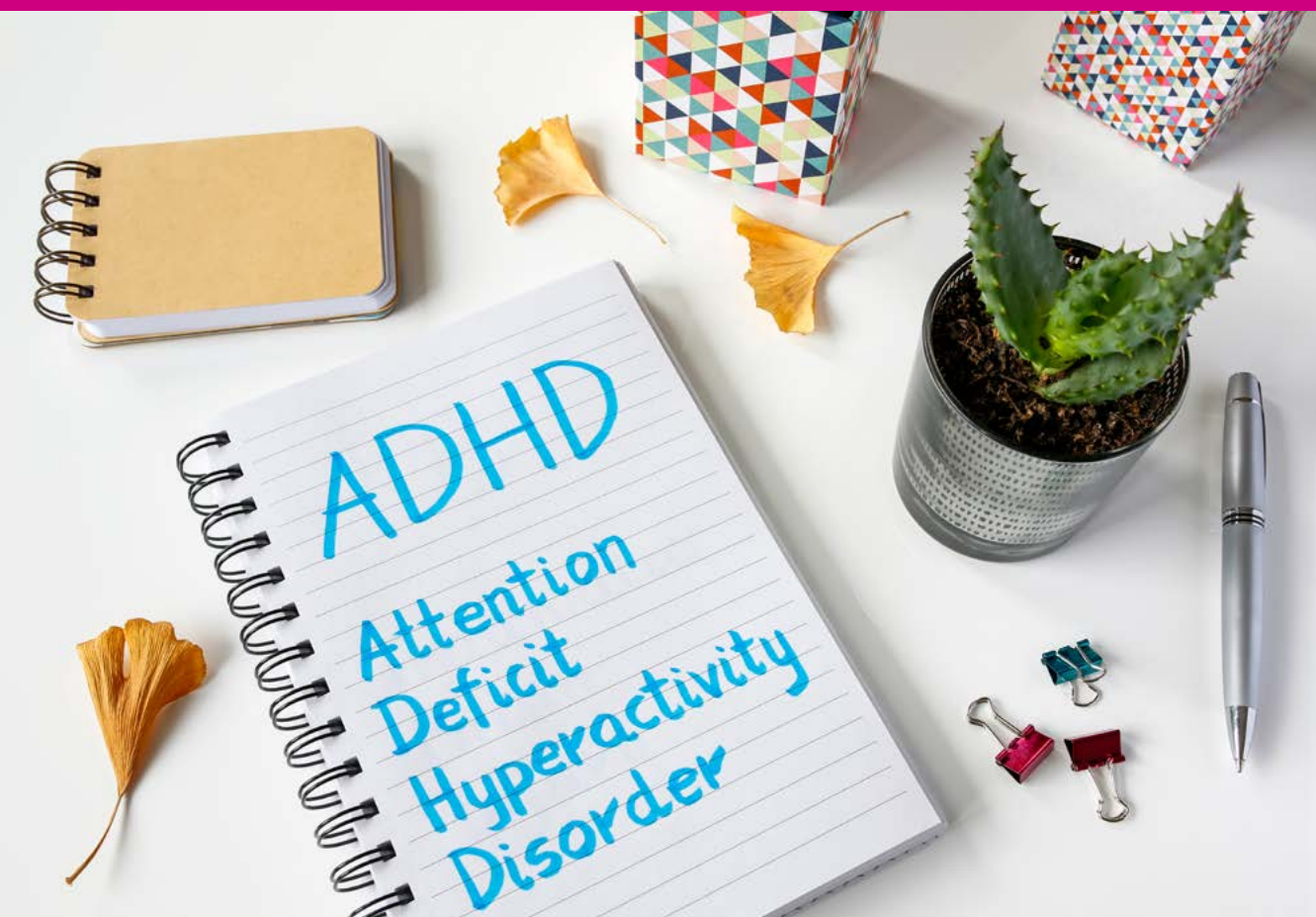


# Studying with ADD or ADHD



**Universiteit  
Leiden**  
The Netherlands



Discover the world at Leiden University

## Studying with ADD or ADHD

If you have ADD or ADHD you might find certain things difficult during your studies. For example:

- Keeping a good overview and planning your work well;
- Processing study materials well and on time;
- Concentrating during lectures;
- Working well in groups.

Leiden University finds it important that everyone has the same opportunities to be successful in their studies. For this reason, students with ADD or ADHD are entitled to request additional guidance and facilities. In this brochure you can read about the support offered by the university. You will also find study tips and information on workshops and courses that can help you to improve your study skills.



