

Guidance for higher education institutions

Students with physical or mental disabilities



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Foreword

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

With this guidance material, the Danish Centre for Educational Environment (the DCUM, Dansk Center for Undervisningsmiljø) hopes to inspire institutions of higher education – including teachers, counsellors and administrative staff – in their efforts to support students with physical or mental disabilities during the course of their education. To this end, the DCUM seeks to contribute knowledge about and recommendations for the areas where such efforts could usefully be focused, as well as knowledge on how physical or mental disabilities may affect students in various study contexts.

We hope this material will reach all higher education institutions and thus bolster their teaching and counselling functions, exemption practices and similar areas in ways that give students with disabilities the best possible support. As such, the DCUM also hopes that the recommendations in the material as well as its aim to advance knowledge in the field will help to break down barriers between teachers and students with disabilities.

We would like to thank everyone involved in this project for the time and energy they have invested: advisory group members, staff from educational institutions, disabled organisations, patient associations, interest organisations, external experts with experience in the field and, not least, the students themselves. Everyone has contributed relevant knowledge and meaningful perspectives that have continuously helped to qualify the DCUM's process of preparing the material.

The guidance material was commissioned by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science.

We wish you pleasant reading!

Jannie Moon Lindskov
Director, Danish Centre for Educational Environment



INT ROD UCT ION



Background

Young people with disabilities are less likely to embark on and complete courses of higher education than their peers. But everyone has the right to education. Accordingly, in 2021 the Danish government and a broad majority of the parliamentary parties concluded an agreement regarding a general initiative in part for students with disabilities at institutions of higher education. The agreement establishes that extra assistance must be provided for those needing help to commence and complete a study programme. The educational system must be able to accommodate students' different learning abilities, including the challenges and needs arising from their disabilities (Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, 2021).

This guidance material has been prepared as a result of Initiative 5 of the political agreement, as defined in the following excerpt from the agreement:

Institutions of higher education are responsible for offering appropriate, individual adjustments for students with disabilities, for example, through exemptions. To better equip institutions to make decisions based on individual students' disability-related needs, the Danish Centre for Educational Environment will prepare special guidance material(s) aimed at students and higher education institutions. The material will seek to disseminate knowledge about the impact of various disabilities in specific educational situations – also with a particular view to providing higher education institutions with support for their exemption practices. Another intention is the endeavour to break down barriers between students and teachers.



In 2020, prior to the political agreement, the Danish Agency of Higher Education and Science distributed a Hyrdebrev om uddannelsesinstitutionernes forvaltning af handicapområdet (an advisory note on educational institutions' administration of disability services) to the institutions of higher education under the Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Science (the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, 2020a). Both the advisory note and the DCUM's preliminary efforts in preparing this material revealed that educational institutions' exemption practices vary widely.

The wording of the agreement emphasises that the materials prepared must target students and higher education institutions. The guidance in this manual is aimed at higher education staff, including teachers, counsellors and administrative personnel. Similar materials prepared for students are available from www.minstudieplan.dk.

Object of the guidance material

This guidance material for higher education staff is generally intended to disseminate knowledge about how a range of physical and mental disabilities can affect students in various study contexts during the course of their education (see the above-mentioned agreement). Aimed at inspiring higher education institutions, the material seeks to enhance their capacity to assess individual students and make decisions regarding the adjustments they require. To meet this objective, we give institutions insight into the challenges students may encounter as a result of a disability.

We would like to emphasise that we are providing this guidance material in an attempt to build knowledge about the significance of disabilities in study contexts. The study-related contexts we aim to describe in the material are teaching situations, group work, independent study and preparation, exams, internships and social activities. Study start is also described in cases where this is a particular focus of attention.

By providing this knowledge, the DCUM aims to inspire and support higher education institutions' efforts to create appropriate individual adjustments through exemptions, for example. However, the knowledge this material produces cannot form the sole basis for granting exemptions, nor does it entitle students to certain individual adjustments or support services. This material's sections on disabilities contain suggestions for how educational institutions can assist students. However, they are intended merely as suggestions, and it remains up to the educational institution to make a specific individual assessment based on student applications and interviews as well as individual documentation. This material should therefore be considered supplementary information and inspiration for the individual documentation higher education institutions collect when making de-

cisions founded in individual students' needs arising from disabilities.

The guidance material is also meant to help break down any potential barriers between students and teachers at higher education institutions. The DCUM anticipates that disseminating knowledge about disabilities and their significance in study contexts can contribute to this process.

