

## Notes to accompany self-audit tool

Continual professional development is part of your requirement to be on the ADSHE specialist tutor register. This self-audit tool is a good starting point for you to consider your professional practice and any developmental needs. The tool is intended for you to evaluate your own practice as a way of reflecting on what you are currently doing, thinking about what has worked well for you and building on good practice as well as analysing what you might have done differently. It is also an opportunity to think about your Continuing Professional Development and Supervision needs.

The self-audit tool is intended both for tutors working within an institution and those working independently as free lance tutors. Some of the questions are applicable only to tutors working within institutions and are marked with an asterisk. It is not exhaustive and there might well be additional areas you feel should have been covered; in which case you can add to the tool as appropriate. Similarly, you might find that some of the questions are not relevant for you in your particular situation.

It is not meant as a 'tick-box' exercise and even if some of the questions ask for a yes/no response, you will see that there is still room for additional comment and reflection.

QUESTION	Yes	No	N/A	Comment	Supervision/JISCMail	Action point
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There is room for you to: make comments; set yourself an action point; note down whether you will bring up the topic/issue in a supervision session or contact the ADSHE jiscmail to seek other members' opinions; anything else that you might need to note down and remember.

Some tutors might like to discuss their audit responses with colleagues or line manager or might like to share it in a supervision session. Others will use it as a personal professional reflection.

The pages that follow contain a series of notes and prompts and/or references for further information.

You should use this tool in whatever suits you best. Some people might want to work through the audit in one sitting, others will take several sessions. You might like to work through the questions without reference to the notes and use the notes if and when you identify any 'gaps' in your knowledge. Some tutors might choose to work through this together with colleagues to gain a shared perspective on experience and good practice.

## A Individual Tutorial Sessions

### SpLd profiles / engaging students

*1 Do you have access to students' Diagnostic Assessment and Needs Assessment reports?*

#### **Extract from ADSHE Guidelines (page 7)**

The specialist tutor working with students with SpLDs will need to review the development of strategies on an ongoing basis as needs emerge.

Specialist tutors adopt a layered approach in their response, designing support to play to student strengths addressing difficulties in small consolidating steps, and helping students to an understanding of how the interaction of SpLDs and learning affects them.

#### **3.2 Working 1:1**

The dyslexia tutor should have the training and skills to take account of:

- 1) the well-recognised effects of SpLDs on language
- 2) the effects of short-term and working memory deficit
- 3) the influence of processing speed on learning Grant notes that "a weak working memory and (or) a slow speed of visual processing will impede the rate of learning (2007:94)
- 4) the possibility of failure in academic learning.

Sometimes dyslexic students can feel angry about how they have been misjudged or humiliated. .... The long-term effects of this history should be taken into account.

*2 How do you take account of students' cognitive profiles as shown in their diagnostic assessment report in your sessions?*

*3 How do you help students take their cognitive profile/learning preferences into account?*

#### **Extract from Guidelines (page 9)**

##### **4.1 Why Specialist Support is necessary**

Students with SpLDs may experience some degree of phonological difficulty, a weak short term memory, a slow speed of information processing, and diverse spatial, temporal and social perceptions, to which might be added a history of educational failure. McGahey and Szumko observe, 'beginning to work with a specialist tutor may be the first time they have really felt understood' (2007:1).

Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties; the difficulties affect the learning process in aspects of literacy and sometimes numeracy. Coping with required reading is generally seen as the biggest challenge at Higher Education level due in part to difficulty in skimming and scanning written material. A student may also have an inability to express his/her ideas clearly in written form and in a style appropriate to the level of study. Marked and persistent weaknesses may be identified in working memory, speed of processing, sequencing skills, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. Visuo-spatial skills, creative thinking and intuitive understanding are less likely to be impaired and indeed may be

outstanding. Enabling or assistive technology is often found to be very beneficial (DfES 2005:5).

Researchers have identified the diversity of the dyslexic profile: Morgan and Klein note: "...dyslexia is complex, subtle and eludes definition. It appears in varying degrees of severity and affects people in different ways". (2000:3). Grant suggests it is useful to refer to the terms 'dyslexias' or 'dyspraxias' as this helps to break away from misleading stereotyping" (2007:2).

It is clear in general that dyslexic individuals show an imbalance of skills: they may have difficulty in taking in symbolic material when it is presented at speed, but they may be very successful at tasks that require good reasoning power (Du Pre, Gilroy, & Miles, 2008:7).

