

Writing Helper DSA Justification Guidelines

March 2022

Introduction

This document is intended for anyone who needs to justify a recommendation for Writing Helper in a Needs Assessment Report for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). It introduces the features of Writing Helper and explains how it can help students who qualify for DSA support.

Writing Helper is designed specifically to help students produce written assignments, including essays, reports, and dissertations. It guides students through a linear, structured approach that starts with a question (or title) and a deadline, and ends with their assignment in Word format.

While Writing Helper was designed with neurodiverse students in mind, it can help anyone who finds writing assignments difficult or stressful. By facilitating the writing process, Writing Helper can help students to focus their time and energy on critical thinking, data analysis, and so on.

For more information and resources about Claro Software and DSA, visit our [Disabled Students' Allowance](#) web page.

What is Writing Helper?

Writing Helper helps students to organise and write assignments such as essays, reports, and even dissertations. It guides the user through a linear, structured approach, dividing the complex writing process into seven clear, easy-to-follow stages:



1 Details	Enter basic details about the assignment, including a question or title, referencing style, word count, and due date.
2 Question	Review the question or title, understand the “instructional verb” it uses, and brainstorm concepts. Students can export concepts as a visual map using popular mind mapping or any other idea generation or information gathering process that they are familiar with.
3 Structure	Structure the assignment into sections and add some writing tasks or reminders of things to do. Students can move sections around using drag-and-drop, helping them to work out the best structure for their assignment. Students can import structure from the previous project or visual map created in popular mind mapping software.

<p>4 Sources</p>	<p>Research sources of information and capture information from them.</p> <p>Students can open documents, images, and websites within Writing Helper, highlight important sections, and search for keywords. These can then be slotted directly into the assignment as “snippets”. Citation information can be found with a simple search feature.</p>
<p>5 Snippets</p>	<p>Organise the captured snippets within the assignment structure. Each snippet must be reworded or marked as a direct quote, complete with a citation.</p> <p>Students can also add their own words as snippets. With the entire outline there in front of them, students can benefit from structured writing.</p> <p>Snippets can easily be moved, duplicated, or deleted.</p>
<p>6 Review</p>	<p>Preview the assignment as a document. Outstanding issues, such as incomplete data source data or snippets that need rewording, are marked using coloured boxes so the student can address them methodically.</p> <p>Students can manage all their citations to make complete and accurate bibliographies.</p>
<p>7 Publish</p>	<p>Get a health check on the entire assignment, and then publish it to fully accessible Microsoft Word document.</p> <p>Writing Helper creates a Word document from the student’s assignment, using proper styles, bibliography, and navigation.</p>

Writing Helper guides students through each stage, breaking it all down into simple steps. Students can choose to write their entire assignment within Writing Helper or use it to sort out quotes and references (for example) before finishing the assignment in Word.

For more information, see our [Writing Helper](#) web page.

What is available through DSA?

Writing Helper is available for recommendation through the DSA scheme. It can be recommended on its own or alongside other applications, such as ClaroRead or Dragon.

All Writing Helper users have free access to training, webinars, and other resources on the Claro Software website.

Assessors can get free licences for Writing Helper and our other products. Simply email dsagroup@texthelp.com with your details.

Other Claro Software applications

The following Claro Software applications may also be recommended through the DSA scheme:

ClaroRead	<p>A toolbar that works alongside many common applications to provide support for reading and writing.</p> <p>ClaroRead has a huge range of functionality, including text-to-speech, writing tools, word prediction, and document scanning. It includes the other applications described below, and much more.</p> <p>ClaroRead has its own <i>ClaroRead DSA Justification Guidelines</i> document.</p>
Claro ScreenRuler	<p>Screen tinting and masking. Applies a tinted strip or a solid line across the screen that moves with the student's pointer and helps them focus on the current line or paragraph.</p>

How can Writing Helper help?

Writing Helper can be an appropriate recommendation for students with the following learning needs:

Reading and writing difficulties	Including dyslexia and dyspraxia.
Mental health issues	Including anxiety, stress, and ADHD/ADD.

The following sections detail how Writing Helper can help with some of the common problems faced by students who have the above learning needs.

Anxiety and focus

Starting an essay is hard. When all the student has is a blank page, anxiety can make them unable to focus on the huge task of writing the assignment.

Writing Helper is there to give students a helping hand. It gives them a pathway to progress from that blank page, breaking down the assignment into smaller, self-contained chunks of work that they can focus on more easily.

Complexity and time management

The student is overwhelmed by the complexity of the task, which leads to disorganisation and poor time management.

Each stage in Writing Helper's writing process can be tackled separately. The stages are simple in isolation, helping students to focus and not get distracted by 'noise' from other tasks that can be dealt with later. This gives them confidence that they can reach their goals more quickly and with less stress.

Difficulty organising thoughts

The student has references and reading material that they want to pull together in a certain way in order to structure their argument effectively, but the existing tools are overwhelming, not fit for purpose, or confusing.

Writing Helper offers a simple but effective markup toolset that enables students to capture information from the sources that they want to use in their assignments. The ability

to organise, reword, and cite this information properly helps them focus on the structure of their arguments and encourages them to think critically.

Unnecessary distractions

The student is distracted by the demands of formatting and organising the final document and gets distracted from content and structure.

Instead of using a “what you see is what you get” or WYSIWYG process, Writing Helper does not show the final appearance of the output document throughout the writing process. This makes it easier for students to focus on content and structure.

Instead of wasting time with continual formatting and re-formatting, the process guides students to format their assignments just once, at the end, after they have done all their writing.