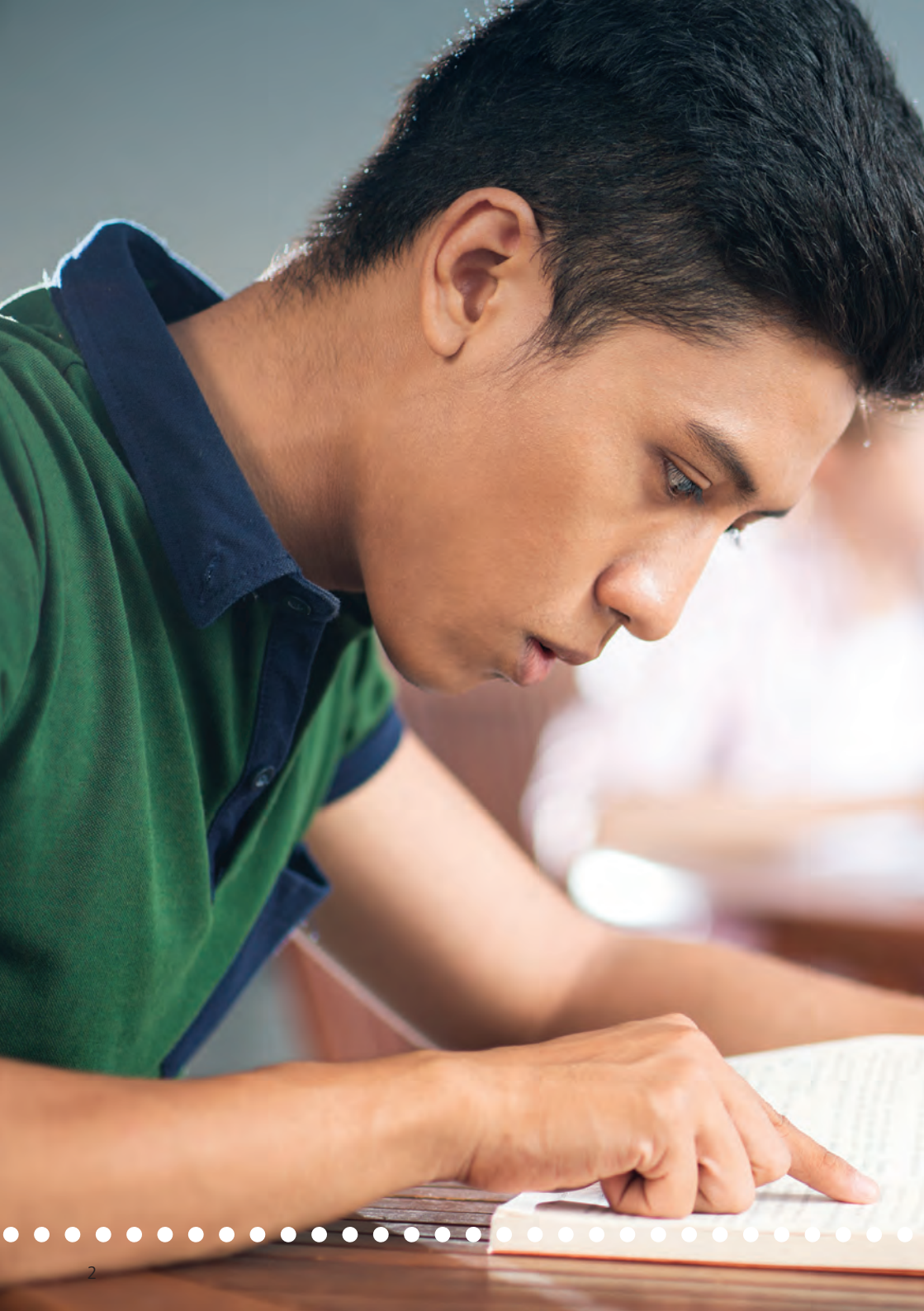


Key facts

about Dyslexia and Specific Learning
Difficulties (SpLDs)





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What is Dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate reading and spelling.
- Dyslexia occurs across a range of abilities and is best thought of as a continuum with no distinct cut-off points.
- Estimates vary, but Dyslexia is thought to affect up to 10% of people in the UK, with 2 to 3% severely so.
- It is persistent and lifelong but individuals will often develop a range of skills and coping strategies.
- Sometimes it is hereditary so individuals might well relate to similar difficulties experienced by other family members.
- Typical difficulties include phonological processing, working and short-term memory, visual processing, reading speed and comprehension, concentration and personal organisation – the pattern of difficulties varies widely between individuals.
- At University, individuals with Dyslexia might fall behind their peer group in subjects that rely heavily on reading and writing skills but might excel in other areas. In particular, they might encounter difficulties with planning assignments, note taking in class and effective proof reading of written work.
- Occasionally individuals have more than one SpLD, such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, AD(H)D and/or Asperger's Syndrome.