Definitions of the term should therefore "...acknowledge the individuality of dyslexic learners...people with dyslexia will not exhibit the same characteristics, nor to the same degree" (Reid & Kirk, 2005:3).

What is clear is that these students do not always learn effectively in a traditional way and alternative approaches need to be adopted. Morgan and Klein observe the "failure of the dyslexic learner to respond to 'traditional' teaching methods may be explained on the basis of a difference in learning style" (2000:13).

Assuming that everyone can take in and remember sequences of information (particularly auditory information) is disabling (Cooper, 2009:70). Pollak comments that the academy – the HE establishment – esteems linear thought, for example the conventional structure of an essay, above other forms, and this may disadvantage those that do not naturally think that way (Pollak, 2005:xvi).

Evidence-based practice and research underpin the development of training programmes for specialist tutors who work with adult students with SpLD. 1:1 tuition is based on individual needs and is specific to each student. Every dyslexic person is different and should be treated like an individual...dyslexia is greater than the sum of reading and spelling problems (Reid & Kirk, 2005:5).

## **Resources**

**ADSHE website members' area:** <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>

**ADSHE Presentation at NADP Conference.** (2009)

**Understanding Dyslexia: An introduction for dyslexic students in HE** Jill Hammond & Fabian Hercules

**Developing a sense of Dyslexic identity:** Professor Robert Burden  
Key note presentation at Networking Day 2009

**The Experience of Dyslexic Students at University:** Transitions in Education  
Dr Margaret Meehan

**The Dyslexia Adult in a non-dyslexic world** (2000) Morgan, E & Klein, C  
London Whurr

**Dyslexia and Self-Concept** (2005) Burden, R Wiley Blackwell

## **Promoting independent learning**

### *4 How do you facilitate individual enabling strategies in your support sessions?*

You might like to think about how you assimilate information presented by students during tutorials and how you use what students have told you to develop appropriate responses in terms of teaching study skills. It is also worth considering how you gain an understanding of students' receptivity to specific study skills.

Research into how the students' courses are presented and taught and what form of assessment are expected can generally be found on the institution's website.

Students on health professional courses will spend up to fifty per cent of their time on placement; students taking archaeological or geography degrees will often require support with preparing and participating in fieldtrips.

### **Extract from Guidelines** (page 11)

3) Students attending work-placements for example as trainee teachers, social workers or nurses may require focused advice on support mechanisms or reasonable adjustments to assist in their general practice.

"The dyslexia tutor can work with the student to develop strategies which can be transferred into practice requirements, according to personal and placement requirements...Where required, dyslexia tutors can provide guidance to mentors or supervisors regarding useful support and simple adjustments that can be put in place for students on work placements" (Sumner, 2009).

## **Resources**

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>  
**Support guidelines for nurses and nursing students**

**Dyslexia Guidelines in the workplace for employers**

**Dyslexia Guidelines in the workplace for employees**

**Guidelines on what is appropriate in tutorials** Henri Court

**Personalised strategies for Effective Study** Ginny Stacey

**The experience of dyslexic students at university transitions in education** Dr Margaret Meehan

**Access to employability** Fiona White and Richard Mendez: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Access to work funding and how this impacts on HE** Sue McKenna: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Dyspraxia** Dr Judy Turner and Dr Angela Taylor: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Dyspraxia** Dr Geraldine Price, Julia Kender and Janet Skinner: Presentation from Networking Day 2010

**Dyscalculia in FE and HE** Clare Trott: Presentation from Networking Day 2010

**Effective Time Management** Dr Michelle Reid: Presentation from Networking Day 2010

**Dyslexia: How to survive and succeed at Work.** (2006) Moody, S. Vermilion  
This is a very useful practical guide. Part A explains the effects of dyslexia and dyspraxia at work; Part B is concerned with 'improving skills' and Part C discusses the employer's role in providing support.

**Dyslexia in the workplace** (2000) Bartlett, D., Moody, S. Whurr Publishers  
This book is written for both professionals and dyslexic people. Part 1 discusses aspects of dyslexia and assessment; Part 2 provides different ways of 'tackling the difficulties'; Part 3 provides further information.

