Royal Marsden School

Inclusivity in Education Policy

Inclusive practice is at the heart of effective education. The aim is to maximise the opportunity for success for all students. The Royal Marsden School (RMS)/ University of East Anglia (UEA) Inclusive Education Policy has 4 interrelated elements:

1. Inclusive Curriculum – the content of what is taught and learning materials

2. Inclusive Assessment – the way student attainment is measured and qualified

3. Inclusive Pedagogy – the way the content of the curriculum is taught

4. Inclusive Environment – the classroom experience

1. Inclusive Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' is used to describe the content of Royal Marsden School modules and programmes, in essence what the students are taught in terms of the content and the way it is delivered.

All teaching staff also have the responsibility to treat their colleagues and students with respect and create a safe and inclusive learning and teaching environment for all. In line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our institutional policies, and the Royal Marsden Trust values, the Royal Marsden School proactively works to provide an environment where all can flourish in work and study and achieve their full potential free from prejudiced attitudes and unlawful discrimination. All staff must undertake mandatory equality training on diversity, equality, and inclusivity, once every two years, and are strongly recommended to attend more detailed training sessions on a range of equality-related topics.

The curriculum should be appropriately diverse. Wherever possible, content, examples, case studies and supporting materials should reflect diversity and challenge stereotypes.

The curriculum of some modules may be defined by Public and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The content of the course will be constantly evolving to reflect new knowledge and the changing world we live in.

When thinking about the curriculum content, the Royal Marsden school should consider:

• Do the sources used in the module draw from a wide range of perspectives?

• Do examples used refer to a diverse range of people?

• Do examples help raise awareness of equality, challenge established stereotypes and promote respect of individual difference?

A diverse and inclusive curriculum should be supported by diverse and inclusive learning resources. It is important that these are regularly reviewed, and consideration given to how they represent diversity. It may be that some subjects have previously been taught in ways which do not represent diversity, but this should be actively challenged, and each course should consider how stereotypes can be challenged in the choice of learning resources.

If a student has concerns that the curriculum is insufficiently diverse, they should as a first step raise their concerns with the module leader or programme leader. If the issue cannot be resolved by this route, then the student may raise the issue with the Head of School or their delegate on this matter. It is important to differentiate between the content of the curriculum and the way it is being taught. If a staff member or student believes that someone is behaving in a discriminatory way towards them, they can raise the issue via the HR Manager for the area (for staff issues) or with the Head of School (for staff or student issues). In either instance an informal discussion may be helpful before deciding whether to raise the issue as part of a formal process.

2. Inclusive assessment

Assessment is an integral and important part of the teaching and learning experience of students in Higher Education. Transforming assessment policy and practice can lead to improved potential for student learning and increased student satisfaction, as

well as promoting consideration of the ways in which assessment can enhance inclusivity.

Teaching teams should consider the assessment design and feedback practice in their modules as part of the regular cycles of reviews of modules and programmes. When doing this, three things should be considered:

- Student feedback on their experience of assessment
- Student participation on formative assessment activity
- The distribution of student marks, with reference to considering whether there are any patterns in the attainment of students from underrepresented groups

In addition, the following should be considered:

- Assessment design which gives students an opportunity to build on existing knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Assessment design that requires students and staff effort proportional to the amount of credit, the subject, and in line with professional body requirements where appropriate.
- Where possible, opportunities for students to provide feedback to inform topics and approaches that are meaningful and of interest to them.
- Marking practice should be shaped by marking criteria, with the grammatical and presentational aspects of writing appropriately and proportionally considered. Therefore, markers should restrict themselves to identifying a representative selection of errors in syntax, spelling, grammar, or presentation, and giving advice about where to seek help if needed. The focus of the marking and feedback should be on the content and whether they have met the learning outcomes.
- Marking and feedback should be informed by clear and accessible marking criteria and focussed on helping students to understand their performance, reflect and improve on it, recognising their strengths and weaknesses, and build confidence and motivation. Feedback comments should support students' learning and signpost them to online resources where appropriate.
- Practice and oral assessments should give students a chance to succeed in practice- based assessments through careful assessment design, for example, providing clear instructions and preparation and by giving students additional support prior to the assessment, and also by adhering to any Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements.

