



Provider Handbook Professional Placements

Student Futures



University of
Chester

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Anticipating and managing reasonable adjustments: guidance for placement providers

The aim of this handbook is to explain how the University anticipates and manages reasonable adjustments in preparation for placement. Furthermore, to offer advice and guidance to a provider in how they too can prepare for the placement element of an undergraduate programme at the University of Chester.

This handbook covers:

- Definitions of placement and provider
- Anticipating disabled groups' needs
- Requesting reasonable adjustments from a placement provider
- Unable to meet reasonable request
- Pre-placement visit good practice guidelines
- Examples of educational and placement reasonable adjustments
- Further information and guidance.

Definitions

The University is committed to removing barriers to learning for our disabled students. External providers as well as the University have a duty to both anticipate and manage reasonable adjustments in placements for students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) and disabilities.

The term placement is used to describe work –based learning and/or placement learning opportunities.

The term provider refers to a workplace environment, which is an agreed and negotiated period of learning that takes place outside the University

Anticipating disabled groups' needs

To prepare University of Chester students for a placement element of their undergraduate courses students are encouraged to:

- Disclose their disability to a placement provider to access their legal rights to reasonable adjustments;
- Conduct a Self- directed placement audit to gain insight of current and potential employment skills and awareness of strategies they could employ to develop particular skills;
- Complete a Reasonable Adjustment Placement Plan or shortened version of RAPP that identifies the requests for reasonable adjustment from a provider;
- Visit a placement, before commencing, to discuss and agree the reasonable adjustment requests.

Requesting reasonable adjustments from a placement provider

Students who have disclosed a disability/SpLD are required to complete a Reasonable Adjustment Placement Plan or the shortened version before commencing placement. This document identifies the requests for reasonable adjustments in a placement setting, based upon either a self- directed skills audit or the competency/professional standards required from a particular professional body. It is important that a student discusses with a provider the reasonableness of the requests in advance. This is an opportunity to discuss and agree, in a timely manner, the reasonable adjustments request whilst familiarising a student with the location, people, processes and procedures that can be adapted to their preferred learning style. If your organisation has a HR or Equality and Diversity department, then they ought to be able to advise you on the reasonable adjustments requests in order to meet the needs of disabled groups.

It is also important that reasonable adjustments in a placement setting are monitored during and evaluated at the end of a placement. This approach will enable the University to monitor and evaluate how reasonable adjustments are anticipated and managed in a placement environment. It is hoped, that more collaboration between a provider and the University will promote effective resource and implementation of anticipatory adjustments.

Unable to meet support request

If a placement is unable to accommodate a student's needs then the Provider will need to inform the relevant academic department / faculty as soon as possible outlining their concerns. A decision will then be made regarding the placements suitability for the student in question, if reasonable adjustments cannot be met.

Pre-placement visit: best practice guidelines

It is important that both a student, with a disability/Specific learning Difference, as well as a placement provider anticipates learning needs in order to facilitate a positive and successful learning placement experience.

This handbook has been compiled, based upon best practice guidelines, which aims to support both students and a provider with suggestions in how to support the transition into a placement learning experience.

Student

Here are a few examples of how a student can prepare for a placement element of their undergraduate studies.

- Undertake background research of the placement that you have been allocated to gain a greater awareness of your expected role and responsibilities;
- Ensure that you are familiar with the competency/professional standards that you may have to demonstrate whilst in the placement,;

- Liaise with your department regarding the most appropriate method of communicating your learning needs to a provider.;
- Arrange to visit the placement and/or mentor to discuss and agree your learning needs through the Reasonable Adjustment Placement Plan (A member of staff in your faculty for example, the Practice Co-ordinator or a Personal Academic Tutor ought to be able to advise you on whether the adjustments requested would be deemed reasonable.);
- Request an Induction Pack, from your placement, with relevant information required in a placement setting.

Provider

Here are a few examples of how a provider can anticipate the needs of students which may ease the transition into a placement setting.

Access to an Induction Pack with relevant information such as the following:-

- Location map of the building that the placement will occur to orientate a student;
- Relevant contact details supported with photo of staff including name and role to aid memory and recall;
- Relevant policies and procedures such as, Health and Safety; flow charts of particular processes commonly used in placement to aid memory;
- Templates of reports, memos and or letters and/or proformas that may be adapted to individual learning styles to aid skill development;
- Copies of acronyms or abbreviations commonly used in placement to aid language development.

Examples of educational and placement reasonable adjustments

The table overleaf provides examples of the types of reasonable adjustments that are offered at the University of Chester for teaching, learning and assessment and how these can be replicated in a placement setting.

Context	Examples of educational reasonable adjustments	Examples of placement reasonable adjustments	Rationale
Teaching	Provision of course material in advance.	<p>Provision of printed or audio placement paperwork, documents in advance.</p> <p>Access to complicated procedures e.g. flow charts, images, visual.</p> <p>Induction Pack e.g. copy of proformas, templates or reports.</p>	<p>To adapt information to own learning style; opportunity to practice a particular technique.</p> <p>Opportunities to model expected standards of written documents.</p> <p>Opportunities for familiarisation of processes and procedures before commencing placement.</p>
	Provision of prioritised reading.	<p>Copy of common abbreviations used in placement.</p> <p>Access to medical terminology commonly used in placement.</p>	<p>Student to devise own glossary of terms to aid language development, improve vocabulary and understanding the meaning of new words.</p> <p>To develop effective reading strategies and strategies to manage the reading load through SpLD tutorials.</p>
	Permission to record lecturers in line with University guidelines.	Consent by provider to record meetings or one to one sessions with mentor.	Acts as a reminder, can listen and take notes later but needs to be in line with placement confidentiality guidelines.
Learning	One to one explanations.	Verbal information supplemented with written explanations through flow charts/or visual aids of processes or procedures.	<p>To aid memory and add to own learning file.</p> <p>Information is clear and concise to reduce potential misunderstandings.</p>
	Not required to read aloud without adequate preparation.	Adequate time to prepare for public speaking.	Reduces the often anxious impact of having to read aloud without adequate preparation.

Context	Examples of educational reasonable adjustments	Examples of placement reasonable adjustments	Rationale
Written Assessment	Entitled to seek guidance through emailing an outline essay plan to determine if a student is on the right track (in line with departmental policy).	Regular meetings with placement mentor with written feedback (or recording) on performance and areas to develop.	Informs teaching and learning opportunities with SpLD tutor.
	Access to a Standard Assessment Feedback statement which is attached to all assessed pieces of written work. The purpose is to alert a marker that the work has been submitted by a student with a declared SpLD .Moreover, by providing clear and constructive feedback the development of academic writing skills may be enhanced.	Identification of strengths and/or abilities that can be applied to overcome underdeveloped skills. Clear and specific feedback to aid development.	Encourages goal setting and action planning with deadlines to focus learning.
Exams	25% extra time in exams = extra 15 min per 60 mi.	Opportunities for over learning of skills to increase speed and accuracy to meet competency/professional standards. Extra time to consolidate skills e.g. extra week(s) in placement, additional time to do tasks before assessment.	Typical reasonable adjustment in education to support weak processing speed under timed conditions.

Context	Examples of educational reasonable adjustments	Examples of placement reasonable adjustments	Rationale
Exams	Quiet room with no distractions.	<p>Permission to take in laptop with reading / writing software provided through the Disabled Students Allowance.</p> <p>Quiet room to complete demanding tasks.</p> <p>Ear plugs to reduce noise and possible distractions.</p>	<p>Software reads back to student which reduces the mechanical challenges of the reading process to enable concentration and comprehension of text.</p> <p>Often students with a SpLD can be distracted by noise that impacts upon attention and concentration.</p>
Academic research	Individual library induction to ask questions, gain familiarity of staff and accessing information.	<p>Arrangement of a Pre placement visit may enable a student to familiarise with placement expectations and adapt paperwork to individual learning style before commencing.</p> <p>For instance, a Placement Induction pack that includes the following would support preparation for placement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific procedures and practices; • a glossary of words and abbreviations commonly used in the placement; • proformas of standard forms//telephone message sheets/ planning sheets; • any relevant training before commencing placement. 	<p>Reduces information overload when commencing placement.</p> <p>Opportunity to discuss concerns may reduce potential anxiety of unfamiliar faces and situations.</p> <p>Supports the transition from education to employment.</p>