**Effective Study Skills Series** Price G, Maier P, et al (Study Skills for Science, Engineering & Technology Students; Study Skills for Nursing & Health Care Students; Study Skills for Business & Management Students)

**Supporting dyslexic students on practice placements** by University of Southampton Dyslexia Services/School of Health Sciences. Pdf downloadable from [www.southampton.ac.uk/student-services/dyslexia](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/student-services/dyslexia)

**Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia: a toolkit for nursing staff.** Cowen M. (2010) Royal College of Nursing.  
[http://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/news/article/uk/rcn\\_publishes\\_guidance\\_on\\_dyslexia,\\_dyspraxia\\_and\\_dyscalculia](http://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/news/article/uk/rcn_publishes_guidance_on_dyslexia,_dyspraxia_and_dyscalculia)

*4 How do you help students work towards becoming independent learners?*

You might also like to consider whether you introduce skills that you identify as essential in the context of some anxiety or resistance from the student.

## **Extract from Guidelines**

### **4.4 Delivery of 1:1 tutorials**

DIUS (2009) guideline No 107 states:

*Study skills tuition to help manage difficulties within higher education, language and numeracy through the more effective use of dyslexic thinking styles. Individual study support sessions may be required because generalised advice offered by a department may not take into account different learning skills. However, the aim of such support should be to impart generic skills which, together with any specialist equipment that has been provided, will allow the student to become an independent learner. Therefore, any study skills support recommended should be tailored to the student's individual needs, setting out clear goals and timescales for achieving those goals.*

1) Students are responsible for developing their own learning processes and dyslexia tutors are facilitators. Dyslexia sessions should

be student led. Committing to support sessions can in itself assist the development of better time management and organisation.

2) Learning Priorities: Any individual provision should be negotiated with the learner before support sessions begin, taking into account the demands of their degree programme, their individual experience of dyslexia and the usual considerations of any SMART targeting, so that goal setting is Specific, Manageable, Achievable, Realistic and Time constrained (Severs, 2008:2).

1:1 support focuses on the individual student and their evolving needs. Learning priorities in support sessions are developed by the student and a dyslexia tutor, in partnership (3.2). In identifying priorities account should be taken of:

- the student's learning profile and
- the student's current level of proficiency
- the nature of the course, how it is delivered and assessed
- what has worked (or not) for the student in the past
- recommendations made by diagnosticians and needs assessors.

The aim of support sessions is to:

- reinforce and build on successful strategies
- support the student in critical reflection to enable independent understanding of their working preferences and of how the interaction of SpLD and learning affects them
- ensure that all sessions are student-centred with the flexibility to work with students on what is most urgent.

3) '*...clear goals and timescales for achieving those goals*' (DIUS, 2009).

· It is good practice to establish short and long term goals in establishing learning priorities; however, it must be recognised that the demands of any course at this level change year by year so that inevitably each new academic year will bring new challenges. For example, the final year for many students involves an extended dissertation and the organisation and management of such a detailed assignment may mean that students who have become independent learners in many ways once again find themselves needing a high level of support. "As they progress through their courses, the quantity and volume of work increases and they can no longer cope without additional support."

([dcsf.gov.uk/studentsupport/administrators/doc/DSAs.doc](http://dcsf.gov.uk/studentsupport/administrators/doc/DSAs.doc))

Given the research-based principles on which dyslexia support is based it is clear that effective support for students with SpLDs has to be flexible.

### **Extract from Guidelines (page 9)**

Evidence-based practice and research underpin the development of training programmes for specialist tutors who work with adult students with SpLD. 1:1 tuition is based on individual needs and is specific to each student. Every dyslexic person is different and should be treated like an individual...dyslexia is greater than the sum of reading and spelling problems (Reid & Kirk, 2005:5).

## **Resources**

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>

**Guidelines on supporting dyslexic students and staff: Dyslexia Guidelines for the workplace; Guidelines for good practice: supporting learners on placement; Marking Guidelines; Reasonable Administrative Adjustments; Reasonable Adjustments in Academic Departments.**

**Neurodiversity and laboratory and benchwork** Dr Margaret Meehan:  
Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Study Skills needed for dyslexic students Ginny Stacey:** Presentation from  
Networking Day 2009

**Developmental Co-ordination Disorder in Adults** (2005) Drew, Sharon Whurr  
Publishers

**Dyslexia: Surviving and succeeding at college** (2007) Moody, S. Routledge  
This is intended to be a practical guide for dyslexic and dyspraxic students but will also be useful for subject tutors and support tutors. It provides information about dyslexia and dyspraxic as well as offering ways of improving skills.

**Dyslexia, The Self and higher Education** (2005) Pollak, D. Trentham Books  
'Learning life histories of students identified as dyslexic'

**Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: A Resource for Change** Waterfield, J and West, B (2006) University of Plymouth SPACE (Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation) project

**Making Dyslexia Work for You. A Self-Help guide** (2004)  
Goodwin, V., Thomson, B. David Fulton Publishers  
This provides some very useful strategies for dyslexic people, primarily aimed at students.

