Dyslexia Guidelines for Staff

Advice and Guidance for Staff involved in Teaching, Learning and Support of Students with Dyslexia

Maureen Cook
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Dyslexia Guidelines

1. Executive Summary

This paper is designed to provide a resource for all staff who are involved in teaching and learning for students with Dyslexia. It is not intended to be a policy document and all of the areas covered will remain open to debate with academic staff and students.

The paper is designed in such a way that staff can access easily any specific advice they are looking for, rather than having to read the whole document.

The historical context of the Equality Act is provided to enable staff to understand the ongoing development of disability legislation from 1995 to the present day, and to clarify why Disability and Dyslexia Support requests such adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment methods.

The resource provides staff with advice and guidance on the kinds of reasonable and anticipatory adjustments students with Dyslexia require and how those entitlements are supported by the Equality Act 2010. It also includes reference to some best practice used for clinical placements in Nursing and Midwifery and advice for meeting the needs of students with Dyslexia on field trips and other off site activities.

Case studies and guidance tips are provided to help staff identify best practice in inclusive learning and disability-related adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Guidance is also given on how to avoid potentially discriminatory actions where the university or individual staff could be held accountable.

There are specific sections on legislation, teaching and learning, assessments and feedback and field trips/placements.

A list of references, resources and useful websites is provided on page 27.
2. Introduction

This booklet has been produced at the request of academic staff and the guidelines are based on good practice recommendations from external specialist organisations and the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP). It is recognised that specific guidance relating to support for Dyslexic students is required for colleagues at Keele University. The proportion of Dyslexic students has grown year on year over the past decade and as such has presented colleagues within HE with the challenge of ensuring that relevant, appropriate and effective support is put in place for this group of students. The increase in Dyslexic students has been seen at Keele. Of Keele students who have disclosed a disability or SpLD (Specific Learning difficulty) and who are entitled to specialist support, adjustments to the teaching and learning process and to exam arrangements and other modes of assessment, over 80% have been diagnosed as Dyslexic.

Since the inception of the Special Educational Needs Act 2001 which was followed by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 the numbers of students accessing higher education with a disclosed diagnosis of Dyslexia, or having a screening when they enrol on a programme of learning, has increased. There are many reasons for growth in the number of students with Dyslexia studying in higher education. For example the introduction of Disabled Student Allowance and the Widening Participation agenda have been influential and led to universities across the UK to change or modify their practices. The inception of the DDA 2005 ensured that higher education institutions had to promote positive images of disability and actively seek to encourage disabled people to participate in learning. As a result, the promotion of disclosure and seeking specialist support as a positive step for all disabled students is a key policy development for all universities.

Growth is also partly due to students with a diagnosis becoming more aware of their ability to learn, but differently, and having had encouragement to build on their strengths.

In order to meet the needs of these students, the majority of universities now have a policy or guidelines to support academic staff in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment of students with Dyslexia.

The booklet is intended to provide staff with an understanding of their statutory obligations under the Equality Act, and advice on some of the barriers students with Dyslexia face in the teaching and learning environment, and how staff can modify their processes and practice to meet those individual needs and foster a positive and inclusive learning experience. Case studies are provided for quick and easy
Maureen Cook, December 2011

reference, as well as tips for modifying practice in the delivery of teaching and learning and assessment.
3. Legislation

Statutory Obligations

Provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act relating to higher education have been significantly amended since it was introduced in 1995. In particular, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, and the Disability Discrimination Act (Amendment) fundamentally changed the application of the DDA 1995 to make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled pupils and students in schools, colleges and HEIs. The SENDA 2001 and the Disability Discrimination Act (Amendment) 2005 were repealed by the Equality Act 2010 and strengthened the requirement that HEIs ensure that no disabled student is disadvantaged because of a disability. The Equality Act consolidates existing law in to a single legal framework, and while many of the concepts remain the same as in previous disability equality legislation, there are some areas that were not previously covered.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/further-and-higher-education-providers-guidance/key-concepts/

All staff now have a legal obligation to:

- eliminate direct discrimination and indirect discrimination
- eliminate new areas of discrimination introduced in discrimination by association and perception
- foster positive relations between disabled and non disabled people
- encourage disabled students to participate in public life
- take reasonable steps to avoid disadvantage where a provision, criteria or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage (this of course involves teaching delivery administration and access to practical work contexts )
- provide an auxiliary aid where without one a student would be put at a substantial disadvantage.

The Equality Act is the only legislation where a university is permitted to take positive action so as to overcome barriers to access for disabled students even if that means favouring them over non disabled students.

