



Dyslexia Booklet

A Resource for Tertiary Practitioners in Disability

Dyslexia Booklet:

A Resource for Tertiary Practitioners in Disability Services

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this country and pay respect to Aboriginal Sites, Culture and to past, present and future Elders.

Acknowledgements

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Purpose

This booklet aims to assist practitioners working in Disability Services within the tertiary sector who are responsible for planning and implementing reasonable adjustments for students with dyslexia, including assistive technology. It provides a legislative framework, information about dyslexia and reasonable adjustments, case studies and further information and resources.

Please contact us if you have any feedback and ideas about this Booklet:

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The IMVC is committed to the social inclusion of all, and is passionate about providing opportunities for the wider community to enhance capabilities in applied learning and vocational education and training.

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Section 1: What the Law Says

1.1 Overview

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability.

Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability are treated less fairly than people without a disability. Disability discrimination also occurs when people are treated less fairly because they are relatives, friends, carers, co-workers or associates of a person with a disability.

1.2 What the DDA Does

The DDA implements Australia's international human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as obligations relating to non-discrimination under other treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The DDA protects people with disability against discrimination and harassment in many areas of public life, including education in terms of enrolling or studying in a course at a private or public school, college or university

The DDA provides a mechanism for individuals to make complaints and seek redress for disability discrimination.

Further information on the DDA can be found on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website at:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act>

1.3 Definition of Disability

The Definition of Disability in the Disability Discrimination Act is broad and includes:

- Total or partial loss of body function or a body part
- The presence of organisms (such as HIV or Hepatitis C) that may cause disease or disability, malformation or disfigurement of the body
- Mental or psychological diseases or disorders
- Conditions or disorders that may result in a person learning more slowly

Disability can be temporary or permanent and includes:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Learning
- Psychosocial disabilities
- Diseases or illnesses
- Physical disfigurement
- Medical conditions
- Work-related injuries

It extends to disabilities that people have had in the past and potential future disabilities, as well as disabilities that people are assumed to have

Further Information:

A more detailed explanation of the definition of disability can be found at:

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/dda-guide-who-does-dda-protect>

1.4 Disability Standards for Education

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 were formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.

Under the Standards, education providers have three main types of obligations. They must:

- **Consult**

Education providers must consult in order to understand the impact of a student's disability and to determine whether any adjustments or changes are needed to assist the student.

- **Make reasonable adjustments**

The Standards set out a process whereby education providers can meet the obligation to meet reasonable adjustments where necessary.

- **Eliminate harassment and victimisation**

The Standards require that education providers develop and implement strategies to prevent harassment and victimisation of people with disability.

Further information and Fact Sheets can be found at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

There are fact sheets on the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005, Parental Engagement, Effective Consultation and Complaints Processes.

Section 2: Dyslexia

2.1 Definition of Dyslexia

Learning Disability is a term for a variety of disorders which affect a person's ability to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The word dyslexia comes from the Greek language and means difficulty with words.

No two individuals with dyslexia are alike. Dyslexia occurs on a continuum from mild to severe.

Dyslexia is a type of learning disability that primarily affects an individual's ability to read and spell despite having the ability to learn.

Dyslexia is neurological in origin and is characterised by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities.

Secondary consequences may include difficulties with reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can affect the development of vocabulary and background knowledge.

2.2 Characteristics of Dyslexia

Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed as outlined:

- Phonological awareness is defined as the ability to identify and manipulate the sounds in words.

For example, phonological awareness would be demonstrated by understanding that if the 'p' in 'pat' is changed to an 's', the word becomes 'sat'.

- Verbal (phonological short-term) memory is the ability to retain an ordered sequence of verbal material for a short period of time.

For example, it is used to recall a list of words or numbers or to remember a list of instructions.

- Verbal processing speed is the time taken to process familiar verbal information, such as letters and digits.

Difficulties in these areas can be thought of as reflecting disorders in the systems that are involved in processing information about word sounds (phonology).

Please note: information for 'Characteristics of Dyslexia' has been sourced from SPELD Victoria. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.speldvic.org.au/information-for-parents/dyslexia-and-ld>

2.3 Skills Affected by Dyslexia

In practice people with dyslexia often find it hard to:

- Retain spoken information within their short-term memory systems
- Access spoken information from long-term memory
- Reflect on the units of sound within words.

These difficulties impact on the learning of vital aspects of reading and writing, such as encoding, decoding, segmenting and blending.

Information for 'Skills Affected by Dyslexia' has been sourced from SPELD Victoria at:

<http://www.speldvic.org.au/information-for-parents/dyslexia-and-ld>

Section 3: Tertiary Disability Services

3.1 Registration Process

Each disability service provider in the tertiary sector has their own registration process and terminology may also vary. Within the context of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education, there are general steps taken in the registration process across all providers.