Inclusive marking practice
All staff who perform marking should note the features of inclusive assessment above and ensure that:

- Marking of work constitutes all the following: comments on feedback sheets, annotations on scripts and face to face feedback where needed.
- In all the above, markers comments should be clear and accessible.
- The focus of the marking and feedback should be on the content of the work and to what extent it meets assessment criteria.
- Feedback should indicate where marks have been gained and where students have met the assessment criteria.
- Where comments focus on aspects of work which contain mistakes or inaccuracies, problems or areas for development, there should be an emphasis on how improvements could be made and on signposting to appropriate sources of guidance and support.
- Markers should restrict themselves to identifying a representative selection of errors in syntax, spelling, grammar or presentation, even if there are such problems throughout the work.
- Comments should be focussed on both the justification of marks and on helping students improve their understanding.

3: Inclusive Pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy in higher education means designing and delivering a teaching and learning experience that is meaningful, relevant, personalised, and accessible to all students.

These include:

- A timetable of taught events/activities that allows all students time to get to their on-line teaching forums, and rooms, if appropriate, which are suitably equipped to meet their needs.
- Clear and available planning – students need to know how, when and where they are expected to attend, in on-line or face to face, and participate in teaching sessions well in advance. This includes: the timely publication of a module timetable and outline containing brief details of taught sessions and e-learning activities.
- Clearly articulated formative and summative assessment should be communicated.
- Teaching that is varied and can be personalised, within the appropriate approaches for that subject discipline. These allow students time to listen, think, talk, question, participate and create in partnership with staff and other students as well as vary pace where appropriate.
- The consistent availability of good quality digital resources that are accessible to all. These may include but are not limited to a module outline in the correct

format, lecture/seminar slides and/or notes and/or a recording of lectures, a suggested reading list with useful student signposting, and assessment briefs, where appropriate.

- Subject specific terms are explicitly explained both in teaching and in supporting materials.
- The consistent availability of materials that help students prepare for their taught sessions.
- Help for students about effective learning, including online and in blended approaches.
- An open and ongoing dialogue with students about the expected preparation and follow up from taught events/activities.
- An open and ongoing dialogue with students about their experience of teaching and learning, for example about the content of the curriculum, the modes of delivery, and the selections of learning material, through mid and end of -module evaluations and other forums for feedback

4: Inclusive Environment

Features of an inclusive learning environment include:

- An organisational culture that promotes learning and reflection alongside dignity and respect.
- An environment that is accessible to all students, with effective communication about short term accessibility issues and alternative arrangements.
- Good access to support for individual wellbeing and learning development.
- Regular meetings available with a module leader/ programme leader if required.
- Transparency and clarity about appeals, complaints, and disciplinary procedures.
- A commitment to developing and promoting a range of peer-led learning initiatives.
- A commitment to student involvement, and representation.
- A commitment to developing a sense of belonging at this higher education institution.
- A commitment to creating a psychologically safe space for learning to take place.

Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

Specific learning difficulties is an umbrella term sometimes used as a synonym for dyslexia but now generally accepted as also including the following:

- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia
- Attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD or ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders

The impact of SpLD on learning and assessment performance

No two individuals experience the same combination of difficulties, and some students may exhibit signs of more than one SpLD. However, these learning difficulties typically affect students' motor skills, reading and writing, information processing and memory and are likely to be more acute under assessment/ examination conditions. In particular, students with SpLD typically:

- Have slower than average writing speeds (15 rather than 25 wpm).
- Must spend much longer than their peers reading and re-reading material to check their understanding of its content.
- Have difficulty organising their thinking.
- and, in some cases, need to deal with the visual disturbance (scotopic sensitivity) which can make print appear to "dance" on the page.

