



SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Guidance on supporting disabled students for teaching staff

Contents:

1. Introduction.....	3
2. The Legal Framework.....	4
3. Definition of disability.....	5
4. Reasonable Adjustments	6
5. Supporting disabled postgraduate and research students	7
5.1 Support for disabled students at SAS.....	7
5.2 Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)	9
5.3 Disclosure, confidentiality and communication.....	9
6. Inclusive learning and teaching practices	10
6.1 Teaching rooms.....	10
6.2 Lecture and seminar preparation and delivery	10
6.3 Group work/class presentations	12
6.4 Assessment	12
6.5 Research student supervision	12
Appendix 1: Information on specific disabilities, impacts on learning and teaching and recommended teaching strategies	14

1. Introduction

As a member of staff you may not always be aware that you are teaching or supervising a disabled student or researcher, but, on average, it is likely that out of a lecture theatre of 50 students, 3 students will have some form of disability. The number of postgraduate students declaring a disability has risen gradually in the past ten years, and currently just under 7% of postgraduate taught and research students have a disability (source: HESA student return 2013/14). Recent figures show that the SAS has approximately 5% disabled students.

This guidance is aimed at all staff who work with students in a learning and teaching context, including (but not limited to) lecturing and supervisory staff, administrative staff, and programme and module directors. It aims to:

- raise awareness and understanding among SAS staff of their responsibilities towards disabled students under equalities legislation;
- promote a more inclusive approach to learning and teaching by providing practical examples of how staff can support disabled students to reach their full academic potential;
- provide further sources of support and information.

The legislation requires that HEIs pro-actively respond appropriately to disabled students' needs and supports a mainstreaming approach to disability, often referred to as the 'social model' of disability. This views disability as something 'located' in the interaction between an individual and the environment and recognises that it is attitudinal and environmental barriers that disable people, rather than their impairments. It is recognised that universities play an important role in challenging these barriers by ensuring that their policies and practices do not discriminate against disabled students.

In addition to the legislative requirement to ensure equal access to provision, increasing opportunities for universities to review their practices and adopt more inclusive learning, teaching and assessment approaches will be of benefit to **all** students. At this level, teaching strategies that are effective for disabled students are also effective for non-disabled students and the requirements of disabled students should not be thought of as 'special needs'; they are generally identical to those of non-disabled students. For example, all students need access to the teaching room and access to the information that is being presented or discussed there.

2. The Legal Framework

Protection from discrimination for disabled people is covered in The Equality Act 2010. The stated aim of the Equality Act is to reform and harmonise discrimination law, to help Britain become a fairer society, improve public services and enhance business performance. The Act strengthens and streamlines equality law and replaces previous anti-discrimination laws (including the Disability Discrimination Act) with a single piece of legislation. The Equality Act prevents discrimination against disabled people in the areas of employment and service delivery and places a duty on public bodies to promote disability equality.

The Act sets out the different ways in which it is 'unlawful' to treat someone and defines the several forms of discrimination, victimisation and harassment that it protects against. Disability is one of nine protected 'characteristics' (see figure 1 below) identified by the law, all of which are of equal status.

