

# Tips for UCD Students - Mental Health Difficulties

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 with mental health difficulties to **communicate with UCD ALL** in order to 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 **'Mental Health 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 a mental health difficulty. Examples of exam supports include:

10 minutes extra time  
per hour

Alternative exam  
venue

Mental Health  
Awareness

## Assistive Technology

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

Example Assistive Technology:

Technology	Description
<b>Recording and Note-taking software</b>	Apps and software for recording lectures and note-taking. For example <b>LiveScribe Smartpen</b> – a 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.
<b>Mind Mapping software</b>	A mind map is a visual representation of ideas. This software can help you to organise ideas in a useful way. This software can be used to create notes following lectures or reading. It can also be used when planning essays.
<b>Mindset Technologies</b>	Sometimes it can be challenging to find the right frame of mind to work. Some apps that may help you get into a productive frame of mind are: <b>Smiling Mind</b> - Free App with mindfulness techniques. <b>Worry Tree Shift Worries</b> - Free app that helps you to shift how you view a worry. <b>Daylio App Wellbeing</b> - Free app that offers wellbeing tips. <b>Written Kitten Motivation</b> - A website that may help with motivation for written work.
<b>Download Notes an Alternative Format</b>	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 <a href="#">Brightspace Ally</a> . You can also convert files into an alternative format using <a href="#">SensusAccess</a> .

## '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 you feel less nervous.

## 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 as 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 reminders**: 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.

## Mental Health Supports in UCD

- UCD has some mental health supports available to all students.
- A free and confidential **Student Counselling Service** is located in the Student Health Centre. Staffed by professionally qualified psychologists and counsellors to help students deal with personal issues affecting happiness, well-being, relationships, capacity to cope or learning. Find out more about requesting an appointment on their [website](#).
- **SilverCloud** is an online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based mental health tool with a number of courses available to be accessed in your own time. Register on the [SilverCloud](#) website.

## Other Support Services available to all UCD Students

Service	Purpose
<a href="#">Writing Centre</a>	Free 1:1 support and workshops for academic writing.
<a href="#">Maths Support Centre</a>	Free 1:1 and small group support in Level 0, 1, and 2 Maths modules in any programme.
<a href="#">Programme Office</a>	Support for queries relating to your programme.
<a href="#">Student Adviser</a>	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
- [HSE Your Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health Ireland](#)
- [Jigsaw](#)
- [Aware](#)
- [Shine](#)
- [AHEAD](#)
- [Student Minds UK](#)
- [Mind](#)

Please contact [disability@ucd.ie](mailto:disability@ucd.ie) at any time if you have questions!