



## Current HE Students on the Autism Spectrum

### Participant Information Sheet

#### **Introduction**

Autism&Uni is a European project that aims to make it easier for students on the autism spectrum to transition from school and college to university. We also want to help students make the most of their university experience when they are there, and support them to learn the skills they need to negotiate student life and studies successfully. Autism&Uni will create interactive tools to enable students on the autism spectrum to find out about the challenges they may encounter in higher education, and to immerse themselves in typical scenarios. These can be used independently or with the help of professionals in HE institutions.

#### **How can I participate?**

We invite you to take part in this research because we feel that your experience as an autistic student can contribute to our understanding of the challenges of entering and succeeding in higher education. We would like to learn about your current situation, your ambitions to enter higher education and the support you are receiving.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

No. Any participation is voluntary and up to the point when you submit your questionnaire responses, you are free to withdraw without any explanation or reason.

#### **What we will do with your information**

We will use the understanding and knowledge gained from your information in our research and our findings will be published. We will not be sharing information about you outside the research team. Where we ask for your name or contact details, it is for the administration of the research only. Your responses will be anonymous and it will not be possible to identify you from any published material.

If you would like to be notified when results of this research are available online, please enter your email address when prompted at the end of the questionnaire. Where we ask for your email address, it is for the stated purpose only.

#### **Contact for further information**

If you have any questions about the information we have given you, or about the way your contribution will be used, please contact us before completing the questionnaire.

Project website: [www.autism-uni.org](http://www.autism-uni.org)  
Email: [autism-uni@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:autism-uni@leedsmet.ac.uk)  
Sponsor: Leeds Metropolitan University  
Lead researcher: Dr Marc Fabri

# Personal Details

Q1 What is your name? (optional)

Q2 What is your gender?

- Female .....
- Male .....
- Other .....
- Prefer not to say .....

Q3 How old are you?

Please note that if you are under the age of 16 we cannot use your responses.

Q4 Please enter your parent or carer's contact details.  
As you are under 18, if you don't answer this question we cannot use your responses.

Name

Email address

Q5 How old were you when you started university?

Q6 How was your autistic spectrum condition diagnosed (or identified if no official diagnosis)?

- Psychiatrist .....
- Psychologist .....
- Neurologist .....
- GP .....
- Educational staff .....
- Family .....
- Self-diagnosis .....

# Applying to university

Please note: This questionnaire is about your CURRENT university experience. If you have started more than one course in the past, please provide details about that at the end of the questionnaire.

Q7 Why did you want to go to university?  
(can tick more than one option)

- I love studying .....
- I need a degree to do the job I want .....
- I am interested in research .....
- I think I will earn more money .....
- I want to learn more about my subject.....
- Other people say I should go .....
- My family expect me to go .....
- My teachers expect me to go.....
- My friends are going .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q8 How easy did you find the process of applying to university?

- Very easy .....
- Easy .....
- Manageable .....
- Difficult.....
- Very difficult.....

Q9 What was good about applying?  
(can tick more than one option)

- The forms were quick to fill in .....
- I knew what to say .....
- I had enough support to help me .....
- All the questions were clear .....
- I liked being able to tell universities about myself.....
- I knew what would happen next.....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q10 What was bad about applying?  
(can tick more than one option)

- The deadline was difficult to meet.....
- I kept putting it off.....
- I worried about writing the wrong thing.....
- I found telling them why I wanted to do the course difficult.....
- I found the choice of subject or university difficult.....
- I did not understand all the questions.....
- Other.....
- Other, please specify

Q11 Were you interviewed for your course before they offered you a place?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q12 What was good about the interview?  
(optional)

- I knew what to say.....
- I had enough support to help me.....
- All the questions were clear.....
- I liked being able to tell the university about myself.....
- I knew what would happen next.....
- They told me more about the course.....
- I felt they understood my autism.....
- It made me very excited about university.....
- Other.....
- Other, please specify

Q13 What was bad about the interview?  
(optional)

- I did not know what to say.....
- I did not have enough support to help me.....
- I did not understand all the questions.....
- I found it difficult to tell them why I wanted to do the course.....
- I found it hard to say what I meant.....
- They didn't tell me anything more about the course.....
- I didn't feel they understood my autism.....
- It made me very nervous about university.....
- Other.....
- Other, please specify

Q14 Did you have to take an entrance exam to get into university?

- Yes.....
- No.....