Conceptual clarification

Political agreements refer to students with disabilities in various ways, as do interest organisations, disability organisations, patient associations and students and staff of higher education institutions. In this guidance material, the term disability covers the physical and mental diagnoses and conditions described later in this material.

The DCUM's understanding of disability is inspired by the UN and, as a concept, covers the physical or mental impairment of a given function or ability (UN, 1994). The use of this concept also underlines the understanding that a disability is not something an individual has or is, but is rather a phenomenon that can occur when a person with a disability encounters shortcomings in the environment. Such shortcomings can be described as created by society and may, for example, reflect the circumstances – physical, academic, social – present at a place of education and preventing a student from participating on equal terms with others because of their particular disability. The socially created obstacles that limit a student thus depend on the nature of the disability (UN, 2006; Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019).





Method and process

In developing this guidance material, the DCUM has worked with various stakeholders and organisations as well as the project advisory group to create a material that is both informative and relevant. The following sections describe the two overall strands of the project's ongoing process of involvement.

PRELIMINARY USER SURVEY

The DCUM initially conducted a user survey among students, student counsellors, Special Educational Support (SPS) counsellors and advisers, faculty support teachers, study board representatives, educational managers, teachers and administrative staff at higher education institutions. In this connection, we held focus group interviews and workshops with representatives from universities, university colleges, business academies, maritime and art educational institutions, as well as the Student Counselling Service. Through this process, the DCUM gained insight into current practices as well as the challenges students and staff experience in relation to exemptions, support options and the study environment. This has

helped us produce guidance material that, in this instance, is relevant and appropriate for higher education institutions.

QUALIFICATION OF THE DISABILITIES DESCRIBED

This material contains 47 descriptions of disabilities. These limitations were selected on the basis of anonymised data from the Counselling and Support Centre at Aarhus University and inspired by Guide om Handicap og Job, published by Danske Handicaporganisationer, as well as input from the project's advisory group and the preliminary user survey. The actual descriptions of the various disabilities were prepared in collaboration with and qualified by disabled organisations, patient associations and professionals with experience in the field. The object of this process was to ensure that the descriptions contain qualified knowledge and specific examples regarding how disabilities can affect students in certain study contexts. Specific descriptions could not be compiled because students experience the disabilities concerned in different ways. As such, the descriptions are general in the sense that they address the range possible within all disabilities.

Guidance structure

The guidance material has two parts.

The introduction is followed by **Part 1**, which contains general guidance for higher education staff. This part outlines the framework for exemptions as well as provides counsellors, administrative personnel and teachers with a range of general recommendations and ideas for supporting students with disabilities during their education.

Part 2 comprises 47 sections describing various physical and mental disabilities. It should be remembered, however, that one can never assume that students experience living and studying with a given disability identically. Nevertheless, the descriptions give a general impression of what it is like to study with a disability.



PART 1



Life as a student with a disability

Part 1 starts with the following introduction briefly describing how students in higher education experience studying with a disability. This section is based on knowledge gleaned from relevant reports, the preliminary user survey, and input from disabled organisations and patient associations useful in qualifying the material.

It is quite normal for students to experience challenges during their studies. The learning curve at the start of a new study programme is often steep. For many, this is a transitional time where they have to carve a space for themselves in academic and social communities, become familiar with new physical surroundings and learn to navigate everything from transport options to new online platforms. During this process, students may well find themselves wondering whether they have indeed made the right choice. Some students may find this transition particularly overwhelming, with factors such as a disability further complicating the process. Some are already aware that their disability will pose challenges, while others only gradually encounter challenges or discover the underlying reasons for them. Disabilities are not always visible. Many are invisible, so the educational challenges a student may be facing are thus not always apparent. This is why educational institutions must be open to giving students easy access to information and guidance (Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019; SUMH, 2014; SUMH, 2013).

Although most students meet challenges of varying degrees during their study programme, those with one or more disabilities may encounter special challenges (VIVE, 2019). Students with disabilities may feel concerned about physical, academic and social accessibility at every stage of their studies as well as about how to apply for and get the support they need (SUMH, 2014; SUMH, 2013). Already affected by a disability, some students may find independently navigating a jungle of options and information quite daunting. These students may need extra support during their study programme, which is where you,



as a teacher, counsellor or member of administrative staff, can make a great difference. Students need to know they always have a professional to whom they can turn. Being able to get guidance as simply and straightforwardly as possible is also important, and will ease the difficulties of student life for those with disabilities (Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019; SUMH, 2013).