*Please note that the term “substantial disadvantage” has been changed with the Equality Act to “disadvantage”. This means that adjustments are required if the disadvantage is not “minor or trivial”. Disadvantage is not defined in the Act but a rule of thumb is that a reasonable person would consider that
disadvantage had occurred. This can take many forms, such as a denial of adjustments and or support, choice or an opportunity to progress, or a rejection or exclusion from a course because assessment of abilities has not been undertaken after reasonable adjustments have been put in.

It needs to be stressed that programmes leading to professional registration may not be required to make adjustments to learning outcomes or competence standards, but modes of assessments may need to be modified to enable such students to demonstrate their skills.

www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/further-and-higher-education-providers-guidance/key-concepts/

Definitions of Discrimination

Direct Discrimination

This occurs when a member of staff knowingly treats a student with Dyslexia less favourably than a student without Dyslexia and this act adversely affects their progress through a module(s). It can happen because the staff member has stereotypical views and makes assumptions about Dyslexia or its effects. This is because that staff member would not make assumptions about a non-disabled student.

A student is recommended to have the use of a computer in all exams, but is refused the adjustment for class tests because it causes the programme area logistical problems, and “that even students with Dyslexia should be able to handwrite short answer questions in a test”. This decision is based on a generalised assumption and is not meeting individual need and is direct discrimination.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when we apply a provision, criteria or practice in the same way for all students or a particular student group, but this has the effect of putting disabled students at a particular disadvantage. It does not matter that you did not intend to disadvantage the students. What matters is whether your action does or would disadvantage

In effect, this means that we cannot treat all students the same. Disabled students have individual needs. We have a duty to remove any barriers to learning within the teaching and learning environment which we create by our delivery and practices.
The Equality Act states that we must make ongoing reasonable and anticipatory adjustments to ensure that the barriers to teaching, learning and assessment are removed.

**Reasonable and Anticipatory Adjustments**

A “reasonable adjustment” may be defined as an accommodation or alteration to existing academic programmes which is necessary for students to be given a fair opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.

In terms of teaching, learning and assessment disabled students must have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and achievement of clearly specified learning outcomes within a system which maintains academic and competence standards for all. Reasonable and anticipatory adjustments are a statutory obligation under this legislation.

When deciding what is reasonable HEIs need to consider:

- whether any adjustments would be effective in overcoming the difficulty disabled people face in accessing learning and/or the service provided
- the nature of the institution and its size and resources
- the impact of the disability on the disabled student
- the extent to which it is practicable to make the adjustment
- the financial costs involved
- the financial resources available to the provider
- the extent to which other aids and services will be provided
- relevant health and safety issues
- impact on other students

**Case Study**

A student with Dyslexia is recommended to have lecture notes in advance so that they can familiarise themselves with the material prior to any presentations or lectures. Many students with Dyslexia cannot read, listen and take notes simultaneously during lectures and may well be disadvantaged if they are not able to access these notes in advance. They do not require a full transcript of your notes or a lesson plan but do need key points, a framework of the lecture and possibly a glossary of technical words or complex concepts.
Academic staff in HEIs are concerned about compromising academic standards and can be reassured that the need to maintain academic standards is within the premise of the law. All students need to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes and competence standards (QAA precept 12) and while there is not a duty to make an adjustment to a standard, the duty does apply to the assessment of that standard or the process of enabling a student to demonstrate they meet that standard.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one. We should not wait until an individual student approaches us but plan ahead and anticipate the requirements of disabled students and the adjustments that might need to be made for them. For example, it is good practice to have a policy on the provision of lecture notes being made available in advance, book lists well in advance, glossary of technical terms, induction loops in lecture theatres etc.
Case Study

Student X

“My time at Keele was amazing. I struggled academically until I was diagnosed with Dyslexia in my final year. The support I received helped me achieve higher grades jumping from a 2:2 to a first. Without this support I would not have been able reach my full potential”

This student was provided with specialist study skills tuition and a range of reasonable adjustments which removed the barriers inherent in her environment and caused by the impact of Dyslexia on her studies

Student X’s reading for meaning is slow in comparison to peers and she has to re-read many times in order to process information. Her scripts typically contain frequent spelling, grammatical and structural errors and as a consequence Student X’s written performance then is poor in comparison to her ability to articulate her ideas. Student X was provided with a specialist study skills tutor and specialist software to assist her in developing her study and proof reading skills. At this late stage in her studies it would have been difficult for Student X to train in the use of the more sophisticated Read Write Gold and Inspiration, assistive technology which provide a more complex spell and grammar check and mind mapping to help with developing a coherent argument.

