texthelp®
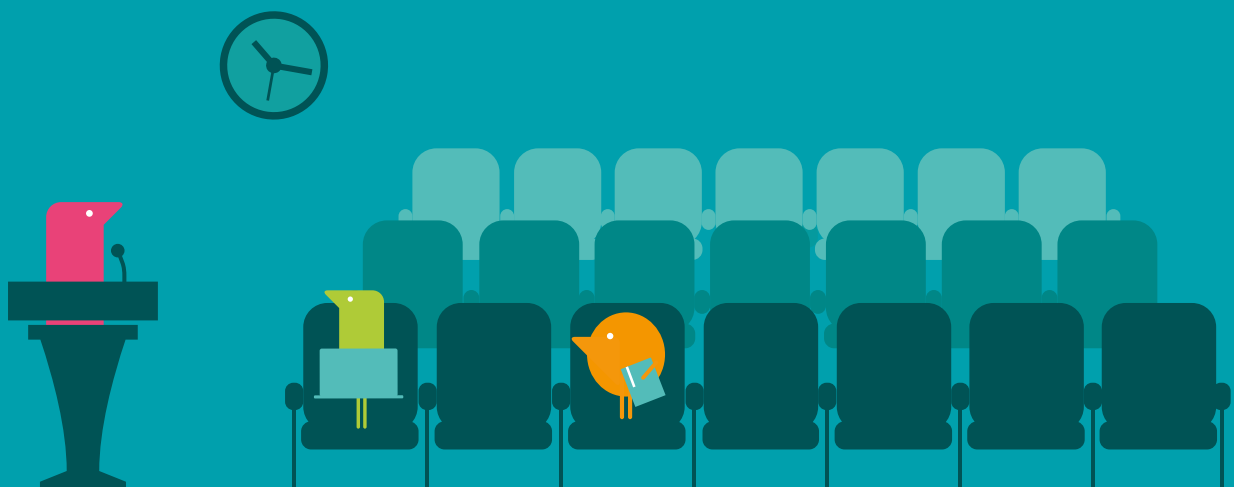
an assessor's guide to Texthelp tools

This guide explains how **Read&Write** and **EquatIO®** software can be helpful for students with additional learning needs who qualify for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

Read&Write and EquatIO are two individual softwares which can be recommended separately, but also compliment each other and offer additional accessibility features for specific needs when recommended together.

Visit **text.help/dsa** to get your assessor copy of Read&Write and EquatIO.

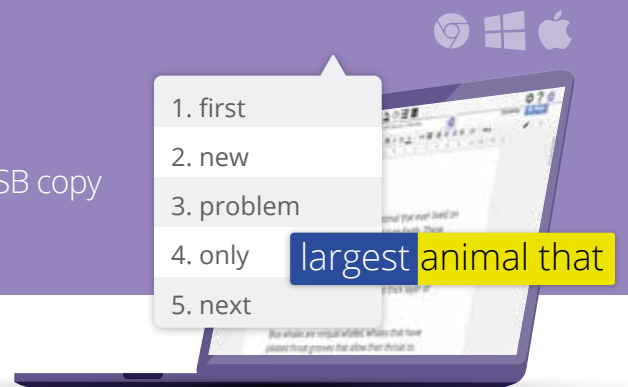# Guidelines for recommending Read&Write for DSA students

rw read&write

The **Read&Write** toolbar provides a wide range of literacy supports to students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties who qualify for the Disabled Students' Allowance, giving them the tools they need to boost their confidence and enhance their learning experience when:

- writing essays and assignments
- reading or conducting research
- drafting emails to tutors and fellow students
- using the web and online forms

What's included when recommended?
All platforms: Windows, Mac, ChromeOS, Tablet, USB copy

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Breakdown of needs covered:

✔ **Reading & writing difficulties -** students with dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia

✔ **Mental health problems -** students with anxiety, OCD, stress, ADHD/ADD and working memory difficulty

✔ **Visual impairment -** this also includes students with visual stress

✔ **Motion and dexterity -** students who have difficulty with motion and dexterity skills