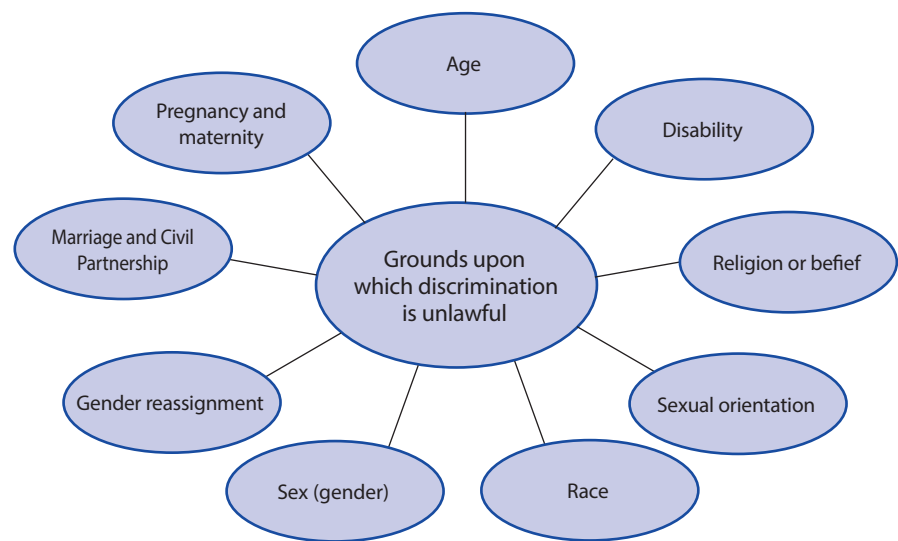


Figure 1. The nine protected characteristics under The Equality Act 2010

3. Definition of disability

In order to be protected under the law, a disabled person is required to meet the legal definition of a disability. The Equality Act considers a person to have a disability:

‘...if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

Equality Act 2010 (Ch.1) Part 6

The legal definition of disability covers both ‘visible’ and ‘unseen’ conditions, including diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions; hearing or sight impairments, or a significant mobility difficulty; mental health conditions and learning difficulties.

The law does not require the cause of the disability to be determined, or to categorise it as either mental or physical. Conditions such as MS, cancer and HIV are covered from the point of diagnosis even if they are symptomless. This recognises that people might be discriminated against based on having a certain condition, rather than due to the effects that it has on them.

Under the law disability is determined by the significant effect it has on a person’s ability to carry out day-to-day activities. These activities are defined as involving physical mobility, co-ordination and hearing and sight, but also the ability to remember, concentrate and learn. ‘Long-term’ means that the impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months or for the rest of the affected person’s life. Even if the effects of a condition are episodic or sporadic – if they are recurring and are likely to last beyond 12 months then they will be considered long-term. The law also protects people who have had a disability in the past if it meets the definition, even if this condition has not reoccurred (discrimination based on past disability).

Some disabilities are immediately obvious, but others - such as visual impairment, mental health difficulties such as bipolar disorder and depression, and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD - are far less so. Appendix 1 contains more detailed information about disabilities and their potential impact on individuals, as well as the particular strengths and abilities that might be recognised as being associated with a particular disability. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of disabilities, but it is important to remember that it is the effects of a disability on an individual and not the disability itself that is relevant, and that every person’s needs should be considered individually.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act, HEIs have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled students can fully participate in the education and services provided for students. This means the University may be required to make 'reasonable adjustments'. The reasonable adjustments duty is to avoid as far as possible "by reasonable means" the disadvantage that a disabled student experiences because of their disability. This is an **anticipatory** duty; HEIs are required by law to respond to requests for adjustments and must pro-actively anticipate disabled students needs as far as possible. In an educational setting, examples of reasonable adjustments include such provisions as providing lecture notes in alternative formats, allowing students' additional time for an exam or providing voice recognition software, or moving lectures to an accessible venue. Although the same reasonable adjustment may be appropriate for a number of students, for example, an extension to an essay deadline for dyslexic students, every person should be treated as an individual and each person's needs must be considered individually.

Reasonable adjustments can be required at any stage of a student's studies, from application to a course to a viva voce examination. As part of the online application process, prospective students have an opportunity to declare a disability and inform the School of any support they may need, which allows the necessary adjustments to be anticipated. Students can however become disabled on course or chose to disclose a disability at any stage in their studies and the School is required to respond accordingly. A disabled student has the right to request that the existence or nature of his or her impairment or condition be treated as confidential. This may mean that reasonable adjustments have to be provided in an alternative way in order to ensure confidentiality, and in some cases this may lead to less satisfactory adjustments being provided.

5. Supporting disabled postgraduate and research students

Supporting disabled postgraduate students requires a balance to be struck between meeting the anticipatory duty to attend to the individual needs of disabled students and a more proactive approach to increasing the accessibility of teaching more generally. Under the law students have a right to accessible teaching, but it is also important to consider the benefits of mainstreaming this approach and recognise that adjustments and provisions made with disabled students in mind might facilitate the learning of a far greater number of students.

