



Reasonable Adjustments for Interview Candidates

This factsheet provides some guidance on reasonable adjustments that prospective students might require during the Oxford interview process. However, it is good practice to write to applicants who have disclosed a disability well in advance to ascertain what their particular requirements might be if they are shortlisted for interview.

The Disability Advisory Service can provide more information and guidance about anticipatory adjustments (for example, clear signage will benefit all students) and support for individual interviewees on request (contact details available at the end of this factsheet).

Autism (ASD) / Asperger Syndrome (AS):

- Routine and predictability are important for many people with AS. A clear timetable for their stay at Oxford will be essential, with explicit guidance on how they might spend 'free' slots. Any unexpected changes to the schedule could provoke extreme anxiety.
- Any information about the interview process and the candidate's stay in College should be provided well in advance so that they have time to think about how their time is going to be structured and arrive feeling prepared.
- Think about the interview timings and try to avoid long gaps – stress/anxiety tolerance may be low.
- Interviewers should be prepared to rephrase/ask questions in more explicit concrete terms if the student is having difficulty interpreting what is being asked or expressing their knowledge clearly.
- Offer to provide accommodation for a parent or other 'supporter' during the interviewee's stay.
- A student helper could be assigned to assist with orientation, making sure they know where they need to be and when, and generally checking that everything is ok and they are accessing the dining facilities, etc. Alternatively, with sufficient notice the Disability Advisory Service could help the College source someone experienced in supporting students with AS.

Blind/Visual Impairment:

- Clear signage will be important, but the interviewee may also require a sighted guide/orientation support (potentially throughout their stay, depending on the level of impairment).
- Any information about the interview process and the candidate's stay in College should be provided well in advance so that they have time to think about how their time is going to be structured and arrive feeling prepared.
- Check whether alternative formats are required for any paper-based information.
- A personal emergency evacuation plan may be required.

Conditions causing fatigue/pain and other variable symptoms (e.g. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/M.E, Chron's Disease, etc):

- Timing is key. Find out in advance whether there are particular times of day that are better than others – early morning may very difficult if it takes the student along time to get going, but they may be exhausted by the end of the day.
- Any information about the interview process and the candidate's stay in College should be provided well in advance so that they have time to think about how their time is going to be structured and arrive feeling prepared.
- Think about the length of interviews/tests. Breaks will almost certainly be necessary between interviews/activities (and possibly during them) so that the interviewee can regain some energy before the next task.
- Interviews may need to be rescheduled at short notice for another time later in the day, or the following day.
- Minimise the distance the candidate has to travel around the College during their stay and ensure that there is always a well signed accessible toilet nearby.

Deaf/Hearing Impairment:

- Check their preferred means of communication – do they use they use British Sign Language (BSL) and is an interpreter necessary?
- Check whether they use hearing aids and make sure that all interview venues have an infra-red system/portable loop available (interviewers may need to wear/use a microphone).
- Provide clear instructions about where they need to go as the interviewee won't necessarily hear if they get stuck on route and need to ask for directions.

- A personal emergency evacuation plan may be required.

Dyslexia:

- May require extra time and/or use of a word processor during written tests (as per any arrangements they have had to date in public examinations).
- Make written information available in advance and in alternative formats (e.g. electronically).
- Some people with dyslexia are much better able to express their ideas verbally than in writing, although this is not the case for everyone.
- May also need to be prompted to rephrase their answers to interview questions if they have not been clear the first time.

Dyspraxia:

- May require extra time and/or use of a word processor during written tests (as per any arrangements they have had to date in public examinations).
- Make written information available in advance and in alternative formats (e.g. electronically).
- May need enhanced orientation to the College and its facilities, and a clear timetable for their stay as organisation can be poor.
- May also need to be prompted to rephrase their answers to interview questions if they have not been clear the first time.

Epilepsy, narcolepsy, and other conditions involving seizures or episodes of loss of consciousness:

- Consult with the student (and other relevant people, e.g. parents, school teachers) in advance in order to devise an action plan and determine what they would like to happen in the event of a seizure/episode (with supporting medical evidence if possible) – what are the triggers, is an ambulance required, should anyone else be alerted, what aids recovery and how long might this take.
- Notify any welfare/health & safety reps/first aiders of who the student is, where they will be staying, and the details of the action plan.
- It may be necessary to reschedule the interview(s) at short notice.
- The interviewee may require somewhere to store medication (e.g. access to a fridge).

Mental health difficulties:

- Interviewers should be made aware that the candidate has disclosed a mental health difficulty and exercise patience/sensitivity if they need extra time to gather their thoughts and get their nerves under control.
- It might also be helpful for someone (e.g. a student helper or member of staff in a pastoral role) to check in with the interviewee periodically throughout their stay to ensure they are coping ok and are not unduly distressed.
- Think about timing – some types of psychiatric medication have sedative effects which make it very difficult to get up in the morning and mean it can take a while to feel fully alert.

Mobility difficulties:

- This could include a wide range of things, from the relatively minor or things that have little impact on their stay or the interview process, to more significant difficulties that mean the student is a full-time wheelchair user or has personal care requirements, for example.
- Level access to buildings and/or portable ramps, and a ground floor/accessible room with an en-suite bathroom might be required. The interviewee might also need to bring a carer with them who will need an adjacent room.
- Make sure that there are not too many (heavy) doors that the candidate will need to get through and that an accessible toilet is never too far away.
- Signage for accessible entrances and toilet facilities should be made clear.
- It might be appropriate to minimise the distance that the interviewee has to travel around the College during their stay and to arrange for interview rooms to be located on the ground floor or close to a lift.
- Ergonomic furniture might also be required.

The Disability Advisory Service

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 280 459

Fax: +44 (0)1865 289 830

Email: disability@admin.ox.ac.uk

Website: www.ox.ac.uk/students/shw/das