Individual adjustments and exemptions

Institutions of higher education have a fundamental obligation to address a student's disability as soon as it comes to their notice. In this context, the institution should also consider any adjustments to be made in the course of the programme – including to the teaching and exams. Furthermore, there may be situations where specific exemptions are required; see the rules for the programme in question. The aim is to ensure that students with disabilities gain the same opportunities for completing a programme of higher education as other students.

In this section, you can read an outline of the framework for the higher education institutions' obligations regarding individual adjustments for students with disabilities attending their programmes. Finally, this section offers ideas for how to establish good practices at your educational institution.

INSTITUTIONS' FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION REGARDING INDIVIDUAL ADJUSTMENTS

Higher education institutions are obliged to provide students with disabilities access to programmes by offering appropriate, individual adjustments, for example. This is laid down in the Danish Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination in the Labour Market, etc (lov om forbud mod forskelsbehandling på arbejdsmarkedet m.v.), which establishes that people may

not be directly or indirectly discriminated against because of disability, among other things; see section 1 of the act. The prohibition against discrimination applies to any educational provider; see section 3(2) of the act. You can read more about the anti-discrimination act in the advisory note on educational institutions' administration of disability services distributed by the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science on 7 May 2020 to the institutions of higher education under the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science, as well as in the Ministry of Employment's Vejledning om forskelsbehandlingsloven (guidance on the Act on the Prohibition of Discrimination in the Labour Market, etc., Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, 2020a; Ministry of Employment, 2019).

Educational institutions are thus obliged to take steps to grant special arrangements for a student as soon as they are made aware that the student in question may have special needs arising from a disability. This duty to regularly examine a student's need for compensatory measures as a consequence of a disability applies continuously throughout the student's ongoing course of education.

APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTIONS

Specific cases may arise in which a student needs to apply for an exemptions; see the respective educational executive orders or the rules laid down by the educational institution.

Exemptions can be granted to students in exceptional circumstances. Students must apply for a specific exemptions and provide documentation showing that an exceptional circumstance prevents them from following the applicable programme rules. After a concrete assessment, the acute illness or death of a close relative may be considered an exceptional circumstance. A disability, either temporary or permanent, may also be specifically assessed as an exceptional circumstance. An exemption from a given rule is always granted on the basis of an individual

assessment. Read more about this in Tjekliste til hyrdebrevet (the advisory note checklist, Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, 2020b). Individual educational institutions may determine their own exemptions practice within the applicable legislative frameworks. In principle, educational institutions can grant exemptions from rules when they themselves have stipulated such rules, or when the respective executive orders specifically state that the institution may grant an exemption from a given rule in the executive order concerned.

Educational institutions must otherwise generally observe the applicable rules laid down in the legislation. This also means they must take other relevant laws and decisions into consideration – for example, decisions made by the Danish Board of Equal Treatment, which deals with complaints about discrimination.

SPECIAL EXAMINATION CONDITIONS

For an individual student whose disability makes standard test or exam conditions difficult, special examination conditions can be granted to adjust these conditions, but only following a specific assessment of whether the special arrangements are a compensatory measure necessary to put the student on a par with other students. An institution may grant special examination conditions because of its general obligation to offer individual adjustments or because it has considered an application for an exemptions, but such arrangements must not compromise the exam's academic level. As mentioned above, students with a long-term disability only need to submit one application for special examination conditions.

Once an educational institution has become aware of a student's long-term disability, it must independently undertake to continuously check whether it needs to offer the student special examination conditions for the programme's remaining exams – standard tests, exams and re-examinations alike. This appears from the advisory note (Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, 2020a).

Written and oral tests and exams alike can be planned on the basis of special arrangements. Examples of special examination conditions are extra preparation time, extended exam time or permission to use assistive technology.

Useful information about the frameworks for individual adjustments and exemptions

- Applications for exemptions and individual adjustments are always processed by the educational institutions, which also make the decisions in this respect. Students can also apply for Special Educational Support (SPS) via the educational institution
- The authority under which educational institutions may offer special examination conditions to students with disabilities is embodied in the examination executive orders.
- The university programme orders and admission orders also contain options for offering special arrangements and individual adjustments in such areas as teaching, tests and exams..
- The granting of an appropriate, individual adjustment must not compromise the academic level. In addition, exemptions may not put the student in question at an advantage or disadvantage compared with other students.
- Educational institutions can only grant exemptions from rules they themselves have stipulated or which the respective executive orders permit the granting of.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION PRACTICE

As an educational institution, you must have a defined practice for equalising pupils and students through adjustments and exemptions. It may be a good idea to write down this practice so that all relevant staff can consult the current practice for your specific educational institution at any time. Regardless of practice, a targeted, individual decision based on the situation of the particular pupil or student must always be made.

