

# A Brief Guide for Students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) 2020/21

## What is a Specific Learning Difference?

Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) refers to differences that affect learning. These include Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

## Do SpLDs count as a disability?

The Equality Act 2010 (EA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform day to day activities. Specific Learning Differences are included in this definition.

## What does the Disability and Neurodiversity Team (DNT) do?

We put in place any agreed adjustments you may require to enable you to study successfully at SOAS. These might include:

- An individual Study Inclusion Plan (SIP)
- Exam arrangements
- Extended deadlines for coursework
- Library services, for example: quiet study rooms, extended loans, scanning
- Screening for SpLDs
- Advice on disability-related funding for study (Disabled Students Allowance)
- Study Skills Workshops and support
- Assistive Technology resources, for example: training and loan equipment

DNT also work in collaboration with different departments and our academic members of staff to ensure accessibility for our disabled students and to actively promote and develop inclusion.

## What about confidentiality?

We would like to assure you that SOAS will treat your sensitive personal information with the utmost confidentiality. To enable the Disability Service to arrange adjustments and coordinate your support we may need to share some limited information with other departments at SOAS or external agencies. In line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, this would only be with your explicit consent on our Confidentiality Agreement.

## What evidence do I need to provide of my SpLD?

You need to provide a full diagnostic assessment by a registered psychologist or suitably qualified specialist professional that meets sector guidelines. From 2019/20 there is no longer a requirement for the assessment to be carried out post-16 years, although further testing may be needed if it has been many years since your assessment. For AD(H)D a medical diagnosis is also acceptable. If you do not have one of these you have two options:

- Option 1: Once you are enrolled you can contact us about referral and SOAS funding for an assessment
- Option 2: Pre-enrolment you can self-fund an assessment (around £400), which might be helpful if you are keen to apply early for the Disabled Students Allowance (see below)

and receive any equipment, software and training you are entitled to before the start of your course. If you wish to do this please contact us for a list of Educational Psychologists.

If you are not sure whether you have a SpLD please come to a drop-in during term-time with our Learning Advisor, Carol John, to discuss an initial screening.

## What external funding is available for disabled students?

If you qualify for student finance from Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or the Students Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) you may also be eligible for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). This funding can pay for extra costs you incur when you are studying because of your condition. This might include IT equipment (eg. a computer or Assistive Technology software), Assistive Technology training, mentoring, or study skills tutoring and travel costs. To apply for DSA you complete an application form, provide evidence of your disability and attend a needs assessment.

For more details and to apply online visit <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/how-to-claim> For Student Finance England phone 0300 100 0607 or textphone 0300 100 0622 (other details for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on the website). Please contact our Disability Advisors if you would like help with your application.

Although International students are not eligible for the DSA, SOAS will still provide all the support and adjustments for you that we can. (See above 'What does the Disability and Neurodiversity Team do' and also below, 'What facilities are available to ALL students at SOAS')

## What facilities are available to ALL students at SOAS?

- Specialist software on all SOAS PCs for student use: ClaroRead (a screen reading, spelling and grammar programme) and Mind Manager (a mind-mapping programme). We can also provide training in using these software packages.
- The Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching department (CILT) provide self-help study resources online, workshops on essay-writing, reading and more, see <https://www.soas.ac.uk/cilt/>
- Induction Loop Systems are provided in the large lecture theatres at SOAS and portable loop systems at reception points across the school.

## What do I need to do next?

- Visit our website <https://www.soas.ac.uk/disability/> for more information
- Send us your medical evidence or educational psychologist's report and completed [confidentiality agreement](#) and any previous DSA needs assessment report and letter of entitlement (if you have them). Scan and email these to [disabilities@soas.ac.uk](mailto:disabilities@soas.ac.uk) or you can post or bring them to our address below.
- We will then prepare your Study Inclusion Plan (SIP) for you to complete online (but if you have ADHD, or another condition as well as an SpLD, we will ask you to make an appointment to see a Disability Advisor (Angela Axon or Anastasia Pateraki) to arrange your support and complete your SIP.
- There are also opportunities to speak with a learning advisor during their 'On The Day' bookable brief on-line chats if we are providing our services remotely or during drop-ins if

we are providing services on campus (see website for times). These are for brief enquiries and are held during term time only. You can also email us at [disabilities@soas.ac.uk](mailto:disabilities@soas.ac.uk)

**Postal address:** Disability Advisor, Student Advice and Wellbeing Department, SL48, SOAS (University of London), Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG **Email:** [disabilities@soas.ac.uk](mailto:disabilities@soas.ac.uk)

Please contact us if you require this leaflet in an alternative format.  
Other Brief Guides are available for students who have mental health issues or for students with other disabilities or long-term conditions.

SOAS Disability and Neurodiversity Team