Student X accessed PowerPoint presentations after lectures which were useful to a degree. However, because of her Dyslexia, Student X is unable to listen and take notes simultaneously. DDS provided her with a digital recorder to help her supplement the PowerPoint copies, but Student X really needed lecture notes in sufficient detail to explain some of the complex concepts explained verbally in lectures. This adjustment does not require a transcript of the whole lecture but key points, a glossary of complex concepts and technical terminology would be useful for d/Deaf students, blind and partially sighted students and those with Dyslexia.

Student X was also given an individual room for exams to aid with concentration, 25% extra time in exams plus the use of Dyslexia stickers for all exams.
Individual Liability

There is provision under the DDA Part 4 for “individual liability” if the university agrees that adjustments are reasonable and individual lecturers refuses to implement them.

Case Study

All staff in a university have been trained in the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students with Dyslexia and the majority of academic staff provide lecture notes in advance or a copy of a PowerPoint or key points for the lecture and a glossary of key terms or complex concepts. One lecturer refuses to do so because she does not prepare any notes or has any planning documentation and argues that this will give students with Dyslexia an advantage, that they will miss out on the learning process and that she will have to provide these notes for non-disabled students. Students with Dyslexia learn best if they have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the lecture material at least 24 hours in advance so that they can concentrate on listening and note taking or recording. This enables the ongoing reinforcement of learning essential for a student with Dyslexia. If the lecturer continues to refuse they could be charged with disability discrimination through vicarious liability under the Equality Act.

Key Quote

“Problems arise if someone suffers as the result of an employee’s wrongful act which was not authorised by the employer. It is not always obvious whether an employer should have liability. There is no legal problem if the wrongful act done by an employee was authorised by the employer. In that case the employer is generally fully liable and the employee may also be liable to the injured party”

Equality Act- Explanatory Notes

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/division/2/1
4. How Dyslexia can impact on learning

Students with Dyslexia are part of a group with “protected characteristics” under the Equality Act.

Dyslexia is a “combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in one or more of reading, writing and spelling. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills.”

The impact of Dyslexia can have many variations so each student learns to learn in a range of different styles. However, this does not imply an inferior ability to learn.

The majority of students with Dyslexia cannot learn by listening, note taking and watching a presentation simultaneously without interactions and other forms of delivery.

Key Quote

“Experience has demonstrated that adjustments made for disabled students can benefit all students. Inclusive teaching is good teaching.” (OU, Journal of Inclusive Practice in FE and HE Issue 2, December 2009 p45)

Case Study

The more of my five senses that I use at any given time, the easier it is for me to learn. If a lecturer speaks for two hours with a presentation I will not take in any of the information. I need the key points before the lecture and the presentation needs pictures, concept diagrams and opportunities for interactive learning.

Some students with Dyslexia have great difficulty with reading. Dyslexia can cause visual stress which results in blocks of text jumping and dazzling, or they may miss
out words and lines so misinterpret content. This means that they have to re-read texts a number of times and research takes them much longer than their peers. In addition, they cannot skim or scan a text which is why we ask for specified reading lists with key chapters identified. This slow speed of reading can cause them particular difficulty if given a new text to read in a seminar and requested to comment on it. Enlarged font for example 12 size point is useful and often recommended. It is also why we usually request 25% extra time in exams.

Case Study

If a lecturer asked us to read a piece from a journal or handout given to us during the seminar I panic because I know that in the time it takes my peers to read a page of A4 I will still be on the first paragraph. I cannot track a sentence without using a ruler to guide me and I find this embarrassing. If the font is enlarged to at least .12 Ariel and the paper is green with black text I can manage, as these adjustments stop the visual stress but I still keep getting .11 Ariel black on white text.

For others, Dyslexia impacts on short term memory, the speed of recall and word finding; students with Dyslexia find it difficult to retain the image of words, symbols, formulae etc. and this result in difficulties with abstract and conceptual language and the skills of deconstructing an essay or exam question. These characteristics and issues with concentration require us to make adjustments such as extra time in exams for some students and for those with severe Dyslexia possibly an individual room, a reader, scribe and/or a memory prompt sheet.

It may also cause them to lose track of what they are writing so that their work contains repetition of ideas and a lack of sequencing. As they usually have a holistic learning style they have difficulty in converting complex ideas in to the linear nature of sentence structure and paragraphing.

