**University of Chichester**

# **Supporting Dyslexic Students:**

## Differentiated marking of the work of students with dyslexia

#### Policy

1. That the University implement a system of flagging the coursework and exam scripts of students identified by the Disability Service as dyslexic.
2. That, in marking flagged work, markers should discount, as far as possible, errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation and instead mark for content and ideas and critical acumen (see appendix 1 – Guidance for lecturers marking the work of students identified as being dyslexic).

#### Procedure

#### It is important that a robust and clear procedure is put into place if this policy is to be seen as fair by both staff and students.

**Disability Service**

1. Students who have dyslexic difficulties are required to register with the Disability and Academic Skills Service.
2. The student is required to provide an assessment report from an Educational Psychologist or equivalent, including cognitive assessments proving that the student has the capability of studying at HE level.
3. Where the student has no such report, or where the report is outdated or invalid, the student will be referred by the Disability Service to an Educational Psychologist for a full assessment.
4. Where the Educational Psychologist’s report recommends that consideration is given to difficulties with spelling, grammar and punctuation, the Disability or Dyslexia Advisor will add this to the Student Additional Requirements Agreement form.

**Academic Services**

1. Academic Services will log the requirement for differentiated marking on the SITS record. This will allow SITS to flag the electronic submissions of students requiring differentiated marking.
2. Where the student has physical or hard copy submissions, the student can request paper stickers to flag their work. Academic Registry will create small, self-adhesive labels for this purpose for the student’s use.
3. In order to maintain anonymous marking, each label will have the student’s individual student reference number, rather than their name, printed on it.
4. Students will be provided with these stickers on request from either Academic Registry or the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

**Students**

1. On line submissions will be flagged automatically to alert markers that the work is eligible for Differentiated Marking.
2. For physical or hard copy submissions, it will be the student’s responsibility to ensure that the labels are clearly attached to the cover sheet.
3. Misuse or abuse of labels by students will be viewed as academic malpractice and dealt with accordingly.
4. Students may choose not to use their labels if they wish. However, if they do this there will not then be grounds for mitigation if they are unhappy with the subsequent mark.

**Academic staff/schools**

1. Each label or flag will alert the marker to the fact that this is the work of a dyslexic student and therefore should be marked according to the policy in Appendix 1 and the student should not be penalised for problems with spelling, grammar and punctuation.
2. For hard copies, the Marker should check that the student number on the label matches the number on the script.
3. Some pieces of work may be exempt from the policy. Where this is the case it is the responsibility of the school concerned to state clearly that the work is exempt.

***Appendix 1***

***Guidance for Lecturers marking the work of students identified as Dyslexic***

### Marking Assignments and exam scripts submitted by identified students with dyslexia

All written work submitted by identified students with dyslexia is eligible for differentiated marking only if it has attached a sticker issued by Academic Services identifying the student as eligible for differentiated marking.

Examiners should mark in accordance with the following notes of guidance:

1. Marking the work of a dyslexic student is likely to take longer than marking the work of other students.
2. Markers might find it easier to skim the assignment quickly first, before a closer reading. This may allow the ideas the student is presenting to come through.
3. When marking dyslexic candidates’ scripts, examiners are asked to focus on the clarity of the argument, rather than on details of expression. Try to separate marking of transcription errors and marking of content.
4. When allocating marks, discount the difficulties with spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax, **except where they form an explicit part of what is being assessed.** (N.B All courses in the School of Education and courses leading to pre and post qualifying Social Work qualifications are exempt from this policy).
5. Do not penalise errors that a good copy editor could put right. Marking for content over form may require re-reading texts and some consideration.
6. However, while differentiated marking of assessed work submitted by dyslexic students implies the disregarding of errors of spelling and grammar, the communication itself must be effective. If academic standards are to be safeguarded, differentiated marking cannot extend to written expression so poor that coherence and intelligibility are at issue. **Markers cannot give marks for what is not there or what is so unclear that no sense can be made of it.**
7. If ideas are not clear then students need to be shown this. In feedback, comment on how the student has done well and explain why some work is good. Comments will be most effective if they offer clear explanations of what is required and what is wrong. Simply stating that a point needs developing does not tell the dyslexic student anything. It would help the student improve future performance if examples can be given of how a point can be developed.
8. If commenting on difficulties with spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax, use an easily recognisable abbreviation system to flag up where the problem is, e.g. sp for spelling, gr for grammar, ss for sentence structure, pn for punctuation, Lt for layout. Make sure the student is given the code for the abbreviations. Give clear indications of what the error is and what the correct version would be. Where possible, use two pens (not red because of the negative associations). Use one colour to comment on the material and the use of ideas. Use the other colour for comments about spelling, grammar, punctuation and syntax.

For further advice on this document or any other issues related to Dyslexia, please contact the Disability and Academic Skills Service on 01243 812076.

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