

## Dyslexia

Dyslexic students may present diverse difficulties such as:

- short-term memory difficulties which will make the viva very challenging;
- long-term organisational problems which will make three years' research planning seem an insurmountable hurdle;
- writing difficulties (e.g. structure, spelling) which will make the thesis the main obstacle to progress but will also affect the way notes are taken and meetings are managed;
- problems with reading quickly and efficiently;
- problems with comprehending the written language;
- difficulties with fluorescent or white light which makes text appear to move or shake;
- feeling threatened whilst attending and presenting at a conference.

### Solutions might include:

- the supervisor writing bullet-pointed notes of meetings, freeing the student to listen and exchange ideas;
- engaging with a planning approach different from more usual methods;
- setting realistic targets which take into account the activities which present hurdles; encouraging the student to break down complex tasks into manageable units; allowing extra time for reading tasks and building this into their plan;
- staggering the writing-up process;
- identifying key texts for essential reading to provide the foundation for their research;
- checking with the student that they are interpreting the literature effectively;
- using enabling technology to assist with writing (e.g. mind-mapping software; dictation or voice recognition software; voice synthesiser to read text out loud; talking spell-checkers and thesaurus; coloured acetates/ backgrounds to slide presentations/ computer screens);
- arranging and funding proof-reading;
- ensuring detailed forward planning for the support required for fieldwork, conferences etc. |