

# CANTERBURY COLLEGE POLICY

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## DYSLEXIA POLICY

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LAST REVIEWED:	December 2011
REVIEWED BY:	Lut Stewart
NEXT REVIEW:	December 2013
POLICY LEAD:	Director of Student Support Services

# Dyslexia Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document was developed through consultation with students, College staff and stakeholders and approved by the Senior Management Team in April 2011.
- 1.2 This policy applies to Further Education programmes.
- 1.3 Higher Education programmes implement the marking scheme from the corresponding University.

### 2. Principles

2.1 The College recognises the following definitions of dyslexia:

‘Dyslexia is evident when accurate or fluent word reading and/or spelling develops very incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the word level and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching.’

British Psychological Report (BPS, 1999)

‘Dyslexia is a learning difference, a combination of strengths and weaknesses which affects the learning process in reading, spelling, writing and sometimes numeracy. Dyslexic learners may also have accompanying weaknesses in short-term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information.’

The British Dyslexia Association (BDA, 2006)

2.2 Using these two definitions in combination focuses on students’ word level skills but also accepts that other difficulties may occur in conjunction with or as a consequence of dyslexic difficulties.

2.3 This policy recognises that research evidence continues to present new or conflicting ideas in relation to dyslexia and all attempts have been made to reflect the most contemporary evidence and debates.

### 3. Aims

- To view dyslexia as a “specific learning difference” that implies a range of strengths and weaknesses, as well as different learning styles and preferences.

- To recognise that learning problems will arise if dyslexia is not identified and teaching and learning support is inappropriate.
- To meet the diversity of needs of dyslexic students through appropriate, personalised and effective provision.

To provide high quality support for dyslexic students by:

- Raising awareness and understanding of dyslexia within the College
- Establishing clear assessment and support procedures
- Providing a needs-based combination of teaching adjustments and additional support
- Ensuring parent and stakeholder concerns are acknowledged and addressed
- Increasing training opportunities for all College and Corporation staff

## **4. Practice**

### **4.1 Promoting Partnership**

4.1.1 Parents and stakeholders concerns about a young person's needs will be acknowledged and investigated. Appropriate evidence will be requested to inform subsequent discussion and further assessment may be conducted within College.

4.1.2 In the case of students that have dyslexia identified at college and are within the 16-18 years of age cohort, parents or guardians will (with the consent of the young person) be contacted to discuss assessment outcomes and support plans. Parents and guardians elect to participate will also be invited to attend progress reviews throughout the academic year.

4.1.3 Students and parents/guardians will be given advice and guidance on seeking help and support from external agencies.

4.1.4 If parents/ guardians disagree with the outcomes of any assessment or support provisions made for a young person, a period of tracking the student's progress will ensue over an agreed time period. Following the expiration of the review period another meeting will be convened.

4.1.5 The College will seek to work in collaboration with external agencies in order to promote awareness and develop best practice.

### **4.2 Recognising Diversity and Early Intervention**

4.2.1 All College staff will be given opportunities to undertake continuing professional development relating to dyslexia.

4.2.2 Teaching and support staff will be given opportunities to undertake continuing professional development that focuses on effective and inclusive teaching and learning strategies aimed at dyslexic students.

### **4.3 Identifying Barriers to Learning**

4.3.1 Assessment of dyslexia will provide evidence that

- Fluent and accurate word reading and/or spelling has been learned incompletely
- Appropriate learning opportunities have been provided
- Difficulties are persistent and progress has been made only as a result of significant additional support, instruction and effort

4.3.2 Assessment will focus on establishing a student's strengths and weaknesses in order to inform future teaching and support; assessment will NOT be completed solely for the purpose of diagnosing dyslexia.

4.3.3 A range of assessment procedures will be used to gain information about a student's strengths and difficulties; dyslexia screening tools will not be used exclusively.

4.3.4 It is recognised that students of all abilities may experience difficulties of a dyslexic nature; however, where a student's cognitive abilities exceed literacy skills, decisions about suitability for a programme of study will not be based on literacy ability alone.

4.3.5 In such situations a more holistic view of the student's potential to achieve, with additional support, should inform the decision-making process.

4.3.6 It is accepted that phonological skills have a central role in the development of reading and spelling; research evidence suggests that around 80% of dyslexic people have problems with phonological processing; however, phonological difficulties alone will not be used as the defining feature of dyslexia as some dyslexic students will have secure phonological skills.

4.3.7 Assessment of word level skills will be central to an assessment of dyslexia; however, other skills often associated with dyslexia that can affect learning outcomes will also be investigated; these may include organisational ability, motor difficulties, sequencing, short-term and working memory.

### **4.4 Assessing Students with English as an Additional Language Needs (EAL)**

4.4.1 In the case of students with English as an additional language the College recognises the need for culture-fair identification of dyslexia which takes into account language and culture.

4.4.2 The College is committed to providing assessment opportunities for students with English as an additional language and interpretation of data will take full account of the learning opportunities that have been available.

#### **4.5 Modifying Teaching**

4.5.1 The College regards dyslexia as primarily a 'mainstream' issue; teaching will need to be modified throughout the student's College experience and needs may change over time.

4.5.2 Students with dyslexic difficulties have access to all relevant and appropriate learning programmes which will be differentiated by presentation, pace, level and outcome to meet their individual needs; this will include differentiated materials and tasks to suit their particular learner profile.

4.5.3 The Course Tutor's responsibility will focus mainly on facilitating access to the core curriculum, with advice and support from the additional learning support (ALS) service; the Directors of Further Education have overall responsibility for ensuring that students are provided with appropriately modified curricula.

4.5.4 The Functional Skills Tutor's responsibility will be to ensure that functional skills programmes are accessible to dyslexic learners and are differentiated; the Directors of Further Education have overall responsibility for ensuring that students are provided with appropriately modified functional skills curricula.

4.5.5 The Additional Support Team is responsible for assessing and providing specialist additional support for students with dyslexic difficulties; the Director of Student Support Services has overall responsibility for ensuring that additional support services are appropriate, personalised and effective in promoting progression and success.

4.5.6 It is recognised that good progress in literacy skills is often linked to structured, systematic teaching programmes that occur regularly and frequently, and often involve a multi-sensory approach; these may be delivered individually or in small groups by appropriately qualified Specialist Tutors working within the Additional Learning Support Team; the Additional Learning Support Team will ensure there is an appropriate balance between the student's need to pursue and individualised withdrawal programme with their entitlement to access a broad and relevant curriculum.

#### **4.6 Provision and Resources**

4.6.1 The College recognises that there is a continuum of learning difficulty; this will be met by a corresponding continuum of resources; students with identified dyslexic difficulties will be supported through a needs-led combination of differentiated resources and tasks within core curriculum and functional skills lessons and additional support from Learning Support Practitioners and Specialist Tutors.

4.6.2 The College will draw on the advice and service of external agencies and professionals as required.

## **4.7 Promoting Student Participation**

4.7.1 Students will be regarded as active participants in the learning process; they will be involved in:

- Setting and reviewing targets and progress
- Identifying helpful support strategies
- Receiving prompt feedback on their progress
- Investigating their own learning style and preferences

## **4.8 Monitoring Arrangements**

4.8.1 Monitoring procedures for students with dyslexic difficulties will occur at three levels:

- Monitoring student progress towards curriculum targets and outcomes
- Monitoring the effectiveness of additional support interventions
- Monitoring curriculum access and the effectiveness of whole college approaches

## **4.9 Policy Review**

4.9.1 This policy will be reviewed in spring 2014.

## Appendix 1.

### **General Dyslexia Marking Guidelines (applicable to Further Education Programmes. Higher Education Programmes implement the marking schemes of the corresponding universities)**

#### **Guidance for Tutors**

These marking guidelines should be applied to any and all students where the College has evidence of dyslexia type difficulties. Marking guidelines of this type are common amongst further and higher education establishments and are considered good practice. The purpose of the guidelines is to ensure that students with dyslexia have parity with their peers and not to give them an unfair advantage in meeting course outcomes.

Please be aware that not all students that state they are dyslexic will be – please check with the Additional Learning Support (ALS) Team to verify the existence of evidence within college that supports such claims or view the ALS records for the learner via the team R Drive (if you do not have appropriate permissions please contact [als@canterburycollege.ac.uk](mailto:als@canterburycollege.ac.uk) requesting access). If the College does not have sufficient evidence of dyslexic type difficulties, these guidelines should not apply.

In addition, please be mindful that dyslexia can affect a range of functions involved in the processing and use of language and that people experiencing dyslexia type difficulties are a heterogeneous cohort – refrain from making assumptions about an individual skills, abilities and confidence.

Finally, although many students with dyslexia may elect to access additional learning support services, some will decline. If you are unaware of whether the student is accessing ALS services you are strongly advised to find out via the student or the ALS team in the first instance.

More general guidance for College staff on effective and inclusive practices when working with students dyslexia can be found on the ALS Dyslexia Candoodle pages or on request from the ALS Dyslexia Support Tutors ([dyslexia@canterburycollege.ac.uk](mailto:dyslexia@canterburycollege.ac.uk)).

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## MARKING GUIDELINES

These apply to Further Education Courses only. Higher Education Courses implement the marking schemes of the corresponding Universities.

What to do	Rationale
<p>Assess or discuss what level of correction the student will be able to do effectively.</p> <p>Be very clear about the marking criteria. If you decide to mark for knowledge, understanding and ideas and ignore spelling, punctuation and grammar make sure the student is aware of this prior to the start of the assignment or essay.</p>	<p>This is because many students with dyslexia will be able to tell you what works for them.</p> <p>Absence of lots of corrections (they might well be used to lots) may create a false sense of improvement and can be demoralising when re-appraisal occurs.</p>
<p><b>The main marking strategy is to read quickly in order to assess ideas, understanding and knowledge.</b> The marker needs to ignore grammar, spelling and punctuation errors, and not make any corrections or comments.</p>	<p>The dyslexic student's holistic thinking style does not lend itself to the linear nature of words or texts. Consequently, reading quickly may enable the reader to access the holistic pattern of thought.</p>
<p>Accentuate the positive - try to comment on where the student has done well and explain why a particular aspect of the work is good rather than/as well as being critical.</p>	<p>This approach is good because students with dyslexia might find it difficult to 'read between the lines'. Instead they need direct but positive comments e.g. 'this was good because ...' Try to avoid telling them what they should not do as models and examples of good practice and correct usage are easier for the student to retain and replicate.</p>
<p>Explain what is required and what went wrong in the work. Use clear, explicit English avoiding innuendo, sarcasm &amp; complex sentence structures. Avoid using grammatical terms, unless using a marking scheme supported with models of good practice (see <b>Error Analysis Marking</b>, below).</p> <p>If the student agrees, 'awkward' sentences can be selected for the student to rewrite.</p>	<p>Because dyslexic students do not learn language skills subliminally, students will usually be unlikely to know how to correct or improve an error without some guidance, model or explanation. Also, they are usually not familiar with grammatical terms or rules.</p> <p>Consequently, unless language skills are explained in a way which makes sense to a dyslexic person, they cannot improve these skills merely through comments and corrections about spellings, grammar, punctuation and syntax, etc.</p>

<p>Use one colour pen to comment on ideas, understanding &amp; knowledge, a different colour pen for spelling, grammar and punctuation. Avoid using red pens.</p>	<p>Anything which helps to differentiate the functions of words is very useful for the dyslexic student. Red ink often has negative associations from school days and can be demoralising.</p>
<p>If you want to indicate where changes in structure or organisation are necessary, use highlighter pens to indicate areas of text which 'belong together'.</p>	<p>Anything which aids differentiation of text is helpful: colour is instantly recognisable and will give the student an additional sense of control over the text.</p>
<p>If you decide to mark for spelling, grammar, &amp; punctuation, don't mark every error. Instead, select and indicate about 4 or 5 types of error. (Perhaps you can negotiate this with the student.)</p> <p>To enable the students to develop as learners, use the error analysis marking system.</p>	<p>It can be demoralising to see masses of corrections. Simply correcting spelling, grammar or punctuation will not facilitate an improvement – helping the student to identify types of error together with models of correct usage will help.</p>
<p><b>Error Analysis Marking</b></p> <p>Even if you are marking without penalising for mistakes in the technical use of language, students do need help to develop their written English skills. The following marking system will help a student to aim towards independent learning, as long as it is augmented with explanations, examples and models of good practice.</p> <p>Self- checking is a powerful tool to learning. Error analysis marking encourages the student to find and correct errors identified by a tutor through a coded mark in the margin e.g.</p> <p><b>Sp</b> - spelling, <b>G</b> -grammar, <b>SS</b> - sentence structure, <b>P</b> - punctuation, <b>V</b> - vocabulary, <b>O</b> - word omission, <b>R</b> - repetition, <b>T</b> - tense.</p> <p>Using this guidance the student will examine the line of writing, identify the highlighted error and attempt to correct it. Once a student learns to identify particular types of error, s/he can begin to check their own work and re-draft accordingly.</p>	