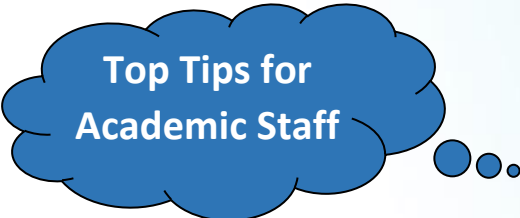


Dyslexia

Dyslexia affects about eight to ten percent of the population in the UK. Individuals with Dyslexia will have a history of difficulties with reading and/or spelling. They may also have difficulties with organisation, planning and memory.

Difficulties described include:

- Taking longer to read papers, books etc.
- Comprehending academic texts
- Making spelling errors and missing out key words
- Structuring assignments
- Remembering appointments and deadlines
- Finding their way to or around unfamiliar places
- Being punctual
- Remembering the necessary paperwork and equipment
- Remembering verbal instructions
- Task completion
- Learning new skills
- Revision for exams and recall during exams
- Taking down information accurately whilst listening



Top Tips for Academic Staff

- Don't ask a person with dyslexia to read aloud
- Be aware that a student with dyslexia may have difficulties staying focused when reading, writing and listening.
- Often people with dyslexia can demonstrate their understanding with a spoken answer but may struggle to put those ideas into writing.
- Teach one topic at a time in small chunks.
- Demonstrate and give examples.
- Slower processing speeds can result in difficulties with verbal fluency and word recall.
- People with dyslexia may benefit from explicit instruction broken down into clear points to aid sequencing.
- Be aware that the student may be using a digital recorder or other recording device.
- Provide handouts in advance so that students with dyslexia have time to read and understand them.

For further information please visit www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Dyslexia Friendly Text – information sheet

Media:

- Paper should be thick enough to prevent the other side showing through
- Use matt rather than glossy and avoid digital printing which tends to leave the paper shiny
- Avoid white backgrounds for paper, computer and visual aids as it can appear too dazzling, instead use cream or a soft pastel colour.
- Some people with dyslexia will have their own colour preference

Font:

- Use a plain, evenly spaced sans serif font such as Arial or **Comic Sans**; alternatives include Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic and Trebuchet
- Font size should be 12-14 point, though some students with dyslexia may request a larger font
- Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background
- Avoid green and red/pink as these are difficult for colour-blind individuals to read

Headings and emphasis:

- Avoid underlining and *italics* as these tend to make the text appear to run together: use **bold** instead
- AVOID TEXT IN BLOCK CAPITALS: this is much harder to read
- For headings, use a larger font size in **bold**, all lower case or capitals for the first letter
- Use boxes and borders for effective emphasis

Layout:

- Use left-justified with ragged right edge
- Avoid narrow columns (as used in newspapers)
- Lines should not be too long: 60 – 70 characters
- Avoid cramping material and using long, dense paragraphs: space it out
- Line spacing of 1.5 is preferable
- Avoid starting a sentence at the end of a line
- Use bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose

Writing style:

- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style
- Give instructions clearly and avoid long sentences of explanation
- Use active rather than passive voice
- Avoid use of double negatives
- Be concise

Increase accessibility:

- Use flow charts to help explain procedures
- Use pictograms and graphics to help locate information
- Lists of 'do's and don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice
- Avoid abbreviations if possible or provide a glossary of abbreviations, jargon and specialised vocabulary
- For long documents, provide a contents page at the beginning and an index at the end

Check readability:

Microsoft Word and Outlook have a feature which gives you the ability to view “readability” statistics for what you are writing, so you know how simple or complex your writing is. This can help ensure texts are accessible for your intended audience.

In older versions of Word, the feature is found on the status bar; in versions from 2013 onward, you have to enable the feature first, and then access it by running a spell and grammar check.

Word uses the following ways of assessing the readability of a text:

- The Flesch Reading Ease score rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, you should aim for a score of approximately 70 to 80
- The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level score rates text on a US grade-school level, e.g. a score of 5.0 means that a fifth grader, i.e. a Year 6, average 10 year-old can understand the document.
- For most standard documents, you should aim for a score of approximately 5.0, by using short/er sentences rather than dumbing down vocabulary
- It is recommended that you check long documents in sections so that you know which parts are harder/too hard.

Use accessible formats:

- It is important that documents and publications are prepared to be accessible in alternative formats for people with reading difficulties. These should include availability in electronic format which can be read by screen reading software.
- Printed documents are created in computers, so it should be possible to issue the electronic files and some documents will only be available electronically.
- Word files are the easiest for individual viewing preferences and for listening
- Portable Document Format (PDF) files keep the presentation better than Word files, but are not as easy to use
- Publicise availability of accessible formats.

Preparing a document for text-reading software:

- Listening to a document using a text reader will take longer than visual reading
- Put full stops after headings to make the voice drop and pause; a pale tint similar to the background colour will make the dots less visually distracting
- Put semi-colons, commas, or full stops after bullet points to make a pause
- Use Styles in Word to organise headings and formatting
- Avoid automatic numbering as some text readers will not read these. Use manual
- Contents Page listings should be hyperlinked to the relevant section to aid navigation. Number menu items
- Use internal and external hyperlinks for ease of navigation
- Avoid text in capital letters in mid-line, as they may be read as single letters
- Include as few signs and symbols as are absolutely necessary e.g. asterisks or dashes (both short and long), as these will be spoken
- Long dashes should be avoided: use colons to make the voice pause
- Use straight quotation marks, as curly or slanting ones may be read out as 'back quote' by some screen readers
- Avoid Roman Numerals and No. for number
- Consider whether abbreviations and acronyms need full stops
- Text readers may have difficulty with tables in Word and may not automatically move on to the next cell without manual use of the Tab key
- Avoid text in images, as listeners cannot hear it. Repeat in the main text
- Use hyphens in compound words to aid text reading pronunciation
- Chunk phone numbers to avoid being read as millions or hundreds of thousands.
- There can be difficulty in distinguishing sounds from background noise and they may be light or noise sensitive and this can affect concentration

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