UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

School of Health and Social Care

Supporting Students with Dyslexia on Placements

For Placement Staff

2015

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Contents

	Page
What is Dyslexia	3
Support to Students with Dyslexia	4-5
Reasonable Adjustments	6
Memory & Processing	7
Motor Skills & Coordination	8
Communication	9
Reading	10
Literacy	11
Feedback from Students & Practice Assessors	12
Useful Contacts	13
Recommended Websites	14

Please Note: Reference to the term Practice Assessors is inclusive of Practice Educators, On-Site Supervisors, Contact Tutors, Mentors and any other colleagues who support practice learning.

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

What is Dyslexia?

The [British Dyslexia Association](http://www.bdaDyslexia.org.uk/) defines dyslexia as 'a specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills. It is likely to be present at birth and to be life-long in its effects. It is characterised by difficulties with phonological processing, rapid naming, working memory, processing speed, and the automatic development of skills that may not match up to an individual's other cognitive abilities.' It can affect an individual's:

- Reading, spelling and writing

- Numeracy skills, such as making calculations, mental arithmetic, and times-tables.

- Getting organised, meeting deadlines and personal organisation.

- Memory

- Sequencing, such as getting dates and numbers in the right order.

- Concentration

It is considered a general term for disorders that involve difficulty in learning to read or interpret words, letters, and other symbols, but do not affect general intelligence.

Dyslexia affects around 1 in 10 of us, and often presents itself in various different ways. Every person with dyslexia is unique; however they may share similar characteristics, and may experience issues with:

- Their 'short-term memory (or working memory), which may not be as efficient as that of individuals without dyslexia

- Their speed of processing information may be slower than for those without dyslexia' (Godwin, 2012)

The British Dyslexia Association website holds a lot of information about dyslexia and offers advice on various aspects for students and assessors: http://www.bdaDyslexia.org.uk/

Many students will be aware that they have dyslexia prior to enrolling at university; however some may find that the support services available at University help to identify issues that they have been struggling with. The University has a successful support system in place which is very accessible. Please see page 4 for further information on these services.

A main component of a student's degree within the School of Health and Social Care will involve an assessment of competencies on placement. Students may find that their dyslexia presents in a different way when it comes to placement, it is therefore encouraged that students share any difficulties with the placement team and the staff supporting them on placement. Sharing this information offers the placement and the staff supporting students an opportunity to discuss the support that can be offered, along with what support the student requires. It is essential that the student and the placement are aware of the expectations of one another to allow for a supportive environment which will offer the individual the best learning opportunity.

This guide has been put together to explain the support available through the University to students with dyslexia. It also includes strategies which students and placement staff have used in the past to ensure that a placement learning opportunity has been successful with the right level of support on offer for the student.

UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Support to Students with Dyslexia

The University has a Student Wellbeing Centre which has a dedicated team who are able to support students with their learning needs. The Wellbeing Centre discuss student specific needs in relation to academic support as well as placement specific support. The team will develop a Learning Support Plan with the student. This plan, with the student's permission, can be shared with the placement provider.

During the students' placement application process, students are asked if they have a Learning Support Plan and to detail any strategies that they have in place which will help them to manage their specific learning needs throughout the placement. There is an area for students to indicate whether there are additional measures which they think will help to support them during their placement period. Students choose whether or not they wish to share this information with the Student Wellbeing Centre, their placement support team at the University and their placements; students are strongly encouraged to share these details, as this allows for reasonable adjustments to be made within the placement, should it be required.

Placements have a responsibility to provide opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or disability. It is illegal for placements to discriminate against a student with a disability. It is expected that placements will make reasonable adjustments (defined on page 6) to allow for students to be placed and to access successful learning opportunities.

It is also expected that student's take responsibility for their own learning and where possible discuss their specific learning needs at their pre-placement meeting or where possible to allow the placement to support the student.

There are a number of ways in which a student declares their learning needs, including:

- During a University open day - face to face
- During the application process
- Drop in sessions with the student Wellbeing Centre on a 1:1 basis
- Disclosure (self-assessment) forms

There are a number of support systems in place for use during placement; these are identified on a Learning Support Plan:

- Where possible, a student can be provided with a USB version of TextHelp Read and Write to assist them with reading and understanding information whilst on placement.
- Where confidentiality allows, a student can take their digital recorder into placement.
- Additional time and assistance (if required) with reading essential placement based information.
- It is recommended that you have any written documentation proof read; please approach your placement assessor or personal tutor for advice and support.

If issues arise within the placement environment which relate to a student's dyslexia then a concerns process can be initiated. If a meeting is held to discuss these concerns and it is felt appropriate, then a representative from the Wellbeing Centre can be invited to advise and offer recommendations.

UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

The Student Wellbeing Centre also offer telephone support to students if they are on placement. Contact details are included at the end of this guide.

Some placements themselves may have a dyslexia policy; it would be useful to look through this at the earliest possibility.