Please consider the statements below taken from the British Dyslexia Association Adult Dyslexia Checklist



More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Find map reading difficult and/or confuse left and right
- ☐ Dislike reading aloud
- ☐ Take longer than you think you should to read a page of a book
- ☐ Find it difficult to remember what you have read
- ☐ Feel that your spelling is poor
- ☐ Find that your writing is difficult to read
- ☐ Find you are forgetful and disorganized
- ☐ Find it difficult to take phone messages accurately
- ☐ Have difficulty with the multiplication tables and/or alphabet
- ☐ Mix up dates and times and miss appointments
- ☐ Find forms difficult and confusing
- ☐ Get numbers and/or letters in the wrong order
- ☐ Find it difficult to get your ideas onto paper

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Dyspraxia?

- Dyspraxia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) that primarily affects the skills involved in organisation of movements and thought processes.
- Dyspraxia occurs across a range of abilities and is best thought as a continuum with no distinct cut-off points.
- Estimates vary, but Dyspraxia is thought to affect Up to 8% of people in the UK.
- It is persistent and lifelong but individuals will often develop a range of skills and coping strategies.
- Sometimes it is hereditary so individuals might well relate to similar difficulties experienced by other family members.
- Typical difficulties include aspects of language skills, gross and fine motor co-ordination, orientation, mental calculations, concentration, working and short-term memory and personal organisation – the pattern of difficulties varies widely between individuals.
- At University, individuals with Dyspraxia might encounter difficulties with note taking in class, planning and organising their ideas in writing, reading comprehension and time management.
- Occasionally individuals have more than one SpLD, such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, AD(H)D and/or Asperger's Syndrome.



Please consider the statements below adapted from the Dyspraxia Foundation website



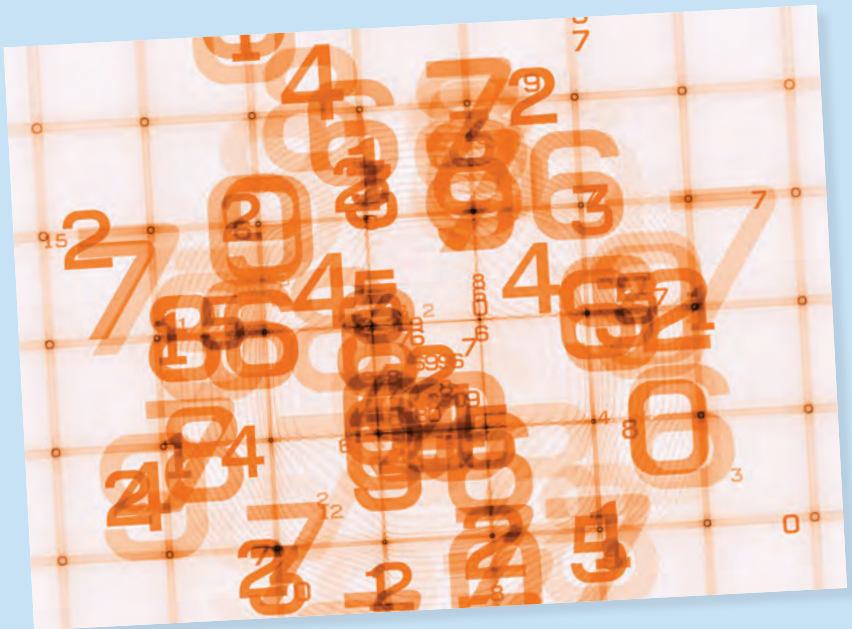
More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Experience poor balance, find activities requiring hand/eye co-ordination difficult and/or experience a lack of rhythm when dancing, doing aerobics etc.
- ☐ Have a tendency to fall, trip or bump into things/people
- ☐ Write untidily or write neatly but only when you write slowly
- ☐ Find that you have poor manipulative skills such as those involved in drawing, holding cutlery, tying shoelaces or doing up buttons etc.
- ☐ Find you are forgetful and disorganized
- ☐ Have difficulty pronouncing some words and/or have difficulty organising the content of what you want to say
- ☐ Find that you lose your place when you are reading and/or have difficulty looking from one thing to another (e.g. from the board to your notes and back)
- ☐ Find you are over or under sensitive to noise, taste, light and touch
- ☐ Have a poor sense of direction and difficulty distinguishing left/right
- ☐ Have difficulty with concentration and find you are easily distracted
- ☐ Have good and bad days and feel that you want to opt out of things that appear too difficult