The move from undergraduate to postgraduate study may present a particular challenge for some disabled students. This might be especially the case in predominantly postgraduate and research institutions like the School, where students come from an array of disciplinary and professional backgrounds and often not through a direct route from undergraduate studies. Generally disabled students have developed some coping strategies through their educational experiences, but these can often fall apart under stress. The impacts of a disability might also become more apparent in a postgraduate and research environment, for example, dyslexia with the increased written workload required of a PhD. You should not assume that a student's disability will have been diagnosed at an undergraduate level or that a student will automatically be more comfortable disclosing a disability at postgraduate stage; often the opposite is the case.

Within postgraduate and research education there is a level of guidance and support which to go beyond might lead staff to have concerns about the erosion of academic standards and the competence of the learner. Although disabled students might challenge these assumptions, it is important to note that the changes that may be considered to teaching, learning and assessment practices are about providing access to the course and learning environment, rather than reducing academic standards and criteria. While many disabled students may learn in different ways, their differences do not imply inferior capacities. There is no need to dilute curricula or to reduce course requirements for disabled students. Nor is there a need to consider that practical adjustments, such as giving lecture notes in advance, will result in academic advantage for certain students. It is important to challenge the 'deficit' model of disability and the 'problem' that is caused by a disabled student's condition, and consider instead the particular strengths and skills that a disabled student will bring to the learning and teaching context and how these can be harnessed and developed.

5.1 Support for disabled students at SAS

There are a number of policies, practices and procedures in place at the School to support disabled students, as well as staff with particular expertise in this area. Equality Focus are external consultants working with the School providing support for disabled students at the School and ensuring that any equipment is purchased and that the correct information is shared. The Disability Adviser at Equality Focus can answer any queries about what can be done to support students and answer any further specific questions around disability.

It is important that staff are aware of the support in place and are able to advise and direct students accordingly. Detailed information on support available for disabled applicants and students at the school can be found here is found in the following sections.

Learning Support Plans

A Learning Support Plan (LSP) outlines the support agreed for a student during their course of study at SAS in order to ensure equality of access whilst at the School. It provides the opportunity for the student to have their individual needs agreed and clearly set out in a way that can be communicated to all staff directly involved in his/her learning and teaching. The LSP is drawn up in collaboration with the Disability Adviser from Equality Focus who meets with the student to discuss their needs and the adjustments that can be offered. These might include individual IT or library support, permission to record lectures and seminars, additional time to submit coursework and special examination provisions. The agreed LSP is then disseminated to all members of staff who have responsibility for implementing the adjustment and will be named in the LSP.

If you receive a copy of a student's LSP, you may want to discuss arrangements with the student or seek further advice from the Disability Adviser at Equality Focus.

Specialist support

Disabled students may be able to access specialist support to help them with their studies. This may include study skills tuition (for students with SpLDs), mentoring (for students with mental health difficulties) or the use of a support worker for notetaking/library support (for those with visual or mobility difficulties). Specialist support can be funded through the Disabled Student Allowance if the student is eligible (see 5.2 below).

Library support

The library has particular support in place for disabled students. This includes access to extended loan periods for standard and one-week loan materials; a book and journal fetching service for those students that have difficulties accessing shelves; and a photocopying, printing and scanning service for those who have difficulties accessing these facilities.

Software

The School has various pieces of assistive software which are now networked on library computers in the School and in Senate House Library. All students have access to this software.

Inspiration 9

ClaroRead Pro

ZoomText M/R

TextHelp R&W

Mindview 6

Dragon Pro

Jaws Pro

All the libraries also offer additional facilities and some equipment. All users are asked to discuss their needs with their respective library staff.

Screening for Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

Students who think they may have a SpLD can attend a screening appointment with the Disability Adviser at Equality Focus. If appropriate, the student will then be referred for a formal diagnostic assessment.

5.2 Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

Disabled postgraduate students may be eligible for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) funding to meet the cost of any support they require for their academic studies. DSA is not means-tested, and does not need to be repaid. DSA can help with the costs of specialist equipment, for example, a computer if one is needed specifically because of a student's disability, non-medical helpers (such as mentors and study skills tutors) and additional travel costs due to disability. DSA can be applied for at any time in a student's studies, but early application is recommended.

5.3 Disclosure, confidentiality and communication

Disclosure refers to a choice that a disabled student makes about whether to tell another person or organisation about his/her disability. The Equality Act means that students can decide whether or not to disclose a disability to a university and they are under no legal obligation to disclose unless elements of their course involve circumstances or situations where their disability could present a risk to the health and safety of themselves or other people.

