

## Severe/Profound General Learning Disability

✘ Students with severe to profound general learning disabilities are likely to be severely impaired in their functioning in respect of a basic awareness and understanding of themselves, of the people around them and of the world they live in.

Many of these students will have additional disabilities such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs), challenging and/or self-injurious behaviour, emotional disturbance, epilepsy, hearing impairment, physical impairment, severe impairment in communication skills and visual impairment. Insofar as IQ (Intelligence Quotient) may be used as an indicator of general learning disability, a student with a severe general learning disability is described as having an IQ in the range 20 to 35 on standardised IQ tests, and a student with a profound general learning disability is described as having an IQ under 20.

Students with severe to profound general learning disabilities exhibit a wide and diverse range of characteristics, including a dependence on others to satisfy basic needs such as feeding and toileting, difficulties in mobility, problems with generalising skills from one situation to another, significant delays in reaching developmental milestones and significant speech and/or communication difficulties. Some students may have associated behavioural problems. Students may have limited communication skills and will therefore not have control of the multiple means by which other students communicate such as speech, body language, facial expressions and print. (It should be remembered that the students' difficulties in expressing themselves does not diminish their communicative intent. Opportunities to enable the student to communicate should underpin learning and teaching.) Remember that each student is different - what works for one may not work for another.

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