DISABILITY ADVISORY SERVICE

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Student Support Plan

This plan contains:

1. Personal and disability information
2. Impact on study of the disability
3. Recommended adjustments
4. For staff: advice for supporting students
5. For students: important sources of support

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:	
Disability information:	

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

- In lectures, difficulty making useful notes at the same time as fully comprehending the material and engaging with the content

- Reduced capacity to work under extreme time constraints due to slower speeds of reading, planning, writing and reviewing work

- 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 behavior

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 field, or in a 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

3. Recommended adjustments

The measures outlined in the disability inclusion statement are key for providing access to learning for all 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

- Tutors: Allow for the student needing more time to complete extended reading. They may need some guidance as they carefully plan and prioritise what they read.

- Tutors: Use clear language for instructions and feedback and reinforce in writing. Provide opportunities for students to ask for clarification.

For examinations and assessments

Please note these are recommendations only. An application must be made by the student's college to the Examinations and Assessments Service to approve the arrangements. Applications must be received by Friday of week 4 in the term before the relevant exam/s. For further information, students can refer to the Student guidance on examination adjustments. Students and disability coordinators can confirm adjustments are in place ahead of examinations by checking the student's e-vision record.

Approved adjustments need to be replicated in any departmental or college exams where relevant to the assessment format and conditions. The recommendations given below may not take account of all assessment types used and therefore additional adjustments may need to be considered. For advice on this, staff can contact DAS.

- DAS and College to action: DAS to start exam adjustments application – notification to college to review and submit application will follow.

  The adjustments included in the application will be dependent on DAS's review of a diagnostic report and/or evidence of previous exam adjustments. Typical adjustments applied for include: Inclusive Marking Guidelines to be applied to assessment submissions (see the quick guide to inclusive marking guidelines); extra time of 15 minutes per hour; use of a computer with spelling and grammar checks enabled.

For summative assessment deadlines:

- Students to initiate and college to action: if the student experiences an exacerbation of their disability and this impacts their ability to meet a summative assessment deadline they may apply to Proctors' Office for an extension of up to 14 days using their SSP as evidence. If an extension beyond 14 days is needed, additional evidence is required. Student Guide: problems submitting work or attending an exam.

4. For staff

Advice for supporting students

This section contains advice for supporting students with a Specific Learning Difficulty, based on general inclusive teaching principles, but highlighting what may be particularly helpful for them.

- (Tutorials) 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 studies, using this document as a starting point, but also bearing in mind your approach to teaching and the curriculum. For example, if you require students to read aloud in front of others, check that they are comfortable with this (as they may not be). It will be helpful to have check-in discussions subsequently, once they have some experience of the programme of study or particular paper, as unexpected barriers or difficulties may have arisen.

- Course information: provide key course information, deadlines and timetables in advance on Canvas in a clear, easy-to-find format.

- Provide an overview of the aims of a teaching session at the start; summarize salient points regularly throughout and again at the end; pause regularly when delivering information verbally so students have an opportunity to process the information and to take notes if needed.

- Tutorials: be prepared to repeat or rephrase if a student has missed what you have said and give time for students to absorb and integrate information and prepare responses.

- Consider a mix of teaching resources to reduce reliance on dense written text. For e.g. employ visual learning materials - pictures, flow charts, diagrams, graphs, demonstrations, videos, etc.

- Consider a variety of different teaching and learning approaches: students with a Specific Learning Difficulty may benefit from active learning approaches, for example. If you try a new approach, ask your students about their experience.

- 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.

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.

Undergraduates: your primary contact is the disability coordinator in your college. However, if the barrier to study relates mainly or solely to departmental teaching, please contact the disability coordinator in your department.

Postgraduate taught students: your primary contact is the disability coordinator in your department. However, if the barrier to study relates mainly or solely to college provision, please contact the disability coordinator in your college.

Applying for Disabled Students' Allowance

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

- Computer hardware (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. Please contact the Disability Advisory Service by email at disability@admin.ox.ac.uk if you need help with your application.

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)