

Student Support Plan (B)

Please read this plan and the accompanying [guidance notes](#) carefully.

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1. Personal and disability information

Name/known as:	
Student ID:	
College:	
Programme:	
Level:	Post-Graduate Research degrees
Department/Faculty:	
Start year:	
Key DAS contact:	DAS contacts
Disability type:	Social Communication
Disability information:	Autism or NHS Autism Assessment pathway

Confidentiality: The student has given their consent for information about their disability to be shared on a need-to-know basis with appropriate staff in line with Data Protection Act requirement.

2. Impact on study information

For more information about autism, see the [DAS implications for study guides](#).

3. Recommended adjustments

Teaching

The measures described in the [disability inclusion statement](#) (SSPA) apply to this student's support arrangements. SSPA is often of less direct relevance for PGR students, but the measures should be implemented where applicable.

In addition, the following adjustments are recommended:

Access and Orientation

- Offer individual induction to buildings and premises.

Supervision

- Advance notice of changes to study venues and times where possible to allow time to adjust to change.
- Consider the frequency, duration and format of supervisions and discuss options with your supervisee. Offering optional meetings in-between formal supervisions can help in enabling discussion of difficulties or barriers at an early stage.
- Be aware that sensory and/or social overload may affect concentration, processing speed, and response time. Allow additional time for the student to process and respond to questions, and provide advance guidance on material to be discussed where possible.
- Presentations and collaboration: be aware of the potential for increased anxiety and consider adjustments where needed (see [Advice for supporting students](#) section).
- The student needs to manage their health through the day and may need to: leave the room/session at short notice, take a rest break, take food and drink into sessions, stand up and move around the room, etc.
- Set aside time during supervisions to support the student's development of a medium-to-long term plan, and review together regularly. This will be helpful for all students, but especially neurodivergent students managing the extra time needed for reading and writing, and who may be impacted by organisational or prioritisation difficulties.
- Use clear language for instructions and feedback and reinforce in writing. Provide opportunities for students to ask for clarification. Feedback is clear, constructive, and helps the student identify specific areas to develop further. See: [Oxford Teaching Ideas: Feedback](#).
- Student can make their own recording of supervisions and/or agree with you a preferred method for confirming and documenting the main points of the session. Student to refer to their responsibilities relating to

recordings, as set out in the [educational recordings policy](#), §26-30. [Staff guidance on student recordings](#).

Practicals and laboratory work

- Evaluate the need for an individual risk assessment for practical or laboratory settings, to be carried out by the relevant lab/safety manager.

Examinations (Transfer of Status, Confirmation of Status, final viva)

Action for research student:

To gain approval for adjustments to examinations, an application must be made by the research student via the GSO.19 form on the [graduate forms](#) page. Please see [6: Guidance notes](#) in this document for further information.

4. For staff

Advice for supporting students

The following advice for supporting doctoral students is based on inclusive teaching principles.

Supervision

- **Consider flexibility:** let your supervisee know you are interested in understanding their individual needs and preferences and exploring how these may be incorporated into the way you work together. **Let them know you have read their SSP** and will implement the adjustments recommended to teaching. Check in occasionally to ask whether these are working as intended and that no further adjustments are needed.
- **Pause regularly** so the student can process information and take notes if needed; summarize key points at the end. Allow time for them to absorb questions and prepare responses.
- Be aware that some students may use fiddle objects, loop earplugs or ear defenders and may move around, fidget or stim and may not make regular eye contact. These are essential to support concentration, thinking and emotional regulation.
- Some students may be particularly affected by stress, anxiety or overwhelm triggered by **public speaking, networking, presentations or collaborative working**. Students may be supported to develop coping

strategies to manage this, including opportunities to practice in a simulated, supportive and low stakes environment. It may be necessary to make adjustments to tasks or plans--discuss together what may help/what may be possible in the context of the project.

- If applicable, consider how to support a student with a return to study after a period of absence.

Laboratory and experiments

- Ensure there is sufficient time in the schedule for students to keep up with laboratory or experimental work. Build in extra time to allow students to: resolve problems, take a break or ask questions.

Programme, Department or College level

- **Research networking and collaboration.** Build in opportunities for all students to access support with problems that may arise, such as through peer supporter schemes or access to welfare leads. Offer a variety of activities designed to build a supportive research culture, with different ways to engage. This acknowledges that there are a variety of ways to contribute positively to the research community.

