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| Student Disability Service  VIVA Guidelines for Staff Examining Students with a Specific Learning Difficulty | scan-cropped2col-transback |

You will be acting as an internal/external examiner for a student with a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia/dyspraxia/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)) who may have some of the difficulties outlined below. Memory recall and writing problems are most significant for the viva, so please be aware when you draw the student’s attention to grammatical and spelling errors.

Please also be aware that the student may need longer to find the words to explain parts of the thesis, and that s/he may have difficulty in referring quickly to a specific page, reading it and then responding to examiners’ questions on that portion of the text. This may lead to heightened levels of anxiety and stress.

**Reasonable Adjustments might include:**

* Extra time for locating detail, reading and responding to questions
* Time for responding and explaining details
* Being sensitive when drawing the student’s attention to grammatical and spelling errors
* Repeating and rephrasing questions if requested
* Offering a short break if student shows signs of anxiety or stress
* Breaking long questions down into smaller sections
* Being prepared to interrupt and redirect students if they go off on a tangent.

**Difficulties experienced by students with specific learning difficulties**

Each student will have a different cluster of these difficulties.

1. **Processing difficulties**

* Memory problems, particularly short term
* Major problems organising written work
* Poor concept of time
* Short concentration span
* Easily distracted
* Problems with sequencing
* Listening and writing simultaneously
* Organization of study.

1. **Reading**

* Inability to read quickly and process large amounts of text
* May need to reread text several times for recall
* Difficulty in skim reading to provide a verbal synopsis or explanation of text
* Poor proof reading skills
* Confusing letters in words (i.e. computers for commuters).

1. **Writing**

* Erratic and bizarre spelling and confusion of function words (i.e. on/of, so/as, on/no)
* Problems with agreements of subject and verb.
* Difficulties with clear written expression.

1. **Verbal**

* Possible difficulties with word retrieval and finding the ‘right words’
* Mispronunciation of words
* May go off on tangents
* May have difficulty conveying thoughts and ideas clearly, pause frequently and may not complete sentences.

Student Disability Service

[www.ed.ac/student-disability-service](http://www.ed.ac/student-disability-service)

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**If you require this document in an alternative format please contact the Student Disability Service on 0131 650 6828 or email: disability.service@ed.ac.uk**