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Dyscalculia?

- Dyscalculia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) that primarily affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills
- Dyscalculic learners may have difficulty understanding simple number concepts, lack an intuitive grasp of numbers, and have problems learning number facts and procedures.
- Dyscalculia is rather like Dyslexia for numbers, but unlike Dyslexia, very little is known about its prevalence, causes or treatment.
- Current thinking suggests that it is a congenital condition, caused by the abnormal functioning of a specific area of the brain.
- People with dyscalculia experience great difficulty with the most basic aspects of numbers and arithmetic.
- Best estimates indicate that somewhere between 3% and 6% of the population are affected.



Please consider the statements below adapted from the Dyslexia A2Z website



More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Confuse numbers, i.e. 51 for 15
- ☐ Transpose and reverse numbers, when reading or writing
- ☐ Confuse: Minus, Subtract, Take away, Less
- ☐ Confuse: Add, Plus, Add on, More
- ☐ Confuse: Times, Multiply
- ☐ Experience problems with learning the times tables
- ☐ Have difficulty working out simple money and change
- ☐ Find it difficult to estimate numbers: Tens, Hundreds, Thousands
- ☐ Get confused when working out percentages, averages and fractions
- ☐ Have difficulty understanding concepts of place value, carrying and borrowing
- ☐ Experience difficulties reading music, because of the mathematics around notes
- ☐ Struggle with working out the speed, i.e. miles per hour
- ☐ Get confused when telling the time and concepts related to time, i.e. days, weeks, quarters
- ☐ Often answer a mathematical question correctly but cannot describe how you got the answer
- ☐ Have limited strategic planning, i.e. struggle with playing games like chess

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Dysgraphia?

- Dysgraphia is a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) that primarily affects the ability to perform operations in handwriting and can often be described as an extreme difficulty with fine-motor skills.
- Dysgraphia is a neurological disorder, with symptoms characterised by the inability to write properly due to poor fine motor skills.
- It is believed that Dysgraphia affects approximately 10% of the population but is largely under-recognised.
- Students with Dysgraphia may have difficulties with the simplest of writing tasks, i.e. their handwriting will be barely legible, appear incorrect or distorted, have letters of different sizes and different size spaces between letters.
- They may also have particular difficulties following a straight line, keeping to a margin and can find it particularly painful when writing by hand.



Please consider the statements below adapted from the Dyslexia A2Z website



More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Produce very poor written text in comparison to your verbal language development
- ☐ Display poor motor control
- ☐ Have handwriting that is almost impossible to read
- ☐ Have a mixture of printing and cursive writing on the same line
- ☐ Write in all directions, i.e. right slant then left slant
- ☐ Leave a mixture of large and small spaces between words
- ☐ Use different sized letters on the same line
- ☐ Mix up capital letters and lower case letters on the same line
- ☐ Have abnormal and irregular formation of letters
- ☐ Experience a very slow speed of writing, especially when copying down from the board
- ☐ Struggle to follow margins
- ☐ Grip the pen tight and with a 'fist grip' or hold the pen very low down so fingers almost touch the paper
- ☐ Encounter difficulties with spelling words correctly and use bizarre or peculiar spellings, i.e. 'brot' for brought, 'stayshun' for station and 'brink' for drink

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

- ADHD is a developmental disorder that is characterised by attention problems and often hyperactivity, which more commonly, occur simultaneously.
- Individuals with ADHD find it more difficult to acquire the self-management skills to control their attention, concentration, mood and behaviour, the latter of which may be impulsive.
- Attention and focus may be hard to shift and often adults with ADHD experience 'hyper focus' with certain tasks and usually those that are interesting and rewarding.
- ADHD occurs across a range of abilities and commonly overlaps with specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia and Dyspraxia. The pattern of difficulties may vary widely between individuals.
- Up to 5% of children are globally diagnosed and up to half of these continue to show their symptoms as adults
- It is unknown whether ADHD can occur in adults without it first appearing during childhood (but it may have gone undiagnosed). It is known, however, that symptoms of ADHD often persist from childhood into adolescence and adulthood.
- ADHD can appear alongside many related problems. One of the most common conditions is depression.
- Individuals with ADHD may find difficulties with employment, relationships, social interaction, addictions and obsessive behaviours.



Please consider the statements below adapted from the AADD-UK website



More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Find you are careless and lack attention to detail
- ☐ Continually start new tasks before finishing old ones
- ☐ Have poor organisational skills
- ☐ Find it challenging to focus, or prioritise
- ☐ Continually lose or misplace things
- ☐ Find you are forgetful
- ☐ Feel restless and edgy, fidget and find it difficult to sit still
- ☐ Have difficulty keeping quiet and speak out of turn
- ☐ Blurt out responses and have poor social timing when talking to others
- ☐ Often interrupt others
- ☐ Experience mood swings
- ☐ Get irritable and have a quick temper
- ☐ Find you are unable to deal with stress
- ☐ Lose your patience easily
- ☐ Take risks in activities, often with little, or no, regard for personal safety, or the safety of others

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Visual Stress?

- Visual Stress is a condition whose causes are not yet fully understood but which makes people see the printed page differently.
- It can also make it difficult to judge distances and spatial relationships accurately.
- Visual Stress can also be known as Visual Disturbance, Meares-Irlen Syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome and is often associated with Dyslexia.
- It is not detected by standard visual, educational or medical tests.
- It is a perceptual problem, not a visual one, and is not corrected by prescription glasses.
- People with Visual Stress can experience:
 - difficulties looking at a computer screen
 - sensitivity to light and discomfort with fluorescent lighting
 - motion sickness and headaches
 - drowsiness, tiredness or eye strain including watery or hot/dry eyes
 - difficulties absorbing information or skipping words/lines
 - distortions of the print or the white background whereby the word being read appears clear but the other words on the page move or swirl
 - movement and shifting of whole lines of text
 - dominant white backgrounds that look like rivers running down the page
 - letters doubling or having white, black or coloured images
 - blurring of words and letters on the page
 - white background taking over and parts of letters becoming faded or disappearing altogether



Please consider the statements below adapted from the British Association of Behavioural Optometrists Checklist



More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Experience eye strain and headaches after reading for a short period of time
- ☐ Find it difficult to concentrate when reading
- ☐ Often have a short attention span
- ☐ Frequently lose your place when reading
- ☐ Skip or re-read lines when reading
- ☐ Tilt your head to one side when reading
- ☐ Close or cover one eye when reading
- ☐ Rub your eyes often
- ☐ Find the words moving on the page in front of you
- ☐ Screw up your eyes or blink excessively
- ☐ Read with the book very close to your eyes
- ☐ Have trouble copying from the board, and make more mistakes than you think you should
- ☐ Avoid reading
- ☐ Write up or down hill
- ☐ Find your vision is worse at the end of the day
- ☐ Repeatedly confuse the left and the right
- ☐ Often appear awkward and clumsy when climbing, throwing, or participating in other sports activities
- ☐ Suffer from car sickness

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking a screening appointment to discuss your concerns further.

What is Asperger's Syndrome?

- Asperger's Syndrome is not technically a specific learning difficulty, however it often co-occurs alongside dyslexia or dyspraxia and may present with similar characteristics.
- Asperger's Syndrome (AS) is a Pervasive Developmental Disorder that falls within the autistic spectrum.
- It is a lifelong condition and affects about 1 in 200 people.
- Those with AS are usually of average or above average intelligence.
- The pattern of strengths and difficulties varies widely between individuals.
- It is known to be hereditary.
- The condition is characterised by difficulties with social interaction, social communication and flexibility of thinking or imagination.
- In addition to this, there may be sensory, motor co-ordination and organisational difficulties.
- Individuals with AS often have good language skills but will often think that people always mean what they say and may not be able to understand hidden meanings, sarcasm and jokes.
- Individuals with AS often experience a lack of empathy towards others, difficulties in making friends and intense absorption in a special interest.



