

General:

Talk to the student and to parents/carers before the student comes to college. Try to understand the condition and accept the students as they are. Ensure that all staff and, as far as possible, other students who will have contact with the student with ASD understand the condition too. Support staff should be available to assist the learning process and for emotional support.

Specific:

Each lecturer should:

- Agree with the student what is expected of him in the way of attendance, work etc. If he is to take exams, negotiate with the examining body for him to have extra time, use a laptop etc.
- Ensure that the student understands exactly what he is being asked to do in the lecture room by addressing him by name as he may not take in general instructions to the whole group
- Try to use specific language as elaborate language may confuse the student and he may interpret what is said literally. Explain idioms and unspoken assumptions.
- Not expect the student to transfer skills from one area to another – each class will appear separate from the others with its own requirements for attention and activity which have to be learned
- Establish class rules about participation and be firm without being aggressive. These students may appear rude and egocentric, expecting instant attention and quite unaware of their actions and words. They should be told (repeatedly if necessary) why this aspect of their behaviour is a problem. Remember that social interactions are a mystery and will not be ‘picked up’ as they are by other students.
- Establish what happens if there is a difficulty. The student may need a bolthole if a situation becomes too stressful.

Support staff can help lecturers in a number of ways:

- When the student first enrolls, ensure he knows his way around college, has understood the timetable and has met the staff who will teach him.
- If there has to be a change of routine or staffing, give him as much notice as possible. If there is a last minute change, explain this individually to the student.
- Make arrangements as necessary for the student during ‘free time’ (including coffee and dinner breaks) as the lack of structure during these periods may cause stress, anxiety and possibly result in challenging behaviour.
- If he has to bring books/materials to class remind him each time – and give him a checklist to help him

Patience and humour are probably the most desirable attributes in helping those with ASD to get the most out of the education they are being offered.

Tutorial support:

Effectively used, it provides an opportunity for dialogue between a student and a member of staff in which learning requirements are identified and planned in a way which supports student centred learning. The student will be encouraged to recognise their learning strengths and learning needs and to create and direct future tasks, projects and assignments.

Tutorial time allows the staff member and student to look back over work done, explore/reinforce the learning achieved and celebrate these achievements. It also allows them to look forward to future learning via target setting and work preparation and empowers the student to organise and reflect upon his own work.

To set up tutorial time for a student with ASD, the following need to be considered:

- Is the process student-centred, or does it assume an ability to communicate and imagine which is simply not there?
- How can communication be made more effective?
- How is the agenda set? Is this empowering for the student?
- How are the abstract concepts of reflection, evaluation and forward planning to be managed?
- How can the process be kept alive through the week until the next tutorial?

For a tutorial to be successful there needs to be clear understanding as to what the meeting is for, when it will occur, how long it will last, how the content will be communicated and how the responsibilities for decision making and ongoing action are arranged. These issues also apply for students with limited speech or understanding.

Setting up the tutorial:

The location and time need to be known by the student. The place needs to meet the student's needs – familiar, comfortable, quiet, distraction free, not in a room the student uses for other purposes so that he can associate the room with tutorial activity. Keep to the same time and day each week and use an appointment card or another visual reminder of the date, time and how long the tutorial will last. Make it clear what the student is expected to do at the end of the tutorial time.

The structure of the tutorial will depend on each student. Do not underestimate conceptual difficulties. He may have good vocabulary and expressive skills but still have difficulty in understanding language and social behaviour. High structure, especially visual structure, so that the student can concentrate on the content of the tutorial is important. Social stories can be helpful.

There is a need to have good understanding of the individual's learning style as well as likes, dislikes and anxieties. Try to make the discussion visual. For example, use comic strip conversations. They help students who are not always aware of their own emotions or that what they are thinking is not known to others. Colours can be used to identify moods and emotions. Incorporate the student into the narrative, with the solution or desired reaction identified jointly by staff member and student and