University transition - college and department proactively communicate the transition support options available to autistic students and offer personalised support where this is needed.

Sources of support and training

- For advice and information, staff may contact DAS by email on disability@admin.ox.ac.uk, or see [Supporting disabled students: A guide for staff](#) or our [student web-page](#).
- There is guidance for tutors on [Supporting Student Mental Health and Wellbeing](#). Staff can explore training opportunities for supporting students with a disability at the [Disability confidence web-page](#).

As part of the University's IncludEd campaign, The Centre for Teaching and Learning has developed a [Guide to inclusive teaching](#). There are also [Oxford-specific online courses](#): 'DPhil Supervision at Oxford (Sciences)', and 'an Introduction to Inclusive Teaching at Oxford'.

5. For students: Important sources of support

Contact your Disability Coordinator

If at any point you are experiencing disability-related barriers to study, please contact your Disability Coordinator.

The primary contact for postgraduate research students is the [disability coordinator](#) in their department. However, if the barrier to study relates mainly or solely to college provision, students should contact the [disability coordinator](#) in their college.

Accessing welfare support and other resources

- Counselling and therapy is available from [University Counselling Service](#); [NHS Talking Therapies](#); private therapists can be found via the [Counselling Directory](#).
- Every college has a welfare team to support students. Links to the welfare section of every college website are at [College support](#).
- The [University Counselling Services supportive resources](#) for students.
- The NHS has self-help resources for a wide range of mental health concerns - [Self Help Leaflets](#).

Applying for Disabled Students' Allowance

If you have not already done so, UK ('home') students with a disability should consider applying for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). Applying for DSA means that you can access a Study Needs Assessment (SNA), which gives an individualised insight into the study aids and support that may be helpful. For example, where indicated, the SNA could lead to funding for some of the following:

- Assistive Technology - physical study aids and computer software, which can be used to support note-taking, planning and organisation.
- Assistive Technology training – so that you can get the best out of the technologies recommended for you.
- A laptop (students contribute the first £200).

See our [funding page](#) for more information about the appropriate application route, depending on your funding body. It can take up to 14 weeks for applications to be processed and support implemented. Please contact DAS at disability@admin.ox.ac.uk if you need help with your application.

Re-applying: Postgraduates will normally need to fill in a new form for each year of their course.

All Research Council funded students should contact their [DAS advisor](#) in the first instance, who will advise on details, eligibility and next steps.

International students (with the exception of Research Council-funded students) are not eligible for DSA, but can access an in-house assessment and support. International students should contact their [link advisor](#) if they would like to explore this option.

6. Guidance notes

Implementation of the Plan

The Student Support Plan (SSP) sets out the reasonable adjustments recommended by the Disability Advisory Service (DAS), based on evidence and information provided by the student. The recommendations are not exhaustive, and additional or alternative arrangements may be agreed if they address the disability-related barrier more appropriately in the study context, or where unforeseen barriers arise. If required, the SSP can be the basis for discussion about how best to implement adjustments and support the student, which may involve the student, disability coordinator, tutors or other staff as appropriate. The DAS (disability@admin.ox.ac.uk) can provide additional advice where it is unclear which adjustments will be most effective.

Impact on study

Many conditions fluctuate and therefore impacts might be experienced intermittently or present differently over time. Typically, symptoms and their impacts are exacerbated around key stress points in the year, such as when workloads and study schedules are most intense, or during assessment periods. Students should not need to discuss their needs with each member of staff they meet, or be expected to share personal or medical details.

Examinations

To gain approval for adjustments to examinations an application must be made by the research student via the GSO.19 form on the [graduate forms page](#). Guidance on this process is provided in Section 7.4 and Annex C of the [Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees](#). Students can discuss their needs with their supervisor or departmental/Faculty disability coordinator prior to submitting this form.

Examination adjustments can be requested at any point leading up to submission of the thesis, but students are advised to make an application early to ensure arrangements are in place for Transfer and Confirmation of Status. In the application, students can request: that examiners are made aware of the impairment and any implications for the assessment; that reasonable adjustments or inclusive practice already in place for supervisions are replicated during the assessments; any other adjustments needed or recommended in the Student Support Plan.