



UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN



School of Health and Social Care
Supporting Students with Dyslexia on Placements

For Students

2015



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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.

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 maths, 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. It offers advice on strategies that can be put into place that help you deal with areas you may struggle with. The website is helpful in offering advice to Students and Educators: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Many students may be aware that they have dyslexia prior to enrolling at university; however you might find that the support services available at the University help to identify other issues that you have been struggling with.

Some students may not be aware that they have dyslexia, if you think this may be the case the Student Wellbeing Centre hold drop in sessions throughout the week. You will be able to discuss your needs on a 1:1 basis and will receive advice on how to get support. Please see page 4 for further information on the Student Wellbeing Centre and what support can be offered.

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

This guide has been put together to explain the support 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.



The University has a Student Wellbeing Centre which has a dedicated team who are able to support you with your learning needs. The Wellbeing Centre will be able to discuss your needs and will talk you through what support is on offer to you academically as well as during your placements. The team will develop a Learning Support Plan with you if necessary. This plan, with your permission, can be shared with the placement provider.

During your placement application/allocation process, which will be discussed with you near to the placement period, you will have an opportunity to disclose whether you have a learning support plan and to detail any strategies that you have in place which will help you to manage your specific learning needs throughout the placement. There is also an area for you to indicate whether there are additional measures which you think will help to support you during placement. You are able to choose whether or not you wish to share this information with the placement team at the University and your placements; however, we strongly encourage you to share these details, as it will allow for reasonable adjustments to be made within the placement if 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 you take responsibility for your own learning and where possible discuss your specific learning needs at pre-placement meetings or where possible to

allow the placement to support you effectively.

The Student Wellbeing Centre

There are a number of ways in which you can declare your learning needs, including:

- During a University open day - face to face
- During the application process
- Drop in sessions with the Student Wellbeing team on a 1:1 basis
- Disclosure (self-assessment) forms will be made available either on induction week or from the school office. This assessment will be dealt with confidentially and will assist you in recognising any need for further support. If you score highly you are encouraged to attend a drop in session at the Student Wellbeing Centre, where further support can be offered to you

If you already have a diagnosis of dyslexia you can attend a drop-in session at the centre. An advisor will discuss with you what support is available and will devise a Learning Support Plan with you, if necessary.

If you suspect that you may have dyslexia the Wellbeing Centre can support you with obtaining a diagnosis. In the first instance you should either complete a self-assessment form available from the school office or attend a one to one drop in session at the centre. You will be asked to complete a specific learning difference screener, which only takes around 5 minutes to complete. From this screener a score is collated which will be used to assess your needs. There may be three outcomes from this:

1. You may not score enough to require further assessments, if this is the case; the Wellbeing Centre will recommend what support you can access without a diagnosis and where this can be accessed.
 2. Where your score is below an indicative threshold the Wellbeing Centre can organise additional assessment with the Dyslexia Action service.
 3. If further assessment is recommended from either process then you can be sent for a full diagnostic test. If dyslexia is confirmed the Wellbeing service will look at support on a 1:1 basis where a Learning Support Plan will be compiled. They can also support you with claiming Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and identify a dedicated learning support advisor, if required. Where dyslexia is not indicated the Wellbeing Centre will recommend alternative options.
- 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.

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.

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.

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 throughout your placement processes to declare a disability and to discuss strategies and progress. The placement team encourages you to share your 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 your placement assessors; this gives an opportunity for both yourself and the placement 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 you 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 you. These differing aspects of dyslexia may include difficulty with:

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

In addition, you may find that you are

impacted emotionally by your dyslexia, and may struggle with self-confidence. This can affect your performance within the placement, this highlights the importance of providing an environment that supports and develops you to the best of your ability. Sharing information on what support you need can help to provide such an environment that will assist with your confidence and also offer a learning opportunity, where you can be assessed fairly.

It is unusual that you 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 you may find some strategies successful but not others.