Context	Examples of educational reasonable adjustments	Examples of placement reasonable adjustments	Rationale
Non-medical helper support funded by the Disabled Students Allowance	Access to specialist and regular one to one tutorials, delivered through an external agency, to aid and encourage autonomy and independence by developing effective academic and placement strategies.	Access to specialist support /permission to use skype (if difficulties accessing support during the day).	Principles underpinning specialist support are independence, autonomy, metacognition, relevance, over-learning, multi-sensory, motivation, little and often in order to acquire, recall and retain verbal and written information (ADSHE guidelines).
	Specialist Advisor, Mental health Mentor or Advisor, Autistic spectrum Mentor, Asperger's Mentor or study buddy.	Use feedback from placement meetings to discuss and work with specialist NMH support.	<p>To increase confidence and skill development can either be on-going, phased in and out, or at specific times throughout the placement. Can be facilitated either face to face, skype or telephone one to one support.</p> <p>To develop effective strategies (coping with anxiety and stress, time management, prioritising skills) to identify and overcome learning obstacles as a result of a specific learning difference.</p>

Further information and guidance

Understanding the impact of different SpLDs

It is important that a provider fully understands and appreciates both the challenges and strengths faced by students with a SpLD, in order to effectively support their learning style and ways of thinking. If you are unsure about how best you can support a student with a disability /SpLD in a placement setting then please access any of the following links:-

- ADHD <http://www.adhdfoundation.org.uk/>
- Autism / Asperger's Syndrome <http://www.autism.org.uk/working-with.aspx>
- Dyscalculia <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/maths-difficulties-dyscalculia>
- Dyslexia <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/employer>
- Dyspraxia <http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

NB. Visual stress may co-occur with any of the SpLDs or independently. <https://www.nessy.com/uk/teachers/further-dyslexia-information/visual-dyslexia/>

What are co-occurring difficulties?

Co-occurring difficulties are multiple SpLDs that may be related, such as dyslexia and dyspraxia or dyslexia and Asperger's. Again, such issues need to be disclosed and assessed by the parties involved in the placement so that effective reasonable adjustments can be devised, monitored and evaluated.

National Health Service and Particular Conditions

- The NHS Choices section <http://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx> provides useful information regarding the impact of particular conditions.

Equality Challenge Unit

- Equality Challenge Unit provides information, guidance and resources on how best to support disabled groups and equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/> and <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/equality-legislation/>

Employment and Disability

- Disability Rights UK support for education <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/benefits-information/factsheets/education-factsheets> and support for employment <https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-we-can-help/benefits-information/factsheets/workrelated-factsheets>
- Disability Rights GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/employment>
- ACAS Neurodiversity in the workplace <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=6676>
- Department for Work and Pensions <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions>
- Recruitment and disabled people <https://www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people/job-specifications>
- Employers responsibility equality monitoring <https://www.gov.uk/employers-responsibilities-equality-monitoring>
- Personnel Today discuss how employers can support neurodiversity in the workplace <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/four-ways-employers-can-support-neurodiversity-at-work/>

Introduction

The aim of this Staff information guide is to raise awareness of different SpLDs when anticipating and managing reasonable adjustments (RAs) in a placement setting.

Diversity and Equality - What is a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD)?

A SpLD is a specific learning difference that may or may not impact on the way in which a role is performed. Often a SpLD will only affect a small part of a job which may be supported with reasonable adjustments (RAs) to the working process or with additional support from the provider. The types of SpLD are as follows; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism / Asperger's Syndrome, Dyscalculia, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dysgraphia.

Please, bear in mind that although the information attempts to describe features generally, an individual may experience or demonstrate traits to a lesser or greater degree.

ADHD / ADD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a developmental and behavioural condition which can create some challenges within educational and employment opportunities. The form of the condition without the hyperactivity aspects is called ADD.

The adult ADHD organisation AADD-UK says as many as 3-4% of adults in the UK have ADHD whilst some individuals may also have some symptoms of dyspraxia.

