AD (H)D is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is characterised by features of both a mental health condition and a specific learning difficulty. It is present in multiple settings (e.g. home, educational setting, work) and has three key indicators:

**Inattentiveness, hyperactivity** and **impulsivity**.

**Inattentiveness** – **usually at least 6 symptoms are seen:**
- Becomes rapidly bored with a task
- Fails to pay close attention to detail
- Difficulty listening to others
- Difficulty in planning and organising tasks
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty completing tasks and meeting deadlines
- Shifting from one incomplete activity to another
- Losing property or forgetting equipment.

**Hyperactivity**
- Restless and fidgety
- Frequent and / or excessive talking
- Doing several things at once
- Attracted by highly stimulating activities

**Impulsivity**
- Interrupting others
- Difficulty awaiting turn in a group
- Speaks without thinking of the consequences
- Impulsive behaviours

**Many students with AD(H)D also have significant strengths, for example:**
- Having the ability to see the ‘big picture.’
- Being creative and inventive
- Displaying high levels of energy
Taking risks which can lead to discoveries
Being intuitive

Impact on study

The effects of ADHD:

The symptoms can interfere with, or reduce the quality of social, academic or occupational functioning. Hyperactive-impulsive symptoms are less common in adults, who may present predominately with problems of inattention. Educational performance is a specific difficulty for almost all individuals with ADHD, related to the attention deficits that characterise the disorder.

The most common **persisting effects of ADHD** that students at UCL report are difficulties in:

- Time management and self-organisation.
- Procrastination and frustration with managing coursework deadlines.
- Disrupted sleep routines
- Risk-taking behaviours e.g. recreational and/or performance enhancing drug-use (often as self-medication and management)
- Processing and remembering information e.g. sustaining attention for note-taking in lectures
- Managing and balancing the demands of their course

Many students with ADHD are identified with co-occurring specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or a co-occurring mental health difficulty. This places additional pressures on the student as they struggle to manage the effects of more than one disability.

Supporting and Teaching Students

Good practice can include the following:

- Establish clear roles within the department so students know who to go to for particular issues.
- Give clear and unambiguous instructions and feedback, preferably in word-processed form.
- As a personal tutor or supervisor consider scheduling regular meetings - a supportive relationship with a member of staff who knows the student well can be a great help.
• Encourage students to explore the wide range of exercise, relaxation and personal development classes and workshops offered at UCL.
• Encourage students who suspect they may have ADHD but who have never been previously assessed to contact Student Disability Services for advice on how to obtain a medical assessment. Student Disability Services can advise on the best route to assessment and/or offer a screening interview and letter of referral to a medical professional such as a G.P.
• Encourage students with a diagnosis of ADHD to contact UCL Student Disability Services to register for advice and support. Where the impact on study is particularly severe, with the student’s permission, it can be sometimes be useful to establish three-way contact (and the occasional meeting) between a disability adviser, the student’s personal tutor and the student.

Reasonable Adjustments

• Provide reading lists and lecture notes in advance.
• Allow student to record teaching sessions.
• Provide printed materials in an accessible format with font size of at least 12.
• Explore alternative assessment options/adjustments for students who find extended written assessments particularly challenging.
• Permit some flexibility with deadlines e.g. consider requests for coursework extensions of up to one week.

Further Information

For further information and guidance on ADHD in a wider context please see:

https://www.ukaan.org/