



SpLD Strategies for Faculties to Support Achievement

Student diagnosis: Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

The largest percentage of students in HE, who have been identified with a disability, fall under the umbrella term, SpLD. Neurodiversity, being the intrinsic cause of SpLDs, means that the conditions are varied and each person with a SpLD has a unique profile. However, here are some tips for generic support that may be beneficial for *all* students.

The following guidelines will support students to access and achieve positive results on your course.



Student Attributes

- Creative thought
- Good at making connections
- Innovative
- Empathetic



Student Challenges

- Processing information quickly
- Processing new vocabulary
- Writing legibly
- Keeping up with note taking
- Clarity in notetaking
- Prioritising reading
- Takes time when reading
- Retaining information
- Recalling spoken information
- Organisational difficulties
- Working Memory
- Prioritising and organisational difficulties
- Multitasking
- Misinterpreting information
- Group work



General Advice

- The best way to give appropriate support is by discreetly asking the student what would be helpful to them, so an initial one-to-one conversation is very useful.
- Be direct, explicit and consistent when communicating.
- Explain why a subject/topic is taught.
- Chunk workload.
- Use a visual calendar with staggered deadlines and key completion dates.
- Encourage an uncluttered working environment to aid focus – allow headphones to minimise distractions.
- Support the student to avoid over scheduling.



Blackboard Ally

Course content to be made accessible via [Blackboard Ally](#). An overview of Blackboard Ally and how to make course content accessible can be found [here](#).



Handouts, PowerPoints and Written Information

It is advisable to:

- Provide PowerPoints at the beginning of a module or a week in advance of a lecture, to enable the student to prepare and print information.
- Use san serif font e.g. Ariel, Lucinda Sans, Calibri.
- Use a 12pt font with a minimum of 1.15 spacing for text/handouts.
- Break down long pieces of text, using headings, bullet points and using **BOLD** to identify key words.
- Number the slides to reduce order confusion when printed.
- Use a pale coloured background, not white with black text.
- Use a minimum of 24pt font for power points.
- Make all material accessible so that students can change

font, size, background colour etc. to suit their learning needs.

- Place a full stop at the end of bullet points, so there is a pause between points when students use text to speech software.



Lecture / Seminar

Students benefit from preparation:

- Give a course over view at the start of the academic year; a yearly calendar of when assignments are due, exams dates and when the reading week is, etc.
- Balance presentations and activities where possible.
- Present material in different ways using visual aids, such as graphs, flow charts, mind-maps, video clips, music and pictures.
- To avoid confusion, back up what you say in a lecture with the same written information or instructions.
- Staple lecture notes together to avoid order confusion.
- Provide written instructions as well as oral whenever possible.
- Provide glossaries, subject specific vocabulary and frequently used acronyms.
- Introduce new topics by providing an overview first.
- Use concrete examples to aid understanding.
- Use anecdotal information and visual material to aid memory.



Assignments And Essay Questions

- Break assignments down into manageable chunks.
- Use clear fonts for marking grids and learning outcomes.
- Give specific guidelines, e.g. how many references/citations per point; word count for different sections.



Reading Lists

Students benefit from clear reading lists:

- Use a sans serif font e.g. Ariel, Lucinda Sans, Calibri in 12pt font, with a minimum of 1.15 spacing.
- Split into **essential**, **extra** and **exceptional** categories to enable slow readers to priorities their reading.

- Use a line space between each reference to differentiate one reference from another.



- Students can access a range of [Assistive Technology Software](#) to support their learning.
- Allow the use of iPads/devices in seminars to listen to written material if they struggle to read quickly (text to speech).
- Allow use of iPads/devices in lectures/seminars to allow for notetaking using assistive technology software.
- Encourage the use of Dictaphones, laptops, iPads and iPhones.

Encourage your students to use apps:

- Inspiration for mind mapping.
- Zotero for referencing.
- Pomodoro to support efficiency.
- Quizlet and Study Shack to develop flashcards for revision.
- Robobraille.org will convert items such as book pages into accessible formats.



Recording lectures and seminars

Students may benefit from recording information:

- Allow students to record lectures /seminars on their own devices e.g. phones / laptops. It enables students to focus on the lecture content and gives time to process information.
- [Panopto](#) is a video platform available in many lecture theatres.



- All tutors/lecturers should be made aware of the student's SpLD.
- The information in this Student Support Recommendation must be shared if the student studies a module with another faculty, or goes on placement, or abroad.

- Further information for staff on [accessibility and inclusive practice](#)



Resources

- [Specialist resources](#) to support neurodiverse students.
- The library has a range of [Study Skills resources](#) available
- [Blackboard Ally](#) and Accessibility at the University of Southampton

[Further information for students and specialist support](#)



Student Disability and Inclusion Team

University of Southampton
Room 2113, George Thomas Building,
Highfield, Southampton
SO17 1BJ



+44 (0)23 8059 9599



studenthub@soton.ac.uk