

## Dyspraxia and Developmental Coordinator Disorder (DCD) Fact Sheet

### What is dyspraxia or Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)?

- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), also known as dyspraxia, is a disorder which affects one's fine and/or gross motor coordination (Dyspraxia/DCD Ireland, 2019). People with DCD/dyspraxia can experience difficulty with planning, organizing and executing tasks.
- DCD is distinct from other motor disorders, for example, stroke or cerebral palsy.
- The difficulties experienced by people with DCD can change over time, particularly in response to their environment and life experiences.
- Fine motor coordination is concerned with smaller muscles (e.g. by hands, fingers, mouth, toes etc.), whereas gross motor coordination is concerned with larger muscles (e.g. arms, legs, torso etc.)

### How can DCD/dyspraxia impact a student's college experience?

Difficulties	Possible impact in College
1. Managing academic workload and tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Possible <b>difficulty with handwriting</b> and drawing diagrams and graphs. Students <b>may need to use a computer to</b> take notes and in exams.</li><li>• Difficulty with <b>planning and organizing their workload</b>, particularly within the self-directed environment of university. Furthermore, <b>assignments with ambiguous instructions can be difficult</b> to manage.</li><li>• <b>Tasks which may require fine motor skills</b> may be more difficult (e.g. lab work, clinical skills, drawing).</li><li>• Difficulty with <b>time management and planning</b> to arrive to lectures/appointments on time.</li><li>• Difficulty <b>maintaining concentration</b> during lectures.</li><li>• Difficulty with <b>organization of thoughts</b> for assignments, written expression and numeracy skills.</li></ul>
2. Orientation and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty with <b>conveying thoughts clearly</b>, both during informal conversation and formal assessments (e.g. presentations).</li><li>• Difficulty with <b>spatial awareness</b> (e.g. can trip easily).</li></ul>
3. Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficulty with <b>sensory input</b> (e.g. can be highly sensitive to noise, light, touch, movement etc.).</li></ul>

## How can you support a student who is blind or vision impaired?

### 1. Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any [classroom](#) and [exam](#) accommodations which were determined at the **student's Needs Assessment**.

### 2. Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by [Universal Design principles](#) when designing coursework.
- **Provide lecture notes, in a suitable format, in advance of the class.**
- Give **clear and explicit instructions on what is expected of them for assignments** and assessments, possibly providing an example of good work.
- **Provide reading lists in advance** and assistance with prioritised readings.
- **Avoid to sole use of written tutorial or lab work** as some students with dyspraxia/DCD may only be able to write using a computer. Preferably, allow all students to submit tutorial worksheets via a Word document.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom.
- Consider the **exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require a computer/assistive technology/scribe?).
- Support the student if they have **difficulties meeting deadlines**.
- Provide a **clear timeline** for the semester (e.g. when lectures are, assignment deadlines etc.). **Inform about any changes to timetables** as soon as possible.

To find out more information please visit:

- <https://www.ahead.ie/inclusiveteaching>
- <https://www.dyspraxia.ie/>