✔ **Hearing impairment -** students with hearing impairments

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Reading and writing difficulties (students with dyslexia or dyspraxia)	**Text-to-speech with highlighting** Assists students with cognitive difficulties by providing auditory support. For example text-to-speech is a useful tool as students can hear what they've written and rectify any mistakes that they may have missed if they were reading themselves.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Reading and writing difficulties (students with dyslexia or dyspraxia)	Students can hear what is being read aloud and track the words on screen with dual coloured highlighting, helping them to process the information more efficiently. Improves auditory reading speed and productivity as listening to information supports more efficient auditory memory. Hearing and seeing the words can increase word recognition. **Check It** Check It is a dyslexic phonetic spell checker that helps to solve complex spelling and grammar mistakes, to improve the quality and accuracy of a written piece of work. When highlighting an error, Read&Write offers an example contextual sentence to allow the student to make an informed decision on what suggestion is appropriate for the error. Promotes independent, autonomous working. Recognises faculty specific words for medical, pharmaceutical, engineering and legal courses with the **Read&Write for Professionals** add-on. **Prediction** Supports the construction of contextually correct sentences. Expands students' vocabulary through the provision of language. This is particularly beneficial for students with dyslexia who self-limit their vocabulary. Students can concentrate on the context of their work rather than struggle with spelling, helping them to produce error-free documents and assignments. Recognises the student's style of writing for future recall. **Screen masking** Can be altered to specific prescription colours, providing a helpful screen tint.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Reading and writing difficulties (students with dyslexia or dyspraxia)	Screen masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties, by narrowing their focus to individual paragraphs.

Specifically helps students with Irlen Syndrome, a perceptual processing disorder which affects the brain's ability to process visual information. This can also be referred to as Meares-Irlen Syndrome, Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome, or Visual Stress.

Dictionaries
Dictionary definitions, which can be read aloud, help students to quickly look up the meaning of a word.

The advanced dictionary offers grammar assistance and thesaurus support, supporting the student in thinking around the subject.

For students with dyslexia, dictionaries support those with short term working memory who may forget the meaning of previously known words.

The picture dictionary provides the student with a visual representation of a word, to help with memory recall.

Highlighters
A useful research tool allowing students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents, which then automatically creates a bibliography upon collection.

Students can colour code pieces of work for easier processing of information.

Scan
Allows students to convert inaccessible documents, for example electronic journals, to an accessible format. These can then be read with Read&Write, highlights can be collected and audio files can be created.