Q15 What was good about the exam?  
(optional)

- I had enough time to answer the questions .....
- All the questions were clear .....
- The exam room was suitable for my needs .....
- I felt confident about my abilities .....
- I knew what was going to happen .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q16 What was bad about the exam?  
(optional)

- I ran out of time to answer the questions .....
- I did not understand all the questions .....
- The exam room caused me sensory problems .....
- I felt nervous about my abilities .....
- I didn't know what was going to happen .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q17 What course are you currently studying?

Q18 How easy did you find it to decide on a course?

- Very easy .....
- Easy .....
- Difficult.....
- Very difficult.....

Q19 What or who influenced your course choice when you applied?  
(can tick more than one option)

- Family.....
- Partner/Spouse .....
- Teachers.....
- Friends .....
- Previous grades in subject.....
- People already at university.....
- Careers adviser.....
- TV.....
- Movies.....
- Internet.....
- Celebrities .....
- Books .....
- Hobbies .....
- Other .....

Other, please specify

# Support

Q20 Do you currently receive support related to your autism?

- Yes .....
- No - I am not officially diagnosed.....
- No - I have a diagnosis but do not receive related support .....

Q21 What support do you currently receive related to your autism?  
(can tick more than one option)

- Teaching assistant/non-medical helper.....
- Note-taker .....
- Mentor .....
- Changes to exams .....
- Changes to coursework .....
- Help to plan schedules for both study and free time .....
- Helping you to find the right people to talk to, forms to fill in and deadlines to remember .....
- Practicing routes around the campus & university buildings .....
- Alternatives to group work .....
- Permission to audio record lectures .....
- Permission to type assignments & exams instead of using pen and paper .....
- Personal seat and/or computer in classrooms and lecture halls .....
- Access to a quiet room to rest during the day .....
- Assistance in applying for disability-related funding (non-student-specific funding) .....
- Support group .....
- Tutor outside of university .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q22 How useful is the support you receive?

- Not at all useful .....
- Not very useful .....
- Quite useful .....
- Very useful .....

Q23 What further support do you think would help you?  
(optional, can tick more than one option)

- Teaching assistant/non-medical helper.....
- Note-taker .....
- Mentor .....
- Changes to exams .....
- Changes to coursework .....
- Help to plan schedules for both study and free time .....
- Helping you to find the right people to talk to, forms to fill in and deadlines to remember .....
- Practicing routes around the campus & university buildings .....
- Alternatives to group work .....
- Permission to audio record lectures .....
- Permission to type assignments & exams instead of using pen and paper .....
- Personal seat and/or computer in classrooms and lecture halls .....
- Access to a quiet room to rest during the day .....
- Assistance in applying for disability-related funding (non-student-specific funding) .....
- Support group .....
- Tutor outside of university .....
- None.....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q24 When you've attended meetings about the support you receive, who usually accompanied you?

- I usually went alone .....
- Parent(s) .....
- Other relative(s) .....
- I have not attended any meetings.....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify



Q25 Have you ever used social stories to help you with new situations?  
(social stories are descriptions of social situations, the problems and the solutions and consequences)

- Yes .....
- No.....

Q26 Can you tell us more about how you used social stories, and how effective you found them?  
(optional, in less than 100 words)

Q27 When did you get all your current support in place?  
(optional)

- Before I started the course.....
- In the first week of my course .....
- In the first month of my course.....
- Before the end of the first semester.....
- Later than the first semester .....

Q28 What do you like about university?  
(can tick more than one option)

- I like the lecturers .....
- I get good marks .....
- I am learning a lot.....
- I have good friends .....
- I like where I live.....
- I feel supported to do well .....
- I enjoy most of my modules .....
- I get to do things I enjoy .....
- People are nice to me .....
- I can be more independent .....
- I can be myself .....
- Group work.....
- Nothing.....
- Other .....

Other, please specify

Q29 What don't you like about university?  
(can tick more than one option)

- I don't like the lecturers .....
- I am not happy with my marks .....
- I don't have many friends .....
- I don't get the help I need .....
- The classrooms are horrible .....
- Timetables change .....
- I don't like where I live .....
- Exams .....
- Group work .....
- I have to study things I don't like .....
- I have to do things I don't enjoy .....
- I don't fit in .....
- Everything .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q30 What makes you feel LESS stressed or anxious at university?  
(can tick more than one option)

- Exercise/sport .....
- Music .....
- Meditation .....
- Mindfulness .....
- University counselling service .....
- Sessions run by the university .....
- Food .....
- Drink .....
- Speaking to family .....
- Speaking to friends .....
- Other .....
- Other