As an educational institution working on practices regarding students with disabilities, you must be aware that a transparent practice makes studying easier for those students with the greatest difficulties. The Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman has prepared a Myndighedsguide (guide for authorities), which can provide inspiration. Both this guide and the advisory note checklist contain guidelines where you can read about good administrative practice and consultations as well as about documentation requirements and grounds for decisions (Parliamentary Ombudsman, undated; Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science, 2020b). Building on the preliminary user survey, the DCUM has also developed three key points for higher education staff to bear in mind when working practically with students having disabilities.

Attention points

- **Information.** Ensure students can easily find information about their options for applying for adjustments based on a disability and how they can apply for an exemption. Informing them about the process is also a good idea so they know what documentation is required and what happens once they have sent their application.
- **Communication.** Use plain, simple language when informing students about their options for exemptions and writing decisions regarding exemptions. Also make it clear to students whom to contact if they have any questions or doubts.
- **Dialogue and creativity.** Appropriate, individual adjustments cannot only be made on the basis of applications for exemptions, but other matters related to the study programme can also be addressed, the physical surroundings, for example. Accordingly, being creative and engaging in dialogue with students is important when it comes to how educational institutions otherwise can provide appropriate, individual adjustments.

Detailed description for everyone

Aarhus University students can consult the Study Portal, the university's study information site, for a detailed description of how to apply for an exemption. They can also find out what a medical certificate should contain when enclosed as documentation for a disability or other exceptional circumstance. Students do not need to log in to access the Study Portal, so upcoming students can also find information before starting their studies.

No Friday decisions

The Faculty of Law at Copenhagen University is calling for student feedback about, for example, whether they could understand a decision they have received, whether the decision arrived on time, and their experience of the process. In addition, the Faculty no longer sends decisions regarding exemptions to students on Fridays if the decision is expected to have a serious impact on the students – for example, if the decision means they will have to withdraw from their study programme. In this way, the Faculty ensures that students have time to contact a case worker or student counsellor if they need guidance following the decision.

Suggestions and attention points for staff

In this section, the DCUM suggests specific initiatives and attention points for staff in terms of how to generally support students with disabilities in various educational contexts.

The first part of this section is targeted at counsellors and administrative personnel, and the second at teachers.

FOR COUNSELLORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

This section is intended for you if you work as a counsellor (an SPS or a student counsellor, for example) or as a member of administrative staff at a higher education institution. It contains suggestions for ways you, as counsellors or administrative personnel, can help point students with disabilities to information about support and options for exemptions and how to obtain it.

The distribution of roles between counsellors and administrative personnel varies among educational institutions. These two groups may, therefore, take different approaches to counselling students with disabilities. Nonetheless, by working together across their functions, they can make a huge difference to students and their experience of student life (SUMH, 2014).

Students with disabilities find they have to spend a great deal of time navigating rules and applications if their disability means they need such help as exemptions, Special Educational Support (SPS) or an SU (the Danish Students' Grants and Loans Scheme) disability supplement. This requires energy that they would far rather devote to their studies (Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019). In addition, the DCUM's preliminary user survey and input from patient associations and disabled organisations show that some students also spend a lot of time on doctors' appointments, treatment, visits with local authority representatives

and others. This can both lead to absence because these activities overlap with lessons or other study activities and require a lot of the student's energy (VIVE, 2021). If the parameters of their study programme are easy to navigate, they can concentrate on learning (SUMH, 2014).

In light of the preliminary user survey and input from patient associations and disabled organisations, the DCUM has developed some initiatives to benefit students at different stages of their education. As counsellors or administrative personnel, you could consider drawing inspiration from the following ideas.