Please consider the statements below adapted from the Asperger's Foundation website



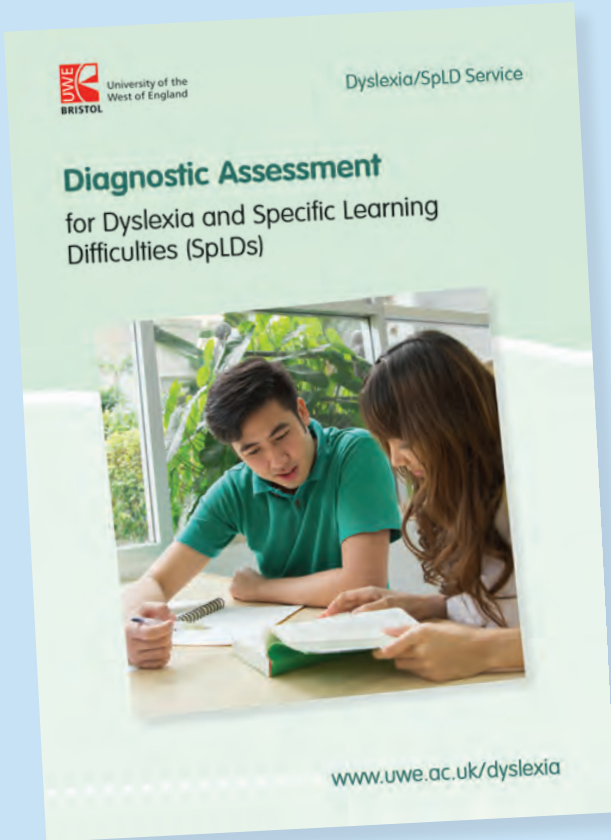
More often than not, do you (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Find it difficult to interact socially and take what people say literally
- ☐ Have difficulty forming friendships
- ☐ Find it difficult to interpret body language
- ☐ Experience a lack of empathy to other's feelings
- ☐ Find it difficult to imagine what others are thinking
- ☐ Find you are unusually sensitive to bright light, noise, textures, taste and/or touch
- ☐ Have difficulty organising yourself
- ☐ Feel that you are clumsy and poorly co-ordinated
- ☐ Become intensely absorbed in certain subjects
- ☐ Find it difficult to tell people what you need and how you are feeling
- ☐ Feel that you prefer to have a set routine and find it difficult to change this
- ☐ Find you are very good at concentrating and learning certain things (especially those that interest you)

If you feel the majority of these statements apply to you then you may like to consider booking an appointment with a Disability Adviser to discuss your concerns further.

You can do this by calling +44 (0) 117 32 85678, e-mailing disability@uwe.ac.uk or by visiting any of the Information Points on the UWE Campuses at Frenchay, Glenside, Bower Ashton or UWE Gloucester.

The Dyslexia/SpLD Service at UWE takes you from diagnosis to study support. We have three additional leaflets about the services we provide which you can pick up from your nearest UWE Information Point or the Dyslexia/SpLD Service.



Dyslexia/SpLD Service

ific Learning



• www.uwe.ac.uk/dyslexia



University of the
West of England

Dyslexia/SpLD Service

Specialist 1-1 Study Skills Support

Dyslexia and Specific Learning
Difficulties (SpLDs)



• www.uwe.ac.uk/dyslexia

You could also look on these websites for further information

- British Dyslexia Association - www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- Dyslexia Action - www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk
- Dyslexia A2Z - www.dyslexiaa2z.com
- Dyspraxia Foundation - www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk
- AADD-UK – www.aadduk.org
- British Association of Behavioural Optometrists www.babo.co.uk
- Asperger's Foundation - www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk

For more information or to book an appointment, please:

- Call 0117 32 83589
- E-mail dyslexia@uwe.ac.uk
- Visit the Dyslexia/SpLD Service in 2P39 Frenchay Campus
- Go to www.uwe.ac.uk/dyslexia
- Or alternatively contact any of UWE's Campus Information Points at Frenchay, Glenside, Bower Ashton or Gloucester

This information can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

www.uwe.ac.uk/dyslexia