

Considerate Marking guidance - staff

Introduction

Specific learning differences (SpLD) is an overarching term is used for a range of learning variances that influence an individual's ability to receive, process, retain and recall information. These differences exist in neurological conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, and can manifest in specific areas such as literacy, memory, and coordination.

SpLD's are lifelong conditions, meaning they persist throughout an individual's life and can have a significant impact on areas of a person's life, including their education, work, and personal relationships. Understanding and accommodating for these differences are crucial for ensuring that individuals with an SpLD can reach their full potential and thrive in educational environments.

At Warwick, the Considerate Marking Adjustment supports students that have SpLD's (such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia/DCD, dysgraphia, dyscalculia), and where appropriate to some students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), and those with visual or hearing impairments. The exceptions for students with other conditions, aside from SpLD's, will be decided by a Disability Adviser, based on information the student is able to provide.

Legislation

The Equality Act (2010) represents a significant step forward in protecting the rights of disabled individuals, extending and strengthening previous legislation. One crucial aspect of the Equality Act states that it is 'illegal to treat a disabled person less favourably than others for a reason that relates to their disability without justification, and in some cases, it may be legitimate to treat a disabled person more favourably'.

Importantly, the Act mandates that educational providers must make reasonable adjustments if a student is at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. This requirement encompasses various aspects of education, including curriculum delivery and the marking of assessed work.

It should also be noted that the Office for Students (2021), also produced a review into spelling, punctuation and grammar in written assessment, underlining the need for quality and reliability within qualifications, but also reflecting that 'providers have obligations under the Equality Act that relate to the assessment of students.

Student responsibility

Students are issued with a Considerate Marking cover sheet (a PDF sent to them on the Wellbeing Portal) after meeting with a Disability Adviser. The PDF document the students receive will make clear that it is the students' responsibility to ensure that they attach the cover sheet to any assessed work, whether that is an assignment or examination. The coversheet will state: *'It is the responsibility of the student to add this coversheet to their coursework or examinations. University staff will be unable to attach this to your work, on your behalf.'*

Advice for professional services staff

If a student asks for a copy of their coversheet for their work, please refer them to the Wellbeing Portal, where the student will be able to gain access to their Considerate Marking cover sheet. This will be a PDF document, which they can either attach electronically, or print out.

References:

AdvanceHE (2020) Competence standards and reasonable adjustments

BDA (2020) 'Assessment Considerate Marking and Feedback Policy for Disabled Students'

Equality Act (2010) – guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Office for Students (2019) Assessment practices in English higher education providers: Spelling, punctuation and grammar