# 1. What are ADD and ADHD ?

Of course, if you have ADD or ADHD, you know what it is. But if you're not sure whether you have it, or if you want to explain it to your study adviser or lecturers, the information below might be helpful. But remember that everyone is different and not everyone experiences the same difficulties.

## ADHD

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. If you have ADHD, you can experience attention problems, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour. Here below are some examples.

### Attention problems

- You are easily distracted, by both outside stimuli and your own thoughts;
- You are forgetful;
- You don't finish things;
- You have difficulty listening;
- You do everything at the same time;
- You often lose things;
- You have difficulty with details.

### Hyperactivity

- You can't sit still;
- You feel restless;
- You're always busy with something;
- You can't stop talking.

### Impulsive behaviour

- You do things without thinking;
- You take people unawares and blurt things out;
- You can't wait your turn;
- People find you pushy;
- You impulsively spend money or gamble;
- You are impulsive when it comes to starting and ending jobs and relationships.



## ADD

ADD stands for Attention Deficit Disorder. It is classed under the same diagnosis as ADHD but there are differences.

People with ADD can focus really well on things they are interested in. This is known as hyper focus. They often appear calmer than people with ADHD. Although they also have a constant stream of thoughts going through their heads, people with ADD don't express this as physically as people with ADHD. People with ADD tend to be daydreamers, whereas people with ADHD tend to be doers who turn their thoughts into actions.

If you have ADD, you are not hyperactive or impulsive, but you do have attention problems. If you have ADD, you may experience the following:

- You are bad at planning;
- You don't tackle things in a structured way;
- You are often late;
- You put things off;
- You are often tired;
- You feel low;
- You suffer from perfectionism and fear of failure.

## 2. Guidance

### Fenestra Disability Centre

ADD and ADHD are so-called disabilities. Leiden University has an expertise centre for students with a disability: Fenestra Disability Centre. Fenestra staff can offer you advice, help you to request extra facilities and refer you to other sources of guidance.

### Intake appointment

In order to provide you with the best service, Fenestra staff need to be aware of your specific situation. You are therefore advised to arrange an intake appointment as early as you can. You can do so from the summer before your studies onwards. You can even make an appointment if:

- you are not sure whether you have ADD or ADHD;
- you are unsure whether you need extra support;
- you are uncertain whether you will definitely study at Leiden University.

You are always welcome!



## 3. Facilities

As ADD and ADHD are legally classed as disabilities, you are entitled to request special facilities. However you must be able to prove that you have ADD or ADHD. For this, you require an official statement issued by an expert. Fenestra can help you to arrange this.

### Binding study advice (BSA)

In the first year of your bachelor's programme you are subject to binding study advice (BSA). This means you must obtain a certain number of study credits to be permitted to continue onto the next year of your study programme. If this isn't achievable as a result of your ADD or ADHD, you can request that your study programme takes this into consideration when issuing binding study advice. This doesn't automatically mean that you will be allowed to continue studying despite insufficient credits. The Board of Examiners will look at the total picture, for example your abilities, determination and attitude to study.

### Request a statement of hindrance

If you want the board of examiners to take your ADD or ADHD into consideration, you must request a so-called statement of hindrance from the BSA committee. To do so, you will need a statement issued by your doctor or another professional.

### Do this on time: by 15 July at the latest!

Request your statement of hindrance on time: by 15 July at the latest! Remember that it might take some time to get the necessary doctor's statement, so don't wait till the last minute.

Read more about requesting a statement of hindrance.

[universiteitleiden.nl/bsa-exceptional-circumstances](https://universiteitleiden.nl/bsa-exceptional-circumstances)



### Extra time for exams

If you need additional time to complete exams due to your ADD or ADHD, you can request extra exam time. Submit your request, accompanied by an official statement confirming that you have ADD or ADHD, to [universiteitleiden.nl/fenestra](https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/fenestra). If you don't yet have the necessary official statement, Fenestra can help you to arrange one.

### Support for study delay

If you fall behind in your studies as a result of your ADD or ADHD, and you are receiving Dutch student finance, you may be eligible to request (financial) support from DUO or the university.

- From DUO you can, for example, get a loan reduction, a one-year extension of your loan or OV card, or additional time to graduate.

- From the university you can, in some cases, receive financial assistance via the Regulations on Financial Support for Students (FOS).

Fenestra staff can tell you more about the options available.

### Other facilities

Maybe you need other facilities, such as additional guidance or extra time for written assignments. Discuss this with Fenestra staff. Together you can look for the best options for your particular situation.

### Advice group for students with ADD or ADHD

There are special advice groups for students with ADD or ADHD. Fenestra staff can tell you more and let you know what is currently available.

