



STUDYING AT LSE

**A guide for students with a specific
learning difficulty**

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is for all LSE students who have a diagnosis of dyslexia, dyspraxia, or other specific learning difficulty.

Dyslexia is a condition estimated to affect 6% of the population, and can be understood as a pattern of strengths and weakness whereby pronounced abilities in some areas contrast with unexpected levels of difficulty with tasks such as reading at speed, spelling, writing, and sequencing information.

Dyspraxia, or developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD) can affect co-ordination, though in the context of university it can be associated with difficulties in structuring work, and challenges with time management and self-organisation.

Being neurodiverse is often associated with strengths such as integrative thinking, creativity capacity for insight, pattern recognition, visual processing skills, and social-emotional and relationship skills. However, strengths can contrast with weaknesses that lead to difficulties being organised, structuring work and schedules, processing and remembering information.

The aim of this guide is to provide practical guidance and tips around studying at LSE with a specific learning difficulty.

STUDYING AT LSE

What do you need?

Think about what reasonable adjustments you need. Start by thinking about what adjustments you had during your last experience of studying; what worked and what didn't?

Take responsibility and be proactive in finding out what you need to perform at your best.

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 e.g. how might lectures and seminars differ to tutorials.

Get the right support

In order to access support and adjustments, such as extra time in exams, you will need to access the service. Details on how to do this can be found on [our website](#).

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

STUDY TIPS

Organisation and time management

Break up your work into smaller tasks and set mini deadlines for working on these smaller tasks, making sure you allocate enough time for each task e.g. 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.

Take a minute to prioritise your work according to what's due first and what is likely to take you the most or least time to complete.

Outline a task before you start. What materials will you need to gather? How long will it take you to write-up your research? Figure out what steps you'll have to take so you know what you'll need, and how much time you need to allow to get it done.

Where you work can really impact how you work. Organise your workspace so you are comfortable, have enough space and minimal distractions.

Notetaking

If you can, read through the lecture slides before it takes place. Make questions and notes – jot-down some ideas and mark bits you find interesting or confusing.

Make notes in question and answer format. This will improve your encoding of the information into memory.

Consider dictating your notes after the session i.e. saving them as voice notes on your phone. This can allow you to be more creative and capture the details all at once.

Memory skills

Always test and ask yourself questions about the information you want to learn - use testing as a key part of your learning process.

As with notetaking, recording information in question and answer format can help things stick.

Makes links and associations between topics and things you

already know. Try making a mnemonic by associating information with a memorable saying, poem, song, or even a creating your own story. Linking new information with existing memories is an invaluable technique; the more connections you can make to new information, the easier it will be to remember.

Reading

When reading for your programme, 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.

Always preview the reading material. Read the summary, headings, subheadings and the first line of every paragraph. Develop different approaches to reading.

Sometimes you do need to read every single word; a quick scan to extract the key points can be enough. Be clear on the purpose of your reading and don't believe you always have to read everything to get the information you need.

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

Essay writing

Make sure you have fully understood the question before you start to plan your answer; try to paraphrase the question.

Always plan. Plan before you start to research, and then re-plan after you have done it.

An effective plan consists of a basic structure with subheadings, and an outline of what content to include in each section.

After you complete a writing assignment, read it aloud and record it on your phone. Listening to what you wrote as you read it over several times can help you spot errors and identify edits you'd like to make. Listening as you read your notes also helps you understand and remember what you've learned.

Revision

Work in a quiet place with few distractions. Ear plugs or noise-cancelling headphones can help to block out noises that compete for your attention. Consider turning your phone to do not disturb mode to help you maintain focus.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Use visual thinking. Create visuals and models to work from e.g. symbols or doodles to help you thinking about and remember a concept.

Learn what works well for you. Do you like using mindmaps? Do you like recording your notes and listening back to them? Do you benefit from standing up and explaining things as if you were a lecturer?

Use past papers to know what to expect, and practise answering whole questions within the time limit.

And remember...

Believe in yourself!

Being neurodiverse teaches you to budget your time, develop strategies and work hard; skills that will support your success at LSE and beyond.

Remember that just because 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 - 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 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](#)

[British Dyslexia Association](#)

[Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

[Yale Center for Dyslexia](#)

[Top ten tips for Student with Dyslexia from Milkround.com](#)

[Open University Tip for Students With Dyslexia](#)

[Reading University Tips for Students with Dyslexia](#)

[Beating Dyslexia.com Study Tips](#)

[Study Skills for University Students with Dyslexia Book](#)