**Making reasonable adjustments with disabled students in higher education.**  
Herrington, M (Ed). With Simpson, D (2002) (pdf publication). Published by Nottingham University as part of the project ADDS- Academic Staff Development for the Support for Disabled Students 2000-2002  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsupport/adjustments/Making%Reasonable%Adjustments.pdf](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsupport/adjustments/Making%Reasonable%Adjustments.pdf)

**Managing Dyslexia at University: A resource for students, academic and support staff** (2007) Jamieson, C and Morgan, E David Fulton books

**Support for Learning Differences in HE: A Practitioners' Guide.** Price, Skinner (2005) Trentham Books

**Study Skills for Dyslexic Learners.** Hargreaves, S (ed) Sage 2006  
**Support for learning differences in Higher Education: the essential practitioners' manual.** (2007) Price, G and Skinner, J. Trentham books  
**Incorporating ADSHE 7 principles**

*6 In what ways do you incorporate the ADSHE seven principles into your work with students?*

You might like to take each of these separately and discuss with colleagues or through supervision.

**Extract from Guidelines (Page 10)**

**4.2 Seven underlying principles facilitate learning for students with SpLDs which the students themselves need to understand**

1) **Metacognition** – Students with SpLDs need to understand how they process information to facilitate their own learning. Dyslexia tutors work closely with students to help them understand their individual learning preferences, strengths and weaknesses.

2) **Multi-sensory** – The dyslexia tutor adopts a multi-sensory approach to learning, respecting students' preferred learning styles. There is a consensus that multi-sensory learning is particularly beneficial to dyslexic learners by arguing that multiple perceptual pathways strengthens memory.

3) **Relevance** – Most students with SpLDs learn best when they can see the relevance of what they are doing.

4) **Motivation** – It is recognised that motivation is an important component of SpLD students' learning experience. Motivation can sustain students' expectations, aspirations, self-esteem and confidence. Motivation is an essential element in keeping the student focused and able to enjoy their studies.

5) **Overlearning** - Students with SpLDs often learn quickly and forget quickly. They need to recognise this and understand the efficacy of overlearning.

6) **'Little and Often'** – Most students with SpLDs will effectively manage their own learning when it is broken into small manageable chunks and when they take short, frequent breaks.

7) **Modelling** – Moving through the model-mentor-independence process is very effective for many students with SpLDs who find it difficult to appreciate what a task actually involves.

***For further information on the Seven Principles see: ADSHE website <http://adshe.org.uk/>***

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>  
Academic Phrasebook, University of Manchester

**Updated Guidelines for Quality Assurance for students with SpLD**

**Mind Map of Specialist Support in SpLD**

**e-learning support in 21<sup>st</sup> century** Sheila Blankfield: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Online study guides** Clare Graham and Matthew Mobbs: Presentation from Networking Day 2010

## **Establishing a structure**

### *7 How do you structure your sessions?*

#### **Extract from Guidelines (page 13)**

Given the research-based principles on which dyslexia support is based it is clear that effective support for students with SpLDs has to be flexible.

Although flexibility is key, some structure within sessions is advisable but it is very much up to the individual how s/he wishes to organise the sessions. You might like to consider how you start and end sessions and how you conclude a series of support sessions?

## **Managing student expectations**

### *8 How do you manage students' expectations of support to ensure students do not expect course related support?*

### *9 How do you distinguish between proof reading work **for** students and **teaching** editing skills?*

Providing simple guidelines for students to make them aware of the boundaries can be helpful. Something along the lines of:

Individual sessions can help students to:

- plan and structure assignments
- develop academic writing skills
- edit and revise work
- manage time and coursework more efficiently
- read faster and more selectively

The students have to be active participants in the sessions as tutors cannot:

- proofread work for the students
- help with subject-specific content
- solve all the problems in one tutorial

A series of tutorials to help with planning and organising coursework can be of benefit and help students to develop their own strategies.

In a tutorial session a dyslexia tutor can discuss any written feedback students have received from a course assignment; skills and weaknesses can be identified and strategies discussed to develop to improve the work. Tutors can help students develop editing and proof reading skills by reading aloud work to the students can read the work aloud to the student who can 'hear' that what is written is what s/he meant to say. Appropriate changes can then be made to the draft before the student.

Specialist 1:1 tutors should not make any comments on subject content or give indication about whether the assignment is 'good' or not or what grade the student can expect to receive.