Disabled students are able to disclose a disability at any stage in their studies and potential and current students of the School are provided with a number of opportunities to disclose whether they have a disability and its nature, at first application and throughout their course. The Disability Adviser will support disabled students who disclose to plan the adjustments that may be required and put in place individual support requirements.

As a member of learning and teaching staff a student may choose to disclose directly to you during the course of their studies. If a student declares a disability in confidence, in the law, the School as a whole is deemed to be aware of it. The Equality Act gives students the right to request that the nature or existence of their disability be treated as confidential and a student therefore might request that you keep this information confidential. However, in order to enable the School to make any reasonable adjustments required to support the student effectively in their studies, you should encourage the student to allow you to share information with the individuals who would need to know in order for effective support to be put in place.

It is important that you promote a learning and teaching environment where students feel they can discuss any issues in confidence and that they will be supported. Disabled students can have particular concerns about disclosing to a member of teaching staff and that sharing this information may affect perceptions of their academic abilities. If a disabled student chooses to speak to you about his/her disability, it is important that they are heard and that they feel supported and also empowered. You should discuss with the individual how they would wish to be supported and do not make assumptions. You should aim to be empathetic but not try to solve the student's personal issues or be a therapist; being supportive and listening to the student's needs, but knowing when it is appropriate to refer a student onto the relevant person.

6. Inclusive learning and teaching practices

It is generally understood that good practice in learning and teaching in regard to curriculum delivery is no different for disabled students than for other students. You may not know whether there is a disabled student in your teaching session as they may choose not to disclose a disability or they may prefer that any information they have disclosed is not shared. It is therefore advisable to assume there may be disabled students present and ensure your teaching is accessible to all. Accounting for different learning styles in your teaching and incorporating multisensory methods of delivery will increase engagement across the whole student body.

What follows is some general guidance on inclusive learning and teaching practices and strategies. It is not an exhaustive list and not all information will be relevant to all staff, but it is hoped that it will prompt a reflection on teaching strategies and serve as a reminder of good practice already in place. It is aimed to complement particular adjustments that might be made for individual students, as set out in Learning Support Plans, and is supplemented with appendices of more detailed guidance where appropriate. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more detailed guidance on disability specific teaching strategies.

6.1 Teaching rooms

It is imperative that all teaching must take place in an accessible room, although it is understood that in some instances, the School's buildings and facilities might present a challenge in this regard. The following factors should be considered.

- Avoid using a room with too much background noise and poor acoustical properties (someone with hearing difficulties, and who depends on lip reading, may not be able to follow what is being said in these conditions.)
- Where possible, accommodate wheelchair users and guide dog users into the general seating area (this may mean moving some chairs or rearranging tables), to avoid the student being 'tagged on' the end of a row.
- Make use of microphones and loop systems, if available.
- If there is to be a discussion in the session, ensure that all students are able to see each other to enable lip reading. If it is expected that a substantial amount of discussion amongst the students should take place, a semi-circle arrangement is preferable, if space allows.
- Avoid giving a presentation with slides in a low level lighting environment (this could make it difficult for students with a visual impairment to take notes).

Be aware of health and safety issues.

6.2 Lecture and seminar preparation and delivery

- Make course materials, assignment sheets, and reading lists available in electronic format at the earliest stage possible. Providing these materials in advance on Moodle will enable students requiring alternative formats time for transcription and allow students with dyslexia time for reading. Prioritising reading lists can also be useful for such students.
- Provide lecture handouts, ideally 24 hours, in advance in electronic format on Moodle. Providing handouts, including copies of slides, prior to a teaching session will help the learning process for students with visual and hearing difficulties, and those with dyslexia. There is no evidence that doing this reduces attendance at lectures.