As many university level texts can be inaccessible, students can scan hard copy texts, for example textbooks, into accessible PDF, Microsoft Word Documents, EPUB and HTML formats.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Reading and writing difficulties (students with dyslexia or dyspraxia)	**Talk&Type** Speech-to-text helps students who struggle using a keyboard to create error-free documents verbally. Provides dictation support, helping those who have difficulty with constructing sentences and writing.
	Audio maker Supports auditory learners as this feature allows students to convert large volumes of text to an audible format, reducing the stress of reading large volumes of text. Many students on the dyslexia and neurodiversity spectrum prefer, or need, to hear information rather than traditionally read. Audio files are portable and can be transferred to any device to study on the go. Improves speed, productivity and effectiveness for those who struggle with reading.
	Vocabulary list Students can create their own word lists to help with memory recall, which is particularly useful during revision. Allows students to create vocabulary lists with both visual and auditory support.
	Similar word checker Students can easily identify homophone errors and ensure words are used in the correct context, which is very helpful for students with dyslexia. Homophones are an area of difficulty due to sounding the same from an auditory learning perspective.
	Research folder Provides one central repository where students can categorise and store work for those with poor organisational skills.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Mental health problems	**Prediction** For students who experience anxiety or stress when typing complex course terminology, the prediction feature learns the student's writing style and recognises the words used most often and suggests those first. Word banks with faculty specific words are available for students studying medical, pharmaceutical, engineering and legal courses, with the **Read&Write for Professionals** add-on.
	Scan, screenshot reader, PDF aloud For students who find accessing university level text stressful, Read&Write's clever scanning feature, screenshot reader and PDF tools can help students convert inaccessible documents to an accessible format. These can then be read with Read&Write, highlights can be collected and audio files can be created.
	Screen masking Screen masking improves working memory and helps students to concentrate by focussing on smaller amounts of text. Poor level of concentration is a prevalent symptom in many mental health conditions. Screen masking can be used with the reading ruler which aids tracking when reading large bodies of text. This supports students with cognitive load difficulties by narrowing the focus to individual paragraphs.
	Audio maker For some students, reading and concentrating on large amounts of text can be overwhelming and cause stress. With audio maker, students can convert large volumes of text to an audible format, to listen to content, rather than read. Audio files are portable and can be transferred to any device, should a student prefer to work from home due to their mental health problem.
	Highlighters Highlighters in Read&Write help students easily collate and reference their research, helping them to feel less stressed and overwhelmed when undertaking a large piece of work.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Mental health problems	Categorising with highlighter colours aids organisational skills and helps the student to feel less stressed as they won't feel disorganised.
	Check It With Check It, students can use an accurate grammar, spelling and homophone checker to polish assignments, enabling them to feel confident when submitting work and reducing stress.
	Toolbar The Read&Write toolbar is fully customisable to the individual student's needs. It can show only the required features and can be presented in an order that best suits the individual. Tailoring the toolbar to contain what is actually required is easier for the student to process, as there are fewer features to learn, making it less stressful.
	Vocabulary list The vocabulary list allows key course phrases and terms to be collected and displayed in one place, which is a great point of reference for students with poor working memory. Poor working memory and poor concentration can greatly hamper the ability to learn.
	Research folder For students who feel stressed or anxious when processing large amounts of information, research folder helps by providing one central repository where students can organise, save and reference content. This prevents students feeling disorganised or overwhelmed.
Visual impairment and visual stress	**Screen masking** Screen masking helps students with visual stress as they can use customisable coloured overlays on screen. An RGB prescription colour can be identified via an ophthalmic test for those with visual stress, this prescription can then be applied via screen masking. Using screen masking with the reading ruler helps students with visual impairments as it narrows their focus to individual paragraphs.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Visual impairment and visual stress	**Audio maker** The audio maker tool allows all hard copy and inaccessible content to be converted into an audio file. This is beneficial for those students who find viewing text problematic or impossible.
	Highlighters A useful research tool allowing students to collect and collate information from the internet and documents which then automatically creates a bibliography upon collection. Once research is collected, the colour coding in the end document creates the correct level of contrast for those with visual impairments or visual stress.
	Vocabulary table This tool helps students create tables displaying key course phrases in an easily digestible format. By using the vocabulary list with text only, content can be read aloud, helping students who struggle with reading text on screen.
	Voice notes For visually impaired students who may struggle to use a keyboard or view a computer screen, voice notes can be used to record a short audio file of the student's voice. This can then be inserted directly into Word documents as a comment. Students can use this tool to review their work, adding voice amendments rather than written. Verbal/auditory notes can enable more effective communication between students and lecturers, in comparison to written feedback which a student may struggle to read.
Hearing impairment	**Text-to-speech** Due to the visual element created with dual coloured highlighting, students who are hearing impaired can track and follow content easily.

Learning need	How Read&Write helps
Hearing impairment	**Prediction** The prediction tool helps students to visually recognise the words they need if they can't hear them read aloud. Students can also open the picture dictionary to enhance the visual support.
Motion and dexterity	**Voice note** Voice notes are a great way for students to leave notes and feedback in a document without having to type, or print. Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, Voice Note supports the student in responding and completing work without external support from a support/learning mentor. It also enhances the ability to communicate with a tutor/lecturer. Students can use voice note as a self-reviewing tool, whilst working on assignments, adding voice amendments rather than written. **Text-to-speech and Audio Maker** Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, students may not be able to sit or work in one position at a screen. By using **text-to-speech**, students can listen to course content being read aloud, rather than reading from a screen. With **audio maker**, students can create audio files of text to facilitate greater mobility when studying. **Scan** The scanning feature means students can convert hard copies of text and documents into digital versions, which cuts down on the volume of paper and books they have to carry. Where a physical disability or manual dexterity issue exists, any additional weight can often impact on general ease of movement and transport.