Some students with Dyslexia have poor writing skills and will have difficulty with spelling, punctuation and grammar. They often misread words which look similar and even with the use of a spell checker errors will be made with homophones such as “to” and “too”.

They have difficulty with word finding and may present as having only immature vocabulary at their disposal in relation to complex ideas.
There “is a lack of automacity in language learning, particularly in the early years” and handwriting maybe extremely slow; another reason for requesting extra time in exams and/or a scribe (amanuensis).

Difficulties with spoken English can cause problems when asked to read aloud or deliver a presentation.

Some Typical features of Dyslexia may be:

- significant discrepancy between verbal and written performance
- problems with expressing ideas sequentially
- poor organisation skills
- slow reading speed
- needs to re-read to assimilate information
- tendency to misinterpret verbal written instructions
- incorrect spelling of common words
- incorrect use of homophones
- omission of letters
- long paragraphs that look like an undifferentiated string of sentences linked by conjunctions
- the use of repeated sentence structure
- repetition of ideas because the student is not certain they have made their point clearly
- apparent preference for simple vocabulary rather than more complex academic terms which lacks maturity of expression- rather than spell incorrectly students with Dyslexia will choose a simple word which they can spell
5. Adjustments to the Delivery of Teaching and Learning

The following are considered to be some of the reasonable and anticipatory adjustments:

Material for modification to DDS 10 days in advance (digitalisation, sub texts/transcripts for

Why?
Disability and Dyslexia Support contracts out modification of materials to Staffordshire ASSIST who require notice to enlarge text, produce subtexts and produce digitised chapters and/or audio recordings.
Reading lists in advance with key chapters identified.

Permission to record lectures (with prior agreement and in line with copyright legislation)

Multi sensory teaching delivery

Why?
Students with Dyslexia have to re-read several times and cannot usually skim or scan because of visual stress and tracking difficulties. This adjustment helps them to overcome this barrier.

Why?
Enables reinforcement of learning and a multi sensory approach.

Why?
Multi sensory teaching is essential for students with Dyslexia. It helps them focus on the topic. Lectures should be delivered to meet a range of learning styles, for example:
- visual – flowcharts, spider diagrams etc
- auditory - slow audible presentation
- kinesthetic - learner needs interaction with materials

Pre lecture notes give an opportunity to use all of these modes as the student cannot read in advance, physically write on handouts, watch a presentation and also listen – skills which students with Dyslexia struggle with if required to do simultaneously, but enables some choice of access and development of study skills.
Lecture Notes in advance

Enlarged font Arial at least .12 on A4 coloured paper

Why?

Students with Dyslexia have problems with tracking lines. Text dazzles and jumps around. The impact of enlarged text and coloured paper can be huge and eliminate this disadvantage immediately. It is best not to produce enlarged text on A3 as students feel singled out and different amongst peers.

Why?

It should be made clear to students that these notes do not replace attendance and are there to enhance their learning experience. Key points of the session can be gapped to allow student interaction. Students with Dyslexia can work through the material in advance and helping in their need to re-read any material a number of times.

Case Study

There are some staff members who give me A3 paper despite being asked not to. Enlargements on A3 are hopeless. I don’t have an A3 file. They take up too much space and are difficult to file. If produced electronically I can have them sent via email and I can enlarge it and produce the background colour best to suit my needs.
What might be considered unreasonable?

- Provision of unlimited time in exams
- Reduced workloads if they lower standards
- Extreme demands on lecturer time

Fairness does not mean treating everyone the same but treating according to individual need

Key Quote

“Both the design and implementation of learning and teaching methods and related activities, as well as the learning environment, recognises the entitlement of disabled students to participate in all activities provided as part of their programme of study”.

QAA for HE 2010, P23
6. Assessments

One of the most important principles of disability legislation is that adjustments should not compromise academic standards. The issue of differential marking may pose difficulties for some subject areas. For example, languages will be explicitly assessing competence with grammar, spelling and fluency of writing. There may also be professional considerations in areas such as Law, Education, Medicine, Nursing and Midwifery, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy. Standards cannot be compromised but the process by which they are assessed may need to be differentiated.

You may stipulate the number of marks which may be lost due to spelling and grammatical errors if national guidelines require this. You may want to mark all errors and explain why the student’s work has been penalised, for example, loss of meaning, incoherence etc.

Marking Guidelines/Sticker System

It is considered a reasonable adjustment to identify the work of a student with dyslexia so that markers can discount minor errors of spelling and grammar.

It is an academic decision whether such an adjustment is consistent with maintaining academic standards.