#### **Extract from Guidelines: (page 11)**

##### **4.3 Student perception of 1:1 support at university**

Many students do not fully realise what specialist support at this level involves. It should be made clear to students that:

- 1) Specialist support is focussed on the student's metacognition, alongside the skill being learned

2) While many students have been taught study skills in school, dyslexia tutors can help them adapt these for university and introduce new strategies

5) Tutorial support is a continual process of empowering students, helping them to become independent learners.

“It is clear that some students may require regular, on-going support throughout their whole programme of study, whilst others may access support at crucial stages, as and when required. A system that can therefore encompass this range of need is essential, to allow flexibility and accommodate individual differences and changes in circumstances” (Severs, 2008:2).

### Proof reading sheet to be inserted

*10 How you support students who have a lack of experience of academic conventions?*

*11. How do you support students from diverse cultural or from a different educational backgrounds?*

*13 How do you distinguish between language difficulties and dyslexic difficulties?*

### Resources to be inserted

#### Importance of Assistive technology in 1:1 support sessions

*13 How do you integrate AT into your work?*

*14 How do you encourage the use of specialist online resources?*

#### Extract from Guidelines (page12)

4) Modelling the best use of assistive software and technology reinforces IT training.

“The impact can be extraordinary if the assistive technology is recognized as built around our senses and capable of forming a powerful individualized learning styles environment...Technical expertise needs to service the learning priorities and be integrated with learning support” (Cooper, 2009:81).

“The future of study skill and IT training is dependent on their ability to merge closer together with one another as the flaw in not doing so may prevent the concept of multi-sensory training from being fully utilised” (Choudbury, 2008-9)

[www.lexdis.org.uk](http://www.lexdis.org.uk)

[www.iansyst.co.uk](http://www.iansyst.co.uk)

#### Recognising non-academic factors in your practice

*15 How do you recognise non-academic factors in your practice such as social and emotional issues?*

*16 What guidance do you provide for students who require more support than is appropriate from a dyslexia support session?*

Many students, particularly those who have been recently assessed as dyslexic will experience some anxiety associated either with their studies or with coming to terms with being dyslexic and often the dyslexia tutor can provide a safe environment for the student to ‘let off steam’. The dyslexia

tutor role is multi-faceted and 'counselling' is part of this; however when more sessions are taken up with talking about emotional difficulties rather than with strategies for study it is probably time to consider referring the student to a Counselling or Mentoring Services. Most institutions provide services in-house and will have different referral procedures. It is a good idea for the tutor to keep a stack of leaflets or telephone numbers to hand.

## Resources

ADSHE website members area: [www.adshe.org.uk](http://www.adshe.org.uk)

**Solution-focused coaching skills** Liz Amesbury: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Dyslexia and Stress** Eryl Hulatt: Presentation from Networking Day 2009

**Adult Dyslexia: Assessment Counselling and Training.** (1994) McLoughlin, D., Fitzgibbon, G., Young, C. Whurr Publishers

**Dyslexia and counselling** (2004) Scott, R London, Whurr.

**Dyslexia, the Self and Higher Education: learning life histories of students identified as dyslexic.** (2005) Pollak, David Trentham Books

## Reflection on the past year

*17 Looking back on the previous year(s) what do you feel has been your most positive learning experience?*

*18 Which skills set do you feel you would like to develop?*

You might like to consider sharing good practice with colleagues or supervisor which can be used as part of your CPD/supervision. Careful thought about areas where you feel you could improve could help you identify any training needs.

See the website for information about local regional groups.

## Case Study Space

*You might like to include a statement about topics covered and strategies used and/or case studies – this could be part of an annual review or a peer supervision session.*

## B Professional considerations

### Supervision and CPD

*19 How often are you provided with professional supervision?*

*20 What form does this supervision take?*

*21 How does supervision help to ensure quality of provision in your support sessions/ help you in your regular activities?*

### [ADSHE Supervision Guidelines to be inserted](#)

### Continuing professional development

*22 What procedures are in place for you to share practice and information with colleagues externally or internally?*

*23 What provision have you made for continuing professional development within the last year/three years?*

*24 Can you identify any training needs?*

Note there are many ways you can demonstrate that you are engaging in CPD; you do not always need to attend costly training sessions. Many of the regional groups

invite speakers from one or other of the institutions to talk to the members on a set topic; alternatively you can decide on a topic and discuss it at the regional meeting sharing good practice or within institutions if appropriate.

