**Guidelines for the Use of Assistive Technology and Human Readers in Examinations**

When accommodating students who require additional support due to disabilities, assistive technology often provides a more consistent and independent examination experience compared to human readers. However, there are situations where the use of a human reader is necessary. Here are comprehensive guidelines for integrating assistive technology effectively while detailing the conditions under which human readers are employed, and how electronic papers can be implemented.

**1. Promoting the Use of Assistive Technology**

**1.1 Preference for Assistive Technology:**

* Whenever possible, the use of assistive technology should be prioritized over human readers to promote greater independence and consistency in the exam environment.
* Technologies such as screen readers, text-to-speech software, and Braille displays are recommended to facilitate exam-taking for students with vision impairments or other reading disabilities.

**1.2 Implementation of Electronic Papers:**

* Examinations should be provided in electronic formats that are compatible with assistive technologies. This allows students to use software that can read text aloud, magnify text, or translate it into Braille.
* Ensure that all electronic exam materials are formatted to be accessible, following guidelines such as those provided by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

**1.3 Training and Familiarisation:**

* Provide training sessions for students who are new to assistive technologies well before the examination period. These sessions should cover how to use the technologies effectively under exam conditions.
* Offer practice sessions with past exam papers to ensure students are fully comfortable with the technology.

**2. Guidelines for the Use of Human Readers**

**2.1 Conditions for Using Human Readers:**

* Human readers are provided only when assistive technology cannot meet the specific needs of the student, such as in exams involving complex diagrams, graphs, or where technical issues may arise.
* A needs assessment must confirm the necessity for a human reader, and this accommodation should be documented in the student’s Learning Needs Report.

**2.2 Selection and Conduct of Readers:**

* Readers must be independent individuals who are not known to the student to avoid any potential bias or conflict of interest.
* Readers should ideally have knowledge of the subject matter to ensure they can pronounce terminology correctly and handle material such as formulas, graphs, or foreign languages appropriately.
* The reader’s role is strictly to read the questions as written, without offering any interpretation, advice on which questions to attempt, or using intonation that could suggest emphasis.

**2.3 Examination Environment with a Reader:**

* The reader may also serve as the invigilator, provided there is no conflict of interest or reduction in the ability to monitor the exam properly.
* If the same person is acting as both reader and scribe, clear guidelines must be established to delineate these roles during the exam.

**2.4 Interaction During the Exam:**

* Students must request when they need questions re-read and are permitted to ask the reader to spell words or describe graphs and diagrams if needed.
* Readers should be instructed to maintain a neutral manner without adding any emphasis or commentary that could influence the student’s responses.

**3. Documentation and Continuous Improvement**

**3.1 Documentation of Accommodations:**

* All accommodations, including the use of assistive technology and human readers, must be thoroughly documented in the student’s Learning Needs Report..
* Records of training sessions, technology usage, and reader involvement should be maintained for review.

**3.2 Feedback and Adjustments:**

* Solicit feedback from students and readers post-examination to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations.
* Regularly review and update technology solutions and reader protocols to reflect best practices and emerging needs.

These guidelines are designed to ensure that all students, particularly those with disabilities, are provided with the necessary tools and support to compete on an equal footing in an academic environment. The focus on assistive technology not only enhances independence but also aligns with modern educational practices that emphasise accessibility and equity.