The key requirement is that, wherever possible, markers do not penalise for errors in spelling, syntax, word order or expression, or other relatively minor errors but should focus their marking on the student's knowledge, understanding and academic argument. However, if the script is incomprehensible, facts are incorrect, interpretation is flawed, or the spelling or grammar do not meet clearly specified learning outcomes of the course, then the script should be marked as such.
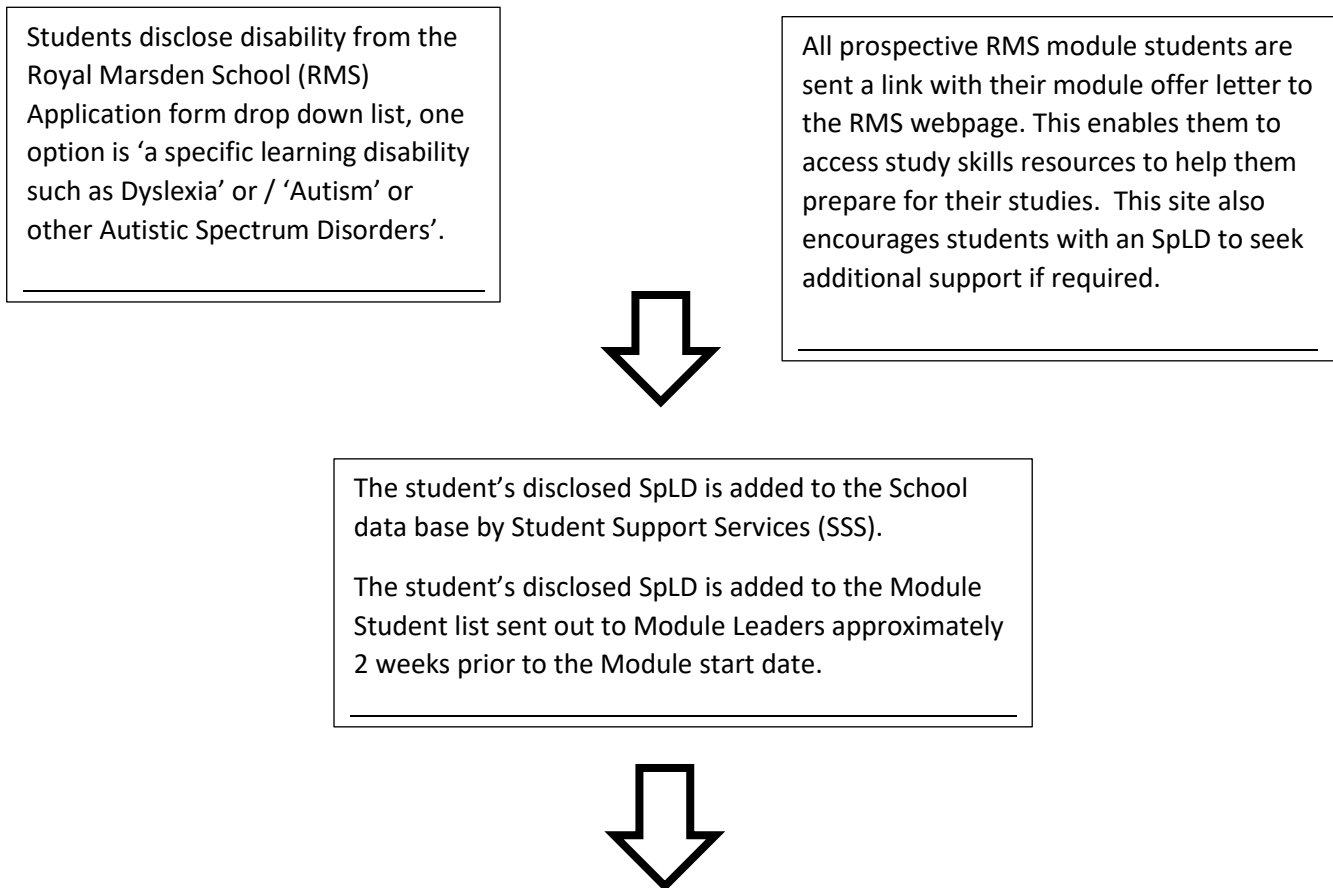
Therefore, wherever appropriate markers should not unduly penalise:

- Long paragraphs that look like a single sentence but are composed of an undifferentiated string of simple sentences linked by conjunctions.
- Short sentences lacking links with those that precede or follow sentences in which prepositions have been omitted or mistaken e.g. "of" in place of "on".
- Sentences that change direction. This can happen because the student realises that the sentence requires a word they cannot spell and so re-phrases the sentence mid-way to avoid a spelling error.

- The use of a repeated sentence structure.
- Apparent preference for simple words rather than more complex academic vocabulary. This may reflect difficulty with rapid word retrieval or spelling and may create a false impression of an immature understanding of the topic repetition of ideas, perhaps using slightly modified phrasing. This may be because the student wishes to make sure that they have made the point clearly.
- Clumsy/very poor handwriting. This is often an indication of the problems with motor control which is common among students with specific learning difficulties. These problems are likely to be exacerbated by the stress of the examination/ assessment situation.
- Spelling errors such as single words misspelled in different ways, parts of polysyllables in incorrect order, letters within words out of sequence e.g. flied/field for field, a tendency to use phonetic spelling or capital letters used in the wrong place.

