

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES
STRATEGIES PAGE

AUTISM/ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Students with Autism/Asperger's Syndrome can complete academic requirements; however some strategies may be required. The following are a few of those strategies that you, as an instructor, might consider when presenting subject matter:

- Get to know the student's particular needs in advance
- Provide clear, detailed information (oral and written) about structure of course, practical arrangements, assessment requirements and deadlines.
- Be consistent in approach and keep variations to a minimum- if a change is inevitable, give clear, specific information as far ahead as possible.
- Use clear, unambiguous language (spoken and written) and avoid or explain metaphors, irony, etc. and interpret what others say. Give explicit instructions and check that the student is clear about what he/she has to do. If providing feedback, be very clear about what is inappropriate or appreciated and why.
- Be patient, encouraging and supportive but guide the student back on task if necessary. Present course materials and instructions in a structured way using literal language. Show how components fit together as a whole. Provide subject word lists, glossaries of terms and acronyms.
- In group work make clear exactly what is required of students with Autism/Asperger's syndrome and mediate to resolve disputes in a calm, logical way providing an opportunity immediately after group sessions to check that they have understood. If group work proves too stressful provide alternative ways of completing team work.
- Students may have difficulties in motivation for certain parts of their course due to a particular interest in one aspect of it. Set concrete, realistic goals to assist motivation, e.g. "If you want to become an engineer you must complete all parts of the course, even the essays."
- Refer student to ODS if the student becomes distressed.
- Assessment- Students may benefit from the opportunity to look at the instructions and structure of examination papers before the exam so that any confusion can be dealt with and anxiety minimized.
- The language and rubric of examination papers need to be both explicit and literal. For some students, multiple choice papers can be particularly confusing and alternative testing modes may be appropriate

Adapted from information from the UK National Autistic Society,
<http://www.adcet.edu.au/ViewFAQDetail.aspx?itemid=539>