Only students who have provided appropriate evidence of need to DDS and who have requested the adjustment should have their work identified in this way.

The identification system should compromise anonymous marking as little as possible.

Marking down for minor spelling and grammatical errors may be considered discriminatory when use of appropriate English is not a specified learning outcome and it is known that the student has Dyslexia.

If correct use of English language is not specified as a learning outcome then schools may wish to use the guide below to avoid penalising students for spelling and grammatical errors. These could be considered as core criteria which would be part of School’s academic standards, regardless of the assessment method, although the assessment method itself may need to be subject to a reasonable adjustment.
Guidance Note

The language used must be of a sufficient standard to permit assessment of the criteria stated below. If the language used is so poor that it is impossible to discern the intended meaning and assess against the specific learning outcomes then that piece of work may fail.

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Good Practice Guidance to Marking

- understanding of the subject knowledge
- use of appropriate academic style
- relevance of material selected and arguments proposed
- organisation of material
- logical coherence
- critical evaluation
- comprehensiveness of research
- evidence of synthesis
- creativity and originality

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Key Quote

"Unless the mode of assessment is itself a competence standard (which in certain circumstances it might be) then universities are required to make reasonable adjustments to the process of assessment if genuinely required for a disability related reason, otherwise this process could be deemed unlawful."

NADP
Competence Standards

Since these learning outcomes would be a part of the school's academic standards and clearly specified, they would not be subject to a reasonable adjustment. However, the method of assessment may be. If a student with Dyslexia struggles with written work in exams – production of course work is different in that they have access to support and assistive technologies – it may be agreed with the school, DDS and the student that an oral assessment may replace one essay covering the same course material. The oral assessment would be assessed against the same specific learning outcomes but the adjustment is to the method of assessment.

Key Quote

"Unless the mode of assessment is itself a competence standard (which in certain circumstances it might be) then universities are required to make reasonable adjustments to the process of assessment if genuinely required for a disability related reason, otherwise this process could be deemed unlawful."

NADP

This is clearly the case where professional bodies award a qualification, for example, Pharmacy, Nursing and Midwifery, Physiotherapy or Medicine, where students have to be assessed in clinical work within a clearly defined time frame because of fitness to practice issues. In these instances the mode of assessment is a competence standard and adjustments cannot be made
**Good Practice Guidance in Alternative Forms of Assessment may be:**

- oral presentation of work but student will need training in vivas
- course work instead of an exam
- open book exams
- short answer questions
- access to voice activated software for exams
- portfolios

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**Examinations/Class Tests**

Schools will need to identify whether use of correct English is required to a specified standard independent of what is required to communicate knowledge of the subject matter ie specified learning outcome.

Where specified learning outcomes are in place, schools will need to determine the appropriate method of assessment. If these standards need to be demonstrated in exam conditions – the process of assessment in timed conditions is a competence standard or core criteria – the schools should instruct markers to ignore the stickers and to follow the marking guidelines below.

Students recommended 25% extra time in exams and class tests should be provided with these adjustments where possible. However, in language classes, tests can be of very short duration of for example five minutes. We have to be pragmatic in these circumstances and it would not be reasonable for the university to have to book extra time in rooms when resources are scarce and the majority of students would be negatively affected.

**Course Work**

The need for adjustment in marking is less acute outside of formal examinations because the student has access to reference materials, assistive technology and study skills tuition. It may then be reasonable to set higher standards for correct use of English, clarity, accuracy and expression. Markers may wish to focus feedback on areas where the student make best use of it, and the stickers may still be useful even when markers are instructed not to discount errors.
Extensions for coursework are a decision for the school. However, if a student with Dyslexia has to manage multiple submission dates it would be a reasonable adjustment to stagger these. It would not be appropriate to offer 25% extra time for coursework or dissertations.

Multiple Choice Questions
Multiple choice questions may present more difficulties for students with Dyslexia. The format of the test requires skill in visual tracking both vertically and horizontally which is a barrier to some students with Dyslexia. Extra time should compensate to some degree, or a change in the response recording process. You may want to consider an alternative form of assessment for some students on some programmes.

