

# Reasonable adjustments for Research Students

## Introduction

If a student has a disability that has an impact on their study and research work, this needs to be considered at the beginning of the programme. There are a number of adjustments that can be put in place to support disabled students whilst writing their thesis that can be discussed with the Disability Advisory Service. These could include extensions for milestones, assistive technology, use of a proof-reader, or changes to the mode of study (full-time to part-time) as a dispensation.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning has developed two online Canvas courses (they take 2-3 hours to complete): [DPhil supervision at Oxford \(Humanities & Social Sciences\)](#) and [DPhil supervision at Oxford \(Sciences\)](#). The courses include advice about how to support disabled students through the DPhil, and how to take an inclusive approach to supervision.

## Reasonable adjustments

The Student Support Plan (SSP) will cover the specific recommendations for each student, but the list below gives an indication of common adjustments in the context of a research degree/research supervision. For an introduction to the typical impact of different disabilities on study, see the [Implications for study](#) pages.

1. Part-time study for the duration of the course – to facilitate autonomous self-pacing and adjustment of work rate in the context of managing a disability. The [Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees](#) states that applications can be made to Education Committee for part-time study, even if the programme does not normally accommodate this.
2. Permission to record supervision sessions. See our [permission to record teaching sessions guidance](#).
3. For part-time students – consider frequency of formal supervisions in-person (or remote) meetings to account for reduced rate of study and allow time for the production of written drafts between meetings. Offering optional, supplementary meetings in-between formal supervisions may further support the student to maintain progress.

4. Schedule meetings at a time of day that accommodates the impact of the disability or side-effects of any medication the student may be taking (symptoms may be worse at a particular time of day).
5. Provide structured feedback in writing and verbally, and allow the student an opportunity to follow-up or clarify points and ask questions (verbally or in writing) after meetings if they require time to process the feedback.
6. Offer flexibility with deadlines for the production of written drafts where appropriate and possible (subject to the constraints of the key DPhil milestones and the need to monitor progress towards these).
7. Permit absence for disability-related appointments (medical, therapeutic).
8. Accommodation – depending on the disability, students may require priority allocation of on-site, fully-catered, en-suite accommodation and to retain accommodation throughout duration of the course/ during vacation periods.
9. Viva adjustments - see 'Viva adjustments' section below.

## Viva adjustments

By the time the student submits their thesis no further consideration of extenuating circumstances relating to the disability for the written work is appropriate, as the student will have been given sufficient support so that that their thesis can be examined under the same academic criteria as those theses submitted by students without a disability.

However, adjustments can be made to the circumstances of the final viva and other oral examinations relating to Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status. The supervisor or disability coordinator should discuss with the student what reasonable adjustments may be needed. If reasonable adjustments are needed (e.g. to enable reasonable adjustments that have been granted in supervisions to be continued in the viva), or if the student wishes to make the examiners aware of their impairment and any implications for the viva, they need to complete the [Application for Adjustments to Assessment Arrangements form \(GSO.19\)](#). With the student's permission, the SSP should be shared with the student's assessors prior to the Transfer and Confirmation of Status assessments and Viva Voce examination of the thesis. Further [Guidance for Directors of Graduate Studies on making adjustments to the assessment arrangements for disabled students \(GSO.19b\)](#) is available. Further guidance on this process can be found in [Applying for adjustments for disability: process for research students and staff \(GSO.19c\)](#).

[Students' responsibilities in the application process](#) can be found on the Oxford student webpages.

Disability Advisory Service

[disability@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:disability@admin.ox.ac.uk) or 01865 280459

Disability support guide at [www.ox.ac.uk/disability-guide](http://www.ox.ac.uk/disability-guide)



## Related links

[Support for students returning after a period of suspension](#)