



Student Support Plan

This plan contains:

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The recommendations are not exhaustive, and additional or alternative arrangements may be agreed. This may be because alternative adjustments more effectively address the disability-related barrier in the study context, or because unanticipated barriers arise. Discussions regarding implementation may involve the student, disability coordinator, tutor/s or other relevant staff at different times as needed. DAS can provide additional advice where, after discussion, it is unclear what adjustments will be effective and reasonable.

1. Personal and disability information

Name:	
Preferred pronouns:	
College:	
Programme:	
Level:	
Department/Faculty:	
Start year:	
Disability type:	Specific Learning Difficulty
Disability information:	ADHD

Confidentiality: The student has given their consent for information about their disability to be shared on a need-to-know basis with appropriate staff in line with Data Protection Act requirements.

2. Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) and impact on study

SpLDs affect the way information is processed and learned, which can have a very significant impact on formal education and study, and self-confidence. SpLDs are neurological and unrelated to intellectual ability, socio-economic or language background. SpLD is an umbrella term used to cover several conditions which have overlapping difficulties:

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia (also known as Developmental Coordination Disorder)
- Dyscalculia
- ADHD
- Slow processing
- None-specified Learning Difficulty (difficulties overlapping with the above but does not neatly fit in any one category)

It is common for individuals to display features of more than one SpLD and some individuals will have more than one diagnosis.

Although the best source of information about impact on study is from the individual themselves, students should not need to discuss their needs with each member of staff they meet, nor should they be expected to share personal or medical details. The following is therefore provided to give an insight into the range of impacts students with Specific Learning Difficulties may experience in the context of Higher Education. Each individual will experience a unique combination of impacts of varying levels of severity:

- Difficulties extracting information from written material and therefore slower reading speeds
- Difficulties expressing ideas in writing, resulting in a slower speed of producing written work, and a significant discrepancy between ability to discuss topics and the quality of written work
- Difficulties with spelling and recognising errors in own work when editing and proofreading
- Difficulties with planning, structuring and sequencing ideas
- When listening to research presentations/papers, difficulty making useful notes at the same time as fully comprehending the material and engaging with the content.

- Reduced capacity to work under tight time constraints due to slower speeds of reading, planning, writing and reviewing work (implications for lab-work, field work, data collection and conferences)
- Heightened stress and fatigue due to study tasks being more effortful and undertaken under additional time-pressure
- Issues with time planning and management and personal organisation, e.g., finding it hard to remember appointments, deadlines, important paperwork, or to find new locations

ADHD (but may also be experienced by someone with a different SpLD diagnosis)

- Difficulties establishing and maintaining attention and concentration
- Tendency to take on too much and have too many tasks running concurrently; student might rush through activities and so miss out key steps, or they might become hyper-focused on one project
- Barriers to effective listening and a tendency to speak before fully thinking ideas through, may appear to dominate conversation, or display restless behaviour

Dyspraxia (but may also be experienced by someone with a different SpLD diagnosis)

- Difficulty learning new techniques involving fine and gross motor skills in the laboratory, the field, or practice-based environment. Applying acquired skills can be more difficult in an unfamiliar or busy environment.
- Difficulties handling tools and equipment
- Handwriting can be slow or difficult to read if produced at speed
- Poor balance and motor planning may increase likelihood of falls or accidents which will be relevant to risk assessments in laboratories or when planning fieldwork

3. Recommended adjustments

The measures outlined in the [disability inclusion statement](#) are key for providing access to learning for disabled students: 1. teaching materials provided electronically in advance; 2. structured reading lists; 3. access to lecture recordings (or alternative methods for content capture where recordings cannot reasonably be provided); 4. flexibility on occasion with formative work and 5. additional library support.

In addition, the following standard adjustments are recommended:

For departments and colleges

- Practicals and laboratory work (for students with dyspraxia or features of dyspraxia): evaluate the need for an individual risk assessment for practical or laboratory settings, to be carried out by the relevant lab manager or safety manager
- Practicals and laboratory work (for students with dyspraxia or with features of dyspraxia): provide support to acquire and practice skills involving fine motor dexterity; provide additional support for activities which require manual dexterity if requested on occasion by the student
- Supervisors: take account of the impact of the disability when deciding on the frequency and duration of supervisory sessions. Offering optional, supplementary meetings in-between formal supervisions may further support the student.
- Supervisors: set aside extra time during supervisions to support the student's on-going development of a work schedule (a medium-to-long term plan), that will be kept up-to-date throughout the project. This will be helpful for all students, but especially for SpLD students who are managing the extra time needed for reading and writing tasks, and who may also be impacted by organisational difficulties.
- Supervisors: student can make their own recording of supervisions and/or agree with you a preferred method for confirming and documenting the main points of the session. Student to refer to their responsibilities relating to recordings, as set out in the [educational recordings policy](#), §26-30. [Staff guidance on student recordings](#).
- Allow for the student needing additional time on occasion to write up their lab-book or field-notes.

For examinations and assessments

To gain approval for adjustments to assessments, an application must be made by the research student in consultation with their department and supervisor.

- **Action for research student:** Consider making an application for adjustments to assessment arrangements (Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, and final viva) via GSO form 19 on the [Graduate forms](#) page (for more information on this process, see GSO.19c). Students can request:

- that examiners are made aware of the impairment and any implications for the assessment;
- that reasonable adjustments or inclusive practice already in place for supervisions are replicated during the assessments;
- any other adjustments needed.

