



Post-Secondary Accommodations for Students with ADHD

Your Rights as a Post-Secondary Student with ADHD

A medically documented diagnosis of ADHD is considered a disability in the post-secondary system, which means that you can access specific accommodations, such as access to a special needs adviser who can assist with time management. Other accommodations include additional time for assignments and exams, access to the professor's or another student's notes, being able to tape lectures, and possibly alternative testing, to name a few. Get your documentation to the appropriate office well before school begins. Approval for accommodations may take some time. While it is true that no one likes to be thought of as having a disability or being different, the truth is that what matters most is graduating with your chosen diploma or degree.

Many students have been unsuccessful at the post-secondary level because they were determined to be "just like everyone else" and not use any accommodations, only to find themselves part way through the first or second year with a couple of assignments overdue, no notes and the threat of failing a course or two. Unfortunately accommodations cannot be retroactive, so students need to be proactive and set up potential accommodations before their post-secondary career begins. You may never have to use your accommodations, but if a problem does arise, you will already have the structure in place. It is never too late to ask for accommodations for future classwork, but you will not be able to ask for them to be applied to a past event.

Be your own advocate.

Become knowledgeable about your disability and both confident in and adept at describing your disability and related needs to others. When you are researching schools during the application process, also review their policy and resources for students with disabilities. There's no need to be ashamed at being different or asking for help.

Accommodations

Here is a list of the most common accommodations that can be helpful and requested for students with ADHD. Since ADHD is a disorder that has many variations of presentation and severity, accommodations, learning strategies and organizational aids must be tailored to the students strengths and needs. This means that the student and those working with the student must spend some time thinking about the difficulties they have experienced and things that have been helpful in the past. Sometimes finding the best accommodations can involve some trial and error. Hopefully some of this

investigative work has been done at the high school level and some of the strategies and skills surrounding making the accommodations work have already been acquired, but, if not, starting the process as soon as possible is essential.

- A lighter course load
- Additional time for assignments, class work, tests and exams (remember this should be used sparingly and not used simply as a licence to increase the level of procrastination)
- Flexibility with due dates
- The ability to write exams and tests on a computer, utilizing spell check
- A quiet environment to write exams and tests to alleviate external distraction
- Access to a scribe or access to either another student's or the professor's notes (it is frequently difficult for a student with ADHD to take notes and pay attention to the lectures at the same time)
- Lengthy assignments always given in written format
- Copies of visual aids and PowerPoint presentations
- Flexibility in the scheduling of tests, exams and assignments in order to prevent the student from becoming overwhelmed
- The ability to listen to headphones during class work time to help shut out distractions
- Not be unduly penalized for grammar or spelling
- The student should be allowed to clarify questions on tests and exams
- The student will require the use of a laptop during class
- Accommodations for auditory processing difficulties, such as preferential seating
- More frequent breaks
- Access to a staff member at the Access Centre to: help monitor the progress on assignments, help her/him to break down assignments into manageable chunks, help with time management skills, procrastination, due dates and to review assignments to ensure that instructions are clearly understood