



NEURO-INC · HUSNAT IV 2026



HUSNAT IV

From User Research to Design Briefs: Dialogue on Neuroinclusive Academic Library Spaces

Magdalena Wójcik (Principal Investigator, PI), Roksana Ulatowska, Krzysztof Gerc,
Dorota Rak, Paloma Korycińska

Jagiellonian University, Poland

Funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, under OPUS 28

Project agreement UMO-2024/55/B/HS2/00694



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IM. IGNACEGO LUKASIEWICZA

A person at the library door

THE RESOURCE IS AVAILABLE

- Catalogue
- Service desk
- Signs

THE VISIT STILL TAKES EFFORT

- Judging noise and lighting
- Finding a route
- Asking for help
- Understanding unwritten rules

Can a person enter, orient themselves and use the library without excessive cognitive or sensory burden?

PROJECT AND COMPLETED EVIDENCE

The NEURO-INC project and completed evidence

Information needs and behaviours of neurodivergent users in inclusive academic library spaces

Academic libraries combine information systems, service encounters and physical experience.

COMPLETED COMPONENT

Systematic review

Physical university spaces for neurodiverse students and staff

26 publications, 2018–2025
51 records from Web of Science, Scopus and Embase

Library and information science

Psychology

User research

Spatial design

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WORKING DEFINITION

Neurodiversity in the project

Neurodiversity refers to the recognition and acceptance of multiple variations in the functioning of the nervous system, especially in the context of neurodevelopmental differences in humans.

Natural variation can lead to differences in perception, learning, communication and behaviour.

Autism

ADHD

Dyslexia

Neurodivergent people do not form one homogeneous cognitive type. Some people also need substantial support.

A formal medical diagnosis is not required for participation.

COMPLETED REVIEW

Practical recommendations

Four connected areas support cognitive accessibility in academic libraries.

1 Sensory conditions

Advance information on routes, lighting, noise and quiet zones

2 Communication

Direct explanations and access through different channels

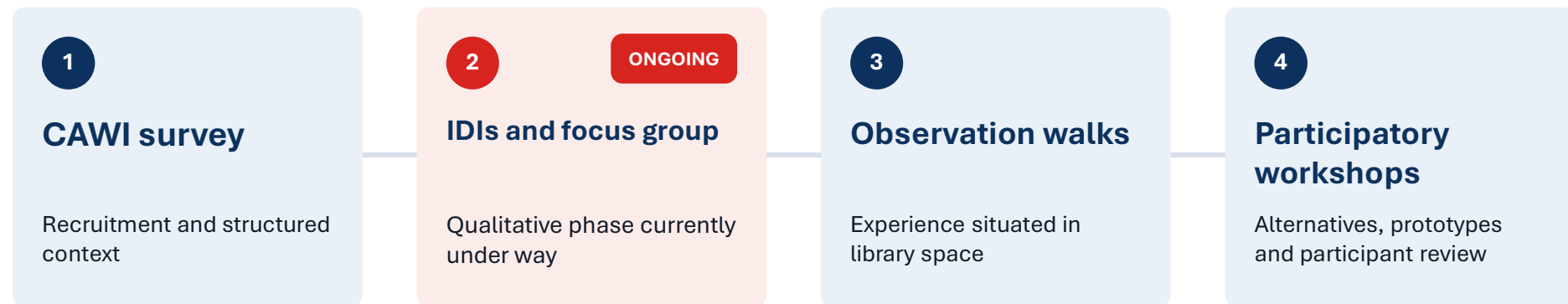
3 Procedures

Transparent expectations and stable support across the institution

4 Spatial logic: explain restrictions and show alternative routes.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Triangulated and iterative research



Each method shows a different part of the relationship between experience, institutional practice and physical space.

CURRENT STATUS

The qualitative phase is under way

INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

- Library directors and more than 20 librarians
- Krakow's academic libraries
- Professional and institutional perspectives

FOCUS GROUP

Neurodivergent student volunteers

Experiences, preferences and needs in academic library spaces and services

No final findings from this phase are reported today.

Qualitative accounts and design decisions

MEDIATION

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Narratives, themes and situated accounts

Rich evidence tied to particular situations

- Context matters
- Differences remain visible
- Interpretation requires judgment

DESIGN PRACTICE

Decisions about library interiors

Zoning, lighting, acoustics, furniture, wayfinding and service points

Designers work within materials, regulations and budgets

Who interprets the evidence, how are the steps made visible, and what remains open to consultation?

CONTEXT MATTERS

Why recommendations require context

A QUIET AREA

Quiet may mean different things

- Acoustic separation
- Predictability or control
- Privacy and choice

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Several channels are not enough

- Which channel should I use?
- When will someone reply?
- Must I disclose a diagnosis?

Recommendations define areas for attention. They are not yet technical specifications.

POSSIBLE FORMATS

Contextualised scenarios and annotated requirements

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|
| 01 | Scenario | Show where uncertainty or sensory burden occurs during an actual library visit |
| 02 | Evidence link | Connect each proposed requirement with the participant accounts and research themes behind it |
| 03 | Design options | Record alternative spatial or communication responses rather than one universal solution |
| 04 | Open questions | Identify what still requires consultation with neurodivergent users and designers |

Traceability makes the interpretive path visible.

The design brief develops through successive versions.

EPISTEMIC JUSTICE

Epistemic justice and niche reflexivity

Whose knowledge can be expressed, recognised and taken into account?

THE LIBRARY NICHE

Spatial arrangements and communication practices shape whose knowledge can be expressed and recognised.

THE RESEARCH AND DESIGN NICHE

Interviews, focus groups, workshops and design conversations also structure who can speak and be understood.

Niche reflexivity applies to the library and to the process that produces its design brief.

Fricker, 2007; Kadodia & Krueger, 2026

MAIN QUESTION

The design brief as an ongoing dialogue

How can we translate our research findings about the preferences and needs of neurodivergent users into design briefs for architects and interior designers who design academic library interiors?

1

Experience

Participant accounts remain connected to context

2

Interpretation

Researchers make their analytical steps visible

3

Consultation

Design requirements remain open to revision

Possible formats: contextualised scenarios, annotated requirements and an evolving design brief.

Bogers et al., 2008; van der Linden et al., 2019

Thank you