Potential strengths	Possibly requiring development
Ability to see the bigger picture.	Impatience and restlessness.
Attention to detail.	Constantly fidgets or moves around excessively.
Creativity and inventiveness.	Interrupting conversations with blurted out responses and / or an inability to stay quiet.
High levels of energy .	Short attention span and/or easily distracted from the current task or activity.
Hyperfocus – channels all attention and energy on task.	Organising time, focussing on other tasks, prioritising and completing complex task.
Negotiation skills .	Social interactions with unfamiliar people.

Examples of reasonable adjustments in a placement setting

- Provide a mentor to support and guide with projects;
- Use planners, calendars and list of things to do and update them often;
- Encourage note taking at meetings and during conversations to help focus on task;
- Break up complex tasks into smaller achievable goals;
- Set time limits for each task and provide encouragement when they are completed;
- Suggest relaxation techniques and meditation to improve concentration;
- Allow regular breaks and provide a relaxing place for them.

Further information

<http://www.webmd.com/add-adhd/adhd-adults>

Autism spectrum condition / Asperger's syndrome

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a condition that typically develops in childhood and is lifelong condition. It affects behaviour, social interaction, communication and interests. There is no 'cure' for ASD, but a wide range of treatments – including education and behaviour support – can help individuals adapt.

Autism can create challenges with learning, communication, emotional responses and awareness and, the ability to socially interact with other individuals. It can also include delayed language development and challenges in starting and contributing to conversations effectively. Individuals with an ASC can also display repetitive patterns in their behaviour, thought processes, interests and physical behaviours and can become upset if their routines are disrupted.

Asperger's Syndrome is a milder or 'higher functioning' condition within the spectrum of autism. It is often not diagnosed as some of the usual autism symptoms such as challenges in learning and social environments are not present furthermore, intelligence range and language development of individuals with the condition is in the average range of the rest of the population. Sometimes symptoms may include mild motor function problems resulting in clumsiness and a lack of co-ordination. Similar to other autistic individuals, they often experience feelings of awkwardness especially fitting in socially which can cause frustration and an increase in anxiety.

Individuals with autism or Asperger's are more likely to experience additional challenges such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and ADHD. (<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>).

Potential strengths	Possibly requiring development
High functioning autism.	Ways of thinking and sensory processing. Uneven set of skills.
Creativity and thinking outside the box.	May take things literally and often misunderstand sarcasm.
Attention to detail.	Can be diagnosed with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Difficulty in developing motivation in areas to study.
Often highly skilled in a particular area.	Structuring their time independently.
Studies deeply. Less concerned about what others think (can be opposite). Honest and non-judgemental. Direct communication.	Transition from home to university more challenging. Find establishing and maintaining relationships confusing. Perceiving unwritten rules of social interactions and situations. May stand too close.
Tendency to be logical (helpful in decision making where emotions may interfere).	Difficulty perceiving emotional states of other.

Examples of reasonable adjustments in a placement setting

- Avoid sensory distractions/overload such as noisy or smelly work areas and maximising natural light;
- Have a relaxed space such as a quiet room and allow regular breaks;
- Provide fixed shift times and work schedules and a regular place or desk to work from;
- Provide and use organisational tools and planners;
- Give clear, simple and unambiguous instructions and encourage notes to be made;
- Access to a personal mentor;
- Allow some consideration for minor misdemeanours and disagreements.

Further information

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asd.aspx>

Dyslexia

Dyslexia can be a hereditary condition and is the most common of the SpLDs. It is thought to affect about 10% of the population to some extent with 4% severely affected by the condition (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyslexia-and-specific-difficulties-overview>).

Dyslexia can also affect the way information is perceived, processed and retrieved by the individual. This may include a reduced memory, slow speed of processing verbal and written information, time perception challenges, and underdeveloped organisation abilities impacting upon sequencing tasks.

Individuals with dyslexia are more likely to experience additional conditions such as dyscalculia, ADHD and autism (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyslexia-and-specific-difficulties-overview>).

