

Effective Support and Understanding for Autistic Students in Higher Education

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The problem & the solution



- The autistic student experience is complicated
 - Major life transition
 - Under diagnosis
 - Mental health
 - Masking or camouflaging
- Poor post-graduation employment stats

- REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS!
 - changes that can benefit everyone
 - ongoing *process* not a one-off event
 - Actually enforce / apply the adjustments

dart.ed.ac.uk/supporting-autistic-people-in-he

They don't seem to need adjustments...

- Don't judge an autistic student by their capacity to seem to cope
 - Effective and skillful masking
 - Burnout and collapse at the end of the day / term / etc.
- Adjustments are there for the bad days - if effective they appear less necessary
- **These are still NEEDS**, even if they're also WANTED by other folk
- What if you think you're being taken for a ride?
 - This is a great time to seek advice from an autistic colleague!



Who identifies reasonable adjustments?



- Not just you & not just them - it's an ongoing process
- If resources are an issue, **be honest** but also commit to finding that resource – it's the law!
- They are not trying to catch you out: open and honest communication will always help
- Sometimes they will know
- Sometimes they won't know:
 - Help autistic students connect with other autistic people
 - Connect with University services (but maintain a critical eye)
 - Social media has loads of ideas – prioritise autistic experiences
 - **Read our web page!**

Furthermore...

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Thank you!

- **TAKE HOME: Make adjustments in partnership with your student and enforce them**
- Not all autistic students will be diagnosed, or disclosed
- Many of your colleagues will be autistic too!
- Create an environment where differences are respected and support is freely given
- Understanding trumps awareness
- Autistic experiences trump your degree