RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

**EVALUATING** STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

* Check students’ **accommodation requests** (inclusion coordinator / lists / your checklist)
* Give 1/3 of total exam **time in addition** at the end, under good conditions in a quiet classroom
* **Separate exam** **room** if possible:
* Many institutions book a big room where all students with accommodations take their exams
* Bigger language centers within universities/schools can manage their own separate room for accommodations where listening comprehension questions can be managed more easily (on students’ laptops via Teams / Zoom, or on school-owned computers or MP3/4 players)
* If a separate room is not possible, **ensure a quiet exam room**:
* Students can only hand in exams and leave in waves every 15 min.
* Students who have left the exam room must leave the building immediately, no chatting outside the exam room. Announce this at the beginning of the exam and put up a notice outside the exam room.
* Allow students to use **noise-canceling headphones** (see checklist)
* For listening comprehension questions:
	+ Wait until dyslexic / slowest students have finished reading questions / gap text before playing the recording
	+ Give **additional listening opportunity** during additional time at the end, **on demand**, possibly read by teacher in order to avoid playing the entire recording
* Exam sheets:
* Use **sans serif fonts**: Arial, Verdana, Helvetica, Courier (**min. size 10/11**, ideally bigger)
* Use at least **1.15 line spacing**
* Use **bold** textto highlight
* **Airy layout**, with ample space for answers
* No italics
* Text not justified
* Pages **single-sided**
* All information necessary to complete an exercise should be **on one page**, or on pages that can be read side by side (not on the front and back of a double-sided sheet)
* Clear instructions and questions:
* Clearly **numbered questions**
* **Short instructions**
* Avoid negatively formulated questions and double negations
* If question formats vary, make this **clear visually** and point this out orally as well
* **Listening** **comprehension** questions:
* **Short extracts** (the lower students’ level the shorter)
* Leave **sufficient text between questions** so students have time to answer and read on in time for the next question:
	+ e.g. one blank every other sentence (never 2 blanks in the same sentence)
	+ e.g. one question per idea rather than several questions about the same short extract
* Wait until students have **finished reading** questions / gap text before playing the recording
* Give them an **additional listening opportunity** if they wish, ideally self-managed on laptop / MP3/4 player with headphones
* **Multiple choice** questions:
* Allow them to **answer in the questionnaire** directly, not on the separate answer sheet (see checklist)
* Allow them to **specify their answer choice** through a short, written explanation for questions whose formulation may give rise to confusion (see checklist)
* **Do not mark spelling**, grammar, or syntax in questions in which they’re not targeted. When spelling is targeted, allow access to tools such as spelling dictionaries or spelling corrector software to which students are accustomed (otherwise it only slows them further down)
* **Oral exams**:
* Give dyslexic students **1/3 more preparation time**
* Give them the choice to take the exam with another dyslexic student if possible (see checklist)
* Ensure accommodations during **in-class tests** as well
* If additional time cannot be granted in good conditions, shorten the test (1/3), but avoid cutting entire parts of test material

**Watch out for undiagnosed dyslexics!**

Students can be dyslexic and never have been diagnosed. Symptoms to watch out for are:

* **Difficulties in writing**:
	+ Poor spelling
	+ Missing words
	+ Poor text structure
	+ Poor penmanship, erasures, untidy or crumpled pages
* **Difficulties in speaking**:
	+ Difficulty using precise vocabulary
* **Difficulties in reading**:
	+ Slow reader
	+ Difficulty reading out loud (to be avoided)
* A surprisingly big **gap between written and spoken skills**, especially in students who seem invested in the course

If you suspect a student might be dyslexic, ask them if they have similar difficulties in their mother tongue. You could also ask them if they have relatives who are dyslexic, since dyslexia is hereditary.

If they believe they might be dyslexic, **encourage them to get tested** so that they may have access to accommodations.

Ideally provide them with the contact information of a test center. Your institution’s inclusion coordinator might be able to provide that.