**Guidelines for the Use of Scribes in Examinations**

For higher education institutions (HEIs) aiming to provide equitable examination conditions for students with disabilities requiring scribe services, creating clear and comprehensive guidelines is essential. Below are guidelines developed to govern the use of scribes in examinations, focusing particularly on ensuring scribe proficiency and exploring alternative assessments when a proficient scribe is not available.

**1. Eligibility and Provision of Scribe Support**

**1.1 Criteria for Scribe Support:**

* Scribes are provided to students who cannot handwrite or use a computer due to disabilities, including severe physical limitations or specific learning disabilities.
* A comprehensive needs assessment must confirm the necessity for a scribe, documented in the student’s Learning Needs Assessment.

**1.2 Scribe Allocation:**

* Scribes will be allowed in subjects requiring written communication skills.
* The use of a scribe is not permissible where assessment criteria include spelling, grammar, or written expression, except as allowed under specific documented accommodations.

**2. Scribe Proficiency and Subject Knowledge**

**2.1 Knowledge Requirements:**

* Scribes must have a good working knowledge of the subject matter to ensure they understand terminology and context. This is critical for accurately transcribing student responses, especially in technical, scientific, mathematical, or language exams.

**2.2 Training and Familiarization:**

* Both scribes and students should participate in training and practice sessions to familiarise themselves with the examination process and each other’s communication styles. This training should occur well before the examination period.

**3. Conduct and Responsibilities of Scribes**

**3.1 Role of the Scribe:**

* The primary role of the scribe is to transcribe the student’s verbal or signalled answers without alteration. Scribes must write/type the exact words dictated by the student and refrain from any editing unless instructed by the student.

**3.2 Examination Integrity:**

* Scribes may also serve as invigilators unless this dual role compromises the integrity of the examination environment. In cases where a student also requires a reader, the same person may fulfil both roles if deemed appropriate and practical.

**3.3 Examination Procedure:**

* Scribes should meet with the student before the exam to review the format and any specific instructions or needs the student may have, such as how to handle new paragraphs, spelling, and punctuation.
* Scribes must declare the start and end times of the exam clearly and ensure the examination environment is conducive to the student's needs.

**4. Technological Support and Security**

**4.1 Use of Technology:**

* Where possible, the student’s responses should be recorded using secure institution-provided computers to safeguard against data loss and ensure exam material integrity.
* Computers used by scribes should have auto-save features enabled to prevent data loss.

**4.2 Security Measures:**

* Examination scripts should ideally be submitted electronically to ensure they are securely stored and accessible for marking.
* A recording of the student and scribe should be also activated to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the students script.

**5. Alternative Assessment Strategies**

**5.1 When Scribe Proficiency is Insufficient:**

* If a proficient scribe in the subject matter cannot be found, the institution must consider alternative assessment methods. These may include oral examinations, practical demonstrations, or project-based assessments, provided they align with the learning outcomes of the course.

**5.2 Documentation and Approval:**

* Any alternative assessment methods must be documented in the student’s Learning Needs Assessment and approved by the department and Disability Services to ensure they meet academic standards and fairness.

**6. Monitoring and Feedback**

**6.1 Continuous Improvement:**

* Feedback from students and scribes about the examination process should be collected and reviewed to improve the scribe provision and examination practices.
* Regular updates to training programs and guidelines should be made to reflect technological advancements and feedback from stakeholders.

These guidelines aim to ensure that all students who require the use of a scribe receive support that is equitable, secure, and conducive to demonstrating their academic abilities. By emphasizing scribe proficiency and exploring alternative assessments, HEIs can better accommodate diverse student needs while maintaining academic integrity.