

Dyslexia – a guide for students

Students should start making arrangements for support and reasonable adjustments as soon as possible and before the course has started. The university or college should have a dyslexia 'reference' package which should include:

- Information about the Student Disability Advisory Service
- Information about the College/University policies for Reasonable Adjustments and Additional Arrangements for assessments and examinations

Arriving at University/College

Within the first two weeks students should see:

- The Head of Year
- Their mentor/supervisor/Senior Lecturer
- The Disability Advisor, who might be known by a different title

Students should discuss with these people what has helped in the past and ask them to help arrange support and additional assessment arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments

'Reasonable Adjustments' is the legal term for changes that can be made which will help students to fulfil their potential without extra stress and could include:

- Study skills support
- Assistive technology
- One to one training in assistive technology
- Copies of lecture notes/slides in advance, if available
- Note takers
- Permission to record lectures
- Extended library loans.

Examination support might include:

- Extra time to complete exams
- The use of a scribe and/or a reader
- The use of a computer instead of handwritten exam scripts.

Any provision put in place is based on individual need, so students who register with the Student Disability Service will be given an individual needs assessment interview. This will determine what the personal support requirements are. It is advisable to make an appointment with the advisor as early as possible. Students should take any valid supporting evidence to their initial appointment - usually a full Educational Psychologist or appropriately qualified professional report using approved and standardised adult tests.

A week after the meeting with the Disability Advisor, students should check that all the agreed arrangements have been put in place. Another meeting should be arranged to discuss this and whether there have been any difficulties.

Disabled Students' Allowance Students might also be able to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance, through Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS). This is a grant, not a loan, to purchase extra equipment and/or software. Disability Advisors will be able to help with this. An up-to-date Educational Psychologist's assessment, or one by an appropriately qualified professional, will be needed – this can be arranged by the Disability Advisor if the student does not have one.

Dyslexia Screening and Assessments

You might not have a report which meets the criteria, because:

- you have not received a full written report in the past
- you have never been assessed for dyslexia
- English is not your first language but you are experiencing more difficulties than you anticipated.

If you suspect that your difficulties might be dyslexia related, you should make an appointment to speak to the Disability Advisor who might be able to carry out a diagnostic screening test free of charge and then refer you to a Educational Psychologist or appropriately qualified professional who is experienced in assessing adults in Higher Education.

More information

- **'Dyslexia - a Guide for Lecturing Staff'**, Dyslexia Scotland (www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets)
- **'Study Skills for Students with Dyslexia'** (Sheffield University audio advice) www.dyslexstudyskills.group.shef.ac.uk/
- **'Understanding Dyslexia'** a Glasgow School of Art publication, useful for any course: www.gsa.ac.uk/media/782517/understanding-dyslexia-for-print-and-web.pdf
- **Students Award Agency for Scotland** (SAAS) Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) www.saas.gov.uk/forms_and_guides/dsa.htm

