

CAMPUS SENSORY SCAN CHECKLIST

Use this worksheet to observe and reflect on sensory features of campus spaces that may affect student comfort, focus, regulation, and participation. The goal is to identify environmental barriers and opportunities to make spaces more accessible, predictable, and supportive for neurodivergent students.

1. SOUND / NOISE

- Is the space usually quiet enough for concentration or conversation?
- Are there sudden loud noises (doors, alarms, equipment, chatter)?
- Are students able to move to a quieter area if needed?
- Are noise-reducing options available or allowed?

2. LIGHTING

- Is lighting comfortable and not overly harsh?
- Are fluorescent lights, glare, or flickering minimized?
- Is natural light balanced so it is not overwhelming?
- Are there lower-light options when possible?

Look for: bright overhead lights, flashing screens, glare on windows, visually intense spaces

3. VISUAL ENVIRONMENT

- Is the space visually organized rather than cluttered?
- Is signage clear, consistent, and easy to follow?
- Are walls and surfaces free from excessive visual overload?
- Are important directions easy to locate quickly?
- Is there a clear path for where to go and what to do next?

Look for: clutter, confusing layouts, too many posters, unclear check-in processes

4. SMELL / AIR QUALITY

- Are strong scents minimized in the space?
- Are cleaning products, perfumes, or food odors noticeable?
- Is ventilation adequate?
- Can students step away from irritating odors if needed?

Look for: air fresheners, cleaning chemicals, food smells, perfumes, stale air

5. TOUCH / PHYSICAL COMFORT

- Are seating options reasonably comfortable?
- Are there choices for students who prefer more or less personal space?

- Are room temperatures manageable?
- Are textures or furnishings unlikely to be distracting or distressing?

Look for: uncomfortable chairs, crowded seating, extreme temperatures, awkward room arrangement

6. CROWDING / MOVEMENT

- Does the space become crowded or chaotic at certain times?
- Are lines, waiting areas, or entrances organized clearly?
- Is there enough room for students to move without feeling boxed in?
- Are transitions into and out of the space predictable?
- Can staff identify high-traffic times that may increase overwhelm?

Look for: bottlenecks, long lines, people talking over each other, confusing traffic flow

7. PREDICTABILITY / CLARITY

- Is it obvious what students should do when they arrive?
- Are steps, expectations, and processes clearly explained?
- Are changes communicated in advance when possible?
- Do students know who to ask for help?

Look for: unclear instructions, unexpected changes, vague expectations, inconsistent communication

8. REGULATION SUPPORTS

- Are breaks normalized when students appear overwhelmed?
- Is there access to a quieter or lower-stimulation area if needed when overwhelmed?
- Are students allowed reasonable sensory tools when appropriate?
- Do staff know the difference between distress, overload, and intentional misconduct?

Look for: no break options, punitive responses, lack of privacy, no calming space

9. COMMUNICATION ACCESS

- Are instructions available in clear, simple language?
- Are verbal directions supported with written or visual information?
- Are students given time to process and respond?
- Are multiple ways of asking for help better process information available?

Look for: rushed explanations, jargon-heavy language, unclear next steps, limited communication options

Reflection

1. What sensory barriers might students encounter here?
2. Who is most likely to be affected by this environment?
3. What low-cost changes could improve access right away?
4. What issues require broader departmental or campus collaboration?
5. How will we gather student feedback and revisit this regularly?



Interested in learning more about how to support neurodivergent students?

Contact us at info@collegeautismspectrum.com or info@navigateu.com