Oral Presentations
A common misconception is that students with dyslexia have difficulty with written language but are fluent orally. However, some students with Dyslexia also experience difficulties with oral presentation. These can include problems with word finding, hesitations, mispronunciations and incomplete sentences. In addition, they may have difficulty with organisation of ideas in exactly the same way as with written work. Problems can emerge because of:

- the load on working memory
- reading aloud from notes
- organisation of material

Good Practice Tip
Allow the student to give their presentation to a smaller group or if severely affected with the tutor only. This is dependent on the marks allocated for verbal presentations. Discuss with the student whether they are prepared to lose marks. You could also give time to the student to prepare and rehearse the presentation.
Extensions

Any recommendations for extensions are usually made through the needs assessor to DDS, but it is up to individual schools to approve and establish agreed time limits. Communication between schools to ensure consistency of approach to the granting of extensions would be useful. It is recognised that continuous granting of extensions can exacerbate problems and have an adverse impact on student performance. The student should be made aware of this and supported to manage their time.

Feedback

A student with Dyslexia is unlikely to know how to correct grammar without some guidance or explanation. They are often unfamiliar with grammatical rules. Explain what is required explicitly and in as simple language as possible.

Even where stickers are in place, markers should sensitively correct errors otherwise the student will believe that all of their work is correct and will not improve.

Often verbal or word processed feedback is useful for students with Dyslexia.

8. Electronic Submission of Work

Turnitin

If work is to be submitted electronically disabled students will begin their electronic submission with Dyslexia Sticker Number XXXX

9. Post Graduates/PhD Students

At this stage in their academic career students will be able to access proof readers and may have access to support and assistive technology if they have a current diagnosis of Dyslexia so academic staff may wish to accept only minor typos and errors. However, lecturers and supervisors may wish to consider “Good Practice Suggestions”:
It is important to stress that all specialist tuition provided through DSA is in place to teach the student with Dyslexia learning strategies that they can use themselves. They do not proofread work for students.

10. Field Trips and Off Site Activities

Keele University has a duty to ensure that their providers of placements in the UK and internationally are able to provide the reasonable adjustments students with Dyslexia are entitled to under the Equality Act 2010.

Study Abroad

The current procedure works well. All students with Dyslexia are indentified and DDS notified at least three months in advance. DDS invites students to make an appointment with a Disability Adviser. With the student’s permission DDS sends the host university the needs assessment and clarification on all adjustments necessary. The majority of the host universities implement similar systems and adjustments are in place for the student when they arrive. The student must take with them any specialist equipment and software.

Key Quote

You should seek to ensure that any off site activities you arrange do not discriminate against any of your students. Failure to think about the range of needs could result in unintentional indirect discrimination

EHRC: Creating a Fairer Future
Placement and Field Trips

Nursing and Midwifery have developed their own Clinical Assessment Tool designed to ensure that reasonable and anticipatory adjustments are in place for students with Dyslexia while out on placement.

DDS need to know well in advance of any off site activity and will liaise with the student and the department about their individual needs as recommended in their needs assessments.

It is helpful if we are made aware of the skills and/or competences that students need to demonstrate during these activities so that support can be put in place and adjustments made. For more severely disabled students DDS will also contribute to risk assessments and seek medical evidence from professionals about safety issues.

DDS needs one month’s notice of field trips/off site activities so that support can be arranged.

We will also seek extra funding where appropriate.

Barriers for Students with Dyslexia on Off Site Activities

Bright sunlight can cause difficulties for students with Dyslexia, as visual stress is a common factor with this specific learning difficulty. Often these students will have prescription glasses with coloured lens to aid the situation. These aids are fundable through Disabled Student Allowance, although the diagnosis is not and costs can discourage students from seeking this extra help.

Some students will have difficulties with note taking. It is helpful if staff and other students will agree to be recorded during fieldwork and group discussions, although the ambient noise will be problematic. If the student with Dyslexia has very poor skills in this area, a note taker may be provided, but discussions should take place with the department to ensure that competence and national standards are maintained.

If those standards require that notes are written up at the end of each day adjustments could include:

- extra time to do so
- allowing students to their take lap top on the trip
- allowing students to use voice recognition software with lap top
- dictation to a note taker
Good Practice Guidance for Field Trips/Off Site Activities:

- student may use a digital recorder
- student may use a lap top and specialist software
- enable student to familiarise themselves with all documentation prior to event
- ask student to repeat back to you any verbal instructions to ensure understanding
- encourage student to use electronic diaries for time management and memory prompts
11. Acknowledgements and Related Links:

Post 16 Code of Practice, Equality and Human Rights Commission

Managing Reasonable Adjustments in Higher Education: disability@ecu.ac.uk

Creating a Fairer Future: Equality and Human Rights Commission

National Association of Disability Practitioners: Deb Viney, John Conway, Nicola Martin and others

Aston University

Nottingham University

University of Liverpool

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