Suggestions for counsellors and administrative personnel

- **Study start.** Give students the option of indicating on enrolment that they would like to be contacted and informed about SPS. Also tell them about support options available during recruitment and as they progress through their study programme.
- **Information.** Ensure that information about SPS and exemptions is always available to students – for example, on a study information site.
- **One point of entry.** Students find a single point of entry with information about SPS, student counselling, the exemption application process and similar topics extremely helpful. This could be a coordinator able to work with students to clarify their needs and options from the outset.
- **Tour.** Offer a campus tour before study start. This lets students get their bearings and thus know from day one where to find facilities such as disabled lavatories, lifts, the student counselling office or quiet rooms.
- **Quiet rooms.** Provide one or more quiet rooms on campus. Today, the layout of many educational institutions is structured around large spaces and numerous open communal areas. Some students need a quiet room where they can withdraw to rest in calm surroundings.
- **Spread the word.** Ensure all administrative staff know about SPS and exemptions as well as where to direct students for counselling at your place of education.

In practice. Have regular discussions about how you, as a place of education, intend to support students with disabilities and how you will ensure that everyone gets the right guidance and assistance.

FACT BOX

Students, who have difficulties reading or handling physical textbooks, can look into whether they can obtain a membership of the Nota digital library. As a SPS counsellor you can apply for a SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice on behalf of the student, if the student is visually impaired or has a reading disability that makes it difficult to read printed text, or a motor disability that makes it difficult to handle physical textbooks.

FOR TEACHERS

This section is intended for you if you work as a teacher at a higher education institution. It contains suggestions for how you can make it easier for students with disabilities to participate in classes and get the most out of them.

Students with disabilities may have many concerns related to teaching situations. For some, the physical surroundings may be an issue, for example, whether there is a desk that fits a wheelchair or whether the teaching materials can be read by a text-to-speech program. Other students may have concerns about cognitive difficulties that can make it hard for them to maintain an overview if they are given a lot of information at one time, or they may feel socially challenged and find it hard to speak up in class. In addition, many students with disabilities find that their condition drains them of much of the energy they would otherwise put into their studies (Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019; SUMH, 2014).

The DCUM has used the knowledge and experience gathered through the user survey and input from patient associations and disabled organisations to develop some suggestions for how you, as a teacher, can make teaching situations easier for students with disabilities. Several of these initiatives may benefit all students. Under the respective descriptions of disabilities in Part 2 of the guidance material, you can also read about the specific considerations that can be made once you are aware of a given student's disability.

Suggestions for teachers

- **Structure.** By setting the parameters for and structuring your teaching, you can help students to understand what will happen during the teaching and thus to prepare themselves as best possible. You could, for instance, draw up a teaching plan for a given semester or module and a programme for the individual teaching sessions to present at the start of the day's class.
- **Align expectations.** Explain what the students are to do and what you expect from them during class, group work or supervision sessions. For example, you might ask a student to make an agenda and prepare three questions before a supervision session. This serves to establish the parameters so that everyone knows what will happen.
- **Inform students about options.** Whenever you introduce a teaching plan or refer to upcoming exams and the related requirements, it is a good idea to inform students about such topics as applications for special examination conditions and Special Educational Support (SPS), and remind them that their student counsellor can provide more information. This means more students can make timely inquiries if they need support or exemptions.
- **Good group dynamics.** Group work plays a large part in many study programmes, and being part of a study group can positively impact both student well-being and learning outcomes. Students have different qualities

when it comes to working in a group, and as a teacher, you can promote good group dynamics by encouraging students to be inclusive and curious about each other's strengths. If a group has challenges, as a teacher you can offer to facilitate a discussion that can help the group find a common direction. Alternatively, a student counsellor could help the group make constructive progress.

- **Openness.** Be open to letting students speak about any challenges they may face. For example, you could introduce your first class by explaining that if students have any questions, if something can be improved, or if they need extra support along the way, they can come to you. The idea is to create both a safe space and a culture where everyone dares speak up. If some challenges cannot be addressed within the teaching setting, you can refer students to the student counselling service or urge them to see their own doctor.
- **Accessibility.** As a teacher, you can improve academic accessibility, thus making it easier for students with disabilities to gain the same academic benefit from the teaching as their peer students. The following are examples of academic accessibility:
 - using OCR software to scan all teaching materials so students with dyslexia or other visual disability can have the text read aloud with their compensatory assistive devices.
 - uploading teaching materials, PowerPoint presentations and schedules in a digital format in ample time before the class. Some students need predictability and to be able to prepare in advance by means of an IT program, for instance.

- avoiding standing in front of a board or projector on which you have just written something. Many students need to be able to see it when taking notes.
- being available in the room for all students and repeating questions/answers for the whole class, so that wheelchair users, students with impaired hearing and others have an equal opportunity to participate.
- permitting students to record the class so they can re-see or rehear it if a disability means they need to do so.
- looking and speaking directly to the camera in online teaching sessions. This allows students with hearing loss to lip-read.
- observing scheduled breaks.

