

## Neurodiversity – discussing your strengths with employers

This document is designed to assist neurodiverse students in discussing their strengths and challenges with employers.

Top tips:

- If you wish your employer to know about your neurodivergence, be prepared to describe it simply and briefly, sharing information that is relevant and avoiding jargon. Don't assume the employer will understand your condition without further information from you.
- Your neurodivergence means you have many strengths, but most conditions are made worse by tiredness, stress and anxiety, so you may want to communicate this to employers.
- You may wish to articulate the fact that your neurodivergence has nothing to do with ability or intelligence, and that it affects different people in different ways.
- This document has some examples of strengths, to prompt you to recognise some of them in yourself. If you discuss your neurodivergence with your employer, use that discussion to highlight these strengths - don't assume that an employer will view you in a negative way.

The examples given here are not an exhaustive list – you will have many other strengths as well, which may or may not be connected to your neurodivergence.

### ADHD

“I have a neurological disorder that sometimes causes difficulties with concentration, sitting still and impulsiveness.”

**If you have ADHD you are likely to have one or more of the following strengths:**

- Quick reactions;
- Lots of energy;
- Able to improvise in a difficult situation;
- Able to notice everything in their environment;
- Sociable and a good communicator;
- Creative thinking;
- Good at starting new projects;
- Being very focused on enjoyable activities;
- Independent thinking.

### Autism/Autistic Spectrum

“I have a condition which can affect the way that I communicate and interact with others.”

**If you are autistic you are likely to have one or more of the following strengths:**

- Being very focused on enjoyable activities. This can lead to significant productivity in work related activities;
- Detailed factual knowledge and an excellent memory;



- Problem-solving skills and attention to detail. Logical and structured approaches to work;
- High levels of concentration, finding detailed work enjoyable and being able to work persistently and identify errors;
- Reliability. Being conscientious, committed, punctual, honest and showing integrity;
- Technical ability and specialist skills and interests such as in IT;
- Resourcefulness;
- Good verbal skills.

### Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

These include dyscalculia, dyslexia and dyspraxia. **With any of these SpLDs you may have one or more of the following strengths:**

- Strong creative skills;
- Strong problem-solving skills;
- Thinking outside the box;
- Good at seeing the bigger picture.

### Dyscalculia

“I have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) which mainly affects the ability to acquire arithmetical skills. Dyscalculia can cause difficulties with understanding simple number concepts and learning number facts and procedures.”

**If you have dyscalculia, as well as the strengths listed above, you may also have one or both of the following:**

- Love of words;
- Good communication skills.

### Dyslexia

“I have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) which mainly affects reading, writing, spelling and sometimes maths. Dyslexia can affect the way a person processes information in their brain.”

**If you are dyslexic, as well as the strengths listed above under the Specific Learning Difficulties heading, you may also have one or more of the following:**

- Strong visual skills;
- Visual-spatial skills;
- Three-dimensional thinking;
- Good communication skills.

### Dyspraxia

“I have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) which can cause difficulties with co-ordination, and can also affect organisation, memory, concentration and speech. Dyspraxia is also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD).”

**If you are dyspraxic, as well as the strengths listed above under the Specific Learning Difficulties heading, you may have one or more of the following:**

- Strategic thinking;
- Determination;
- Motivation.

### **Tourette's Syndrome**

"I have a neurological condition that can cause me to make involuntary sounds and movements called tics."

**If you have Tourette's you may have one or more of the following strengths:**

- High levels of concentration;
- Determination and single-mindedness;
- Strong willpower and self-control;
- Resilience and ability to deal with adversity and setbacks;
- Problem-solving skills;
- Resourcefulness.

Further support with discussing disabilities and long-term health conditions can be found on myUCLCareers (you will need to login first with your UCL login):

- [Applying for jobs - when should you disclose your disability?](#)
- [Applying for jobs – when should you disclose your disability? \(video\)](#)
- [Should you disclose a disability when applying for a graduate job?](#)
- [Disclosure: Telling Future Employers about Non-Visible Health Conditions – a UCL disability series](#)

[MyPLUS Students Club](#) also has a range of material to help disabled students with accessing graduate employment.

Some useful links:

[ADHD Foundation](#)

[Autism Society](#)

[Bipolar UK](#)

[British Dyslexia Association](#)

[Dyspraxia Foundation](#)

[Lexxic](#)

[The Mathematical Brain](#) (Professor Brian Butterworth)

[National Autistic Society](#)

[Tourette's Action](#)

Hallowell New York City (2018). Benefits (Yes Benefits!) of Having ADD/ADHD [[online](#)].

Hallowell New York City [Viewed 17 August 2022]. More reading available from [The Hallowell](#)

[ADHD Centers](#)

Articles

Nall, R (2016). [The benefits of ADHD](#). *Healthline* [online, reviewed and updated 19 January 2021]. [viewed 17 August 2022]