



UCEM

MAY 2021

# BUILT FOR LIFE

Employer's guide to supporting  
students with neurodiversity

# What is neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain can work and interpret information.

Neurodiversity refers to the different ways the brain can work and interpret information. It highlights that people naturally think about things differently. We recognise Autism Spectrum Disorders, ADHD, and Specific Learning Difficulties such as Dyslexia as examples of neurodiversity.

## My student is neurodivergent, who can I speak to?

As an employer, if you would like to speak with the Disability and Welfare Team about a student's neurodiversity, we need to have their written consent. Please ask them to email the **disability and welfare team** with permission to speak with you.

If the student is an apprentice, and is comfortable, it may also be a good point of discussion in their progress reviews with their apprenticeship outcomes officer.

# Who can my student speak to about neurodiversity?

Any queries regarding neurodiversity and the support available should be directed to the **disability and welfare team**.

We also have a Student Ambassador (Welfare) who is there to talk to individuals about their experience as a student with neurodiversity. They can be found on the **student ambassadors LinkedIn group**.



**Phoebe Hughes**

UCEM Disability and Welfare Adviser



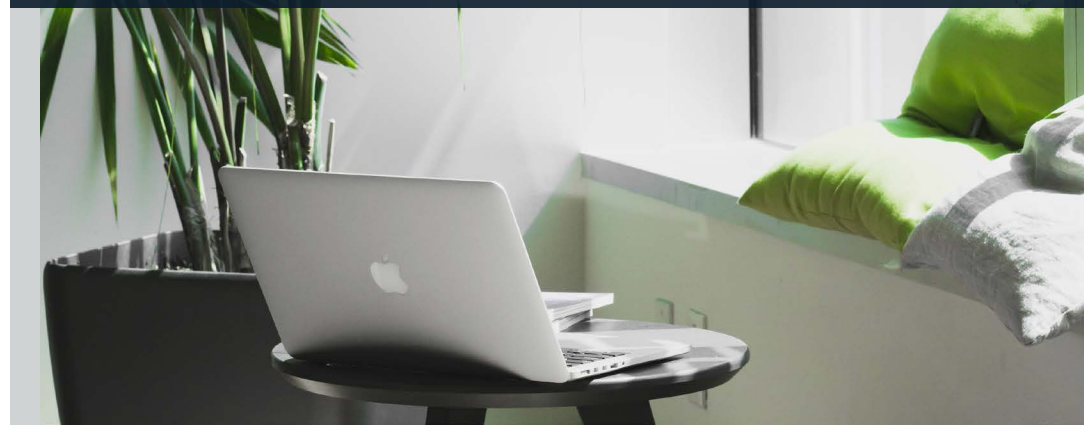
**Richard Higgins**

UCEM Disability and Welfare Adviser



**Paul Adeleye**

Student Ambassador (Welfare)





## What internal support is available for students?

All students can access support through our Academic Support Tutors. Their contact information can be found on each module page in the VLE. They will be able to support with assignment preparation and study skills.

Further reasonable adjustments are available to students with specific needs identified by a qualified and registered Specialist Teacher/ Assessor or Psychologist. Using this information, the Disability and Welfare Team will work with the student on an individual basis to create an Additional Support Plan. This could include, for example, not being penalised for errors in spelling and grammar, extensions to coursework deadlines, and additional time in Computer Marked Assessments (CMAs).

## What funded support is available for students?

If eligible, the Disability and Welfare Team will advise and assist students with applying for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). DSA is a UK government grant that can help to pay for specialist study skills support, assistive software, and equipment amongst other things. More information can be found on the **YourDSA website**.

## What counts as evidence of neurodiversity?

Alternatively, apprentices can access funding for assistive technology and additional support through the Educational Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). Examples of the support available through ESFA include Specialist Study Skills Tutors, Mentor Support, text-to-speech software, voice recognition software and mind mapping software. Apprentices interested in finding out more about ESFA funded support should contact the **disability and welfare team**.

For reasonable adjustments to be implemented, students with dyslexia are required to provide a full diagnostic report carried out by a qualified and registered Specialist Teacher/Assessor or Psychologist. At school or college, students may have been assessed for access arrangements and given a JCQ Access Arrangement (Form 8). While this provides useful information, universities do not accept a Form 8 as sufficient evidence of a learning difference as it does not contain a formal diagnosis.

All evidence should be sent to the **disability and welfare team**.



[wellbeing@ucem.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing@ucem.ac.uk)



0800 019 9697





## What if my student hasn't had a formal assessment?

It is common for students to have gone through school without being identified with neurodiversity. If you are concerned that a student's studies are being effected by difficulties associated with neurodiversity, please encourage them to contact the **disability and welfare team** for advice and guidance. The team can provide them with free access to an online dyslexia screening which will give an indication as to whether a full assessment is required.