Potential strengths	Possibly requiring development
See the bigger picture.	Memory overload, difficulty with sequencing such as taking notes and listening.
Creative, intuitive and insightful.	Good and bad days.
Good problem solvers.	May confuse verbal information.
Eye for detail.	Visual sensitivity.
Curious mind.	Following instruction.
Driven and persistent.	Letter confusion. May read inaccurately.
See things differently.	Confidence.

Examples of reasonable adjustments in a placement setting

- Convey information via speech or pictures instead of writing;
- Provide coloured paper and the ability to change a monitor background colour;
- Allow extra time for reading and writing tasks;
- Access to proof reading software and use of spellchecker and speech to text software;
- Summarise information and emphasise key points;
- Avoid interruptions and a noisy or dark workspace;
- Allow frequent breaks ;
- Break instructions into clear and simple tasks and check they have been understood;
- Use notes and colour coding for important information;
- Use organisers, diaries and planners and prioritise tasks;
- Supervise tasks and allow for planning and extra time.

Further information and resources

<http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/>

<https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Dyspraxia (DCD)

Dyspraxia is a form of developmental coordination disorder (DCD) that affects fine and/or gross motor co-ordination, balance and dexterity in about 10% of individuals and is often a lifelong condition (<http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>). It can create significant challenges with any task that requires agility and controlled movement, such as walking and controlling limbs, eye and head movement, handling objects and writing and typing.

Dyspraxia may also affect speech, memory, perception and mental processing in a similar way to dyslexia. It can affect how information from the senses is perceived and processed creating challenges with perception and organisation of tasks and information. Individuals may vary in how their difficulties present and their symptoms can vary over time depending on the situation.

Individuals with dyspraxia are more likely to experience additional conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD and autism (<http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>).

Potential strengths	Possibly requiring development
Getting an overview of a situation, or making connections between unrelated areas.	Arriving to places on time.
Creative and skilled at problem-solving.	Organisation of self and tasks.
Skilled at spotting a pattern in information.	Remembering instructions.
Thinking 'outside the box'.	Taking notes during lectures or training courses.
Fluent verbal communicator.	following conversations, handwriting or speaking quietly.
May have entrepreneurial skills.	structuring written work.

Examples of reasonable adjustments in a placement setting

- Customise computer mouse settings and use an ergonomic keyboard;
- break instructions into clear and simple tasks, write down notes and check they have been understood;
- create regular routines and timetables and try to keep the workday structured;
- tuition and guidance in time-management can be helpful;
- use of computer technology such as speech to text, spellcheckers and document templates;
- summarise information and emphasise key points;
- avoid interruptions and distractions and a noisy or dark workspace;
- allow frequent breaks and break work into short sections;

- use notes and colour coding for important information;
- use organisers, diaries and planners and prioritise tasks;
- supervise tasks and allow for planning and extra time;
- encourage a calm and positive approach to tasks.

Further information and resources

<http://www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

Dyscalculia
Dyscalculia makes it more challenging to make sense of concepts and logic relating to numbers and maths. It can also be referred to as 'maths dyslexia' or 'number blindness' or 'developmental dyscalculia' and is a lifelong condition thought to have a developmental or genetic origin. It isn't as well-known as dyslexia but is believed to be almost as common, affecting up to 5% of individuals (http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyscalculia).
The challenges with math can be confusing and cause anxiety and low self-esteem especially when someone is doing well in other subjects. Individuals with dyscalculia find it more challenging to grasp numbers and quantities and how they relate to the real world which is a core concept for using maths. They may also experience directional challenges, reading maps and judging distance and speed which may affect physical co-ordination ability. It can also make telling the time, working with money and budgets, managing time and working to schedules more challenging.
Individuals with dyscalculia are more likely to experience additional conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and autism (://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexic/dyscalculia).

Examples of reasonable adjustments in a placement setting

- Use calculators and computer technology to assist with math tasks;
- use visual aids such as diagrams and physical objects when planning tasks and solving problems involving numbers;
- break up larger tasks and training into manageable amounts of work;
- regular review and explanation of math-based skills, formula and techniques;
- supervise work, support and encourage the problem-solving process;
- use graph paper to help keep numbers lined up;
- use a piece of paper to cover up math content not being immediately worked on.

Further information and resources

Royal College of Nursing – Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia; a Toolkit for Nursing Staff.

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