



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
FIRENZE

**CESPD**  
Centro Studi e  
Ricerche per la Disabilità

## Centro di Studio e Ricerca per le Problematiche della Disabilità

NIC, Nuovo Ingresso Careggi

Largo Brambilla, 3 - 50134 FIRENZE

Tel: 055 2751939 - Email: cespd@unifi.it

# SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS (LSD): FAST FACT FOR STUDENTS

## What are the LSD?

LSD (in Italian DSA) are the **Specific Learning Disorders**. They are a set of heterogeneous disorders that may impair the ability to read, write, calculate, listening and verbal expression.

Include: dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dysorthography.

They are specific, because the disorder only affects some skill, leaving intact the general intellectual functioning; they are evolutionary, because they vary with age of the subject.

The main indicator is a discrepancy between general intelligence (tailored to age and training) and skill in specific domain (deficit).

## Applicable legislation

The **Law no. 170/2010** provides that students with DSA are guaranteed the right to education also in universities.

The **Ministerial Decree no. 5669/2011** and the annexed **Guidelines** give practical guidelines on what needs to be done to guarantee it.

## What does the legislation

In order for a student to be recognized as 'student with LSD' the University must obtain certification with the diagnosis (issued by the NHS or other accredited institution and not older than three years).

For students with LSD specifically are planned compensatory and dispensatory measures of educational flexibility that take place at different stages of the academic career:

### Admission test/ verification of knowledge (OFA):

- additional time (not exceeding 30%);
- further measures, in the case of gravity certified.

### Exams:

- additional time (not exceeding 30%);
- possibility of oral rather than written tests, taking into account the individual skills;

- reduction in quantitative, but qualitative evidence, if it cannot be guaranteed the extra time;
- evaluation of content rather than form and spelling.

### Entire track of studies (lectures, etc.):

- allows storage of the lessons;
- use of texts in digital form;
- use of speech programs;
- use of any other piece of technology felt useful to facilitate the study and exams.

## Services of the University of Florence

**CESPD:** the study and Research Centre for the University's Disability issues deals with assistance and support for students with disabilities and LSD is offering mediation services to students and faculty, advice and support, including mentoring and a LSD.

**Rector's delegate for disability issues:** he is Chairman of CESPD and plays the role of University-level sponsor, representative and promoter of actions and initiatives aimed at ensuring the presence and the right to education of students with disabilities and LSD.

**School's Delegates for disability issues:** instructional coordinators are for orientation, students with disabilities or with LSD and assist students and teachers for mediating actions, advice, information, coordination and support for classes, exams and admission test/OFA.

**Specific Learning Disorders section of the University's website:** There is a section dedicated to the management of students with Specific Learning Disorders; from the homepage [www.dsa.unifi.it](http://www.dsa.unifi.it) you can reach areas dedicated to contacts, services, and tools for all the various figures involved.

Specific Learning Disorders guidelines: the University makes available to students, faculty, administrative staff and tutors a wide and articulated document dedicated to the management

of students with Specific Learning Disorders that defines good practice and operational guidelines.

Digital guidelines are addressed to teachers, students, tutors and technical and administrative staff and are downloadable from the website [www.dsa.unifi.it](http://www.dsa.unifi.it).

#### **Screening service for suspected specific learning Disorders:**

Difficulty in study or performance in the exams may result from a possible undiagnosed Learning Disorders; the questionnaire available on the website [www.dsa.unifi.it](http://www.dsa.unifi.it) is a selfassessment tool that do not constitute a diagnosis, allows to highlight signs of a possible Specific Learning Disorders.

#### **University Libraries:**

Offer students enrolled one useful in the presence of the LSD for the use of researchtools and electronic resources available online, computers with speech programs, interlibrary lending services and audio books, electronic copy of the articles.

#### **Educational Secretaries:**

Receive test registration for admission/OFA and degree courses, including the possible diagnostic certification of LSD; report to the Director of the school and Board exam registrations to test like LSD and requests to use dispensatory strategies and measures to carry out exams.

#### **E-learning course 'LSD and University':**

A multimedia course available from the Moodle platform of University at 'student educational projects' section. The course is fully dedicated to the issues of LSD and aimed to raise awareness and inform the various figures involved in the management of students with LSD.

## **Studentes with LSD**

A student with LSD can decide whether or not to declare his condition to the University and can do so at any time of their course of study. The delivery of certification LSD diagnosis allows

the student to access the services offered by the University and take advantage compensatory measures and compensatory instruments to address lessons, study and exams.

## **Take lessons and study**

For a student with Specific Learning Disorders can be difficult to follow a lesson and take notes at the same time, it may therefore be useful to record the audio of classes taking into account that: **register for exclusive use for personal study is a right** (such registration does not fall under the privacy legislation), but it is always useful to fact with the teacher.

To better follow a course the student can also try to get the teacher **training materials in addition to or earlier than normally provided** and try **to make the most of the opportunities for comparison and verification** (questions, interviews, tutorials, tests, etc.).

To improve performance the student can also **use compensatory instruments** (between the most common PCs, tablets, smartphones, with various programs and app for writing, speech, etc.) and try to better organize their study, possibly with the help of a tutor.

For further information and specifications the student may apply to the CESP and consult the specific guidelines for students with Specific Learning Disabilities.

## **Take the exams**

Students with Specific Learning Disorder are entitled to individualized treatment in the examination, but the degree of difficulty of the test and the preparation of the candidate must be similar to that of other students.

Given the variability of Specific Learning Disorder, alternative forms of examination and compensatory measures and dispensatory strategies should be tailored to the specificity of

the diagnosis and course of study. In order to assess the situation there should be a preliminary interview between student and teacher that has evaluated what steps can respond more effectively to the needs of the course and the student's personal problems.

During the test the student with Specific Learning Disorder is entitled to make use of the dispensatory measures and countervailing duties provided by law (see section 'What does the legislation' paragraph 'Exams').

More tips can be found in the CNUDD Guidelines editetd in 2014.

## **Support admission tests and OFA**

During testing, the student with DSA that reported their condition **should be allowed to make use of dispensatory and countervailing measures provided by law** (see see section 'What does the legislation' paragraph 'Admission test/verification of knowledge (OFA)').

## **Mediation with teachers**

The student with DSA that needs to contact a teacher for inquiries, clarifications and/or agree adaptations can follow the following practices:

- apply directly to the teacher during the reception or by mail (if necessary may provide to insert under copy CESP and School's Delegates for disability issues for possible support);
- mediating indirect via the CESP (which can also send a tutor).