The general process is as follows:

1. The student is required to meet eligibility criteria to register with Disability Services at the respective tertiary provider. The two main criteria include:
 - Be enrolled in a relevant program or course
 - Have a disability as per the Disability Discrimination Act definition or be a primary carer

2. The student completes a Registration Form which usually includes consent to release information.
3. The student provides relevant documentation (refer to documentation section)
4. The student organises an appointment with a Disability Advisor, which can be a phone appointment, to discuss and agree on reasonable adjustments.

An assessment is made by the Disability Advisor at this appointment in which reasonable adjustments are considered in the context of the nature of the student's disability, the documentation provided and the program or course requirements. Further documentation may also be requested if necessary.

5. Reasonable adjustments are set out in a plan and distributed to relevant academic staff and student services staff.

3.2 Documentation

Disability Services require suitable documentation to organise reasonable adjustments for students with disability that are eligible to register with the service.

3.2.1 General Requirements

In general students are required to provide original copies of supporting documentation outlining the nature of their disability and its impacts in the academic context.

Documentation can be provided on a Registration or Supporting documentation form provided by the Disability Service which needs to be completed by an appropriate medical practitioner, psychologist or other accredited health or educational specialist.

Alternatively, other documentation from an appropriate practitioner can be provided indicating:

- The nature of the disability
- The impacts of the disability on a student's study
- Any previous adjustments provided in an educational setting
- Recommended academic adjustments
- Whether the disability is short-term, fluctuating or permanent
- How long the documentation is valid for

The specific requirements of documentation may vary depending on the nature of the disability and the adjustments requested.

3.2.2 Documentation for Students with Dyslexia

Students with dyslexia are required to provide a full psychological or educational assessment report.

The assessment is to have been completed by a Psychologist with significant experience in working in education. The report needs to be comprehensive and written by the Psychologist who administered the assessment.

Assessments should be completed after the age of 16 or an update may be required.

An assessment report will:

- Advise whether dyslexia is the underlying reason for a person's learning problems
- Provide recommendations and strategies to assist the individual, including learning strategies and study accommodations in relation to academic studies
- Provide an overview of the individual's strengths and weaknesses

Section 4: Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments may vary from one individual to another depending on a range of factors including the nature of their dyslexia, inherent requirements of their program of study, recommendations from their learning assessment and preferences of the individual.

As a student is assisted in their transition into adult learning by disability services and other areas of the institution their reasonable adjustments may also change over time. The building of confidence and independence through mentoring programs, assistive technology and study skills development may result in a student approaching learning and assessment tasks with new skills and strategies, a progression from when they first commenced their post-secondary education.

Reasonable adjustments listed below include commonly used recommendations and should not be considered as an exhaustive list.

4.1 General Learning Environment

The general learning environment includes lectures, tutorials and laboratory classes.

4.1.1 Teaching Strategies

These may include:

- Providing PowerPoint slides, handouts and in-class exercises prior to class so the student has extra time to read them
- Verbalising text that is written on white boards
- Providing reading materials early to allow for any necessary alternative formatting to occur prior to classes
- Providing a list of subject area terminology to give the student an opportunity to become familiar with new vocabulary
- Providing opportunity for one-to-one catch up time so the student can seek clarification on course content and expectations
- Providing guidance on selecting readings in reading lists so the student has time to access relevant information within given timeframes
- Referral to learning advisors for the purpose of developing study skills relevant to the area of study

4.1.2 Recording of Information

Information presented in class can be recorded by:

- **Lecture capture video and audio recording facilities within teaching venues**

This option may require the teacher responsible to ensure that lecture capture is enabled and to upload the recording into the learning management system to make it available to students

- **Personal audio recording**

Livescribe smartpens allow students to audio record information in class by use of recording technology in a digital pen that allows playback to be synchronized with hand written notes

AudioNote is a similar technology that can be used on tablets and laptops. These options only require the student to write minimal notes or none at all

Sonocent Audio Notetaker is software that audio records and breaks the recording

up into manageable chunks which can be colour coded and have notes, images and slides added

- **Notetaker**

A notetaker attends class and writes notes for the student and when appropriate will type notes electronically so the student can use their text-to-speech software to read them

4.1.3 Formatting of Text

Students with dyslexia may be using assistive technology such as text-to-speech software (e.g. Read & Write TextHelp, TextAloud or Claroread). In this case the following recommendations are relevant:

- Books and readings to be in accessible electronic format (e.g. Microsoft Word format, non-image PDF or HTML)
- All in-class materials to be produced in accessible electronic format
- Notes written including those written by the teacher (e.g. feedback on assignments) or by a notetaker should be in accessible electronic format

4.1.4 Additional Time

- Extra time can be given for assignments

The process for organising an extension for an assignment should be as simple as possible and understood by the student and teaching staff

4.2 Exams Tests and Quizzes

Where an exam, test or quiz is online it may be necessary for the teacher to factor in extra time to modify the online platform's pre-set time limits to provide reasonable adjustments.

