

Faculty Tip Sheet for working with Students with ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral condition characterized by short attention span, excessive impulsiveness, and inappropriate hyperactivity. Symptoms of hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattentive behavior must have been present and caused impairment in two or more social, academic, or occupational settings for this diagnosis. The exact cause of ADHD is not known.

Basically, a college student with ADHD is entitled to the protection he or she needs so that access to education is not unjustifiably restricted because of disabilities.

ADD is both a gift and a struggle. Although everyone is different, many people are:

- Creative thinkers - great at coming up with new ideas
- Capable of giving undivided and sustained attention to things they enjoy
- Very intuitive and able to get to the gist of things right away
- Willing to take risks and think “outside the box”
- Friendly and talkative
- Imaginative and good at fantasizing
- Great in situations that require quick thinking
- Often funny and witty – without even trying
- Naturally curious with a love of learning (As long as they aren’t bored or frustrated!)
- Forgiving and compassionate

People with ADHD struggle with:

- Clutter – in their environment and their minds
- Being chronically late
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Jumping from thing to thing and having difficulty finishing tasks or projects
- Making impulsive decisions that aren’t always the best
- Constantly procrastinating
- Not knowing how to plan for the future, prioritize, or keep track of commitments
- Misplacing or losing things
- Blanking out or losing focus during a conversation
- Difficulties with memory and learning
- Feeling like a loser – like they don’t fit in

Checklist for teaching students with LD or ADHD:

Teaching students who are learning disabled (LD) and/or have attention deficit disorders can be challenging which is why you'll find this checklist valuable. This checklist will help you to support students with learning and attention disabilities in the classroom or the self-contained classroom.

Do you:

- Have very clear expectations for all tasks written into the syllabus?
- Keep transitions flowing smoothly and provide assistance at transitional times?
- Do you enable your student(s) to make choices from time to time?
- Do your student(s) know how to get your attention appropriately?
- Do you provide motivating learning opportunities to help the student to remain engaged?
- Do you provide help with organization and review?
- Are you providing appropriate cues and prompts that help focus your student(s)?
- Are your classroom routines and expectations predictable? The student should be able to know 'what's next'.
- Are you providing adequate accommodations and encouraging the student to use his/her accommodations?
- Are you "checking-in" to make sure the student is not struggling with the curriculum?
- Do you have appropriate assistive technologies available to the student through the OAR office.
- Have you made sure you're addressing the specific students learning styles within your program?
- Do you allow extra time for processing and comprehending information?

If you can answer yes to most of these questions, you're well on your way to meeting the needs of students with LD or ADD. Keep up the great work! It is important for professors to check in periodically to offer support and guidance. The unfortunate reality is that students with ADD/ADHD have to work harder at the skills many others take for granted. But that extra effort to establish effective routines can lead to a more successful college experience.