

Support Worker Scheme Case Studies

Personal Assistant

Rosa was an occasional wheelchair user who used her Personal Assistant to support her with the physical barriers around campus when accessing her teaching. Rosa's condition meant that some days she was in a lot of pain and needed to use her wheelchair. She said that the support was flexible around the unpredictable nature of her individual needs. Her PA support meant she never needed to worry about getting to lectures on time when she was in unfamiliar locations, as her PA knew all the disabled access routes around campus and would pre-plan the route they needed to take to get there on time. Having her PA in teaching spaces meant that Rosa spent less time worrying about the access barriers and more time focussing on learning.

Library Support

Richard had a visual impairment that meant he found it difficult to access physical library resources when he could not use his assistive technology to read the text to him. He also found it time consuming to find books in the library as he would have to spend a long time finding the correct location of the book. Richard used his Library Support Assistant to source the books for him, transfer materials into electronic resources and helped him set up his assistive technology to make reading materials more accessible. This meant that Richard reduced the amount of time he spent sourcing reading materials and focussed on accessing them.

Specialist Mentor Support

Harpreet's Asperger's Syndrome and anxiety meant that she struggled to cope with multiple deadlines and keeping herself focussed on completing pieces of work in a timely manner. She also found it difficult to approach teaching staff to ask for help as she felt overwhelmed by being part of a large faculty and was not sure who she could speak to.

Harpreet starting accessing Specialist Mentor support midway through her first term of university. Her mentor encouraged her to have a long term plan for approaching her workload. She used the sessions to structure her time more effectively and plan for deadlines to minimise her stress levels and keep her focussed. Harpreet said she looked forward to her mentoring sessions, as her mentor was a friendly face with a knowledge of the wider institution, who she could easily approach and get help and advice from. She felt her mentor understood her individual needs and the potential barriers to her university experience.

One-to-One Study Skills Support

Shoeb was a third year dyslexic student who was dreading starting his final year project. Shoeb found it challenging to organise his thoughts for large pieces of coursework and was daunted by the volume of writing he would have to do. Writing such a large project meant Shoeb would need to spend a lot of time reading academic journals, which he had always struggled with as he finds it hard to absorb the relevant knowledge to use in his written work. This process was often time consuming, making it difficult for Shoeb to meet deadlines.

Starting One-to-One Study Skills support meant that he could work on basic techniques of academic writing, in addition to looking at the bigger picture of the project. Shoeb's Study Skills Tutor also showed him reading strategies to help reduce the time he spent on research and finding relevant research areas for his project. Shoeb said the sessions were invaluable as he could take the skills he had gained and apply them to future pieces of academic work as well as in his future working life.

Note-taking Support – Case Studies

Gustavo was recommended note-taking support due to a physical disability which means he cannot write his own notes. A note-taker attends all his lectures, and takes hand-written notes of what the lecturer says. The note-taker gives these notes to Gustavo at the end of every lecture. Gustavo can then use the notes in conjunction with lecture slides and handouts.

Due to her specific learning difficulty, Francesca struggles to keep up with the freewheeling discussions which take place in her seminars. A note-taker attends her seminars only, to take notes on these discussions for her. Francesca prefers not to be identified as receiving disability support, so she has 'discreet' note-taking; her note-taker doesn't make any contact with her in the seminars, and takes the notes away with them at the end. Francesca picks up her notes from the Disability Services office later on in the day.

Gilbert has a visual impairment. A note-taker attends all his taught sessions, taking notes on his behalf. The note-taker then takes the notes away, and types them up. The note-taker then emails Gilbert the notes as a digital document, so that Gilbert can access them using his screen-reading software.

Xinjian is deaf, so she has electronic note-taking. This means that she has a laptop in her lectures, and a note-taker sits a few chairs away with another linked laptop, taking notes directly onto the computer. The notes which the note-taker types appear immediately on Xinjian's screen, allowing her to access the lecture as it is happening. She then also receives a copy of the typed notes after the lecture.