#### **Extract from Guidelines (page 8)**

##### **3.4 Working with colleagues within the profession**

ADSHE was founded with the aim of sharing best practice. In this spirit it is

expected that tutors will:

- 1) share information on, for example, forms of paperwork, policies and business procedures to avoid unnecessary duplication of work
- 2) contribute to research
- 3) support professional colleagues in their reflective practice.

#### **Resources**

A variety of good practice documents can be found on the ADSHE website <http://www.adshe.org.uk/resources/good-practice.htm>

and at PATOSS <http://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/>

See the website for information about regional groups.

#### **ADSHE Guidelines on CPD to be inserted when completed**

You might also like to look at the Patoss website and Dyslexia Action Guild for suggested forms of CPD.

#### **Confidentiality**

*25\*Is there a Confidentiality Agreement in your Service?*

*26 How do you maintain confidentiality within your sessions?*

*27 Are there any occasions when you would need to 'break confidentiality'? If so, why?*

*28 How do you ensure confidentiality for your student paperwork?*

If you are working within an institution you will no doubt be aware of the confidentiality agreement but consultant tutors are sometimes left out of the loop. You need to ensure that students have given written permission for you to access their learning notes/diagnostic assessment reports.

#### **Working conditions**

*29 Are you and your students satisfied with your teaching environment/room? How could it be improved?*

*30 Are specific rooms available for tutorials on a regular basis?*

Issues to think about are: whether there is a vision panel on the door, whether there is sufficient privacy for tutorial sessions and whether the room is free from distractions in terms of noise.

#### **Lone working**

*30 Is there a lone working policy within your institution?*

*31 If you are working in an isolated lone-working environment, what safety measures have you put in place?*

*32 If tutorials take place within student accommodation have you assessed the risks in terms of safety for both you and the student?*

*33 How do you manage support sessions if you feel uncomfortable with an individual student?*

You will need to think carefully about your own safety as well as the safety of the student you are working with. You will need to have in place your own procedures for how to cope if the student is taken ill or becomes aggressive or violent in any way and think about what you would do if you start to feel uncomfortable.

Do you ask for emergency contact numbers?

Does anyone know that you are working in a building alone with a student?

### **Insurance /CRB**

*35 If you are a freelance tutor, have you arranged sufficient professional indemnity insurance?*

*36 What is the date of your last CRB check?*

### **Record Keeping**

*37 What learning agreements are in place and how are these organised?*

*38 \* Do you keep case work notes and teaching notes separately according to ADSHE<sup>1</sup> guidelines?*

*39 What methods do you use to ensure timely record-keeping?*

#### **Extract from Guidelines (page 6)**

##### **2.0 Administration**

ADSHE believes that, in a student-centred process, the following standards should be used as best practice guidelines:

2.1 Accountability and transparency are essential and should be evident throughout the provision of 1:1 support.

##### **2.2 Documentation**

All documentation should be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

##### **2.3 Attendance**

Attendance records must be maintained.

##### **2.4 Records of Work**

Teaching notes detailing support are kept for the use of specialist dyslexia tutors, their supervisors and students. Confidentiality should be assured.

##### **2.5 Administration Notes**

These are also known as case or office notes and are a record of support and contact, additional to records of work.

##### **2.6 Learning Contract**

A formal agreement (often known as a learning contract, learning agreement or something similar) should be drawn up between the dyslexia tutor (3.1) and student. This needs to cover tutor responsibilities, student responsibilities and accountability to DSA.

### **Resources**

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>

**Dyslexia guidelines for Good Practice: Reasonable Administrative Adjustments**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://adshe.org.uk/members-only/>

## Examples of disclosure forms

### C Institutional considerations

#### Initial screening

40\* *Are you involved in screening assessments?*

41 \* *What does the screening process involve?*

42\* *How much time is allocated for the screening?*

43\* *What advice/support do provide to the student immediately after the screening process?*

44\* *How is the information passed to the student?*

#### Extract from Guidelines (page 5)

ADSHE believes that, in a student-centred process, the following standards should be used as best practice guidelines at the identification stage:

##### 1.2 Prior to a psychological assessment

A student should be aware of the reasons for referral, the content of the assessment itself, and the follow-up process - including the importance of consent to disclose. Cooper observes having “ a screening process for dyslexia...provides a clear message that the university expects dyslexics to be among their students” (Pollak, 2009:72). Grant comments that the screening process should be “treated as a useful first step to seeking further advice” (2002:13). Fraser & Zybutz further emphasise the student-centred approach of an initial screening which “offers the opportunity for contact to be made between the student and the support service...an essential first stage in identifying a student’s support needs” (2004:4)

##### 1.3 A minimum time scale for the return of diagnostic reports to students.

A survey of the ADSHE membership found that two weeks is widely regarded as best practice (although five weeks is not uncommon). Longer than two weeks could be detrimental to the student and prolongs an already protracted procedure.

