

Let's work together to keep GCU autism friendly!



In 2019, GCU became the first university in the UK, and worldwide, to be 'autism friendly' under the National Autistic Society Autism Accreditation scheme for universities. We secured renewal of our accreditation in 2023, gaining an Autism Specialist Award. The internationally recognised Accreditation Scheme has been awarded to hundreds of services in the UK. GCU offers sector-leading support to our autistic students, so let's work together to ensure we stay autism friendly.

Why does this matter?

The latest Government surveys estimate 1 in 100 people are on the autism spectrum, however there is some disagreement among statistical research and the National Autistic Society believe the actual prevalence is higher. Some have a formal diagnosis; others don't. This means that it's likely we all know someone with autism.

GCU has seen significant increases in disclosure of autism in recent years, and 1 in 10 disabled students at GCU identify as autistic.

A university environment – where there is constant change; a need to multi-task, self-organise and prioritise tasks; where there are lots of different people to deal with; where there is lots of noise and bustle – can create barriers to academic success for autistic students.

What does this mean for me?

Greater staff awareness and appreciation, inclusive design of services, courses and spaces, and provision of extra support when needed, can make all the difference. Consider what steps you could take to help keep GCU autism friendly.

Here's a few suggestions:

1 Learn more about autism and how it affects people

National Autistic Society:  www.autism.org.uk

GCU guidance and training opportunities:

 [Teaching Guide \(Autism\)](#)

[Accessible Teaching Checklist](#)

[Learning & Teaching Hub](#)

2 Ask how your team or department supports the needs of autistic people

If your team would like some support to consider this, or to review current practice, contact the Disability Team for a chat. We'd be happy to help.

 disability@gcu.ac.uk

3 Share your experience

Disabled Staff Network – Contact a.lui@gcu.ac.uk to find out more.

Let's Talk Neurodiversity Network – Contact Jacqueline.ramsay@gcu.ac.uk to find out more about the group, be added to the MS Teams group, or to simply add your name to the email list if you only want to hear about meetings.

Know about any other initiatives or good news stories we can share, to inspire others and create greater understanding of autism?

Let the Disability Team Know about it!

The Disability Team would love to hear your views on how we can make GCU more autism friendly - especially if you consider yourself to be on the autism spectrum.

For more information, or to offer your views, contact the Disability Team:

 www.gcu.ac.uk/disability

 disability@gcu.ac.uk

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University for the Common Good

