

## Good Practice Guide:

### Inclusive Teaching for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) including Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia



#### Why make your teaching more inclusive, why make reasonable adjustments?

- The School's Strategic Objectives<sup>1</sup> encourage departments to "...lead in the provision of excellent disciplinary and interdisciplinary education", (ensure) that "...graduates are well informed, critical, analytically sophisticated and globally employable", and (ensure) that "...students and staff interact to build a dynamic learning community that reflects the School's distinctive identity."
- Reflecting on inclusion and reasonable adjustments in your teaching provides an opportunity to refresh your practice ensuring it is accessible to students with diverse study experiences as well as disabilities.
- Meet the needs and requirement of diverse student body including disabled students ensuring the School meets its legal 'anticipatory' duty to students under the 'Equality Act (2010)
- "... in the midst of rapid change in higher education, a crucial priority is to ensure that our students have the benefit of great teaching and a rewarding educational experience." Dame Minouche Shafik.

#### Specific Learning Difficulties

SpLDs (Specific Learning Difficulties – or learning differences) are thought to affect 10% of the UK population. Most common amongst students are dyslexia and dyspraxia, with a small number of diagnoses of dysgraphia or dyscalculia. In practice very many of the characteristics co-occur and overlap. SpLDs affect the way information is processed and learned, which can have a very significant impact on formal education and study, and self-confidence. Research shows SpLDs are neurological and not linked to intellectual ability, socio-economic or language diversity. Students with SpLD often have significant compensatory strengths and can be creative and innovative thinkers. A predominant strategy for pre-University students with SpLD is to work harder for longer. This is not a realistic long term strategy for University as to do so means students miss out on valuable opportunities for social and cultural capital.

#### Impact on Study

- Difficulties working under time constraints - especially in exams/ lectures - when trying simultaneously to write, read, listen and extract full meaning; students with SpLDs often find it harder to recognise errors in their own work when editing and proofreading, thus needing more time to finalise written work;
- Issues with reading and writing - individuals with SpLDs might have very strong verbal abilities, but struggle with extracting information from written material.
- There may be a significant discrepancy between the student's ability to discuss topics in classes and office hours, and the quality of their written work including planning, structuring and sequencing ideas.

#### Who can I work with to help my teaching and what resources are available to me?

- Your Department's dedicated Teaching and Learning Centre departmental adviser listed at <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Support-for-LSE-Departments/Support-for-LSE-departments>
- Make use of the 'Assessment Toolkit' at <https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Teaching-and-Learning-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/LSE-Assessment-Toolkit>
- To discuss **My Adjustments**, seek advice on reasonable adjustments and **Central Exam Adjustments** contact the Disability and Wellbeing Service <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/student-services/disability-and-wellbeing-service>

**FOR EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING EXAMPLES SEE OVER**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lse.ac.uk/about-lse/Image-assets/PDF/Education-Strategy.pdf>

### **Inclusive Teaching examples**

- Structure contact hours strongly, opening with an outline, flagging changes in topic, offering recaps and concluding with major points. This helps students follow the logic of the session, and if their concentration slips they can more easily resume their engagement.
- In lectures introduce new terminology in context with concepts explained.
- Avoid slides with significant quantities of text; keep slide text short and clear.
- Circulate materials you will use during contact hours in advance in digital form, where possible. Label diagrams within handouts.
- Academic Advisers should give clear information in advance about field work, study abroad and proactively offer named staff to help with ensuring access to study related activity.
- Provide lecture presentations on a pastel coloured background, handouts on yellow or off-white paper.
- Number lecture slides to assist with referencing during note-taking.
- Publicise deadlines in advance and clearly describe academic tasks.
- Provide clear written feedback even when a face-to-face feedback discussion takes place. Students can thus avoid having to write up feedback while discussing it, and can have a helpful point of reference for later.
- Online discussions may be particularly taxing, and if used, it should be emphasised that participation and content are of interest rather than grammar/spelling.

**'inclusive learning and teaching recognises all student's entitlement to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, removes barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preferences' [HEA]**

### **Reasonable Adjustment examples**

- Provision of reading lists and lecture/teaching materials (includes handouts, notes, slides, and articles for discussion) in advance enabling adequate time for the student to prepare in light of their disability.
- Permission to record lectures or take notes on a computer, and access to lecture capture.
- Library adjustments including extended loans.
- Examination adjustments: such as extra time, use of a computer, or rest breaks.
- Signpost to Assistive technology training via the IT Help Desk
- Signpost to the Disability and Wellbeing Service for mentoring and study skills support - to develop good planning, efficient and appropriate study strategies and coping strategies.
- Proactively ensuring students aware of Office Hours provision and Disability and Wellbeing Service so as to keep relevant colleagues informed of issues (if any) and to enable difficulties to be addressed prior to reaching a crisis.