##### 1.4 The original copy of the report must be given to the student

#### Assessments

45\* *Do you meet with students following on from a diagnostic assessment to explain the implications and set up support?*

46 *Are you involved in making recommendations for reasonable adjustments e.g. extra time for exams?*

47 *What type of recommendations have you made recently?*

48 \* *Is the turnaround time from diagnosis to report within the ADSHE recommendation of two weeks?*

#### Extract from guidelines page

##### 1.5 Post-assessment feedback to the student

This is essential to ensure that the student understands the report findings and its implications. Ideally this should be done by the author of the report; however, it is recognised that this is not always practical. Feedback should be handled sensitively by someone with a clear understanding of the issues involved. McLoughlin, Leather, & Stringer

note that “Providing feedback *is therefore* the most important part of an assessment. The goal is to enable clients to understand the difficulties in order that they can take appropriate action. It is through proper explanations that clients will be able to start developing their awareness and understanding. If, following an assessment, clients leave without a greater understanding of the nature of their difficulties and what can be done to overcome them, then it’s been a waste of their time” (2002:68).

### **Extract from ADSHE Marking Guidelines (page 2-3) Academic Standards**

Assessors in Higher Education are naturally concerned about compromising academic standards when making allowances for dyslexia in the marking of coursework or examination scripts. They should be reassured that according to disability legislation the need to maintain academic standards is a fundamental premise within the law. In fact, the terms of possible justification for treating a disabled student less favourably than other students are limited to the “necessity to maintain academic standards or the necessity to maintain standards of any other prescribed kind or occurring under prescribed circumstances.” If, therefore, when reasonable adjustments have been made, a dyslexic student is not able to demonstrate academic competence as prescribed by the course requirements, he or she will not be able to complete the course successfully. Reasonable adjustments, which in the case of students with dyslexia may include differential marking criteria, cannot involve failure to penalise lack of knowledge.

The purpose of coursework and examinations is for students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. There must be no difference in the requirement for students with dyslexia to provide evidence of learning than for their peers. However, as a direct result of their learning difficulty, the standard of written work of students with dyslexia may differ from that of their peers, and it is these subtle differences for which assessors may need to make adjustments.

#### **Marking with due consideration for the effects of dyslexia**

To ensure that students with dyslexia are not treated less favourably than other students for reasons of their disability it is important that assessors are aware of the manifestations of dyslexia in Higher Education. They will then be able to give due consideration to dyslexia-related factors when marking coursework or examination scripts. Students with dyslexia typically experience difficulty producing written work as quickly as other students; they are likely to make more spelling errors even in word processed work; their punctuation and grammar may be weak and they often omit, repeat or insert small function words or word endings. While not without structure, dyslexic students’ written assignments may lack the “polish” demonstrated by their peers. Assessors might reasonably, in normal circumstances, consider such work “shoddy” or careless, and might deduct marks for poor presentation. However, in the case of dyslexic students, such errors should be understood and overlooked unless accuracy is of vital importance in the subject being assessed (see subject differentiation below).

### **Coursework and examinations differentiation**

There are differing views on whether coursework and examinations undertaken by dyslexic students should be treated in a similar way. One school of thought argues that the extra time granted to dyslexic candidates in an examination should be sufficient adjustment. The opposing view is that even with the provision of extra time in examinations, the dyslexic candidate is likely to make only marginal improvements to spelling, grammar and punctuation and will continue to exhibit difficulties with written expression. The Singleton Report (1999) argues that examiners marking the work of a dyslexic candidate should be alerted to those difficulties and take them into consideration when marking. This will, to some extent, contravene the principle of anonymity. However, it may be argued that without this the dyslexic candidate will be unfairly discriminated against and this in itself would contravene the principle of equality of opportunity. Students should therefore be given the option of whether or not to flag their work for markers.

There are similar concerns expressed over differentiated marking for coursework and assignments. One point of view is that, without the time constraints of the exam, students are able to spend more time proof-reading their own work and making corrections. Those students eligible for the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) are able to access software such as textHelp, a program which reads aloud work typed on the computer, which can help with proof-reading. Many students also have access to support from specialist dyslexia tutors. Thus, with support mechanisms in place, the dyslexic student should be on a par with non-dyslexic colleagues. The counter argument to this is that not all dyslexic students will be eligible for the DSA. It is also a common misunderstanding that the role of the dyslexia tutor is to correct errors in their students' work. The dyslexia tutor is employed to *teach* the dyslexic student strategies that they can employ themselves; the role is *not* to proofread a student's work. In reality, even with the use of special software and support from a dyslexia tutor, many students with dyslexia will still be unable to correct their errors despite their best efforts.