The team can also assist with finding an assessor. They can advise on possible support with covering the cost of the assessment through either the Student Hardship Fund or our charity partner Chartered Surveyors Training Trust (CSTT). For further information please contact the **disability and welfare team**.

## My student would like a dyslexia assessment, how do they arrange one?

UCEM cannot provide in-house dyslexia assessments. The Disability and Welfare Team can provide screenings to give an idea as to whether a student may have traits of a Specific Learning Difficulty such as dyslexia. Following a screening, the team will advise on the next steps which may involve assisting in finding an assessor. They will also be able to advise on any funding support available through the Student Hardship Fund or our charity partner Chartered Surveyors Training Trust (CSTT).

## My student doesn't want to talk to UCEM about their neurodiversity. What can I do?

There is no obligation for a student to disclose information about their neurodiversity. We do however, encourage everyone with neurodiversity to let the **disability and welfare team** know so we can discuss the range of support available. If a student wishes to have reasonable adjustments put in place or access funded support, they will need to disclose information regarding their neurodiversity and provide diagnostic evidence.

Students may also find it beneficial to disclose their neurodiversity to the Disability and Welfare Team without accessing any formal support. We will then have a clear picture of the student's needs should they wish to access support further down the line.

## What further support can I provide as an employer?

Your primary role as an employer is to support your student. That could simply be providing an environment where they can air questions or concerns. If a student does need more support, you should talk to them about their individual needs. You may need to provide a quiet space for them to work, check in with them more often to see how they are progressing or give them more time for activities. As an employer, you can also access initiatives such as **Access to Work**.

## What do other students think about our service?



*“ Since being at UCEM I have received excellent support from the Disability and Welfare Team.*

*When it was suggested to me that I should have a dyslexia assessment, I took the opportunity after completing an online screening.*

I'd never been given any extra support before or considered that I may have dyslexia. At first, when the assessor told me I had dyslexia, I found it upsetting but they helped me to see my strengths and how I could use my learning difficulty to my advantage. Through an Additional Support Plan, I had access to Clear Links who provided me with excellent study skills support. Over the length of my programme, I had three Tutors who I met with fortnightly over Skype or alternative video calls. They were

very flexible which allowed me to connect with them on my study days once I'd spent the morning working on an assignment or piece of work. I also had access to assistive technology for my computer including Dragon Professional and ClaroRead. I've used these to write my assignments as speaking my thoughts is so much easier for me than typing. The Apprentice Support Tutors were also there to help with academic queries and pushed me to succeed.

Completing my programme at UCEM has meant that I'm able to progress in my career and move towards the RICS assessment. This is something that I thought was a long way off after taking time out to be a Mum for many years. I would definitely suggest getting in contact with the Team.”

*Nicki Robinson, Surveying Technician  
Diploma (Quantity Surveying) L3  
Apprentice*



## What do other students think about our service?



*“ Whilst on my studies at UCEM, it was brought to my attention that I may have a form of learning difficulty.*

*It had been suggested that I could be dyslexic.*

At first this worried me, as I thought it could affect my studies and I wouldn't be able to complete them to the standard which I felt would be acceptable. This was definitely not the case! I was put in contract with the Disability and Welfare Team at UCEM and they made sure that I took a dyslexia assessment. The assessment was incredible, extremely professional and nothing to worry about at all. I got my results sent directly to me within five days. This quick timing helped me a lot as

the programme had strict timings and I didn't want to lose marks. I couldn't recommend this service more. I was put in contact with Phoebe (UCEM Disability and Welfare Adviser) who made it top priority that I was put in contact with various companies that supplied and set up equipment which helped me focus and write my assignments. This was equipment I can now use in my professional career to make sure I stay on top and give me the chance to maximise my success. Also, I was

put in contact with a company called Clear Links. They provided me with a Study Skills Tutor, who would go through my work and suggest any grammatical and spelling corrections needed. They would also help with improving my professional language skills. They worked closely and confidentially with my company which made the service relatively stress free and made me feel that I wasn't 'brainless'. Overall, I managed to achieve a Merit and am now in the process of

moving up within my company. This was something that I never felt I was able to achieve. This really has improved my outlook on myself and how achievable challenging tasks are. I look forward to many more challenges.

**Christopher Scotland, Surveying Technician Diploma (Quantity Surveying) L3 Apprentice**







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[ucem.ac.uk](http://ucem.ac.uk)

The disability and wellbeing team is here to listen and provide expert guidance, support and assistance at any time throughout your employees' studies.

For more information:

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