

A photograph of two young adults, a man and a woman, sitting outdoors and talking. The man is on the left, wearing a red polo shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a red top. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background shows a cityscape with buildings and a railing.

STUDYING AT LSE

**A guide for students with an autistic
spectrum condition**

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is for all LSE students who have an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Autism is a lifelong, developmental disability that affects how a person communicates with and relates to other people, and how they experience the world around them.

Many LSE students on the autistic spectrum thrive during their time here, though we understand that navigating higher education can sometimes be challenging.

The aim of this guide is to provide practical guidance and tips around studying at LSE with a autism/Asperger's.

STUDYING AT LSE

Things to think about

It might be hard to predict how your studies might be impacted by your autism/Asperger's. Have a think about these points:

- How will you manage interactions with your tutors?
- How will you manage group work with fellow students?
- How will you organise your studies and set yourself realistic goals?

Try to evaluate and reflect on your previous experiences in education. Was there any support you had which you found particularly helpful? What worked well, and what worked not so well?

Get the right support

We strongly recommend that you contact the Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) as soon as you know you are coming to study here.

Through the DWS we can arrange for additional support and adjustments to help you make the most out of your time here.

STUDY TIPS

You will have the chance to discuss your individual situation and support needs with one of our advisers. This may include collaborating with you to produce a My Adjustment (MA) and/or Central Exam Adjustment form (CEA). Having these in place will allow for adjustments to your course, such as extra time in exams, or reserved seating in lectures.

Full details on these processes and how to register can be found on [our website](#).

UK students should also apply for [Disabled Students' Allowances](#) at the earliest opportunity.

Organisation and time management

It is important to organise your time and spread your reading load. You will be expected to structure your own time and plan your work to meet long-term deadlines. It can be hard to judge on your own if you are doing too little work, or too much, especially if you tend towards disorganisation or perfectionism.

Remember though that there are people to talk to if you find yourself struggling with this. You can speak with your course tutor, academic mentor, or specialist mentor available through DWS.

Find your happy place

When studying at home make sure you are comfortable and that you have the right equipment to study.

While working on campus be sure to explore and find a study area that you like and feel comfortable in.

See here for a [list of student study spaces and IT facilities on campus](#).

Prioritise and structure your studies

When faced with multiple deadlines things can feel overwhelming, but a failure to prioritise and structure your studies can lead to further problems down the line.

Look at what assignment is due in first and what is likely to take you the most or least time to complete. Consider which areas are more challenging for you and may need more academic assistance. If you get stuck, don't be afraid to ask for help.

Break up your workload

Break up projects into smaller tasks and set mini deadlines for completing them.

For example, a date to pick your essay topic by, a date to have finished researching by, a date to have complete the first draft, and a date to have completed the final draft.

Doing an outline of a task might be helpful; bullet points to indicate what you want to include in an essay for instance, or mapping what articles and chapters are related to each part of

the essay. Look at how much time you will need for a task and if it is realistic.

Teaching sessions and notetaking

Lectures and seminars may feel daunting, especially when starting with new classmates and teachers. Here are some guidelines which may be useful when attending teaching sessions and taking notes:

- Allow ample time to get there; you may want to visit the location before to know where to go and the time it takes.
- It may be worth considering arriving early to find a position in a room where you feel most comfortable.
- If there are other students who you feel most comfortable with, consider being near them or meet them before the start.
- If you can, make questions and notes beforehand: generate questions that you expected will be answered in the lecture/seminar..

Remember that there are people to talk to if you find yourself struggling in lectures, seminars and other teaching sessions. You can speak with your course tutor, academic mentor, or specialist mentor available through DWS.

Reading

When reading for your programme, do utilise the support of your academic staff for guidance on the key texts, where possible. Prioritise what reading is necessary and plan a realistic amount of time to complete the reading you hope to do.

Read at a time of day which is best for you, in a place you feel most comfortable, and away from as many distractions as possible. Take regular breaks, have snacks and eat regularly, and do take walks or exercise during a period of intensified reading or studying.

Develop different approaches to academic reading. You do not always need to read every single word; a quick scan to extract the key points may be enough. Be clear on the purpose of your reading and don't believe you always have to read everything. If you are unsure about the amount of reading you are supposed to be doing, do not be afraid to ask your teacher for guidance.

You can attend an [LSE Life](#) workshop on academic reading, or read up on techniques for academic and speed reading.

Essay writing

Before writing an essay, plan and make sure you understand what you are answering or writing about. Seek guidance with any questions about the topic or title. Do not fear asking for this guidance from your academic staff.

Write an outline and key points you want to include in the essay; asking yourself questions about the sequence of information and what you want to leave out.

Utilise the recordings of any lectures or resources that are available on your subject.

Proof-read your work after you finish and possibly consider asking a trusted person proof-read it too.

Revision

Again, work in a space that you feel optimises your ability to concentrate. Make sure you are comfortable and have access to food and drink.

Find somewhere quiet, away from distractions. Try using ear plugs or noise cancelling headphones to help with focus and concentration.

Give thought to what types of learning techniques work for you; does recording information help? Visual maps? Writing cue-cards? Mnemonics?

Remember to look at past exam questions and papers. Consider doing your own mock exam under timed conditions as practice for the real thing.

Take breaks. Sometimes short bursts of studying interlinked with ten-minute breaks can be very effective to maintain concentration and absorb information without burning out.

Do make sure you are eating well, exercising, engaging in pleasurable activities, resting and sleeping.

If a schedule helps, map out a plan to follow, including scheduling in the breaks and self-care.

Prioritise which revision to do and to start as early as you can to avoid additional anxiety and burn-out.

And remember...

Believe in yourself!

Remember that even if you suffer setbacks or find yourself lost at times, this doesn't mean you can't do your work well. Staff here at LSE are here to help, so do not ever be afraid to tell people if you are having difficulties, even if you find it hard to explain what they are.

Remember that being on the spectrum brings with it some incredible gifts which are unique to you. Recognise and understand your strengths – find a way of working which works for you!

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

It may be helpful to explore if assistive technology can help you be more productive.

Writing

If you have difficulties with writing or typing you may want to try dictation software, having your computer or device type what you say.

There are two ways to access dictation software for free, which is in-built for [Mac users](#), or available through [Microsoft Word](#) for PC users. If you do not find either of these options work very accurately with your voice you may wish to explore using a form of the Dragon software.

[Dragon Anywhere](#) is an app from the world leaders in dictation software which adapts to your voice and works very accurately for most users. Versions are also available for [desktops and laptops](#).

Mind-mapping

Mind-mapping software allows you to create digital brainstorm and plan and organise your work visually. Popular programmes

include [MindView](#) and [MindManager](#)

Have your computer read to you

If you have you have difficulties reading a screen for a prolonged period, or find it easier to process verbal information, you may want to try out the various free and easy ways in which your computer or device can read to you:

- Most digital documents can be read out loud [using built-in functionality](#).
- Browsers such as Google Chrome have [read aloud extensions](#) for use on webpages.
- Alternatively you can copy and paste any text into the [Text-to-speech Reader website](#).

Help making your device easier to use

The following webpages contain a lot of useful tips and tricks to make your device easier to use:

- [My computer my way](#)
- [Diversity and Ability resources list](#)

OTHER USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

The [National Autistic Society](#) offer advice and information on preparing for university life

LSE also has its own website to provide information for current autistic students. It is part of the [autism & uni](#) project