# Tips for UCD Students- Dyspraxia/DCD

Managing third level effectively with any disability involves using support services and tools available. It is also very important that each student **takes responsibility for their own academic career at UCD.**

The aim of UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) is to empower all students receiving Disability Support to **become independent learners** so they can develop the skills expected of successful graduates entering the workplace. The following guidelines are designed to support students in achieving that goal.

## Communication

- UCD encourages any student with dyspraxia/DCD to **communicate with UCD ALL** so you can receive the necessary support to manage your student role.
- You will be required to provide appropriate **Evidence of Disability** and attend a **Needs Assessment**, where the appropriate classroom and exam accommodations will be discussed.
- After completing the Needs Assessment, you will be provided with a **Certificate of Disability Support** which outlines the supports you are availing of in UCD. You are encouraged to send this **certificate to your module coordinators/lecturers** to inform them about necessary in-class support and to request exam accommodation for end-of-trimester exams, in-class tests or locally arranged exams.
- You have the option to put '**Dyspraxia/DCD Awareness'** on your certificate as a means of disclosing to module coordinators/lecturers if you would find this helpful.

## Exam Support

- The **support available for end-of-trimester exams** will be discussed during the Needs Assessment. For in-class tests and local exams, you must request your exam support from **module coordinators/lecturers** directly.
- The support is based on **national guidelines**. Hence, certain support may not be appropriate for everyone with dyspraxia/DCD. Examples of exam support include:

10 minutes extra time per hour

Alternate exam location

## Assistive Technology

- Assistive Technology is software and/or devices that can help students manage their day-to-day tasks in UCD. Assistive Technology is usually discussed at the Needs Assessment.
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### Example of Assistive Technology

| Technology | Description |
|---|---|
| **Recording Tools** | Specialised computer software which allows you to take notes and record audio in the same place. You can use colour code material and upload PowerPoint slides. |
| **Mind Mapping software** | A mind map is a visual representation of ideas. This software can help you to organise ideas in a useful way and to create notes following lectures or readings. It can also be used when planning essays. The **Coggle** software is a good example. |
| **Voice Recognition / Dictation Software** | Software can be used to dictate essays or assignments. As you speak, text appears on the screen. This can also be used with a handheld Dictaphone. Dictation features can be found in both **Google Docs** and **Microsoft Word**. |
| **Learn to Type Software** | A programme to help improve your typing skills. This software helps to improve speed and keyboard positioning. |
| **Download Notes in an Alternative Format** | You may wish to study your notes using an alternative format (e.g. PDF, audio file, HTML etc). You can download files from BrightSpace in an alternative format using **BrightSpace Ally**. You can also convert files into an alternative format using **SensusAccess**. |

## 'ALL Student Supports' Brightspace Module

- UCD ALL hosts a range of resources on the Brightspace module called **'ALL Student Supports'**. This module is available to all UCD Students. Resources include **interactive academic skills & wellbeing workshops** as well as **resources for managing online learning.**
- UCD ALL hosts in person **Academic Skills & Wellbeing workshops** to help students learn the necessary skills to succeed in UCD.
- Examples of workshop topics include notetaking, stress management, avoiding procrastination, time management, digital skills, group work, mind mapping, writing & researching and self-care.

## Transition to College

- Studying at third level is less structured and more self-directed, which may be different from what you are used to. Managing assignment deadlines or working in groups might be new to you.
- **Communicating with your module coordinators/lecturers** to gather all the details about trimester assignments and exams and **using a diary/calendar** can help you to stay on top of your work.

## Managing Group Work & Presentations

- Group work is an unfamiliar way of learning for many students. **Agreeing on tasks and open communication** promotes successful group projects. See **UCD's tips for Surviving Group Work**.
- **Practicing presentations for friends and family**, as well as in the room you will be presenting in can help to feel less nervous.

## Doing Assignments

- Check out the **UCD Writing Centre's resources** for planning and writing essays.
- Ask your Module Coordinators for **feedback** or **example essays/reports/projects**.

## Studying for Exams

- Experiment with **alternative ways** to remember material (e.g. the use of mnemonics, flow charts and handouts).

## Tips for Organisation & Concentration

- Being in third level education demands you to stay on top of many tasks and deadlines. These tools can help you find ways to organise your time and demands so you have space to unwind and enjoy college life too! Examples include:
  - o **Google Keep** - Free App and online tool to organise the small things.
  - o **Pomodoro Technique** - Setting time in a structured way to keep you focussed.
  - o **Online Calendars**- Free online calendars as a great way to keep organised.
- **Develop a trimester plan**: write down all the academic tasks you have to complete for the entire trimester. Break them into smaller steps whenever possible.
- **Develop a weekly plan**: Every weekend make a realistic plan for the week ahead.

- **Develop a daily plan:** Every night make a plan for the following day. Make your plan realistic - you are more likely to get through your list which will boost your confidence and motivation.
- **Set realistic goals:** Set realistic and specific study goals before you begin each period of study e.g., number of pages, number of problems you will complete.
- **Use a reminder list:** To avoid worrying about the possibility of missing appointments, write them down on your daily calendar/academic planner/online calendar, or set a reminder/alarm in your phone. By having made a reminder, you will no longer clutter your mind with those details.

## Finding your way around UCD

- Use the **UCD Interactive Map** to find your way around campus.

## Support Services available to all UCD Students

| Service | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Writing Centre | Free 1:1 support and workshops for academic writing. |
| Maths Support Centre | Free 1:1 and small group support in Level 0, 1, and 2 Maths modules in any programme. |
| Student Counselling Service | Free and confidential service staffed by professionally qualified psychologists and counsellors to help students deal with personal issues affecting happiness, well-being, relationships, capacity to cope or learning. |
| Programme Office | Support for queries relating to your programme. |
| Student Adviser | Support for academic, social, personal or financial issues you may have during your course. |

## Useful Online Resources

- **UCD Disability Support**
- **Managing College and Life**
- **Managing Procrastination**
- **Dyspraxia DCD Ireland**
- **AHEAD**

**Please contact disability@ucd.ie at any time if you have questions!**