### **Resources**

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>

**Accommodated Assessments: Viva Voce** Heather Symonds Professional Development Day 2010

#### **Inclusive Assessment in Higher Education: A Resource for Change**

Waterfield, J and West, B (2006) University of Plymouth SPACE (Staff-Student Partnership for Assessment Change and Evaluation) project

#### **Making reasonable adjustments with disabled students in higher**

**education.** Herrington, M (Ed). With Simpson, D (2002) (pdf publication). Published by Nottingham University as part of the project ADDS- Academic Staff Development for the Support for Disabled Students 2000-2002

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsupport/adjustments/Making%Reasonable%Adjustments.pdf](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/academicsupport/adjustments/Making%Reasonable%Adjustments.pdf)

**Sharing information with colleagues (see also previous section)**

49 *What information and/or feedback do you provide about individual students you are supporting to academic tutors or departments?*

50 *Is there an opportunity for you to influence institutional/academic marking practices?*

51 *Do you provide advice to colleagues about inclusive learning and reasonable adjustments?*

52 *If yes, what form does this advice take?*

53 *Are you invited to department and team meetings?*

51 *If yes, what is your role?*

## **Resources**

ADSHE website members' area: <http://www.adshe.org.uk/>

**Dyslexia guidelines for Good Practice: Reasonable Administrative Adjustments**

**Reasonable Adjustments for Academic Departments**

**Establishing systems for specialist dyslexia teaching**

## **Student Feedback**

55 *How do you use feedback students receive from their assignments to help them develop strategies/study skills? In what ways does your institution provide formative feedback?*

56 *What mechanisms do you have for gathering student feedback about your sessions/service?*

55 *How do you involve students in monitoring the quality of the service you provide?*

### **Extract from Guidelines (page 6)**

#### **2.7 Student Feedback**

1) Opportunities for student feedback should be provided at least once a year to cover all service provision and to inform future practice.

2) Feedback should be available in the public domain and utilised in service reviews and for identifying staff development needs (it is expected that this will be covered by the HEI's QAA procedures).

3) All HEI staff should have access to ongoing opportunities for SpLD awareness training. Good practice would be to include an awareness training session for all newly appointed staff as part of their induction. Dyslexia tutors and students should be encouraged to be involved in such training.

Extract from Supporting Learning Differences in Higher Education: A Practitioners' Manual

### 1. What makes writing so difficult for the dyslexic student?

Writing has two very specific purposes at university: writing as a tool to develop the student's thinking and understanding; and to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in a way which can be assessed and examined. It is vital that the SDT is aware of what is involved in writing and the cognitive components needed to make the activity effortless.

The writing process which consists of the following components:

- Defining the task;
- Selecting information (content) during reading;
- Drafting of ideas;
- Editing;
- Proof-reading and checking.

Dyslexic students are likely to require support for coursework in the following areas:

- Management of the whole writing process
- Organisation of various components of the writing process
- Where to get the required information
- Keeping to deadlines
- Drafting, editing and proof-reading.

Self-monitoring systems need to be **explicitly** taught to dyslexic writers. It is not sufficient to tell them to 'check your work to make sure it makes sense'. Even if the dyslexic writer has the time to edit and check (proof-read) her work, she may not be able to spot her own errors in construction and spelling.

Cognitive strategy instruction (cognitive education) helps to bring the thinking skills to the surface so that the dyslexic writer can see how expert writers manage the process. Teaching students self-questioning techniques will provide long-term gains and develop a metacognitive approach to learning. It offers the reflective, self-monitoring which is the vital metacognitive component.

For the SDT knowledge of the pitfalls which could be experienced by the dyslexic writer is a key to relevant support. The pressure points in the writing process for the dyslexic writer are:

- Knowing what to do or what is expected in the written assignment
- Knowing whether the information selected from reading is appropriate
- Overcoming writer's block
- Controlling writing style
- Managing time constraints

These aspects are compounded by weak working memory capacity and difficulties with language processing and speed of working. Armed with this knowledge the SDT can tackle each component of the process to meet the dyslexic writer's needs while at the same time providing opportunities for strategy instruction, self-monitoring and reflection.