

Information about Asperger Syndrome

- Asperger Syndrome is an Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Asperger Syndrome was first described by Hans Asperger in 1944 in Austria and is registered in the *International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* by the World Health Organisation (1992).
- To be classified as having Asperger Syndrome, an individual must exhibit some atypical form of repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities.
- People with Asperger's syndrome often have good language skills and are able to lead relatively normal lives. Many have above average IQ's and excel in areas that involve logical or visual thinking. Single-mindedness is a defining characteristic, as is a strong drive to analyse detail and identify rules and patterns in systems. (Tammet, 2006, p.7).
- The causes of Asperger Syndrome are still being investigated, but many believe it is not the result of a single factor, nor due to emotional deprivation or the way a child has been raised. There is no cure as it is a developmental disability.

Impact of impairment:

- People with Asperger Syndrome find it difficult to read the signals most of us take for granted (facial expressions, body posture, tones that indicate happiness, sadness, anger etc). This results in them finding it difficult to interact with others. (Autism New Zealand Inc).
- In the University environment a student with Asperger's Syndrome may find it difficult to partake in class discussions and communicate feelings, lack cognitive flexibility, experience anxiety, have difficulty making friends and struggle with change to routines. Despite being academically able, students' learning is often disrupted.

Ways staff can assist:

- Consistency (timetable, room, lecturer), give students opportunities to talk with you early in the semester.
- Use clear and unambiguous language (e.g. in examinations this must be explicit and literal).
- Patience.
- Provide clear, detailed written as well as verbal information (e.g. test and assignment dates).

Disclosure is voluntary

Students may choose not to disclose their invisible disability because they:

- Don't want special treatment, or want to see if they can cope alone.
- Fear discrimination.
- Feel embarrassed about asking for help.
- Want to get to know staff first, and then decide whether to disclose.

Information has been sourced from:

<http://www.aspergers.co.nz/whatIsAsperger.shtml>
www.altogetherautism.org.nz

CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

Disability Services

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ClockTower Building

22 Princes Street

Auckland

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 82936

Fax: +64 9 9 308 2354

www.eo.auckland.ac.nz

www.disability.auckland.ac.nz

disabilities@auckland.ac.nz

University Medical Services

City Campus Clinic

Level 3, Student Commons Building

2 Alfred Street

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 87681

Grafton Campus Clinic

The "White House"

151 Park Rd

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 86962

Tamaki Campus Clinic (Registered Nurse Clinic only)

Building 730.110

Morrin Road

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 86677

Epsom Campus Clinic

R Block, Gate 4

60 Epsom Avenue, Epsom

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 48526

Student Learning Centre

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 88850

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The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students to achieve their academic potential.