



Supporting neurodiverse students

Neurodiverse young people, including those with ADHD, autism, and other conditions, face exclusion from meaningful work experience. Supporting neurodiverse young people to access inclusive work experience can transform their employment prospects, giving them the opportunity to experience a working environment, learn new skills and develop confidence and independence. All students are different and their teachers can help you and us to understand how the student can thrive, but here are some common strategies.

■ Supporting Students with ADHD

Students with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may face challenges with attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.



Provide Clear Instructions: Simplify and break tasks down into smaller, manageable steps.



Minimise Distractions: If possible, provide a quiet workspace with minimal distractions. Noise-cancelling headphones or a quiet corner can help students concentrate better.



Task Lists and Schedules: Provide a to-do list to help students stay organised.



Regular Breaks: Encourage short, frequent breaks to help maintain focus and reduce restlessness.

■ Supporting Students with Autism

Autistic students have specific needs related to communication, social interaction, and sensory sensitivities.



Routine and Structure: Students with autism often thrive in structured environments. Establish a clear routine for their workday, with consistent start and end times, and let them know what to expect in advance.



Clear and Direct Communication: Use straightforward, literal language when giving instructions.



Social Interaction: Understand that social interactions can be challenging for some students with autism. Be patient, and if necessary, provide guidance on how to interact with colleagues in a way that is comfortable for them.



Sensory Considerations: Some students with autism may be sensitive to sensory stimuli, such as bright lights, loud noises, or strong smells. Be mindful of the work environment and make adjustments as needed, such as dimming lights or providing a quieter workspace.



Supporting students with learning difficulties

Learning difficulties encompass a range of conditions that can impact a student's ability to process information. Students with learning difficulties may face challenges in areas such as reading, writing, math, memory, and organisation. With the right support, these students can thrive in a work environment. Below are strategies to help you provide an inclusive and supportive experience.

■ Support Strategies



Break Down Tasks: Simplify tasks by breaking them into smaller, more manageable steps. Provide clear, step-by-step instructions to help students understand what is expected.



Use Visual Aids: Visual supports such as diagrams, charts, and color-coding can help students better understand and retain information. Visual schedules or flowcharts can also clarify the sequence of tasks.



Allow Extra Time: Be patient and allow students additional time to complete tasks, especially if they involve reading, writing, or complex problem-solving.



Reinforce Learning with Repetition: Repetition can be a powerful tool for students with learning difficulties. Review key information or tasks several times to help reinforce learning.



Be Mindful of Language: Use positive, encouraging language when communicating with students. Focus on their strengths and progress rather than their difficulties.



Timetable Adaption:

- Having a shorter period of work experience (eg. 2/3 days rather than a week)
- Shortening the length of days
- Adapting job tasks so they are shorter/longer
- Having a range of independent and supported tasks