4.2.1 Extra Time

- **Reading time**

For exams that start with reading time extra time should consider the amount of reading required

- **Writing time**

Extra writing time for each hour of writing time should consider the amount of writing required for the student

- **Rest time**

This can also be organised for each hour of writing time and reading or writing is typically not allowed during rest breaks

4.2.2 Technology and Formatting

Technology options can be organised in consideration of formatting requirements.

- **Computer**

The use of a computer allows students to correct mistakes more easily and the standard features of word editing software (e.g. spell check) may also assist students

- **Text-to-speech software**

Students may use this software to have question papers and their written answers “read” back to them by a life-like electronic voice

- **Voice dictation software**

For example ‘Dragon NaturallySpeaking’ and other similar software allows the student to dictate their answers with the software converting their spoken words to electronic text

- **Mind mapping software**

For example ‘iMindMap and Inspiration’ and other similar software can assist students as a visual way of “mapping” ideas to plan the draft of an essay style question

- **Format of question paper**

An accessible format of the question paper will be required for text-to-speech users

- **Electronic format of answers**

It should be explained to exam and test administrators that the student's answers will be in electronic format when this reasonable adjustment has been made

4.2.3 Other

- **Reader scribe**

A reader scribe may be required for students for whom assistive technology is not appropriate

- **Words list**

This recommendation allows students to write down a list of words that they would like to take into the exam with them for the purpose of assisting them with spelling

It is recommended that the list is given by the student to the examiner for checking prior to the exam and then the approved list is provided to the student at the start of the exam

- **Room on own**

If a student is using voice recognition software they will need to be seated in a room on their own for tests and exams so they can speak aloud without being concerned about disrupting others

- **Exemption from spelling and grammar**

In some circumstances this may be considered when assistive technology or a scribe are not an option

Section 5: Case Studies

Just as reasonable adjustments vary from one individual to another so does the general experience of each student. In the following case studies course content and format, technology resources available with the educational institution and the development of independent study skills are just some of the factors that make each story unique.

Please note that both case studies are fictional.

5.1 Higher Education Case Study – Yasmin

Yasmin is a Bachelor of Arts student. She did not know about assistive technology until she came to university. Yasmin was introduced to text-to-speech software, voice dictation software and a smartpen. Alternative formatting of course books, (that were not commercially available in an accessible format), were also organised for her. Yasmin was successful in applying for a grant for Read & Write Gold and Dragon NaturallySpeaking. Disability Services provided Yasmin with a Livescribe Smartpen and her teachers were asked to use lecture capture to record classes.

Yasmin is enthusiastic about assistive technology and finds that books in an accessible format together with her text-to-speech software means that she can read study materials independently. She also finds that she can write her assignments independently. Yasmin keeps in contact with Disability Services throughout the year to seek advice and if necessary to review her access plan.

For first semester Yasmin decided to use a scribe in exams as she wanted more experience with Dragon NaturallySpeaking prior to using it for exams. By semester two exams however, she had become more confident and started using Dragon for some of her exams.

Yasmin found that she used a variety of means to access information in class. The smartpen was particularly useful for tutorials where lecture capture was not used. For a couple of subjects Yasmin did request a notetaker as lecture capture was not an available option. Furthermore, the lectures had a lot of information that needed notes written so that Yasmin could prepare for weekly tests. Yasmin has also started to use Sonocent Audio Notetaker for these classes and is finding that it allows her to listen to the audio in manageable chunks and add information.

When Yasmin is having difficulty understanding information presented in class she organises for a one-to-one consultation with the lecturer/tutor. She asks questions during these sessions and shows the lecturer/tutor the particular areas she is struggling with. Yasmin also makes sure the lecturers/tutors have a copy of her learning plan so they have strategies on how they can assist her.

5.2 TAFE Case Study - David

David is studying Diploma in Fitness. Most reading materials are accessible PDFs, online articles as well as materials that his teachers produce. They are generally in an accessible format but his teachers forward files they may need formatting to Disability Services for processing.

David uses a number of assistive technologies. As well as using text-to-speech software he has an app called Prizmo on his smartphone that can photograph a page or more of text, convert it into an accessible format and then “read” it aloud to him. He finds this comes in handy in situations when there is a hardcopy of text that he needs to read quickly. This technology is particularly useful for his work placement.

Most of his classes are of a workshop seminar style and are in venues that did not have lecture capture facilities. David found that a smartpen was a suitable way for recording the information he needed to refer back to. If there are discussions in class of a confidential nature he stops recording.

