

Focus on Inclusive Teaching

How do Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) impact on studying?

"You have got the ideas exactly like a painter, you know exactly what colours you want to use... but if you come to put it on paper, it is very different, it is a nightmare"

"I find that sometimes, if I'm not really concentrating on what I'm saying, when I'm speaking, I manage to get the order in what I'm saying jumbled up"

The impact of an SpLD will vary from individual to individual and will depend upon a range of factors such as the time since diagnosis, the range of strategies already developed and the support available. Importantly, it should be noted that there may be times when an SpLD will become more noticeable and this can further impact on a student's performance, for example, in different contexts, at different times, and under different pressures.

- **Reading:** accuracy, speed, absorbing information quickly and comprehension may be affected. Reading aloud may be a dread.
- **Handwriting:** Speed and legibility of handwriting - may lack fluency and regularity.
- **Spelling:** at best may be 'uncertain'.
- **Grammar and punctuation, ability to recognise errors.**
- **Planning, organising, ordering and structuring ideas in writing.**
- **Notetaking:** listening and writing at the same time may be impossible.
- **Short-term memory limitations:** affect ability to remember instructions, reading, written work.
- **General organisation and time management.**
- **Placement settings:** reading and notetaking at speed; writing up records and reports accurately, form filling, multi-tasking.

Supporting and teaching students with SpLDs

Supervision

- Provide guidance with reading lists and / or directed reading tasks.
- Give adequate time to assimilate information and prepare answers to verbal questions.
- Use concise, clear, and explicit language and break information down if task details are long.
- Provide instructions in written format if required.
- Provide exemplars and models of expected work / assignments.

Lectures

- Use Panopto where possible or utilise an alternative format for disseminating the information.
- Provide copies of PowerPoint presentations or any handouts, lecture notes, discussion documents, seminar topics / notes in advance in electronic format / Blackboard.
- Provide PowerPoint presentations on a pastel coloured background where possible.
- Number PowerPoint slides to assist with referencing during notetaking.
- Provide a synopsis at the start of a lecture and effective signposting throughout. At the conclusion of each lecture, review major points.
- Provide a glossary of key terms.

Placements

- Ensure good liaison for preparedness - draw up a plan for the placement at the beginning with the student highlighting important information and dates.
- Provide clear instructions and expectations and check understanding.
- Give instructions in both verbal and written format wherever possible.
- Recognise and discuss possible anxieties / stress points.
- Look to individual learning style.
- Where possible, control workload and avoid time pressure.
- Provide a map of the building.

Fieldwork and study abroad

- Give clear information in advance about fieldwork and year abroad study to allow the student to familiarise themselves prior to the event.

Marking

- Refer to the *Guidelines for marking and feedback for students with SpLDs* at: https://www.bangor.ac.uk/studentservices/disability/documents/AUG_17_FINAL_Marking_Guidelines_Eng.pdf
- Note that in oral assessment some students may have specific difficulties that affect word finding, flow of presentation and pronunciation.