You may experience difficulties linked to memory and processing, these include:

- Short attention span and distractibility
- Ordering your 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 your 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

Possible Strategies:

- Agree realistic progression points with your assessor to ensure that learning outcomes are being met, record these clearly
- Take responsibility to discuss and develop an achievable plan with your placement assessor, which covers: Important meeting dates, measurable learning outcomes against competencies required, expectations of the placement and yourself.
- Make use of aids or tools – including coloured pens, small notebooks and telephone pads
- Devise your own strategies which help with memory and sequencing of task, these can include – flow charts, prompt sheets, electronic/paper diaries, post-it notes, to-do lists, or any other coping strategies that you have
- Taking messages, this will help to organise and prioritise your workload.
- Responding appropriately and within a timely manner where the demands of placement are more urgent
- Having a clear idea of their responsibilities and expectations



You 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

Possible Strategies:

- Request additional time
- Take responsibility to embed learning – practice skills you're unfamiliar with or ask for further demonstrations or information
- Record sequences in flow charts, diagrams, or methods which will support your learning
- Ask for a quiet area to write up information



You 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

Possible Strategies:

- Keep a record of words and terminology used within the placement environment
- Ask questions regarding language used, or keep a record of questions to ask regarding language at the next appropriate time
- Research the pronunciation of specific words if required



You 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 you are unsure of
- Recognising, mispronunciation, and misinterpretation of information
- Reading in loud busy environments with distractions
- Distinguishing between two words which look familiar

Possible Strategies:

- Use Text Help Read and Write software where appropriate
- Use diagrams or flow charts to map out important areas from documents, or highlight main areas
- Use coloured overlays in books to help you focus
- Change the background colour on text documents on the computer
- Use an online dictionary or thesaurus
- Record placement specific words or terminology along with their meanings to remind you of important words and how they are used within the placement environment
- Read little and often, this will help you to digest information more effectively
- Ask to read in a quiet area if the environment is loud and busy
- Ask your placement assessor to highlight main areas of importance within documents, where appropriate



You 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 your thoughts onto paper accurately
- Writing in a clear and concise manner

Possible Strategies:

- Plan any documents you need to write in an easy understandable format (flowcharts, mind mapping, tables)
- Plan out the format and layout of the document
- Ask your placement assessor or other staff members to proof read your documents, where appropriate
- Use spell check on your computer, if available
- Keep a record of words which are regularly used with their definitions, and refer to it when required
- Use a dictionary and a thesaurus
- Ask for templates of certain forms or documents you may be required to write, if these aren't available, you may be able to devise templates within the placement as a project, if appropriate
- Use a dictaphone or write notes which can help with writing up documents later, only do this if appropriate



During the process of writing this guide, the practice placement team have liaised with students and staff involved within placements. Many of them have 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 your assessment criteria to assist with understanding, creating visual aids with these key words
- Using different colour paper and overlays
- Ensuring that you write clear notes from supervision sessions, which have clear headings and action points
- Creating a diary, which you update with supervision dates, deadlines and goals
- Discussing your support needs from your pre-placement meeting and throughout your 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 your placement if this is to be used)
- Develop a routine within the placement, allowing yourself to be flexible
- Discuss early on your preferred working methods with placement staff and university support.

If you discuss these ideas with you placement assessor and placement support staff you may be able to use these strategies and ideas to support you during your placement period.

The placement team welcome your advice and would appreciate any further techniques which you have found useful, which you may wish to include 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

Useful Contacts



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, you may also have your own advisor who you can contact following your assessment and confirmation.

Social Work Practice Placement Team:

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

	
Ian Mathews Module Coordinator	Diane Simpson Module Coordinator
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01522 886936	01522 837019

Nursing Placement Team:

			
Karen Johnston Practice Lead	Emma Morton Placement Administrator	Kelly Skidmore Placement Administrator	Debbi Hinchliffe Placement Administrator
01522 837788	01522 886322	01522 837330	01522 837771
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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/>