

Top Tips for neuro-diverse students

(SpLD and mental health conditions)

Listen to students by asking what works (or might work) for them. Many students may already be aware of their own challenges and what strategies help them personally. For other students, difficulties may have only recently been identified (whether formally diagnosed or not).

Encourage students to be independent in their learning by putting their own strategies in place. By asking students for their input you will help them feel that they have a responsibility for and involvement in their own learning. There are many resources online and via Marjon platforms.

Facilitate activities where students' needs are discussed to promote engagement. For example, put together a 'wish list' of what type of support students would like from lecturers. This could include learning activities which include visuals, audios, bullet-pointed lists or Q & A sessions.

Reassure students that help and support is available through DIAS/Student Support (predominantly for students with diagnosed conditions). Generic study skills support is available with Kerry Kellaway at studyskills@marjon.ac.uk. Drop-in sessions are available for queries on disability. Sessions for well-being can be booked via studentsupport@marjon.ac.uk and counselling sessions via counselling@marjon.ac.uk.

Practical Tips – factors to be considered:

- **Environment** – distractions, comfort, movement (e.g. from one activity to another)
- **Variety of media** - different techniques and resources (e.g. kinaesthetic learning)
- **Timing – structure and pace** (e.g. extra time at the end of sessions)
- **Language – clear, concise and highlight key words** (e.g. avoid ambiguity)
- **Information - font, background, images and 'white space'** (reduce visual stress)
- **Instructions – written and verbal, easy to follow sequence** (avoid confusion)

The following are common indicators (not exhaustive or exclusive) of Dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia: a family of specific learning needs which often co-occur with related conditions such as ADHD and Asperger's. Note that Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia are generally under-studied and under-resourced in comparison with Dyslexia.

Dyslexia is estimated to occur in 10 % of the UK and is as likely to affect females as males.

- processing and remembering information
- understanding task requirements (e.g. breaking down the title, structuring an essay, organising thoughts on paper)
- grammar: spelling, sentence structure and punctuation
- low opinion of capabilities.
- getting started and completing work
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Dyscalculia is estimated to occur in 3% – 6% of the UK and is as likely to affect females as males. Dyscalculia and maths anxiety are not the same thing. The difference is that people with dyscalculia also struggle with the skills to do mathematical tasks; often relating to their anxiety.

- following instructions (sequencing)
- understanding simple number concepts
- *lack* an intuitive grasp of numbers
- problems learning number facts and procedures

Dyspraxia is estimated to occur in ten% of the UK and is four times more common in males than females.

- planning, organising and carrying out movements in the right order in everyday situations.
- articulation and speech, perception and thought.
- tendency to miss and confuse appointment times
- prioritising work schedules.
- time management, planning and personal organisation