FACT BOX

OCR stands for Optical Character Recognition and refers to the technical conversion of an image format into a text format. Scanned book chapters or scanned figures containing text have to be OCR-converted so students can read them on their reading/writing assistive aids. OCR functions are found both in some file display programs and in online text conversion programs.

Find out whether your educational institution uses a certain program.



PART 2



Descriptions of disabilities

Part 2 of the guidance material contains 47 descriptions of disabilities. The DCUM hopes these descriptions will provide information and insight into which challenges students with a given disability might face. Each section describes how a specific disability can affect students in various study contexts. These include study starts, teaching situations, group work, independent study and preparation, exams, internships and social activities. Since not all the disabilities necessarily impact every study context, a number of descriptions may omit some study-related contexts. However, supporting students where needed is always relevant – whatever their disability. Every student is different and therefore has an individual experience of what it means to live with a particular disability, of the degree to which they are affected and of what other life conditions, transitions and personal circumstances will affect the premises on which they can embark on a higher education programme (VIVE, 2021; Tænketanken Perspektiv, 2019; SUMH, 2014). As such, the descriptions cannot be specific, but are general in the sense that they address the variations and range possible within all disabilities.

The descriptions are aimed to build knowledge about the significance of disabilities in study contexts. For example, the descriptions can thus help to support exemption practices at institutions of higher education and efforts to facilitate individual adjustments. As emphasised in the introduction and now re-iterated here, decisions about applications for exemptions or SPS cannot be based on the descriptions alone, as such decisions remain conditional on a concrete,

individual assessment of the specific adjustments or support each student needs because of a disability. The disabilities included in the guidance material were selected on the basis of anonymised data from the Counselling and Support Centre at Aarhus University and further inspired by Guide om Handicap og Job, published by Danske Handicaporganisationer, as well as by input from the project's advisory group and the preliminary user survey.

All the descriptions have been qualified by the respective disabled organisations, patient associations or external experts with knowledge and experience in the given area. We hope that the following sections will help qualify your efforts to support students with disabilities during their study programmes.



ADD

ADD is the quiet form of ADHD. It is a neuropsychiatric condition that to varying degrees affects the brain's ability to regulate attention and activity level. People with ADD primarily struggle with attention and concentration, and thus also with maintaining a suitable pace and energy level throughout the day. Because people with ADD generally appear calm and quiet, others may find it hard to spot their difficulties. This is also why many are not diagnosed with ADD until they reach adolescence or adulthood, as children with ADD are sometimes overlooked at school. Many may be perceived as being quiet, shy, lazy, less intelligent or introvert. Many people with undetected ADD battle with feelings of negative self-esteem and low self-worth. Whereas people with ADHD often experience physical unrest, people with ADD experience mental unrest, with their thoughts often racing and being chaotic. Although ADD has nothing to do with level of intelligence, people with ADD may have difficulty putting the knowledge they have acquired into practice or applying it to other situations.

ADD in study-related contexts

Students with ADD will often have experienced learning difficulties because learning, including storing new knowledge, requires sustained attention and concentration. Depending on the individual student's ADD symptoms, challenges may arise in various educational contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with ADD are outlined below.

Study starts

Many students with ADD have a strong need for predictability and a plan. Students with ADD therefore need to know exactly what is going to happen and what is expected

in an unknown situation such as study start. They may also need to visit the educational institution before commencing their studies.

Teaching situations

Teaching situations can be challenging for students with ADD, as some of the most characteristic symptoms are poor concentration and difficulty maintaining attention. Students may find it hard to shut off both external and internal stimuli such as light, sound, smells or other distractions. This varies from person to person and from situation to situation. When their focus lapses, students with ADD can often be perceived as daydreaming.

Traditional teaching from the blackboard puts great demands on a student's attention, which students with ADD may have difficulty meeting. They can be easily distracted if they do not find the subject interesting and meaningful. This is because students with ADD have a stronger need for tasks and activities to make sense. These students may have a hard time sustaining their attention when receiving blackboard teaching, taking notes, following along in textbooks and listening to fellow students' input. Students with ADD often do not let on that they have lost track of things and cannot keep up. This makes it difficult for teachers to realise that students with ADD are unable to keep up with the teaching. These students may need structure and scheduled breaks.

