

Students with an Autism Spectrum Condition

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability. It affects the way in which a person communicates with, and relates to, other people and the world around them. Autism is described as a spectrum condition, which means that while all people with autism will share some common characteristics, how the condition affects them, and how they experience it will be different to each person. Around 1 in every 100 people in the UK has an autism spectrum condition.

Asperger Syndrome (AS) is a form of autism. People with AS tend to experience some level of difference and/or difficulty with social interaction and communication, and may develop repetitive behaviour and resistance to change.

Some of the common characteristics of AS are as follows:

- A high level of motivation
- Difficulty in social situations, which may lead to a feeling of isolation
- Sensory hypersensitivity, such as sensitivity to noise, light or touch
- Elevated anxiety, often as a result of confusion, or because of sensory overload
- Poor motor skills and coordination, sometimes leading to clumsiness
- Very precise, sometimes pedantic use of language, which may be extremely literal. Difficulty with ambiguity, sarcasm, metaphor and so on. Differences in processing tone and intonation.
- Differences in processing non-verbal communication, such as facial expression and eye contact, and difficulty in understanding social cues, such as knowing when a conversation is ending
- Difficulty in making decisions, and an aversion to change. A liking for routine and order
- Intense interest in a certain subject, object or activity which can sometimes become obsessive. This can lead to high levels of interest in and focus on the chosen subject of study

Students with Asperger Syndrome at the University of Leeds study a wide range of subjects – from maths and sciences to languages and arts subjects. We work with students at all levels, from students on foundation courses, to final year PhD students.

Support for students with an autism spectrum condition

Students at the University of Leeds who have an autism spectrum condition can access a variety of support services, subject to availability and suitability, without applying for any additional funding. These include:

- Transition support to assist you in making the transition from school to university, including transitional learning contracts

- modified examination arrangements, such as extra time, the use of a separate room, a familiar invigilator, rest breaks etc
- extended library loan facilities, so that you can borrow library books for longer
- access to campus-based computers with assistive technology (including text-to-speech, mind-mapping and magnification software)
- the loan of small items of equipment, such as recording devices
- assistance in requesting copies of handouts or lecture presentations in advance from your department
- term-time drop-in sessions to talk to member of staff in the Disability Team, from Monday to Friday, 12:30pm – 1:30pm
- term-time guidance appointments with a Disability Coordinator
- advice and guidance to both you and your department about the impact of your condition on various study tasks, and how to accommodate this

To access a range of other support services, you will need to apply for additional funding. Depending on your requirements, these services include:

- a full assessment of your academic support needs
- weekly study strategy support sessions with an independent specialist in autism spectrum conditions
- support from a Specialist Mentor to help you to stay on track with academic work, organise your studies and help you settle in to University life
- personal assistant and/or note-taker support
- the opportunity to attend relevant workshops
- computer equipment or assistive software for you to own
- allowance for photocopying, printing, computing and recording consumables
- allowance for travel costs if you are living away from campus and are unable to travel by public transport

You can find out more about funding this support here **[[link to Funding page](#)]**

We can also offer support for students wishing to seek a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome.

For more information contact:

Disability Co-ordinator (Autism Spectrum Conditions)

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Or look at the following webpages:

- The National Autistic Society: www.autism.org.uk

- The National Autistic Society Guide to Choosing and Applying to University: <http://www.autism.org.uk/18455>
- The National Autistic Society Guide to Starting at University: <http://www.autism.org.uk/20552>
- University Students with Autism & Asperger Syndrome: <http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~cns/>
- A Survival Guide for People with Asperger Syndrome by Marc Segar: <http://www.autismusundcomputer.de/english//marc2.en.html>