



UNIVERSITÀ
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SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS (LSD): FAST FACT FOR TEACHERS

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 for LSD students

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.

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 LSD; from the homepage 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 LSD 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.

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 is a self-assessment tool that although 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 research tools 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.

The role of teachers

A student with LSD can decide whether or not to declare to the teacher his condition and can be done in different ways at any time during the entire course of study.

If this happens, it often coincides with a request to use compensatory and dispensatory measures to deal with the

lessons, studying and exams.

Given the wide variability of possible disturbances, the teachers should be **open and ready to listen** to students with LSD.

Lessons and teaching materials

During the presentation of the course (and on teacher's webpage space) it might be useful to communicate to potential students with LSD the opportunity to agree, in private and within a reasonable period, the **dispensatory and countervailing measures to be used during the course and exams**.

The student with LSD should also be permitted by law the possibility of **registration of the lessons in the classroom for individual study purposes** (such registration does not fall under the subject of privacy legislation).

To facilitate the learning process of students with LSD in their course the teacher could:

- use different languages to convey information;
- create frequent opportunities for feedback;
- provide well in advance notes, bibliographies, indexes and other educational materials;
- develop and make available texts, slides, handouts, web space, etc. that can be easily used and understood even in LSD conditions (for further information and operating instructions see also Specific Learning Disorders guidelines and E-learning course 'LSD and University').

University 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 LSD is entitled to make use of the **dispensatory measures and countervailing duties provided by law** (see section 'What does the legislation' paragraph 'Exams').

In addition the teacher may refer to the provisions of the 2014 CNUDD Guidelines and care to elaborate examination traces that can be easily used and understood even in LSD conditions (for further information and operating instructions see also Specific Learning Disorders guidelines and E-learning course 'LSD and University').

Admission tests and OFA

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

To ensure the right to education of a candidate with LSD the selection board in an admission test/OFA should therefore verify any requests and the real possibility of granting the required tools. If necessary the selection board can ask for the support of CESP or/and of the School's Delegates for disability issues.