

Significant On-going Illness

What is a Significant On-going Illness?

- A significant on-going illness is a medical condition that has a persistent and substantial effect on the health of an individual.
- Significant on-going illnesses include Epilepsy, Diabetes, Cystic Fibroses, Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's Disease, Fibromyalgia, Haemophilia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and many more.

What difficulties might be experienced by a student with a Significant On-going?

- Poor concentration due to fatigue
- Missing deadlines due to hospitalisation or other effects of the illness
- Missing days or weeks of classes due to hospitalisation or other effects of the illness
- Fine- motor activities may be affected e.g. handwriting.
- Medications often have side-effects including fatigue, nausea and disrupted sleep patterns.

Epilepsy

- Periods of excessive stress such as exam periods or nearing assessment deadlines may bring on seizures which may result in missing deadlines or exams.

Diabetes

- Periods of excessive stress can result in students' blood sugar becoming difficult to regulate. This can result in poor concentration levels or extreme fatigue for the student.

What can you do to support these students?

- Allow for the use of assistive technology in class e.g. recording devices.
- If a student discloses their illness to you ask if there is anything you can do to help them.
- Try to be flexible with regards to assessments and deadlines as students may be unable to meet deadlines due to hospitalisation, exhaustion or other effects.
- Provide slides/notes before lectures to help students to focus on the material. Providing this material also helps students who may have to be away from college for extended periods of time.
- Prioritise reading lists so students can make the most of their time which can often be limited.
- Offering breaks during longer classes or lectures can help students who are suffering from fatigue and concentration difficulties.
- If you're not sure how to support a student, ask them!

Useful Resources

- www.ahead.ie
- www.diabetes.ie
- www.epipliesy.ie
- www.cfireland.ie