

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



Dyslexia

Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia are more common than many people realise. The British Dyslexia Association has estimated that 1 in 10 of the population have some degree of dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a difficulty with written language: reading, writing and spelling. People with dyslexia may also have problems with organisation, memory and with spoken language.

The British Dyslexia Association explains it as follows:

- Dyslexia is one of a family of Specific Learning Difficulties. It often co-occurs with related conditions, such as dyspraxia, dyscalculia and attention deficit disorder.
- It is a lifelong, usually genetic, inherited condition and affects around 10% of the population
- Dyslexia occurs in people of all races, backgrounds and abilities, and varies from person to person: no two people will have the same set of strengths and weaknesses
- Dyslexia occurs independently of intelligence
- Dyslexia is really about information processing: dyslexic people may have difficulty processing and remembering information they see and hear. This can affect learning and the acquisition of literacy skills
- Students with dyslexia may need to develop further strategies to deal with the demands of Higher Education.

How might it affect my studies?

Being dyslexic has nothing to do with your intelligence and ability to think. Everyone is different, profile but most people with dyslexia are likely to have difficulties with some of the following:

- reading
- spelling
- writing
- speed of processing information
- organisational skills
- working memory
- motor co-ordination
- numeracy

In terms of your studies, this may mean, that you:

- take longer to complete reading
- do not notice spelling errors
- find it difficult to structure your arguments
- find it difficult to take notes while listening to lectures

Students with dyslexia often have some of these strengths:

- innovative thinking
- solve problems in original ways
- creative in many different ways

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University of
Reading

- make original connections
- work harder than their friends

These are qualities which are particularly valued at university. However, you may find some support helpful (especially in the first year) to adapt your way of working to fit in with the expectations of your tutors.

Strategies that may help

Talking to a Study Adviser, support staff and tutors, can help you to work out strategies for making the best use of your time; for example, by developing your note taking, reading and essay and report writing.

Some techniques which may help are:

- making notes in a more visual way e.g. on a spider diagram
- recording information and playing it back
- discussing ideas verbally before writing them down
- breaking work down into individual tasks
- thinking about outcomes before you start reading
- alternating modes of study (between reading and writing)
- using coloured overlays when reading
- using effective proof reading techniques

Different things work well for different people, so it is always a good idea to see a Study Adviser to discuss specific strategies that might work for you.

Useful websites

[Adult Dyslexia Access](#) - a really useful site with targeted advice for students in higher education.

[BRAINinHE](#) is a comprehensive resource on dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties at university with detailed definitions and suggested strategies

[British Dyslexia Association](#) (BDA) has general information and advice on dyslexia.

[Dyspraxia Foundation](#) - supports individuals affected by dyspraxia.