



Student Spotlight: Celebrating Students with Reasonable Adjustments

Alex Grainger

He/Him

About my disability:

I am autistic, having been diagnosed since I was a young child. I have also been diagnosed with depression.

What my disability makes me appreciate:

I would like to think that my autism providing a “different” way of thinking is helpful in analysing data and drawing conclusions.

The challenges I face in the Lab environment:

My fine motor skills have been poor since childhood, which can sometimes be problematic when dealing with sensitive electronic equipment. The communicative difficulties caused by my autism also makes group working within the laboratory more difficult, particularly when it comes to me failing to convey information effectively and preferred approaches differing within the group.

Accommodations I need to do my science:

Time, understanding and clarity in instructions go a very long way. Forgiveness if I fail to be punctual, explain my reasoning poorly or take too little care when adjusting a dial on a piece of equipment, all make the experience within the laboratory much easier. Likewise, conveying clearly to me what is wanted/expected of me is undoubtedly helpful for both the group’s experience and its productivity.

I found the department to be accommodating and flexible with regards to attendance in the labs. Having to arrive at the lab late or leave early was permitted and accepted, with flexibility being employed by the various staff in the laboratory to enable us to catch up on work at mutually convenient times, beyond those ordinarily scheduled. While this was incredibly helpful, there was unfortunately no flexibility in the associated assignment deadlines (lab reports in the style of a Physical Review Letter), for which there was one submission between the three people in the group for each assignment.