



SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:

GUIDELINES FOR THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

UNIVERSITY OF SIENA
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EDITED BY THE INCLUSION COMMISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SIENA

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FOREWORD

Enrollment in a University program is a step that may carry with it doubts and uncertainty; in particular, students with disabilities, neurodivergent conditions, Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) may encounter difficulties in identifying the support services offered by the University and the relevant offices.

A crucial step is the submission of a disability or SLD certification, which then allows the student to benefit from flexible teaching methodologies, to be described below, and to support services, as per the Law 170/2010, article 5, point 1.

The present Guidelines are aimed at illustrating the process of certification submission and the concrete teaching methodologies that may be adopted in order to ensure full support to students with special educational needs.

1. SUBMISSION OF THE CERTIFICATION

Students with a certified condition of a specific learning disorder must fill in the enrolment form in bSegreteriaonline the dedicated field for DSA (Disturbi Specifici dell'Apprendimento) and upload a copy of the relevant certificate(s). If the certification becomes available after enrolment, the same procedure must be completed. Relevant FAQs on this process (in Italian) are published on the bOrientarsi website :

<https://orientarsi.unisi.it/studio/servizi-di-supperto-agli-studenti/disabilita>

The University also accepts certificates that are not updated or are in course of update. For any questions the students can contact the Inclusion office at the email addresses:

disabilita@unisi.it (for physical disabilities)

servizidsa@unisi.it (for specific learning disorders)

1. SUBMISSION OF THE CERTIFICATION

At the beginning of each semester, the representative for inclusion policies of each Department receives the data concerning the students with specific educational needs enrolled in the Department's Bachelor's and Master's programs; the representative then informs the President of each program, who then discusses with the program faculty the flexible teaching methodologies that can be adopted, depending on the specific needs of each student.

This information is protected according to GDPR rules. It will be shared only with the teachers directly involved with the students' study plan and only with the students' prior consent.

1.1 NO CERTIFICATION AVAILABLE

When the student **does not have a certification**, they should directly contact the Inclusion office and/or the Department representative for inclusion policies ([see the list of the Department representatives here](#)).



1.2 OTHER SPECIFIC EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Some students may have specific educational needs that are **not related** to disabilities, neurodivergence or Specific Learning Disorders (e.g., reactive depression caused by a stressful situation). These conditions too can be supported with flexible teaching methodologies. Students with such conditions can contact the Department representative for inclusion policies ([see the list of the Department representatives here](#)).



2. CONTACT WITH THE PROFESSOR

A student with disability or SLD can ask for the adoption of support and flexible methodologies **directly from the professors/instructors** of the courses they are attending. To achieve this, the student should contact the professor/instructor at the beginning of each course, by email or during their office hours.

The student must be aware that their request will not lead to any discriminatory attitude on the part of the instructor; on the contrary, this step will open up a **constructive dialogue** in which the instructor will collaborate with the student, also with the help of the inclusion office, to identify the most effective types of support and teaching flexibility that meet the student's specific needs.

3. DIDACTIC METHODOLOGIES: THE CLASS

The instructor can adopt active learning and interactive methodologies in class to enhance participation; record part of their classes and make available the recordings through the Moodle platform; make available the teaching materials (slides etc.) in advance of the classes; check the accessibility of the slides; adopt teaching materials in digital form; prepare accessible visual support materials (e.g. concept maps); make use of student response systems to gain feedback on the teaching activities.

They can also organize their classes in such a way as to enhance the learning process, such as dividing the class into two parts of 45 minutes each, with an intermediate recap to be realized in interactive form, and offering a question time at the end of each class.

3. DIDACTIC METHODOLOGIES: THE EXAMS

In general, students with a certified disability or SLD can be granted additional time for written exams, up to 30% in addition to the regular time. If needed, additional support can be provided by the inclusion office, such as a tutor assisting in the reading process.

The professors discuss with the student, in advance of the exam, so as to choose the most effective type of exam. For instance, the standard written or face-to-face exams can be divided into successive segments to reduce the load, or they can be replaced by other methodologies such as a written essay, an e-portfolio, or a group project. In written tests, open-ended questions can be replaced by multiple choice tests or cloze tests, or vice versa, depending on the student's specific educational needs.



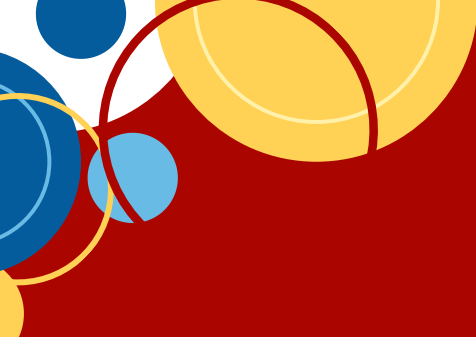
3. DIDACTIC METHODOLOGIES: THE EXAMS

The student may also be allowed to use support material during the exams, such as concept maps (dedicated software: CMapTools, SuperMappe (classic and Evo), Mind Maple, SimpleMind Lite, Prezi, Canva, PowerPoint). The student, if they wish, can share such concept maps with the instructor while preparing them to receive suggestions.

Other possible support materials include tables, a calculator, and assisted writing software.

The use of such support materials must be agreed upon with the instructor **at least four days** before the exam date. Also, when registering for the exam in segreteriaonline, the student will need to specify the support materials that they intend to use.





THE SERVICES AVAILABLE BY THE INCLUSION OFFICE

Support for study: specialized tutoring; accessible didactic materials; support for international mobility programs.

Support for the classes: collaboration with the instructors to adapt their classes according to the students' needs; accompaniment and support for disabilities

Support for the exams: collaboration with the instructors to design specific evaluation methods; support for disabilities

Support for university life: help with bureaucratic procedures; counselling and psychological support.

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