



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

ASSESSMENT OF WORK BY STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES: GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

(formerly Dyslexia and other additional learning needs – Guidelines for staff on supporting students)

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Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Public Access Internal Access Only Applies to Collaborative Provision The principles apply to CP only
Summary: <p>These guidelines are intended to assist academic staff when assessing the oral and written work of students, identified by Student Services, who have diagnosed learning differences, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. They are intended to promote equality in order that the work of students with learning differences can be marked appropriately and consistently across the University, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).</p>	

ASSESSMENT OF WORK BY STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES: GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

1. Introduction

1.1 These guidelines are intended to assist academic staff when assessing the oral and written work of students, identified by Student Services, who have diagnosed learning differences, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. They are intended to promote equality in order that the work of students with learning differences can be marked appropriately and consistently across the University, in line with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

1.2 Under current equality legislation, the University has an anticipatory duty to ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place to prevent disabled students being substantially disadvantaged relative to non-disabled peers. However, academic standards should not be compromised when making reasonable adjustments.

1.3 The application of these guidelines should not compromise academic standards where accuracy of spelling, grammar and punctuation is a genuine competence standard of the work being assessed. They are not intended to replace any marking criteria but should provide supplementary guidance to take account of learning difference-related difficulties.

2. Identification of students with a formal learning difference diagnosis

2.1 Students recognised by Student Services as being formally diagnosed with a specific learning difference which will affect their writing skills will be offered stickers (known as 'dyslexia stickers') (see Fig. 1 below). Not every student with a formal diagnosis of a learning difference will want, or require, the use of a dyslexia sticker. Some students may choose to only attach stickers to certain types of assignments. Students can only access dyslexia stickers with the approval of a Disability Adviser in Student Services. Such students will also have a learning agreement (please refer to *Disabled Students' Learning Agreements: Guidelines for Staff* for more details on Learning Agreements.) These stickers are intended to alert a marker to the fact that the student has an identified learning difference and the marker should refer to the marking guidelines below.

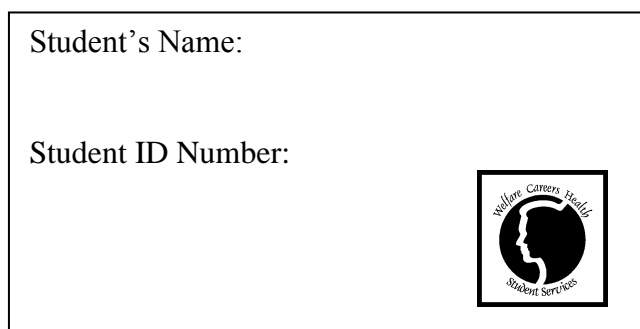


Fig. 1 Dyslexia Sticker

2.2 Students living with learning differences may receive appropriate specialist support from qualified staff in Student Services. Disability Advisers will assist students in accessing the most appropriate specialist support. Specialist tutors in Student Services will support students in developing core skills but will not provide subject specific guidance nor will they provide proof reading services.

3. Reasonable adjustments and marking guidelines for students with learning differences

3.1 Any student requiring specific arrangements for examinations must be assessed by the Disabilities and Learning Diversity Team in Student Services in order that individual needs can be established. Reasonable adjustments will be identified in a student's learning agreement and would apply to formal examinations in the centrally organised formal examination diet and also locally organised examinations or tests.

Examples of reasonable adjustments in exams include:

- a) Additional time. The amount granted will depend on the impact of the specific learning difference on speed and accuracy in reading and writing. This would also be granted on a pro rata basis for 'take-home' papers (eg 30 hours to complete a 24 hour paper when the extra time granted is 25%)
- b) Use of a PC
- c) Coloured paper or use of overlays
- d) Scribe/Reader (a rare adjustment for learning differences)
- e) Adjustments to viva voce or practical examinations would be made on an individual basis in discussion with the student, a Disability Adviser and the appropriate member of academic staff.
- f) Students may choose to mark their papers with a dyslexia sticker

3.2 Exam marking guidelines for students with a learning difference:

- a) Read the exam script quickly - look for ideas, understanding and knowledge
- b) Ignore structural flaws and sequencing
- c) Provide legible feedback – preferably typed
- d) Make constructive comments – and explain what is required to improve
- e) Do not use red pens – red is often a difficult colour for people with learning differences to read
- f) Corrections to spelling, punctuation and grammar are often appreciated but should be limited to major errors, unless orthographical and grammatical accuracy are explicitly being assessed.

Some of this guidance is applicable to coursework and some to all students with or without a learning difference. The generic guidance is incorporated into the *Assessment Regulations* which can be found on the intranet <https://intranet.winchester.ac.uk/information-bank/quality-office/Documents/2015-16%20Assessment%20Regulations%20NEW.pdf>

3.3 Examples of reasonable adjustments to course work outlined in a learning agreement may include:

- a) Permission to submit electronically (where this is not the norm)
- b) In rare cases (often in cases where students live with multiple disabilities including a learning difference) an alternative assignment (still evidencing the learning outcomes) may be recommended.
- c) Additional time is not recommended on grounds of a learning difference alone. In exceptional circumstances a case may be made for this. Support for such an adjustment shall be given by a Disability Adviser. An example might be where two or more assignments are due in the same week.

3.4 Marking guidelines for coursework for students with a learning difference:

- a) If spelling, punctuation and grammar are assessment criteria this should be stated, as should the potential marks at stake. If they are not mentioned in the marking scheme it should be assumed that they are not assessment criteria and that students shall not be penalised.
- b) In certain subjects, in which accuracy in writing is one of the assessment criteria, this should be stated, along with the potential effect on marks. Students with dyslexia might thus be penalised for inaccurate writing in certain subjects but this would reasonably reflect a weakness in a particular knowledge base deemed to be important in their degree course.

- c) Students who find it difficult to produce well-structured work with a logical sequence should be advised to contact the Disabilities and Learning Diversity Team in Student Services to ask about specialist one-to-one sessions in literacy and study skills.
- d) It is helpful for students with specific learning difficulties to be given constructive feedback to help them to identify ways of improving their written language skills.