

Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties in Psychology

The psychology department has agreed that many reasonable adjustments are to be embedded in our teaching provision for all students. The agreed interpretation of the SSU recommendations are summarised in the Table below. Students with specific learning disabilities whose needs are covered by these recommendations will be highlighted in **green** on Sussex Direct, and there is no need to read their support documents.

NB: Students whose needs are not covered by the standard reasonable adjustments will be highlighted in **yellow**. We do not expect all contributing lecturers to read this material, but it is the responsibility of the **course organiser** to look at the information and pass on the support requirements to other faculty contributing lectures to the course. All seminar tutors and faculty involved in setting or marking work *are* expected to look at the disability support information for these students.

Reasonable adjustments and support arrangements	SSU Recommendations (& explanatory notes in italics)	Psychology Department Arrangements
Reading lists	Reading lists to be made available in advance <i>(by advance we mean the start of academic year for autumn term courses, week 10 of preceding term for other terms).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading lists are provided at the start of individual courses in the <i>Course Handbook</i>. • Reading lists are available from the Course Information section of the departmental website http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/1-3-9.html – students who want information further in advance can refer to this for previous years’ handbooks (where applicable)
Directed reading	Identification of key texts to enable more focused reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reading lists should make a distinction between essential reading and non- essential reading.</i> • <i>Students should always be aware that failure to consider any non-essential reading will limit performance irrespective of this recommendation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings in the <i>Course Handbook</i> will be labelled so as to distinguish between essential/core reading and additional material.
Preparatory reading	Specific reading lists for seminars to be provided in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar readings are provided at the start of individual courses in the <i>Course Handbook</i> (as above).
Outline lecture notes and OHP/PP slides	Outline lecture notes and copies of OHTs/presentations available in advance on the intranet. Where this is not appropriate, eg. for interactive lectures, to consider what alternative information or materials might usefully be provided as a reasonable adjustment (SSU or TLDU can advise) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Definition: Short precis of key concepts and material covered.</i> • <i>Bullet points and/or copies of powerpoint slides are usually sufficient but they should not just be a list of areas covered.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of OHTs/Powerpoint slides are provided to all students via Sussex Direct. • NB: Need to provide both pdf and powerpoint format so that students can manipulate the material as required • The material should be available one day in advance of the lecture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes should be made available in electronic format so students can make their own alterations to format. 	
Accessibility of materials	<p>All materials, including handouts, reading packs and course information, to meet accessibility standards e.g: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/equalities/documents/presenting-materials.doc (12pt font, sans serif, not right justified, avoid heavy use of capitalisation or underlining etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials, including handouts, and course information, will be provided in Ariel font, size 12 and be available on the web http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/1-3-9.html or through Study Direct We are not at present able to guarantee the format of study pack readings, as we are constrained by copyright issues etc.
Tape recording	<p>A tape recorder may be recommended for students who are unable to write by hand, or continue to write over a prolonged period, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a student with dyslexia who has difficulties taking notes whilst listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students may use a tape recorder to tape lectures. Students will provide their own tape recorders. The department is exploring routine recording of Chichester-based lectures, with sound files to be available on Study Direct.
'In-class' tests	<p>Approved reasonable adjustments to be made to all in-class tests, information about arrangements to be conveyed in a timely fashion to student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course organisers are responsible for making sure that the appropriate arrangements are made (e.g. extra time, separate accommodation) Students with SpLDs should be reminded to place stickers on their tests.
Lengthy assignments	<p>Receptiveness to requests from students with SpLD for support with lengthy assignments to ensure that work is developing along the right lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Lengthy' is intended to mean an extended piece of work and does not relate directly to word length. A preliminary meeting to clarify expectations and identify the basis of the assignment can be sought by students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are available in office hours to offer advice to any student who needs it Students may seek feedback on an essay plan (or alternative format for other forms of assignment) on request (short meeting during office hours or via email). Students should approach (email) course lecturers to set up such arrangements
Marking of assessed work	<p>Marking of coursework bearing a dyslexia sticker will be in accordance with examiners' handbook guidelines. See below* for details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes
Feedback to students	<p>Feedback, of a consistent quality, will be provided, to give guidance on ways of improving assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided through standard feedback sheets as part of the marking process.

*** The UG and PG examiners' handbooks state:**

When marking dyslexic students' scripts, examiners are asked to focus on the clarity of the argument, rather than on details of expression. Try to separate marking of transcription errors and marking of content. However, while sympathetic treatment of assessed work submitted by dyslexic students implies the disregarding of errors of spelling and grammar, the communication itself must be effective. If academic standards are to be safeguarded, sympathetic treatment cannot extend to written expression so poor that coherence and intelligibility are at issue. In effect, examiners ought not to penalise errors that a good copy editor could put right.

The written work of students with dyslexia may be characterised by one, or in some cases, several, of the following:

- *omitted words or punctuation;*
- *excessive or misplaced punctuation;*
- *repeated information or phrases – this would not be detected by a spellchecker or by a dyslexic student proofreading their own draft;*
- *unsophisticated language structures – in order to avoid grammatical errors, many dyslexics adopt simplified language structures, which do not necessarily denote unsophisticated thinking;*
- *simplified vocabulary – in order to avoid spelling errors, many dyslexics students adopt a simplified vocabulary when writing;*
- *difficulties with sequencing or word-finding may produce a stilted style of writing which may not match the student's oral performance in seminars etc.*

Although assessed work, other than examination scripts, is likely to be word-processed and spell-checked, examiners should be aware of the limitations of a spellchecker. Some of the problems likely to remain in dyslexic students' work after spell-checking include:

- *homophone substitutions (e.g. there/their, effect/affect, course/coarse);*
- *phonetic equivalents (e.g. frenetic for phonetic, homerfone for homophone);*
- *incorrect word substitution (distance for disturbance);*
- *American spelling (e.g. colorful, fueling).*

(Paragraphs 7.18 – 7.21 in the UG handbook and 7.6 – 7.9 in the PG handbook)