Adjustments can be requested at any point leading up to submission of the thesis, but students are advised to make an application early to ensure the arrangements are in place for Transfer and Confirmation of Status.

4. For staff

Advice for supporting students

Supervisors adapt their approach to the needs and characteristics of each individual student and this means that each supervisory relationship is unique. This section offers advice for supervisors, based on inclusive practice principles, but highlighting what may be particularly helpful for students with SpLDs.

- Getting to know students: if they are happy to do so, discuss with them the impact of their SpLD and what they find most helpful in their work, using this document as a starting point, but also sharing with them your approach to supervision to enable a discussion about what it might be necessary to adjust. It will be helpful to have check-in discussions subsequently too (approximately once a term) to talk about any new barriers or challenges that have arisen as the project progresses.
- Support the student to make objective prioritization decisions to balance the demands of primary research and writing up with the other tasks associated with doctoral study (research presentations, preparing papers for publication, teaching and demonstrating, training, research proposals or job searches). This will nurture the skills needed to stay on track and moderate workload pressures.
- During supervisions, pause regularly when talking, so the student has an opportunity to process the information and to take notes if needed; summarize salient points at the end of the meeting. Be prepared to repeat or rephrase if the student has missed what you have said and give time for them to absorb questions and prepare responses.

- Provide feedback both verbally and in writing (typed or other electronic format); and be prepared to give extra clarification and structured feedback.
- Refer the student to visualizations relating to the topic of their research where possible - pictures, flow charts, diagrams, graphs, videos, podcasts etc.
- Provide clear and explicit instructions both verbally and in writing for written work or other set tasks. For labs and other practicals, offering instructions (where relevant) in multiple modes (spoken, written, video recordings), and making these available before, during and after the session will be helpful for all students.
- Allow enough time for students to complete tasks and reading in laboratory settings/practicals. Build in some time to resolve problems that may arise, and for students who may need longer to progress through instructions.
- If possible, provide additional opportunities to practice techniques before or after laboratory sessions, for example with the use of computer simulations.
- Follow [guidance on accessible formatting of learning materials](#) and file types. Students will have varying needs and preferences for layout, so providing learning materials in flexible, electronic formats (e.g. Word, ODT, HTML) is helpful, so students can change font size and type as needed. As a guide, the following are helpful:
 - Minimum size 12 sans serif font
 - Avoid italics and underlining (bold is often easier).
 - Avoid dense blocks of text by marking the structure of text with sub-titles, paragraph breaks, bullet points, numbered lists and by including visual information
 - Number slides and document pages
 - Use the correct headers to assist all readers but particularly those using a screen-reader.

Sources of support and training

- For further advice and information, staff involved in the implementation of this plan may contact the Disability Advisory Service by email on disability@admin.ox.ac.uk, telephone 01865 (2)80459, or see our [staff](#) and [student](#) web pages.

- Our [Disability Confidence web-page](#) has a list of training courses and online resources for staff.
- As part of the University's IncludEd campaign, The Centre for Teaching and Learning has developed a [Guide to inclusive teaching](#).
- Further information about procedures relating to examination adjustments can be found on the [Academic Support website](#).

5. For students: important sources of support

Contact your Disability Coordinator

If at any point you are experiencing disability-related barriers to study, please contact your Disability Coordinator.

The primary contact for postgraduate research students is the [disability coordinator](#) in their department. However, if the barrier to study relates mainly or solely to college provision, students should contact the [disability coordinator](#) in their college.

Applying for Disabled Students' Allowance

If you have not already done so, it is advised that UK ('home') students with a disability consider applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Applying for DSA means that you can access a Study Needs Assessment (SNA), which can give an individualised insight into the study aids and support that may be helpful. Where indicated, the SNA may lead to funding for some of the following study support:

- Specialist SpLD study skills tuition (to work one-to-one with you to develop your study skills, building on your individual strengths and compensating for areas of difficulty)
- Assistive Technology - physical study aids and computer software, which can be used to support note-taking, planning and organisation
- Assistive Technology training – so that you can get the best out of the technologies recommended for you
- Laptop (students contribute the first £200), and recording equipment or other study aid technology

Please see our [funding page](#) for more information about the appropriate application route, depending on your funding body. It can take up to 14 weeks for applications to be processed and the support implemented. Please contact

the Disability Advisory Service by email at disability@admin.ox.ac.uk if you need help with your application.

Research Council funded students should contact their [link advisor](#) in the first instance, who will advise on eligibility and next steps.

International students are not eligible for the UK government's Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), but are eligible for in-house needs assessment and subsequent support. International students should contact their [link advisor](#) if they would like to explore additional study aids and support options.

Accessing counselling, therapy and self-help

- Counselling and therapy is available from [University Counselling Service](#); [NHS Talking Therapies](#); private therapists can be found via the [Counselling Directory](#)
- The University Counselling webpage - [Counselling Services supportive resources](#) has lots of helpful resources
- [Togetherall](#) – an online 24/7 clinically supervised, peer-support community. It also includes self-help resources and courses
- The NHS has self-help resources for a wide range of mental health concerns here - [Self Help Leaflets](#)

Study skills and library support

- [Study skills and training | University of Oxford](#)
- A range of services are available for disabled readers from the Bodleian Libraries. More information can be found at [Services for Disabled Readers](#).
- Students with an SpLD, ADHD, autism or a mental health condition may be able to access specialist study skills tuition or mentoring via an application to Disabled Students' Allowance (see section above)