# STUDYING AT LSE

## A guide for students with a long-term health condition

# WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is all students at the LSE who have long-term or permanent medical condition, such as:

- CFS/ME
- MS
- Fibromyalgia
- Endometriosis
- Cancer, or on-going cancer treatment

The above list is not exhaustive, and every long-term medical condition and personal health situation brings with it its own challenges, though commonly students with these conditions experience symptoms such as:

- Fatigue
- Bouts of ill-health
- Pain
- Increased stress and anxiety
- Side effects from medication/treatment

We understand symptoms like these can make managing your studies alongside your health more difficult, and we have designed this guide to provide some practical information and tips which may be helpful during your time at LSE.

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## What do you need?

Think about what adjustments you had during your last experience of studying.

If you have not yet started your course, find out as much as you can about how it will be taught in order to identify what support you might need.

Think carefully about the logistics of your course: how many teaching sessions will you have in a week? How long is your journey to get to campus? Will you have to travel in rush-hour?

By finding out as much information as possible beforehand it will be easier to foresee potential difficulties, and help you plan how you will manage possible issues such as pain and fatigue.

## Get the right support

We understand that travelling to and from university and spending long days on campus can be tiring and uncomfortable with a long-term medical condition. Through the Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) we can ensure

you are provided with a priority locker in the library, and give you access to the private rest rooms on campus equipped with a bed.

We can create a My Adjustment (MA) so that your individual circumstances can be explained to those teaching you, allowing them to offer some flexibility where required.

MAs are created in collaboration with you and their purpose is to set-out what support and adjustments your teaching department need to offer you.

Details on how to register with DWS can be found on [our website](#).

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

## Organisation and time management

Be realistic about your workload and plan your studies accordingly. There may be times when ill-health unforeseeably makes you fall behind, but prior planning and organisation will help lessen the impact if this does happen.

You will have competing deadlines and concurrent projects – make a timeline of when you will start work on each of them, and build-in contingency in case things get in the way.

## Find your happy place

Figuring out how, where and when you work most effectively can really help with productivity.

People are often more productive at different points in the day and work better in different environments. Whether you are a morning person who enjoys a bustling atmosphere while you work, or a night-owl who prefers a quiet corner, explore the campus and the surrounding area – find where you feel most comfortable and play to your strengths.

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

If you are working remotely or predominantly online, remember the importance of having a comfortable workstation, and the need to take regular breaks.

## Notetaking

If you struggle with notetaking in lectures you can always re-watch the session on recordings made via Lecture Capture, or make your own recording of it (with the teacher's permission) to revisit later wherever Lecture Capture is not used.

## 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 and studying.

Try not to judge yourself negatively on the days you can't focus; seek support during those days, rest, and know you can return to studying at a less challenging time.

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.

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

## 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; consider putting your phone on do not disturb mode.

Be sure to 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 just because you may suffer setbacks, and it might take you longer to do something compared to your peers, this doesn't mean you can't do it well. Recognise and understand your strengths – pace yourself and find a way of working which works for you!

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 brainstorms 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

Disability Rights UK is the leading charity of its kind in the UK, run by and for people with experience of disability or health conditions.

They have a number of useful education related factsheets as well as a Disabled Students Helpline that provides advice to disabled students who are studying in England.