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- Prepare handouts in a standardised, accessible typeface (a minimum of 12 pt, preferably 14 pt, sans serif font), on off-white paper to minimise contrast. Ensure the accessible reproduction of charts, graphs and other images, with small diagrams printed one slide per page, as opposed to the more commonly used format of three slides to a page.
 - Ensure any changes to format or location of classes are clearly communicated and with as much notice as possible. Students with Autism, for example, can get particularly anxious and confused about last-minute room changes.
 - Provide students with lists of new technical terms.
 - Proactively remind students at the start of modules/teaching blocks about the resources available and where they can access additional support. It is helpful if an announcement can be made at the start of each semester to invite students with specific requirements to approach you in confidence to discuss any particular support needs.
 - Provide an overview of the course/module structure, including linking topics and clarity around course outcomes as this will enable students to make better connections between course elements and prepare more fully for each lecture, seminar or group work.
 - Use multiple ways of presenting information: videos, slides, practical demonstrations, as well as talking through text. Visually present key phrases and lecture outlines on PowerPoint slides/whiteboard.
 - Use PowerPoint presentations free from overcrowded text and distracting visuals. Read out loud key information and repeat questions from the audience.
 - Face the audience when speaking and avoid standing in front of a window as it might cast your face into shadow (and make it difficult for those that lip-read). Repeat discussion questions from other students, as not all students may be able to hear their peers. Try not to walk around or pace back and forth whilst talking as some students may find it distracting and difficult to follow what is being said.
 - Use clear and literal language and be explicit about what you mean. Some students, such as those with Asperger Syndrome find abstract language, metaphors and irony difficult to understand.
 - Manage discussions and question and answer sessions to enable all to participate, and make explicit what is required. In discussions, ensure that only one person is speaking at a time; this will help any student who depends on lip reading to identify the speaker and to follow the discussion it will also help those with processing difficulties, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.
 - Allow time for students to read handouts if you are going to refer to them during a lecture. Pace delivery and when necessary allow brief breaks to allow students and sign language interpreters to keep up.
 - Avoid expecting students to undertake more than two learning activities at a time, and, where possible, even two. For many, listening and taking notes is more complex than for their peers and to then be required to answer questions or follow slides may be very difficult.
 - Allow students to record lectures and seminars where this will assist them (and allow them to use laptops to take notes if required). Students may often be provided with a dictaphone by the DSA for this purpose and this provision will be included in their Learning Support Plan.
 - Where students have assistants, such as note takers or interpreters, direct questions and comments to the student rather than to the assistant.

6.3 Group work/class presentations

- Be aware that some students may find the dynamics of group work difficult or impossible to understand and, for them, this may not be a useful learning experience.
- Try to ensure turn taking and reducing the number of multiple conversations and interruptions. This will help all students follow the discussion, but particularly those with hearing or auditory processing difficulties.
- Be aware that visually impaired students may find it difficult to make a spontaneous response to texts or other materials that they have not received in advance.
- Understand the stress that certain students, such as those with dyslexia, may experience stress if they are asked to scribe for a feedback session, speak spontaneously to a group, or read materials in a short period of time.
- When students give presentations, give support to those with communication difficulties, or those who may find presentations difficult for other reasons.

6.4 Assessment

- Be aware of the provisions made for disabled students within the School's procedures and how these can best be applied to the particular requirements of a course/module.
- Try to spread work evenly and avoid 'bunching' of deadlines. A few deadlines close together can be particularly stressful for a student with mental health problems.
- Consider adjustments to the design or delivery of an examination if it becomes evident that it presents unnecessary barriers.
- Consider the ways in which changes and adaptations to assessment methods can provide a choice rather than an alternative. As long as the same criteria are assessed to the same standard, the assessment method can be flexible.
- Provide comments or feedback on assessed work in alternative formats.

6.5 Research student supervision

- Take regular opportunities to clarify expectations and objectives.
Prioritise reading lists.
- Be cautious in use of language – some students might not be assertive enough to say I don't know what you mean.
- Be conscious of annotating drafts. Handwritten comments are generally harder to decipher so takes even longer than electronic text might for some students. Try to type but also talk through comments.
- Writing up may well be a much longer process for a PhD student, consider earlier opportunities for commencing this.
- Consider building a relationship with the student's key contacts (e.g. support tutor) in order to give a more joined-up approach to support.
- Potentially schedule more time for supervisions.
- Try to develop an understanding of the student's learning style and ways in which they can support the student to harness abilities appropriate to the research.

