

## *Information for markers*

The coursework marking criteria agreed by the School are available on all of the [faculty web pages](#). **The minimum core criteria intentionally do not include standards concerning the presentational aspects of the work, such as spelling and punctuation in written assignments.**

These minimum core criteria form a part of the School's core academic standards, applied to all coursework and as such they would not usually be subject to any modification, even as a "reasonable adjustment" to the needs of a specific disabled person.

The spelling and grammar can be included as an additional criteria for some assignments when appropriate to the learning outcomes being assessed on that occasion. Where spelling and grammar are included as an additional criteria they should be drawn to the students' attention when the assignment is set.

### **Guidelines to support academics in marking the work of students with SpLDs**

The following guidelines are based on the premise that a lecturer or tutor will be having a 1-1 discussion with the student. There are a variety of ways in which this could happen e.g. 1-1 meeting, discussion board or e-mail.

1. Establish with the student the level and kind of correction that they will be able to use effectively. The reason for this is that the student may be able to tell you what feedback works for them also their particular weaknesses that they have that they will need to address.
2. As far as possible mark for content and critical acumen.\*
3. Read quickly in order to assess ideas, understanding and knowledge and ignore spellings and punctuation errors. This method can help to access the dyslexic student's holistic thinking style, where ideas may go off on a tangent and it can be difficult to see a linear progression of ideas.
4. Student could accompany the assignment with a plan, mind maps or bullet points. This would help to establish whether the piece of work contains the key ideas and to clarify any confusion. It would act as a guide to the marker which they could refer to as they were reading the work. This can be discussed with the student.
5. Employing an error analysis marking system which helps students to develop written English skills is a good idea. It encourages students to find and correct errors identified by a tutor through a coded mark in the margin e.g. Sp-spelling | G- grammar | SS-sentence structure | P -punctuation | V-vocabulary | R-repetition | T-tense. The student should be encouraged to go through the corrections with either their 1-1 specialist tutor or in a follow up session with the Tutor (see point 7).
6. Accentuate the positive aspects of the work. Be explicit about specific problems so that the student can see a way forward and/or seek the appropriate help. For example "This is not a sentence" is not helpful if the student is not sure why, nor how to make it one. "You are not clear at this point", or "Do you mean .... ?" is more helpful than a vague comment such as, "Does not make sense". Feedback, whether positive or negative should be constructive.

7. Provide opportunities for students to go over essays with you.
8. Have discussions with students in situations of serious doubt, e.g. grade borderlines, or discrepancy between coursework and exams. A lack of order/clarity in writing may mask a good understanding of the ideas or reveal a lack of clarity in thinking. It is sometimes impossible to tell without discussion with the student.
9. Encourage students to seek help from the learning advisors if their work seems to contain errors which may be consistent with a Specific Learning Difficulty. Also seek advice from the learning Advisors if you would like to talk about difficulties individual students may be experiencing.
10. Wherever possible present your commentary in typewritten form.

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Please get in touch with Carol John or Carol Rifkin, learning advisors in Student services if you would like to discuss any of the advice contained here. Carol John, May 2007

These guidelines were approved at the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee in May 2007. These have been slightly amended to take into account the introduction of the School marking criteria (above) and changes to where the learning advisors work.