

Students with specific learning disabilities

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Summary

- **Definition**
- Specific learning disabilities
- Regulatory framework
- **Law 170/2010**
- **Ministerial Decree July 12, 2011**
- Guidelines for the right to an education for students with specific learning disabilities
- Applications and procedures
- **CNUDD Guidelines** National University Conference Delegation for Disability
- Tools and strategies

Definition

"Specific Learning Disabilities" (DSA) include different types of disabilities that can affect the acquisition, organization, memorization, understanding and use of verbal and non-verbal information.

These disabilities affect the learning ability of individuals that do not have any neurological conditions or sensory impairment and that demonstrate adequate understanding and reasoning skills.

The student with learning disabilities often just needs more time to organize his/her studies, take notes, read or draft a text. The possibility of using some tools, combined with some simple precautions, can make him/her able to tackle his/her university studies and/or training.

Specific learning disabilities

DYSLEXIA: specific decoding disorder related to what is written that affects reading skills.

DYSGRAPHIA: specific writing disorder that affects the ability to write (shape of the graphic symbol).

ANORTOGRAPHY: specific writing disorder that affects writing skills (spelling rules of the content of a text).

DYSCALCULIA: specific calculus disability that affects the ability to recognize, write, count and work with numbers.

Regulatory framework

- The **law 170 of 2010** called “New rules on Specific Learning disabilities at school ”, recognizes and protects students with specific learning disabilities and establishes, also at a University and/or Academic level, the necessary measures that the Institutions must follow . This procedure aims at guaranteeing the right to an education, to foster school success also through educational support measures, ensuring an adequate training, promoting the development of potential.
- The **Ministerial Decree of July 12, 2011** specifically lists the key interventions that guarantee the right to an education of students with specific learning disabilities.
- The **guidelines for the right to study of students with specific learning disabilities** represent the regulations that Institutions and schools of every type and level are obliged to follow.

Law 170/2010

- availability of clear, concise and well-organized study material
- additional time to learn (30 percent more)
- knowing the study program in advance
- knowledge of the bibliography, the calendar and deadlines
- use of compensatory tools and exemptions
- knowledge of the procedures for carrying out the exams
- constant dialogue with the lecturer / tutor

Ministerial decree July 12, 2011

- ensure the reception, tutoring and mediation with the academic organization
- monitor the effectiveness of the measures adopted
- provide additional time during the examination and admission tests (up to 30 percent compared to the ordinary)
- allow the use of compensatory tools depending on the type of specific learning disability
- evaluate the exams taking into account the indications given in the guidelines included in the same decree

Guidelines for the right to study of students with specific learning disabilities

- **Diagnostic certification:** To be valid the specific learning disability certification must be issued by the National Health Service (SSN), by specialists or accredited structures and cannot have been issued more than three years before it is submitted.
- **Presentation of certification:** the certification of specific learning disabilities can be submitted when enrolling in an admission test or OFA so as to be able to take advantage of the extra time during the exam (or of further measures, in case of particular serious cases); when enrolling so as to use the services provided by the Institution and the compensatory and exemption measures; after enrolling.
- **Admission test or OFA test** (Mandatory additional education): 1) granting of additional time deemed appropriate by the Institution in relation to the type of test and in any case not higher than 30 percent more than the ordinary; 2) in case of particular serious cases the Institution can independently evaluate further measures to ensure equal opportunities in carrying out the tests.

Guidelines for the right to study of students with specific learning disabilities

MEASURES

- favor oral examinations over written ones, taking into account the individual needs and skills;
- the written tests may be reduced in terms of quantity, but not quality (if it is not possible to grant additional time);
- during the evaluation the contents must be taken into account rather than the form and the spelling.

COMPENSATING MEASURES

- recording the lessons
- use of text in digital format
- use of speech synthesis programs

Applications and procedures

FOR THE LECTURERS

- oral tests instead of written ones;
- use of personal computers with spell checker and speech synthesis;
- additional time, up to a maximum of 30 percent more than the ordinary;
- possible reduction in quantity of the test;
- evaluation of contents rather than the form.

FOR THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

- presence of specialized tutors;
- consultancy for the organization of study activities;
- planning of alternative forms of study, also making use of study groups;
- availability of specific lessons and exercises published online on the website of the Institution.

CNUDD Guidelines

National University Conference Delegates for Disability

Although they are not a legal obligation, the guidelines state:
the right of students with learning disabilities to access the services provided by the Institution after submitting the related clinical diagnosis;

dedicated forms of inbound and outbound guidance, various forms of mentoring and mediation, technological and educational aids;

the right of students with specific learning disabilities to receive a personalized assessment to identify the compensatory tools and exemption measures that are most suitable to support their studies, chosen also in relation to the uniqueness of the disciplines and study courses.

Tools and strategies

However, it is always necessary for the lecturer and the student to agree on the most appropriate way to make effective recordings that do not interfere with the lessons.

- Index of the lesson, list of the content (better if received before hand) and Bibliography.
- Slides presented during the lessons; notes, exercises and handouts made available in a digital format.

Tools and strategies

Students with specific learning disabilities often already have identified the compensatory tools and the technological aids best suited to their needs.

Therefore when they attend the classes or take exams they already know how to make the most of these supports and do not need additional aids and information.

The following precise and complete list of tools and aids has been drafted through experience.

- Audio recorder or related apps
- Word processor or text editor
- Spell checker
- Spelling prediction
- Vocal recognition
- Speech synthesis
- Scanner
- Optical Character Recognition
- Audio book
- Smartpen
- Software / app for the integrated management of notes
- Calculator with speech synthesis
- Electronic calculations sheets
- Software for concept maps
- Applications for online research.
- Multimedia encyclopedias and online dictionaries
- Online translators
- Digital calendar / planner

Tools and strategies - mediation

DIRECT: the student addresses the lecturer directly by email or, even better, during the tutoring hours to ask for clarification, explaining his/her difficulties and / or making requests.

INDIRECT: when the student needs more time to acquire greater autonomy and security in managing the relationship with the lecturers (tutors).

Each student is asked to independently assess whether the information provided by the Institution may or may not be useful on the basis of their learning methods, of their specific needs and in relation to the commitment and time required.

***If it's important, you'll find a way.
If not, you'll find an excuse.***

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