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- Try to see how the challenge of supporting a disabled student can be seen as an opportunity for creative and shared problem solving rather than a threat to research excellence.
 - Pro-actively consider adjustments that might be put in place for a viva voce examination

Appendix 1: Information on specific disabilities, impacts on learning and teaching and recommended teaching strategies

Asperger Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Autistic spectrum disorders occur in differing degrees of severity, with autism being the more severe end and Asperger syndrome being at the milder end of the range. People who have characteristics at the more severe end of the spectrum usually have learning difficulties and often do not communicate through speaking. It is likely that a student with an autistic spectrum disorder will have Asperger syndrome, and be of average or above average intelligence. Asperger Syndrome (or Asperger's Disorder) is a neurobiological disorder

People with Asperger syndrome have developmental problems in 3 general areas:

- Communication — difficulty with verbal and non verbal communication (body language)
- Social interaction — difficulty with forming relationships.
- Imagination

People with Asperger Syndrome (AS) are usually of average or above average intelligence. They may have extremely good knowledge of factual information but sometimes have weaknesses in comprehension and abstract thought. They may therefore experience some academic problems with:

- reading comprehension;
- problem solving;
- organisational skills;
- concept development;
- making inferences and judgements;
- cognitive flexibility.

Recommended teaching strategies

Many people with AS are visual thinkers, therefore try to use visual methods to teach abstract concepts where possible. Students may find abstract language, metaphors and irony difficult to understand so try to use clear and literal language and be explicit about what you mean.

People with AS are often very rigid in their thinking and function much more effectively in situations that are clearly mapped out for them. Give clear comprehensive instructions do the person knows what is expected of them. Individuals with AS may also adhere rigidly to routine and be unsettled by any alterations, therefore it helps to explain any changes as fully as possible.

Students with AS may benefit from having access to a mentor and or a tutor who the student can go to for advice and pastoral support. This support can generally be provided through the Disabled Students Allowance.

Dyslexia

The British Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as a difficulty with the automatic processing of language based information, especially the written word. It is important to understand that evidence points to a constitutional origin, possibly genetic, and that it is not related to intelligence. Difficulties are most commonly

associated with reading and writing, but can also occur with spatial orientation and hand to eye coordination. It is estimated that approximately 4% of the population have mild to moderate dyslexic tendencies, and a further 6% are severely dyslexic (British Dyslexia Association).

In a lecture situation, a student must read, write, listen and summarise simultaneously, and at speed. Although all students may experience difficulties at first, these may be pronounced in the case of dyslexic student.

Dyslexic students may read and write more slowly than other students and therefore find it difficult to keep up with the lecture take notes effectively. Some dyslexic students may have to think about each word rather than writing fluently, making note-taking difficult. They may also find handwritten overheads particularly difficult to read, and have trouble copying.

Recommended teaching strategies

- Provide an overview when introducing a new topic so students know what to expect — highlight the main argument and the key points.
- Provide a summary at the end of the lecture/topic.
- Allow students to tape the lecture on a dictaphone, if required.
- Provide handouts to decrease the amount of writing a student has to do during the lecture. These are particularly useful if handed out few days prior to the lecture to allow for preparation.
- Explain the purpose of what is being required.
- Use multiple ways of presenting information: videos, slides, practical demonstrations, as well as talking through text.
- Allow time for students to read handouts if you are going to refer to them during a lecture.
- Introduce new topics and concepts obviously - clarify new language.
- Give examples to illustrate a point.
- Have regular pauses to allow students to catch up.

Developmental co-ordination disorder/Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia or developmental co-ordination disorder is a common disorder that affects movement and co-ordination skills such as tasks requiring balance, kicking and throwing a ball and fine motor skills such as writing or using small objects carefully. Estimates vary, but dyspraxia is thought to affect around 3% of adults in the UK. It is more common in men, and often runs in families.

Dyspraxia does not affect intelligence, but may make learning new skills more difficult and students may often struggle to manage their time or numerous tasks simultaneously and organise or sequence ideas.

Recommended Teaching Strategies

The strategies for students with dyspraxia are very similar to those of a student with dyslexia due to the similarities of the impact. A dyspraxic student may just need more guidance with management of their time and should be encouraged to be as organised as possible, using strategies and technology to assist.