Guidelines for recommending EquatIO for DSA students

EquatIO is an equation editor that has been designed with the principles of Universal Design for Learning in mind and is therefore perfect for students with additional needs. With multiple input methods available, EquatIO lets everyone create mathematical and scientific equations, formulas, Desmos graphs, geometric shapes, and more on any device.

EquatIO integrates seamlessly with Texthelp's **Read&Write** software, with key features such as maths-to-speech and screen masking making maths even more accessible.
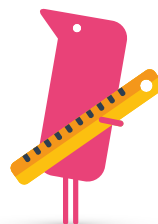
What's included when recommended:
All platforms: Windows, Mac, ChromeOS, Tablet and Mobile
All products: EquatIO, Mathspace web app and EquatIO Mobile

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Students studying the following could benefit from EquatIO:

- ✔ Accountancy
- ✔ Actuary
- ✔ Agriculture
- ✔ Architecture
- ✔ Biology
- ✔ Biomedical Science
- ✔ Business Studies
- ✔ Computer Science
- ✔ Economics
- ✔ Engineering
- ✔ Maths
- ✔ Medicine
- ✔ Midwifery
- ✔ Nursing
- ✔ Pharmacy
- ✔ Physics
- ✔ Science
- ✔ Statistics
- ✔ Technology
- ✔ Veterinary

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✔ **Hearing impairment -** students with hearing impairments

Learning need	How EquatIO helps
Reading and writing difficulties (students with dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia)	**Maths-to-speech** When used with Read&Write, students can have maths problems read aloud which: • provides auditory support for students with cognitive difficulties • improves auditory reading speed and productivity as listening to information supports more efficient auditory memory. • aids tracking and makes processing information easier, with the help of dual highlighting.
	Prediction EquatIO's built in maths prediction helps students to build complex maths and science notations by typing simple English without spelling errors.
	EquatIO Mobile EquatIO Mobile allows students to convert handwritten or textbook maths images into accessible documents.
	Screenshot Reader EquatIO's screenshot reader allows students to read and understand inaccessible documents, like PDFs, by reading them aloud.

Learning need	How EquatIO helps
Mental health problems	**Prediction** Maths prediction allows complex maths and science coding to be created without switching programmes, reducing stress for students as they don't need to learn and remember keyboard shortcuts.
	Handwriting recognition EquatIO's handwriting tool enables students to work how they prefer when inputting in a digital format. Students therefore do not need to change their normal way of working, which could reduce anxiety and stress.
	Screenshot reader EquatIO's screenshot reader allows students to proofread a PDF and other previously inaccessible documents. This removes the stress or anxiety associated when working with inaccessible documents.
Visual impairments and visual stress	**Maths-to-speech** When paired with Read&Write, EquatIO provides maths-to-speech with dual coloured highlighting to help with proofreading complex maths and science content.
	Speech input Speech input allows students to dictate maths in EquatIO, Mathspace and EquatIO Mobile, offering an alternative to typing or handwriting maths.
	EquatIO mobile EquatIO Mobile allows students to convert handwritten or textbook maths images into accessible documents.
	Screen masking When used with Read&Write, screen masking allows students who require a high contrast background to change the background colour. Colour overlays can help reduce visual stress when proofreading work.

Learning need	How EquatIO helps
Hearing impairments	**Maths-to-speech** Dual highlighting allows students to track what maths is being read and edit where necessary, when paired with Read&Write. **Prediction** EquatIO's built in maths prediction and pre-populated symbols allow students to visually form equations.
Motion and dexterity	**EquatIO Mobile** EquatIO Mobile saves time as students can use their smartphone to quickly convert handwritten or textbook printed maths into accessible, spoken maths. **Prediction** Maths prediction, in combination with a keyboard guide/guard, allows those with hand tremors to quickly insert complex maths and science terminology with 60% fewer keystrokes. **Speech input** EquatIO's speech input tool helps students who can't or prefer not to use a keyboard, insert maths and science expressions verbally.

texthelp®

For more information on Texthelp tools for
DSA students, please visit: **text.help/dsa**