Group work

Working in groups or other study constellations can challenge students with ADD, as many come across as lacking initiative and energy. As such, they will often be reserved during group work. Students with ADD can often have very low self-worth, which may influence group work.

Independent study and preparation

Students with ADD can have great difficulty managing independent study, as they will often struggle to structure or plan their own work. Independent study requires a high degree of personal initiative, which can be tough for students with ADD. Similarly, they may have difficulty keeping track of their thoughts, concentrating and managing their daily studies.

Exams

Some forms of exam can be extremely challenging for students with ADD. Because they often experience a multitude of thoughts coming in rapid succession as well as have difficulty concentrating and maintaining focus, students with ADD might find it hard to be as efficient and focused during a timed exam, for example, as they are at other times. Students with ADD might benefit from getting time extensions for exams or assignments, as many spend more time on study assignments than their co-students. As people with ADD often think very literally, teachers may have to express themselves in concrete terms, for example, by asking direct questions in an oral exam. This presents something of a challenge to teachers.

Internships

An internship can be a new situation for many – possibly entailing a new working method, new colleagues and an unfamiliar place. The unknown can be particularly daunting for students with ADD, causing their symptoms to become more pronounced. These students may come across as being uncertain of themselves and lacking initiative.

Social activities

Students with ADD may feel unsure in social contexts, retreating within themselves or, in the worst case, not participating. Students with ADD tire easily and therefore lack the energy for all the activities in which their co-students get involved. Students with ADD often make social activities a lower priority, preferring to concentrate on managing their studies instead.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with ADD can be easily distracted by external stimuli.
- Determine whether you can help the students to get started on assignments, reinforce their memory with aids such as to-do lists, clarify weekly plans for them and give plenty of advance notice of timetable or group changes, for example.
- Show interest in the students' well-being, as students with ADD rarely take the initiative to talk about how their studies are going.

Find out more:
ADHD-foreningen / www.adhd.dk

ADHD

ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) is a neuropsychiatric condition that to varying degrees affects the brain's ability to regulate attention, activity level and impulse control. Typically, people with ADHD are easily distracted by external stimuli, experience motor or internal agitation and restlessness, and act quickly and impulsively.

A distinction is made between three types of ADHD:

- **ADHD – predominated by hyperactivity and impulsivity**
- **ADHD – predominated by inattention (also known as ADD or 'the quiet ADHD')**
- **ADHD – combined type with inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsivity**

The symptoms of ADHD are generally most pronounced in unfamiliar situations and contexts with no clear structure. The challenges of daily living depend on the severity of the symptoms and other external conditions on which the student has no influence. Examples are changes in timetable, the weather or other things. An ADHD diagnosis can therefore have a huge influence on an individual's functional level.

ADHD in study-related contexts

When students with ADHD are easily distracted or appear unfocused, this does not necessarily equate with a lack of engagement or interest in the teaching content or group work. Nor is their restlessness, forgetfulness, tendency to interrupt or noisy behaviour necessarily intentional.

Depending on the individual student's symptoms, a number of challenges may arise in various educational contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with ADHD are outlined below.

Study starts

Many students with ADHD have a strong need for predictability and a plan. Students with ADHD therefore need to know exactly what is going to happen and what is expected in an unknown situation such as study start. They may also need to visit the educational institution before commencing their studies.

Teaching situations

Teaching situations can be challenging for students with ADHD, as some of the most characteristic symptoms are difficulty focusing one's concentration and attention. Students with ADHD can also be quickly disturbed by external stimuli. This may manifest as physical and mental restlessness, daydreaming or gazing out of the window. During the teaching session, these students may benefit from plenty of breaks and the opportunity to 'fiddle' with things, as this helps focus their attention. Practical teaching may be more suitable for some students with ADHD, because physical activity makes it easier for them to concentrate. Many people with ADHD learn better when using their bodies.

Group work

Working in groups or other study constellations can be challenging for students with ADHD as well as their fellow group members. Students with ADHD may have difficulty picking up on others' reactions and needs, and may also lack social awareness or talk excessively. Accordingly, group work can be challenging if, not knowing what ADHD means, fellow students feel puzzled or frustrated by these students' reactions and symptoms.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study can hugely challenge students with ADHD, as they will often find it hard to get started, set priorities and manage their time when given assignments. Because students with ADHD need many breaks, they can find their studies time-consuming. They may need help with structuring and prioritising their time.

