



Dyslexia in the Workplace

It is virtually impossible to find a job that does not require some level of reading, writing and remembering, or some use of the computer. Adults with dyslexia sometimes also struggle with time management and organisation at work. Planning and organising, setting out timetables, distinguishing between the important and the urgent, remembering appointments, passing on telephone messages from memory and meeting deadlines can be exceptionally difficult for many people with dyslexia. Some people may, feel overwhelmed by the workload and get stressed.

It is very important that the initial job training provided takes into account the specific needs of the adult with dyslexia. This requires flexibility in the approach to training, provision of information in alternative formats, multi-sensory learning techniques, more time and repetition of information when necessary.

Reasonable Accommodation in the Workplace

Reasonable accommodations are supports provided by the employer to provide equity in the workplace for individuals with dyslexia or other needs, which remove barriers which may otherwise impact on the individual's work. Reasonable accommodations are most effective when tailored to both the individual and to their specific role and work environment. A one-size fits all approach does not work, and the accommodations an individual needs may change over time as their role changes or as their individual needs evolve. Many accommodations are common sense and cost free, and for those accommodations which have a cost, e.g. specialist assistive technology or devices, there is funding available for employers towards these costs.

Examples of reasonable accommodations in the workplace include:

- ✎ Meeting minutes provided in advance.
- ✎ Accessible documentation (see our dyslexia style guide).
- ✎ Extra time to work on projects.
- ✎ Inclusive working environments.
- ✎ Job duties aligned with employee strengths as much as possible.
- ✎ Assistive technology.

Tips for managing tasks at work

- ✎ Many forms of communication can be dealt with by **creating a template** or form letter.
- ✎ **Organise your day**, chunking your day into sections based on time or tasks can be helpful. Once each section or task tick it, off. Any unfinished tasks should be added to a separate list for the next day.
- ✎ Keep a **diary** with all your appointments.
- ✎ Get into the habit of **checking your diary** every morning, and again at lunchtime. It is surprising how many people with dyslexia forget about appointments
- ✎ **Focus on one task at a time**
- ✎ **Plan extra time** for each task
- ✎ **Learn the language of your business**, all areas of businesss' have their own language. You should familiarise yourself with the language of your work. You can write these words and their definitions in a notebook and use them as a reference point.
- ✎ **Charts and diagrams** can be useful when preparing written work or presentations, as they can assist in generating and organising your ideas into a more coherent structure.
- ✎ Use mnemonics, a rhyme or phrase that helps you **remember** something.
- ✎ Building reading speed while maintaining comprehension is vital, therefore **practising your reading** without too much pressure is important. A good way of doing this is to read something you are familiar with or have read before.

Workplace Equipment Adaption Grants (WEAG)

The [WEAG grant](#) is administered by INTREO and is available to employers to help cover the cost of reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. To avail of this grant contact your local INTREO office and ask to speak with the person responsible for reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology refers to devices or software/apps which are specifically helpful for people, and which enables them to access documents or create work more easily. Assistive technology can remove barriers and enables individuals to achieve. Assistive technology can support key areas of difficulty including reading, spelling, memory, organisation and time management. Technology can help solve many of the problems faced by people with dyslexia in employment. The range of technologies available is constantly evolving and growing. Technology can be used to assist the learning process in the workplace, and provide valuable reinforcement, customisability, variety and can increase motivation.

With so many programmes and products available, it is easy to become confused with the choice. Some established software and apps can be expensive. The software is increasingly built-in to devices and is therefore often free and even for paid products, it can sometimes be possible to get a free 30-day demo or 'lite' version, where introductory levels are free and further levels can be purchased. DAI have a range of short [videos](#) discussing and demonstrating technology that one may find beneficial.

Different types of assistive technology are available to help with note-taking, writing, reading, organisation and planning.

Note-taking

Taking notes live during a meeting is a complex task which requires processing, memory, and ability to identify what is important and what can be left out. When combined with dyslexic literacy challenges such as poor spelling, note taking can be very stressful for some.

Note taking technology generally includes in built audio recording. This reduces the stress of writing notes in real time. Typed notes can also be linked with time-stamped audio recordings so you can listen back to the audio and then finalise the minutes ensuring that all key information is noted. It also enables individuals to engage better during the meeting and the discussion, rather than solely focussing on the note-taking. Examples of note-taking technology are:

-  LiveScribe Pen
-  Sonocent Glean
-  Sonocent Audio Notetaker
-  Dictaphone or digital/audio recording on a mobile phone/tablet

Writing

For some, voice dictation (or typing with your voice) is a useful method of quickly getting ideas down in a document. Because you are speaking rather than typing or writing, your written expression is not slowed down by spelling difficulties. This could be used for a brainstorming exercise to get your initial ideas down which you can edit later, or in time you could dictate a full assignment using this technology. Some level of editing will always be needed. While voice dictation software is much more accurate now than ever before, it is not perfect. In addition, people often express themselves differently when speaking as opposed to writing and so this may also lead to some editing. Nonetheless, voice dictation can speed up production of written documents.

Examples of this type of technology include:

-  Google Dictate (free)
-  Microsoft Office Dictate (free)
-  macOS Dictate (free)
-  Nuance Dragon Dictate (paid)

Other tools are available to help with writing, and especially grammar and spelling.

These are especially useful for proofing written work. Examples include:

-  Grammarly (free)
-  Ginger
-  Language Tool (Chrome app)
-  Hemingway app

Reading

Converting text to speech can speed up access to text you need to read. Most adults with dyslexia can read but it can be tiring and speed of reading is often affected. Text to speech can speed up access to the written word. Text can even be converted to audio files which you can listen to on the move.

Text to speech can also help with proofing you own written work, as sometimes it is easier to hear errors which might be missed when proof reading a document.

Examples of this type of technology include:

-  ClaroRead
-  Texthelp Read&Write
-  Google Lens (Android Only)
-  Speak feature (MS Word, Outlook, Powerpoint)
-  iOS (in built)
-  Adobe PDF (in built)
-  Reading Pens

Organisation

Being organised is a key skill in all workplaces. Organising your work area, diary and having a system of reminders for due dates can help with this.

Online calendars and reminder apps can be a useful way to keep on top of your daily, weekly and monthly tasks and help to reduce stress. Examples of these include:

-  Google Calendar
-  Google Keep
-  Outlook Calendar
-  Microsoft ToDo

Planning

Some people find visual methods of learning and planning beneficial. Concept maps or mind maps can be a useful way to visualise processes, create summaries or overviews, or to plan a report or project. They enable ideas to be linked visually using maps, images and colours. They can be done using pen, colour and paper or post-its, and some find them more effective when done by hand. Online versions are also available. Examples include:

-  Inspiration
-  Coggle
-  Popplet
-  MindView