The Student Wellbeing Centre holds drop-in services:

Monday – Friday 12-2pm and on Thursday an additional drop-in session is held between 5-7pm. Times may vary outside of term time, these times are announced on the service's Facebook and twitter pages:

www.Facebook.com/uniofLincolnSWC
www.twitter.com/UniofLincolnSWC

and are also circulated via student email.

It is essential that placement staff are able to assess all students at the same level, with the support, strategies and reasonable adjustments in place.

UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments are a key part of the Equality Act 2010, and are defined within chapter 2, section 20 of the Act, which can be found here. It is expected that any placement supporting a student, who has declared that they have a disability, makes reasonable adjustments. These reasonable adjustments will support the student with their learning and development and will allow for practice assessors to assess the student's competencies in a supportive environment.

There are opportunities for students throughout their placement processes to declare their disability and to discuss strategies and progress. The University encourages students to share their needs with the University, the Student Wellbeing Centre and their placement as soon as possible. We also recommend that any student specific needs are discussed at interviews or pre-placement meetings with their placement assessors; this gives an opportunity for students and placements to plan for the placement period as well as offering an opportunity for the placement assessors to provide any useful reading in advance, which will give the student time to process any crucial information.

Dyslexia can present itself in a number of ways; it is worth noting that adjustments which have been made for one student may not work as well for other students. These differing aspects of dyslexia may include difficulty with:

- Memory & Processing
- Motor Skills & Co-ordination
- Communication
- Reading
- Literacy

In addition, students may be impacted emotionally by their dyslexia, and may struggle with self-confidence. This can affect their performance within the placement environment, this highlights the importance of providing an environment that supports and develops the student to the best of their ability. Providing such an environment will assist with the student's confidence and will also offer practice assessors an appropriate, learning opportunity, in which, a student can be assessed.

It is unusual that students with dyslexia will have difficulties in all of these areas; however within this guide we have addressed each area individually and suggested strategies which can be used in some instances. As stated above each student with dyslexia is unique, and therefore some strategies may be successful with one student, but not with another.

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Memory & Processing

Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties linked to memory and processing, these include:

- Short attention span and distractibility
- Ordering their ideas
- Remembering names, job roles, contact details, telephone messages and placement specific terminology
- Retaining information – including instruction and observations taken
- Organisational difficulties which may affect searching for information alphabetically, organising workload and commitments and multi-tasking
- Processing written information, including dates, times, appointments, and contact numbers
- Communicating accurate messages verbally with colleagues
- Following set tasks in the correct sequence, which might affect their ability to learn routines and interventions quickly
- Ability to manage the balance between Academic and Practice elements of the course
- Time allocation for specific tasks and being able to complete them within expected timeframes

- Responding appropriately and within a timely manner where the demands of placement are more urgent
- Having a clear idea of their responsibilities and expectations

Strategies for Practice Assessors:

- Develop a plan for the placement period at the beginning in collaboration with the student, to include vital information such as: Important meeting dates, measurable learning outcomes against competencies required, expectations of the student and the placement, information regarding the building and environment (including maps where necessary), placement/induction packs.
- Provide additional time to discuss routines and administrative procedures
- Explain tasks more than once, in a clear way, with both written and verbal instruction where possible
- Provide numerous opportunities for students to observe yourself and other practitioners during contact with service users; encourage the student to discuss and reflect on what they might do.

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Motor Skills & Co-ordination

Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties linked to motor skills & co-ordination, which include:

- Learning how to undertake specific sequences or interventions, due to processing and retaining information
- Motor skill co-ordination difficulties related to the right and left hand side of the body.
- Handwriting documents in a clear and orderly manner

Strategies for Practice Assessors:

- Repeat demonstration of skills on more than one occasion to embed learning
- where suitable allow student opportunities to practice skills
- Closely supervise practice until the student is confident
- Tools or aids- such as diagrams or flow charts
- Allow students extra time when writing up documentation

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Communication

Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties linked to Communication, which include:

- Expressing ideas clearly
- Learning and remembering practice based language and terminology
- Understanding long complex instructions
- Staying focused when giving clear instructions
- Finding the correct words to use
- Understanding the meaning of words which have more than one meaning

Strategies for Practice Assessors:

- Use aids or tools which can support with terminology, where appropriate allow students to record specific language and terminology on paper or using a dictaphone
- Provide written information which details any abbreviations or terminology that may be used within the placement period
- Ensure instructions are given clearly
- Provide feedback in a direct manner, using clear statements
- Repeat instructions given and welcome any questions
- Ask student to repeat terminology and or instructions to embed learning

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Reading

Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties linked to reading, which include:

- Skimming or scanning text
- Reading out loud
- Pronouncing terminology, placement language or unfamiliar words
- Reading text on white backgrounds, for instance on white boards, computer screens or in documents
- Understanding charts/tables which include information presented both vertically and horizontally
- Reading accurately when coming to words they are unsure of
- Recognising, mispronunciation, and misinterpretation of information
- Reading in loud busy environments with distractions
- Distinguishing between two words which look familiar

Strategies for Practice Assessors:

- Offer students a quiet area for them to process the information they are required to read
- Offer lots of opportunities to discuss and reflect on information the student has read
- Give the student extra time to read, if required
- If there is a lot of background reading or recommended reading to complete, provide the student with a lot of notice
- Inform the student of main areas of text that might be useful
- If using whiteboards, use colour to highlight areas and to reduce confusion
- If writing documents for students, ensure that information is presented in clear structured sentences, for main areas of interest use bullet points, or highlight information, and try not to use abbreviations or placement specific language

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Literacy

Students with dyslexia may experience difficulties linked to writing and spelling, which include:

- The spelling of placement specific language and terminology
- Scanning or skimming documentation
- Summarising information
- Writing and spelling correctly when under time constraints
- Presenting documents orderly with clear handwriting
- Completing placement specific forms accurately
- Remembering sequences and ordering them correctly, for example phone numbers or abbreviations
- Distinguishing between two words which sound the same
- Using the correct language and terms
- Transferring their thoughts onto paper accurately
- Writing in a clear and concise manner

Strategies for Practice Assessors:

- Give students extra time to write up placement documents, for example forms, reports and case studies
- Allow students to take notes, where appropriate, and write them up neatly later
- Proof reading the students placement work
- Provide examples of reports and other placement documents, to give the student an idea of format and language that should be included
- Point out main areas that students should focus on when writing up documents
- Allow students to record data in flow charts or tables
- If appropriate, allow students to type on coloured backgrounds with fonts that are clear and simple.

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Feedback from Students and Practice Assessors

During the process of writing this guide, the practice placement team have liaised with students and staff involved within placements. Many of them suggested similar strategies to those listed above which they found useful during placement. However, some suggested specific techniques that they found extremely helpful, these included:

- Allowing extra time when writing reports/case notes
- Arranging proof reading of documentation with placement support staff
- Creating a calendar with important dates highlighted – such as submission dates, reflective journal review dates, learning agreement & midpoint review dates, and supervision dates
- Creating an A-Z book which holds key terminology, user names and reminders
- Requesting a quiet space to carry out complex phone calls, writing up case notes/reports
- Writing down key words from assessment criteria to assist with understanding, creating visual aids with key words
- Using different colour paper and overlays
- Ensuring that they write clear notes from supervision sessions, which have clear headings and action points
- Creating a diary, which is updated with supervision dates, deadlines and goals
- Discussing support needs from the pre-placement meeting and throughout the placement to ensure that all staff are aware of what is needed and can make reasonable adjustments
- Making supervision sessions practical
- Repeating information within supervision and ensuring that things are covered thoroughly
- Using a dictaphone where appropriate (consider confidentiality throughout placement if this is to be used)
- Develop a routine within the placement, allowing flexiblity
- Discuss early on their preferred working methods with placement staff and university support.

If you are able to discuss these ideas with your student, they may be able to develop their own list of helpful techniques which will make the most of their practice learning opportunity.

The placement team welcome your advice and would appreciate any further techniques which you have found useful when supporting students. You may wish to include some further advice in this guide to support other students and placement assessors. If you do think of a strategy that you use successfully during placement which has not been covered – please get in touch with Rachael Adams on raadams@lincoln.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Useful Contacts and Further Information

Student Wellbeing Centre contacts:

Main telephone number: 01522 886400

Email: studentwellbeing@lincoln.ac.uk

All team members are responsible for dyslexia support and can be contacted as above, students may also have their own advisor who can be contacted following their assessment and confirmation.

Social Work Practice Placement Team:

Michelle Ellis	Rachael Adams	Heather Saunders
Placement Administrator	Placement Development Worker	Placement Coordinator
mellis@lincoln.ac.uk	raadams@lincoln.ac.uk	hsaunders@lincoln.ac.uk
01522 886336	01522 886720	01522 886868

Ian Mathews	Diane Simpson
Module Coordinator	Module Coordinator
imathews@lincoln.ac.uk	dsimpson@lincoln.ac.uk
01522 886936	01522 837019

Nursing Placement Team:

Karen Johnston	Emma Morton	Kelly Skidmore	Debbi Hinchliffe
Practice Lead	Placement Administrator	Placement Administrator	Placement Administrator
01522 837788	01522 886322	01522 837330	01522 837771
kjohnston@lincoln.ac.uk	Emorton@lincoln.ac.uk	Kskidmore@lincoln.ac.uk	Dhinchliffe@lincoln.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

Recommended Websites

Dyslexia Action - http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/

British Dyslexia Association - http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/

Dyslexia Foundation - http://www.dyslexia-help.org/

Dyslexia Association - http://www.dyslexia.uk.net/

Dyslexia Lincolnshire - http://www.dyslexialincolnshire.org.uk/

Dyslexia Lincs - http://www.dyslexialincs.co.uk/

Dyslexia Institute Lincoln - http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/OrganisationDetails.aspx?orgcode=3780

Student Wellbeing Centre - https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/home/campuslife/studentsupport/studentservices/studentwellbeingcentre/

UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN