

Guidelines for marking written work

What To Do	Rationale
Assess or discuss the level of correction that the student will be able to use effectively.	A student with SLD will be able to tell you what “works” for them.
Read quickly to assess ideas, understanding & knowledge, ignoring grammar, spelling & punctuation errors, without making corrections or comments.	Holistic thinking does not lend itself to the linear nature of words; reading quickly may enable the reader to access the holistic pattern of thought.
Comment on where the student has done well and explain why a particular aspect of the work is good, rather than/as well as being critical.	Models of good practice and correct usage are easier to retain and replicate; students with SLD find it difficult to “read between the lines”.
Explain what is required and what went wrong; use clear explicit English avoiding innuendo, sarcasm and complex sentences; avoid using grammatical terms.	A student with SLD is unlikely to know how to correct an error without some guidance or explanation; they are often unfamiliar with grammatical terms/rules.
Inform the student if you are marking for ideas, understanding and knowledge and ignoring spelling, punctuation and grammar.	Absence of lots of corrections (they are used to a lot!) may create a false impression of improvement and can be demoralising when re-appraisal occurs.
If you decide to mark for spelling, grammar and punctuation avoid marking every error - select and indicate about four types of error.	Numerous corrections can be demoralising; simply correcting spelling and grammar will not lead to improvement - helping the student identify types of error together with models of correct usage will help.
Use one colour pen to comment on ideas, understanding and knowledge and a different colour for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Avoid using red pens.	Anything which helps to differentiate functions of words is useful for the student with SLD. Red often has negative associations from school days and can be demoralising.
Use highlighter pens to indicate which areas of text “belong together” if you want to indicate where changes in structure or organisation are necessary.	Anything which aids differentiation of text is helpful; colour is instantly recognisable and will give the student an additional sense of control over the text.