Q31 Where at university can you go when you feel overloaded or stressed?  
(optional, in less than 50 words)

Q32 Think back to the time BEFORE you entered university. What support and information was offered to you?  
(can tick more than one option)

|   | It was offered to me     | I actually made use of it | It was not offered but would have been useful |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Information about the universities and what they are really like            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| More information about the application process                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Better information about the course in the first year and its expectations  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Visiting the university   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Interview with the university   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Speaking to previous students   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Tour of the lecture halls and seminar rooms                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Tour of accommodation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Information about clubs and societies                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Meeting the disability support team   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Course reading lists  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Chance to try a "normal day" or week at university, with real lectures etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Training on completing all the paperwork                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Training or information on moving to another city                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |
| Training or information on living as a student                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input type="checkbox"/>                      |

If there was any other support or information that is not listed above, please enter it here and describe whether you were offered it and whether you used it.  
(in less than 200 words)

Q33 When did you first tell the university about your autism?

- When I applied .....
- Before I started.....
- In the first week.....
- In the first semester .....
- In the first year .....
- After the first year.....
- Never.....

Q34 Who at the university knows about your autism?  
(can tick more than one option)

- Disability support team.....
- Disabled Students Allowance (UK) .....
- Your personal tutor .....
- Some lecturers .....
- All lecturers .....
- Your friends .....
- Other students.....
- Nobody .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q35 If you have a problem relating to your autism, what do you usually do about it?  
(can tick more than one option)

- Tell a lecturer.....
- Tell personal tutor.....
- Tell my partner/spouse.....
- Tell a friend.....
- Tell family .....
- Tell student services.....
- Tell disability adviser .....
- Follow advice given by university policy .....
- Nothing.....
- Not applicable .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

# About you

Q36 Have you got any other condition or disability that affects your ability to study or work?  
(can tick more than one option)

- No.....
- Dyslexia.....
- Dyspraxia .....
- Anxiety .....
- Depression .....
- Muscle tension .....
- Digestive problems/intestinal dysfunction.....
- Migraine .....
- Eating disorder .....
- Endocrine disorder .....
- ADD or ADHD .....
- Visual impairment.....
- Hearing impairment.....
- Physical disability .....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q37 How comfortable do you feel explaining your own needs to most people and ensuring that they are met?

- Not at all .....
- Not very comfortable.....
- OK.....
- Quite comfortable.....
- Very comfortable .....

Q38 Can you tell us about people you don't feel comfortable telling and why?  
(optional, in less than 100 words)

Q39 When you want to find out about something, where do you usually get information from?

We are asking you so we can make sure autistic students find out about the tools we create.  
(can tick more than one option)

- Lecturers .....
- Family.....
- Friends .....
- Support workers .....
- Groups or Clubs .....
- Internet search engines (like Google or Bing) .....
- Wikipedia.....
- Social media.....
- Other websites .....
- Emails .....
- Apps on my phone/tablet .....
- Newspapers & magazines .....
- TV .....
- Radio.....
- Films/movies .....
- Games.....
- Other .....
- Other, please specify

Q40 Have you got your own computer or laptop?

- Yes .....
- No.....

Q41 Have you got a mobile phone that has apps and lets you access the internet (a smartphone)?

- Yes .....
- No.....

Q42 Do you have a website that you really like to use because it is well-designed?

Please give us the name and if you remember it the address of the website. Describe what you like about it (optional, in less than 50 words) - this question is so that our website and the tool we create work well for you.

Q43 Is there anything else you'd like to tell us regarding how you feel about your time at university?  
If you have started more than one higher education course in the past, please tell us about the  
circumstances here.  
(optional, up to 200 words)

# Consent Form

We will use the understanding and knowledge gained from your information in our research and our findings will be published. We will not be sharing information about you outside the research team. Your responses will be anonymous and it will not be possible to identify you from any published material.

Q44 I consent to the use of my responses by Autism&Uni. ....

Q45 I am happy to be contacted about taking part in follow-up research, e.g. to talk more about my experiences.....

Q46 I would like to be notified when results from this research become available online. ....

If you have indicated that we may contact or notify you, please enter your email address below. We will not use your email address for any other purpose.

Q47 Please enter your email address.

## Thank you for taking part in this survey

If the issues raised in this questionnaire caused you concern and you would like to find out more, please read these articles on the UK National Autistic Society website:

Starting University

University: Choosing and Applying