## 4. Study tips

The tips below can help you to study more effectively and keep the difficulties caused by your ADD or ADHD to a minimum. Try a few of them to find out what works best for you. Give it a few weeks. Research proves that it takes 21 days to change a habit.

### Planning and organising

- Use a well-structured agenda.
- Make sure your workspace is organised.
- Attend all your lectures and work groups.
- Always make a clear and achievable plan.
- Avoid doing things at the last minute.
- Set priorities.
- Divide tasks into manageable portions.
- Monitor your own progress.
- Share your planning with someone else and ask them to keep an eye on your progress.

### Dealing with distractions

- Make sure your workspace is tidy.
- Switch off your phone, radio and TV.
- Close your emails or other distracting websites.
- Ask other people not to disturb you.
- Avoid places with too many distractions. For example, don't sit by a window.
- Find a quiet room. Many Leiden University buildings have one. Ask at the reception.
- Some students study better with 'white noise' in the background. This is a monotone sound that cancels out

background noise. You can find free 'white noise' via various websites.

- The Pomodoro technique is a good method to help you concentrate on your studies. For periods of 25 minutes you focus intently on your studies, then take a short break and repeat. You can find out more on [www.pomodoro-technique.com](http://www.pomodoro-technique.com).

### Processing study materials

- Before reading a text, first look at chapter and paragraph titles.
- Read the introduction and conclusion first, then the rest.
- Summarise longer texts into a different format such as a list or diagram.
- Study graphics, diagrams and tables carefully.
- Repeat what you have read out loud, but in your own words.
- Discuss the materials with fellow students to improve your understanding and test what you have learnt.
- Read the *study tips* on the student website to help you study more effectively.

### Following lectures

- Find a quiet place in the lecture theatre.
- Try to find out in advance what the lecturer is going to cover that day so you can look at the materials in advance.



- Check if the sheets and notes that your lecturer will use are available in the digital learning environment. If not, ask your lecturer for them.
- Ask your lecturer if you may record the lecture.
- Don't try to include everything in your written notes. Instead, note down key words and fill in the details later.
- Ask a fellow student if you may copy his or her notes.
- You can buy study notes and summaries via SIL ([silverslagen.nl](http://silverslagen.nl)) and the JoHo ([joho.org](http://joho.org)).

### Taking part in work groups

- Choose a quiet place in the room.
- Don't react immediately. Write down your questions and comments.
- Explain your situation to the lecturer or a fellow student and ask them to give you a sign if you're going too far or your attention is wandering.

### Taking exams

- Prepare well. Make sure you begin your revision on time and know which materials you need to learn. Find out if you will have multiple choice or open questions. Practice doing old exam papers and let fellow students test you.
- Find a quiet place in the exam room with few distractions.
- Before starting, read the instructions carefully. Check how many questions

you must answer and how much time you have.

- First answer the questions you immediately know the answers to. Then do the questions you find more difficult.
- Try to remain relaxed. Take short breaks now and then and try doing relaxation exercises.
- Once you have finished your exam, go through it carefully one more time. Check you haven't missed any questions or pages.
- If you frequently run out of time in exams, request extra exam time. Read more in the 'facilities' section.
- Read the tips on *taking exams* on the student website.

### Written assignments

- Divide your written assignment into smaller steps and complete them one by one. Read *how to do this* on the student website.
- If you find it hard to order your thoughts, first record your ideas on a voice recorder, then put them on paper.
- Don't try to make it perfect first time round. Make a rough version. Once you have all the basics on paper, start working on the style.

## Talk to your lecturer

- If you find it hard to process all the materials handed out by your lecturer on time, make agreements with him or her. For example, ask if you can receive the texts a day earlier.
- If you have difficulty meeting deadlines, ask your lecturer to set a 'deadline before the deadline'. That way, if you're running late you should still be able to meet the official deadline.
- If you realise in advance that you're not going to complete an assignment before the deadline, ask your lecturer if you can have an extension.
- Have regular meetings with your thesis supervisor and agree on deadlines for the various phases of your thesis.

## Also take a look on the website

On the Leiden University student website you can find tips on a wide range of *study skills* such as:

- Planning
- Concentrating
- Summarising
- Taking exams

## 5. Workshops and courses

Leiden University offers a range of courses to help you improve your study skills. Take a look at what's on offer on the student website [universiteitleiden.nl/en/courses](https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/courses).

Fenestra staff can also tell you more about workshops and courses that might be of help to you.



## Contact

### Fenestra Disability Centre

Make an appointment via: *this link*

Contact form: *universiteitleiden.nl/fenestra*

Telephone: 071 - 527 8025

#### **Visiting address:**

Plexus Student Centre

Kaiserstraat 25

2311 GN Leiden

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