- Provide an overview when introducing a new topic so students know what to expect — highlight the main argument and the key points.
- Provide a summary at the end of the lecture/topic.
- Allow students to tape the lecture on a dictaphone, if required.
- Provide handouts to decrease the amount of writing a student has to do during the lecture. These are particularly useful if handed out few days prior to the lecture to allow for preparation.
- Explain the purpose of what is being required.
- Use multiple ways of presenting information: videos, slides, practical demonstrations, as well as talking through text.
- Allow time for students to read handouts if you are going to refer to them during a lecture.
- Introduce new topics and concepts obviously - clarify new language.
- Give examples to illustrate a point.
- Have regular pauses to allow students to catch up.

Visual Impairment

Visual impairments range from total blindness to conditions such as tunnel vision, double and blurred vision and colour blindness. Some people may have trouble seeing in low light levels, have problems judging speed and distance, or painful irritation to the eyes can be caused by bright light. Only about 18% of people who have visual impairments are classed as totally blind, and most of these people can distinguish between light and dark. Some people will have been born visually impaired and others may have become visually impaired as a result of illness or accident, and this will affect the way people approach and address their impairment.

General good practice when teaching visually impaired students:

Always introduce yourself by name as the visually impaired student may not recognise your voice.

- Tell the student when you are leaving the room.
- Tell the student if a room they are familiar with has been rearranged.
- Don't leave obstructions where they may be walked into.
- Make sure that the student is aware of any venue changes. An unfamiliar room may be difficult to find at the last minute.
- Don't worry about using phrases that refer to sight, e.g. 'see you later', as most visually impaired people would not be offended.
- Don't pet or feed guide dogs when they are wearing their harness - they are working animals 'on duty'.
- When working in a group of people that includes a blind person, for example a seminar, ask everyone to introduce himself or herself so the blind person knows who is in the room.

Recommended teaching strategies.

- Provide handouts in advance of the lecture.
- Notes may be required in alternative formats to allow for them to be use with Braille or specific software and diagrams or tables may need to be produced in tactile form.
- Describe any material you are writing down. Talk through any images or diagrams.
- Visually impaired students may wish to be seated at the front of the class. Speak to the student to clarify their preferences.
- Use printed transparencies, rather than handwritten overheads.
- Speak clearly - the student may have few visual cues. Allow the student to make a recording of the lecture on a Dictaphone.
- Provide booklists well in advance as students may have difficulty accessing the library and may read more slowly. Annotated book lists can be extremely useful to visually impaired students, for example, if only one page of a book is relevant.
- Providing material such as booklists in electronic format rather than hard copy will allow the student to view in their preferred format.

Hearing Impairments

Hearing impairments can vary from someone who is slightly hard of hearing to those who are profoundly deaf. Sounds can also become distorted, and conditions such as tinnitus produce background noise.

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People uses the following definitions of deafness, which are classified, according to the quietest sound level (in decibels) that a person can hear.

Mild deafness - Some difficulty following speech, mainly in noisy situations.

Moderate deafness - Difficulty following speech without a hearing aid.

Severe deafness - Use a hearing aid and rely heavily on lip reading. May use sign language.

Profoundly deaf - Usually born deaf or become deaf early on in life. Lip read and may use sign language. Hearing aids are of little or no use.

Recommended teaching strategies

Each deaf student is different and you should talk with the student to find out which strategies they find most helpful. The following teaching strategies can be adapted to the needs of the individual student and the teaching situation.

- Supply handouts and lecture notes in advance of the lecture. This will allow the student to become familiar with any new vocabulary and the structure of the lecture, making lipreading easier.
- Try to allow a little extra time for the deaf student to assimilate information and respond before going onto the next stage.
- The student will be unable to hear or lipread questions and comments from the audience. Repeat any contributions before responding. This is important if you are wearing a radio aid microphone, which transmits your voice only to the student's hearing aid as the student will miss comments from the rest of the audience.
- Unknown words are impossible to lipread — write them down on the board or OHP with a definition. Ideally, provide a handout in advance.

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- Make it clear when you are moving onto a new topic or subject. It is much easier to lipread when the context is known.
 - When using OHPs, boards or handouts, allow the student time to read what is written before starting to speak. It is not possible to read and lipread at the same time.
 - Try to make sure your face is visible to the student at all times. Do not speak when writing or pointing to the board and avoid walking about the room when talking.
 - Recap every now and again throughout the lecture.
 - Use examples when explaining ideas and concepts.
 - Write out vital information such as changes of venue and time on the board or overhead projector.