There is a link to SpLD resources for students in the Study Skills section on our on-line learning platform, Moodle.


The RMS process/ pathway of identifying and supporting students with a SpLD.

Students disclose disability from the Royal Marsden School (RMS) Application form drop down list, one option is 'a specific learning disability such as Dyslexia' or / 'Autism' or other Autistic Spectrum Disorders'.

All prospective RMS module students are sent a link with their module offer letter to the RMS webpage. This enables them to access study skills resources to help them prepare for their studies. This site also encourages students with an SpLD to seek additional support if required.

The student's disclosed SpLD is added to the School data base by Student Support Services (SSS).

The student's disclosed SpLD is added to the Module Student list sent out to Module Leaders approximately 2 weeks prior to the Module start date.

The Module Leader contacts students on the module student list with a disclosed SpLD, to enquire if they require any additional learning support.

Support is provided throughout the module and assignment preparation if required.

The Module Leader is to contact SSS by email with any updates re: students SpLDs, i.e., any additions or deletions so that SSS can update the School database.
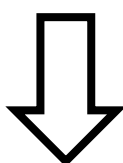
The Marker's / Moderator's are informed of student SpLD status via the Assignment 'Mark Sheet' and accompanying email, notifying them of students requiring Additional Support in the designated column and the nature of the SpLD.

Additionally, students may have needs relating to academic confidence and literacy, and experience, particularly those who have completed their higher education overseas, and those who have had a significant gap since their previous higher education academic studies.

Students who have completed their higher education overseas.

A significant number of our current and prospective students have gained their initial, and perhaps only, academic qualification in a non-UK higher education institution. This may include some countries where BSc degree study is not considered to be equivalent to UK Level 6 academic credits, particularly for those students who have studied prior to 2022. This cohort may experience some difficulties with both oral and written assessments due to using English as a second language, and additionally, a lack of experience with assessments that require articulation of critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation.

Students with significant gaps in their academic study.

Prospective students returning to academic study often come from a diverse population and may not have studied for several years, for example there may be a significant gap, i.e., over ten years. Applications for modules and Programmes will be

assessed on an individual basis and signposted to recommended study skills during the academic clearance process. Applicants returning to study may be asked to demonstrate recent academic work. In addition, many of these students may not have studied previously at BSc level, and therefore only have experience of academic assessment at Level 5.

We also recognise that most of our students complete their academic modules at The Royal Marsden School on a 'stand-alone' basis and often complete just one module, as opposed to enrolling on a Programme, thus limiting their experience and exposure to academic study and assessment.

In acknowledgement of this, the School has developed several interventions to help to meet the needs to these students, and indeed all students:

- Inclusion of a link in the student pre-offer letter enabling access to study skills for module preparation. This includes resources on academic reading, writing, critical analysis, and referencing.
- Signposting to an extensive Study Skills section on our on-line platform two weeks prior to module start date.
- Offering personalised and interactive on-line Study Skills workshops in a small and supportive group.
- Opportunities for one-to-one tutorials with the Module Leader and both group and individualised academic support throughout the module, with a dedicated session focussed on the academic assessment, and dedicated Library staff support.
- A named Programme Lead for students enrolled on the BSc and MSc Programmes who can provide guidance and additional support and signposting of resources.
- Access to the School On-Line Journal where students can view examples of edited and peer reviewed academic writing and posters from previous School student assignments and could publish on this platform themselves.

School Lead for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity

The School has a named Lead(s) for EDI with the role of the promotion of equal opportunities for students and staff; to promote an inclusive working and learning environment where diversity is valued, and everyone's contribution is respected.

The responsibilities of the Lead for EDI are:

- To raise awareness of the equality agenda within the School.
- To co-ordinate activities that promote equal opportunities for students and staff.

- To coordinate the EDI activities identified at programme committee and school board.
- To attend and work with the Royal Marsden Trust EDI forums to develop a cohesive approach to activities across the school.
- To be the first point of contact for equal opportunities issues for individuals and groups of learners or staff and to deal with concerns raised in line with school and/or Trust policy and NMC/HCPC guidelines.
- To provide EDI staff induction information and training.
- To work with the Student Experience group and Progression to implementing EDI strategy for the school.
- To coordinate Equality Impact Assessments as required.
- To prepare EDI information for quality monitoring and professional approval events as required.
- To remain updated and informed on the EDI agenda nationally.