

About Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorders:

In adults, ADHD symptoms must be present since childhood and affect the person's ability to function in daily life. These symptoms must create significant difficulty in at least two areas of life, such as home, social settings, school, or work.

Increasingly, researchers are studying ADHD in the context of executive functions—the brain functions that activate, organize, integrate, and manage other functions. Impairment of these executive functions is considered highly interrelated to symptoms associated with ADHD.

There are three primary subtypes of ADHD, each associated with different symptoms:

1. **ADHD**—Primarily Inattentive Type: Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes, has difficulty sustaining attention, does not appear to listen, struggles to follow through on instructions, has difficulty with organization, avoids or dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort, is easily distracted, is forgetful in daily activities
2. **ADHD**—Primarily Hyperactive/Impulsive Type: Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in chair, has difficulty remaining seated, runs around or climbs excessively, has difficulty engaging in activities quietly, acts as if driven by a motor, talks excessively, blurts out answers before questions have been completed, has difficulty waiting or taking turns, interrupts or intrudes upon others,
3. **ADHD**—Combined Type: Meets both inattentive and hyperactive/impulsive criteria

Students with documented Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) will experience inattention more frequently and severely than other students. Inattentiveness may or may not be apparent by observation. Diagnosis occurs by a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist and treatment may involve medication and on-going professional counseling support.

Attention may be affected by environmental stimuli that other persons may or may not be conscious of, e.g. consistent background noise from any source in and out of the classroom. "Street noise", concurrent conversations overheard in and out of the classroom, radiator pipes "banging", an air vent fluctuating with subsequent noise and the sound emitted from fluorescent lights are examples of possible distractions to a student with ADD or ADHD.

ADHD indicates “hyperactivity” that, to many persons, is an outward or obvious appearance of behavior. This is a generalization and not exhibited by all persons experiencing ADHD. Hyperactivity within some students may be unapparent.

Common challenges for our students with ADD and ADHD involve the attention required in the classroom and the internal focus ability to learn sequence and retain the instructional materials presented. Outside of the classroom and sometimes affecting attendance and/or course assignment deadlines, students are challenged with temporal (or time) awareness, the ability to organize a self-schedule, and adhering to schedules and places for reading, studying and writing that are conducive. The degree to which each student is distracted, inattentive and finds successful supports is variable.

Instructors can provide necessary supports for their students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders in the following ways:

- Present the course syllabus in writing with clear deadline dates for assignments. Review the syllabus aloud at the start of the course and shortly after the close of shopping period. Remind students of upcoming deadlines with a week’s notice.
- Invite the student to submit drafts of written assignments with a specific deadline. When reviewing, make notes but do not correct sentence structure, spelling and syntax. Discuss the draft in person with the student.
- Present course materials and instruction in a variety of modalities – verbal, visual and hands-on when possible. This is usually helpful to all students.
- Adhere to the schedule for course deadlines. Only change deadlines for individual students with a Dean involved in the decision.
- If teaching a course that is over 1 hour and 15 minutes, offer breaks every 45 minutes.