

Specialist Mentors and Specialist Study Skills Tutors – what's the difference?

Specialist Mentors

Support students who are experiencing difficulties with studies due to **mental health conditions**, ADHD and/or autism

Specialist Study Skills Tutors

Support students who are experiencing difficulties with studies due to **specific learning differences** (SpLDs), ADHD and/or autism

Specialist Mentors can help with:

Procrastination
Perfectionism
Feeling overwhelmed
Mental health experiences impacting your studies
Self-esteem and image

Specialist Study Skills Tutors can help with:

Time management
Organisation
Setting achievable goals
Confidence and academic self-esteem
Communication concerns
The learning process
Academic reading and writing
Assignment structuring
Research skills
Memory strategies
Discovering how you learn best



The **Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)** sometimes funds both **specialist mentors** and **specialist study skills tutors**

This funding will be mentioned in the DSA letter that confirms your funding under the section “**Non-Medical Helper Allowance**”

The initials ‘**NMH**’ are often used to describe all **Non-Medical Helper workers** who, funded by the DSA, support students

Additionally, UCL funds support for **disabled students who cannot get the DSA**

Specialist Mentors

Emily Smith, one of our specialist mentors, says:

"I describe mentoring as a safe, empathic and respectful space for students to discuss their mental health condition and how it impacts their studies."

"I work in a person-centred approach, which varies from student to student and usually encompasses a mixture of emotional and practical support."

"Mentoring creates an opportunity to discuss any stressors and triggers that can affect a person's studies and explore creative and practical solutions to support a student to manage their mental health."

"We can discuss learning styles, study planning and strategies. Whilst I am not a study tutor as such, I can act as a sounding board for written work and revision."

Typical issues that I work with might be around:

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Avoidance/procrastination | Managing anxiety/depression |
| Communication skills | Feeling overwhelmed |
| Concentration | Memory strategies |
| Confidence | Organisation skills |
| Coping with change | Recognising increasing stress |
| Daily tasks and life skills | Self esteem |
| Essay planning | Setting achievable goals |
| General health and wellbeing | Supporting independence |
| Low motivation | Social skills |

Specialist Study Skills Tutors

Monica Pellegrini, one of our specialist study skills tutors, says:

"Our tutors work within the framework of the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE). This framework underpins specialist 1:1 study skills support for neurodivergent learners. The specialist skills study tutors explore and develop strategies with students."

Typical issues that tutors work with might be around:

Sentence and paragraph structure, use of grammar, spelling strategies, punctuation

Proofreading strategies: referencing correctly and avoid plagiarism (however, this is not a proofreading service)

Reading strategies for comprehension and fluency

Essay writing skills: unravelling the essay question, planning, organisation, structure, flow of argument

Memory techniques (mind mapping, multisensory input of information, etc.)

Note-taking skills

Time management skills for both oral and written examinations

Revision skills and strategies for examinations

Planning and organisation of content for presentations

Reflection on learning and strategies that are effective when assimilating information

Research skills (using the internet, library, academic journals, etc.)

Appropriate writing styles (academic, reflective, report writing, etc.)

Presentation skills

**Lucy Smith, the Specific Learning Difference Coordinator
and one of the specialist study skills tutors, adds:**

"ADSHE 7-principles® underpin the specialist 1:1 support offered for neurodivergent learners. These principles include:"

Metacognition: thinking about thinking and finding out your learning strengths

Motivation: working with you on why you're studying and what you need you to do pass

Overlearning: neurodivergent students often need additional repetition of tasks to remember them

Modelling: showing you different ways of approaching study

Little & often: breaking down big tasks into manageable chunks, repetition also

Multisensory: if we use more than one sense to learn (e.g. see and hear something)
we create stronger pathways to that memory

Relevance: working with you on tasks you need to complete
rather than just showing you examples