Mental Health Conditions

Mental ill health or mental illness are broad terms used to describe a wide range of psychiatric illnesses, from anxiety and depression to eating disorders and schizophrenia. Everyone has times in their life when they feel depressed, anxious, or under stress. For some people these feelings become so overwhelming they produce physical or behavioural symptoms that affect an individual's ability to go about their day-to-day life. Mental illnesses are not present at birth, but there is much debate as to whether they are brought about by environmental or genetic factors. In some circumstances the illness seems to have no trigger at all. Approximately one in four people experience mental ill health at some point in their life, and the peak age range for the first onset problems is between 18-24, coinciding for many people with their time as a student. It is therefore more than likely that some of the students you teach will be experiencing mental health difficulties. With support and planning, mental illness does not have to be a barrier to successful study.

Recommended teaching strategies

- Make sure that the student is aware of the support services available at the University and know where to refer a student.
- Help to create a support network for the student if they feel isolated. Group seminars, tutorial and study groups can all be of help as can pair or group assignments.
- Allow students to tape lectures if they find this helpful.
- Avoid putting students in a stressful situation, e.g. asking them to read out loud in a seminar.
- Try to spread work evenly and avoid 'bunching' of deadlines. A few deadlines close together can be particularly stressful for a student with mental health problems. It may be necessary to be flexible with deadlines if a student is struggling to complete a piece of work due to their illness or condition.
- Develop some knowledge about mental health and mental health conditions; do not assume that a student is simply lazy or unmotivated. Often people do or say things over which they have no control — this is the illness, not the person. If a student tells you about their mental ill health, a prejudiced or misinformed reaction from you will not improve matters. It will be easier to support the student if you understand the difficulties they face.
- Be supportive and encouraging. Take time to listen to the student and give them an opportunity to explain their requirements. If the student has an existing illness, they will have a good idea of what coping strategies work for them.

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- Don't try to solve the student's personal issues or be a therapist — Be supportive and listen to the student's needs, but know when to refer a student on to Student Advice and Counselling.

Unseen Disabilities

This category covers a multitude of long term or permanent medical conditions which, in some circumstances, will affect a student's ability to study. Unseen disabilities can refer to conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, ME, cancer, Crohn's Disease, haemophilia and cystic fibrosis.

Recommended Teaching Strategies

Students with medical conditions may not see themselves as having a disability. Make sure that the student is aware of the support services available at the Institute and know where to refer a student. The Disability Adviser at Equality focus will be able to advise the student on support and equipment that may be available to them.

- Allow students to tape lectures if they find this helpful.
- A student may miss teaching sessions due to ill health. Copies of lecture notes should be made available during periods where the student is unable to attend.
- If you know of a student's medical condition and are unsure about what to do if a student is taken ill in class, for example with an epileptic seizure, discuss your concerns with the student and the Disability Advisor.

Mobility Impairments

Students with mobility impairments have a reduced range of physical movement, causing varying degrees of difficulty when sitting, moving and walking and, in some cases, requiring the use of a wheelchair. These physical impairments may be the result of injury or be caused by a medical condition such as arthritis, muscular dystrophy or multiple sclerosis and, as such, can be stable, degenerative or intermittent in nature depending on the exact cause of the impairment. Additional problems may be caused by pain, lack of stamina and fatigue due to the extra physical effort required to move. Medication may cause side effects such as drowsiness, making concentrating difficult at times.

Recommended teaching strategies

Talk to the student - they will have already developed coping strategies and will be able to advise you on what support they will find beneficial.

It is unlikely that a student's mobility impairment will necessitate changes in the **delivery** of teaching. It is more likely that students will require flexible timetabling and deadlines and copies of lecture notes.

Teaching must take place in accessible rooms.

Students who have a temporary injury such as a broken leg may not see themselves as having a disability. Make sure that the student is aware of the support services available at the Institute and know where to refer them to.

There are also other conditions that may not be listed here, in short any condition which has a long-term and adverse effect on studying is covered under disability law.

Support should also be offered to students who have a temporary mobility / dexterity impairment / other difficulty as a result of an accident, injury, illness or surgery.

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