David’s course does not have any exams but there are brief tests at the end of some classes. As the tests consist of questions that require short answers he finds that he does not need to use his voice dictation software and that the extra writing time and use of his text-to-speech software for reviewing his answers is all he requires.

As some of his assignment due dates are close together he uses his assignment extensions to stagger them. His class sizes are relatively small so there is a good rapport between him and his teachers. This has assisted in teachers developing good knowledge of his access plan.

Section 6: Assistive Technology Resources

There is a broad range of assistive technologies available however this section provides further information on technologies that are commonly used to assist students with dyslexia.

6.1 Recording and Notetaking

- Livescribe Smartpen

This digital pen synchronises audio recording to hand written notes.

<http://www.livescribe.com/au/smartpen/echo/>

- Audionote

Audionote is a similar technology to the smartpen however notes are typed or written using finger stroke on a tablet or laptop.

<http://luminantsoftware.com/iphone/audionote.html>

6.2 Voice Recognition and Dictation

- Sonocent Audio Notetaker

This product audio records and breaks the recording up into manageable chunks which can be colour coded. Notes, images and slides can be added as well as questions to test their knowledge of the content.

<https://www.sonocent.com/en-us/audio-notetaker>

- Dragon NaturallySpeaking

Dragon is the leading voice recognition/dictation software. Student licenses are available at discounted costs.

<http://australia.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm>

6.3 Text-to-Speech

- Read and Write Gold TextHelp & ClaroRead

These products are user friendly text-to-speech software options that also provide other literacy assistance functions. There are a variety of versions available of each product.

<https://www.texthelp.com/en-gb>

<https://www.clarosoftware.com/>

- TextAloud

TextAloud is an affordable text-to-speech software, however it has less functions than other similar software.

<http://nextup.com/TextAloud/>

- ImindMap & Inspiration

Mind mapping software provides users a visual way of representing their ideas.

<http://imindmap.com/>

<http://www.inspiration.com/visual-learning/mind-mapping>

- Prizmo

This affordable app scans, performs optical character recognition and reads using text-to-speech. It is available for smartphones and MAC computers.

<http://www.creaced.com/iprizmo>

Section 7: Further Information

7.1 General Services

AUSPELD

AUSPELD is the Australian Federation of SPELD Associations that provide information, resources, articles, and useful links with the aim of supporting people with learning disabilities.

<http://auspeld.org.au/>

State SPELD Associations:

Each state organisation operates differently however they all provide advice, support or services to assist you or someone you know with a specific learning difficulty.

Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation Western Australia Inc.

Email: support@dsf.net.au Web: www.dsf.net.au

SPELD New South Wales

Email: enquiries@speldnsw.org.au Web: www.speldnsw.org.au

SPELD South Australia

Email: info@speld-sa.org.au Web: www.speld-sa.org.au

SPELD Queensland

Email: speld@speld.org.au Web: www.speld.org.au

SPELD Victoria

SPELD Victoria provide information and services to children and adults with Specific Learning Difficulties and for carers and professionals.

<http://www.speldvic.org.au/>

Australian Dyslexia Association

The Australian Dyslexia Association provide information and resources to identify and assist individuals with dyslexia and they provide a pre-assessment service.

<http://www.dyslexiaassociation.org.au/>

7.2 Victorian Assessment Providers

The following specialist services provide psychological and/or educational assessments:

Jennifer Finemore Psychologist M.A.P.S.

Jennifer conducts psychological and educational assessments for children and adults who are experiencing learning issues and/or difficulties with reading, writing or spelling. Jennifer also provides counselling and conducts professional development workshops in relation to learning disabilities.

Contact details:

Wattletree Psychology

Address: Suite 1B/ 307 Wattletree Road-Malvern East

Telephone: (03) 9500 0455

Email: jennifer.finemore@psych-assessments.com.au

<http://psych-assessments.com.au/psych-assessments.com.au/Assessments.html>

SPELD Victoria

Address: 60 High Street Preston, Victoria

Telephone: (03) 9480 4422

<http://www.speldvic.org.au/2014-10-28-22-51-19/assessments>

For other states:

Please refer to the SPELD in your state as listed in General Services, Section 7.1.

The following tertiary institutions provide psychological and/or educational assessments:

Australian Catholic University

Melbourne Psychology and Counselling Clinic - Fitzroy

Telephone: (03) 9953 3006

Email: melbournepsychologyclinic@acu.edu.au

La Trobe University

Psychology Clinic – Bundoora

Telephone: (03) 9479 2150

Monash University

Monash Psychology Centre - Notting Hill

Telephone: (03) 9905 4393

Swinburne University

Swinburne Psychology Clinic – Hawthorn

Telephone: (03) 9214 8653

Email: psychclinic@swin.edu.au

Victoria University

Psychology Clinic – Footscray

Telephone: (03) 9919 2353