



Attention Deficit Disorder

Implications of Attention Deficit Disorder in the Postsecondary Education Setting

Attention Deficit Disorder is a neurological disability characterized by difficulties with tasks involving executive function. These include:

- Planning skills
- Organizational skills
- Selective attention
- Maintenance of attention
- Impulse control

Students with ADD may have difficulty maintaining their attention for a long period of time or “screening out” unimportant stimuli in the environment. These students may also have difficulty keeping up with materials, organizing information in a meaningful way, or planning a project or paper. Attention Deficit Disorder is often treated with stimulant medications but behavioral interventions are also recommended. Students with ADD often benefit from external supports such as the use of day planners or personal digital assistants and coaching. Breaking tasks down into manageable parts is also helpful.

- **Tips for Teaching Students with Attention Deficit Disorder**

- ***Encourage selective scheduling of classes.*** Scheduling classes so that students have a break between them provides an opportunity for the student to review and organize notes, and to prepare materials for the next class.
- ***Allow students to demonstrate understanding of course material using approved accommodations.*** These may include taking a test in a reduced-distraction environment or breaking a test down into smaller sections.
- ***Vary classroom activities and teaching methods.*** Include hands-on, interactive and small group activities when possible.
- ***Provide models of good projects.*** When essays, papers, or various projects are a part of the class, have a “model” of the particular class requirement so students can see what you consider excellent work and learn by example. You could either use work of past students or an example you develop yourself.

- ***Encourage the organization of study groups.***
- ***Provide a calendar that shows due dates for important assignments and tests.***
- ***Provide instructions for exams and assignments in print as well as orally.***
- ***Provide overheads or class notes or allow the student to record lectures.***