

Tips for UCD Students- Autism / Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Managing third level effectively with any disability involves the use of a number of available services and tools. It is also very important that each individual student **takes responsibility for their own academic career at UCD.**

The aim of the UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) is to allow all students receiving Disability Support to **become independent learners** so they can develop the skills expected of successful graduates to bring into the workplace. The following guidelines are designed to help you to reach that goal.

Communication

- UCD encourages any student on the autism spectrum to **communicate with UCD ALL** so you can receive the necessary supports 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/tutors** to inform them about necessary classroom supports and to request exam accommodation for in-trimester exams, in-class tests or locally arranged exams.
- You have the option to put **'Autism/ASD Awareness'** on your Certificate as a way of disclosing to Module Coordinators/lecturers if you would find this helpful.

Exam Accommodations

- The **exam supports available to students for end-of-trimester exams** will be discussed within the Needs Assessment (you may still use exam supports for **in-trimester exams but must request them from Module Coordinators directly**).
- These supports are based on **national guidelines**. Hence, certain supports may not be appropriate for everyone with Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder. Examples of exam supports include:

10 minutes
extra time/hour

Alternative
exam venue

Use of a
computer

Assistive Technology

- Assistive Technology is **software and/or devices that can help you manage your day-to-day tasks** in UCD. Assistive Technology is usually discussed at the Needs Assessment.

Example Assistive Technology:

Technology	Description
Recording Tools	LiveScribe Smartpen – pen with built-in recorder. Synchronizes notes with audio recording, you can click on any part of the notes to play back the audio recording from class. Audio Notetaker – computer software which allows you to take notes and record audio in the same place. You can 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. It can be used to create notes following lectures or reading. It can also be used when planning essays.
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 **live free Academic Skills & Wellbeing workshops** each trimester to help students learn the necessary skills to succeed in UCD. More information can be found on our [website](#).
- Examples of workshop topics include note-taking, 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.
- **Communicating with your lecturers/tutors** to gather all 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 alleviate nervousness.

Tips for Organisation & Concentration

- Being in third level education involves staying on top of many tasks and deadlines. These tools can help you organise your time and demands so you can make space to unwind and enjoy college life too! Examples include:
 - [Google Keep](#)- Free App and online tool to organise the small things.
 - [Pomodoro Technique](#)- Setting time in a structured way to keep you focussed.
 - **Online Calendars**- Free online calendars are a great way to keep organised (e.g. Google Calendar).
- **Develop a trimester plan:** write down all of 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 the worry 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.

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

- [Managing College and Life](#) video
- [Managing Procrastination](#) video
- [AslAm](#)
- [Irish Society for Autism](#)
- [Aspire Ireland](#)
- [AHEAD](#)

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