

Overview - ADHD

The main characteristics of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are:

- Inattention – poor concentration, being easily distracted, procrastination, difficulty organising and finishing off tasks.
- Hyperactivity – restlessness, fidgeting, tapping, being over-talkative.
- Impulsivity – speaking and acting without thinking, interrupting others.

Medication may help manage the condition but adult ADHD often goes undiagnosed and untreated. It may overlap with other SpLDs such as dyslexia and dyspraxia (please see separate guides).

Students with ADHD may experience the following issues:

- Putting off study tasks (such as essay writing) until the last minute and falling behind with work.
- Forgetting tasks, appointments and necessary things (keys, equipment, books, etc.).
- Difficulty organising their work, time and ideas.
- 'Zoning out' in lectures and missing important information.
- Restlessness and fidgeting, especially during lectures.
- Problems with time keeping and attendance.
- Difficulty waiting their turn and contributing to group discussions.
- Poor emotional well-being, which can impact social relationships.
- Depression and poor self-esteem, which can affect motivation to study.



Top tips for teaching students with ADHD:

- Give rest breaks and/or vary the focus and activities.
- Be understanding about students' need to doodle, fidget and move around.
- Emphasise important information and instructions as well as deadlines.
- Avoid last-minute changes to lecture venues and times.
- Provide lecture notes and slides so students do not miss out on key information.
- Help students prioritise reading by categorising it as essential or recommended.
- Help students break work into smaller, manageable chunks and set themselves deadlines.
- Encourage students to access information through non-textual means (such as videos, discussion and experimentation) where possible.
- Explicitly teach students what a good assignment or presentation looks like (and provide templates or exemplars).
- Encourage students to use calendars, diaries and alarms to help with time management.
- Be aware of the emotional aspects of ADHD and their impact on students' mood and performance.

Useful links

- <http://www.brainhe.com/students/types/ADHDstaff.html>
- <http://aadduk.org/living-with-adhd/university-college-issues/>
- <http://www.additudemag.com/>