Exams

Because they often experience a multitude of thoughts coming in rapid succession as well as have difficulty concentrating and maintaining focus, students with ADHD might find it hard to be as efficient and focused during a timed exam, for example, as they are at other times. Depending on the students' challenges, the need for special examination conditions can be looked into.

Internships

An internship can be a new situation for many – possibly entailing a new working method, new colleagues and an unfamiliar place. The unknown can be particularly daunting for students with ADHD, causing their symptoms to become more pronounced. However, many people with ADHD thrive with physical activity, and as such will do well with an internship and working differently from how they would with theoretical teaching.

Social activities

In social contexts, people with ADHD have difficulty decoding other people's behaviour or understanding the social codex. They may therefore perceive social events that are unfamiliar or have no clearly defined structure as daunting. Some people with ADHD may focus more strongly on the activity than the social interaction, which can be problematic in social contexts. Some people with a high hyperactivity level can come across as pushy and dominating in social situations. However, the degree to which people with ADHD are challenged in social situations varies greatly.

Worth knowing

- Take note of whether students with ADHD are surrounded by many extraneous stimuli, as they are easily distractable.
- Determine whether you can help these students get their assignments started and aid their memory by illustrating and writing down assignments and messages.
- Students with ADHD may find it useful to have a detailed, visual weekly or daily plan and to be given ample notice of assignment deadlines, new groups or other circumstances.

*Find out more:
ADHD-foreningen / www.adhd.dk*

Arthritis

Arthritis diseases cause mobility loss or diseases in parts of the musculo-skeletal system such as muscles, bones, joints, tendons and ligaments. All arthritic diseases are characterised, among other things, by pain in joints and muscles, tiredness and reduced functional capacity. The symptoms of arthritis vary, as can the pain and discomfort. The term arthritis covers more than 200 different diagnoses, the most common being osteoarthritis, gout, spinal arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis.

- **Osteoarthritis:** degenerative disease of the joints. The cartilage and tissues around the joints gradually break down.
- **Gout:** an inflammatory arthritis disease due to uric acid crystals that deposit in a person's joints.
- **Spinal arthritis:** arthritis where inflammation occurs in the discs and vertebrae of the spine, for example.
- **Rheumatoid arthritis:** inflammatory response in the joints. This condition is due to changes in a person's immune system and can reduce bodily mobility.
- **Psoriatic arthritis:** inflammatory condition that affects various joints and tendons in the body. People with the skin disease psoriasis are particularly prone to this arthritic condition.

People suffering from inflammatory arthritic conditions may find that periods of physical or mental strain aggravate their functional impairment.

There is no cure for arthritis, but many treatments can alleviate the symptoms and help prevent it from progressing. People suffering from a serious arthritis disease may have difficulty coping with daily life because of pain, tiredness and reduced mobility.

Arthritis in study-related contexts

The degree to which the disease hinders students in study contexts varies from student to student. Some will be seriously affected, while others will experience no challenges in study contexts. Some may also be able to cope provided they take their medication, generally pain relievers.

People with arthritis may also find that their condition is concealed from people around them as its signs are not obvious. This causes problems because others may not understand the challenges people with arthritis can face. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with an arthritic condition are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Owing to their reduced functional capacity, some students with an arthritic condition may have trouble carrying heavy books to and from their place of study. One solution that could be suggested is for them to apply for extra books they could keep at the educational institution. If students with arthritis struggle to handle physical textbooks, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studieservice.

Students with arthritis may have challenges participating in practice-oriented teaching on equal terms with their fellow students since their functional capacity may be reduced and their condition extremely painful.

Group work

Students with arthritis can get the feeling that people fail to consider their challenges because the severity of their pain can be hard to see. As such, these students could benefit from opening up about their condition, with all its related challenges and needs, so their fellow students can better help them and show consideration.

Independent study and preparation

If students with arthritis have trouble structuring and managing their studies, it may be a good idea to explore what study strategies and support options they might find useful. A high degree of independent study might be an advantage for students with arthritis because this enables them to plan their study time themselves. This would allow them to plan rest periods during the day, as many with arthritis are challenged by extreme fatigue. Students with arthritis should make sure they have a good home office for independent study. They should take seating positions into consideration, and may find it an advantage to have options for switching between standing and sitting.

Exams

Students with an arthritis disease may, for example, find long written exams problematic because their pain and fatigue make concentrating for many hours a taxing undertaking. Joint pain or major disabilities can also give them trouble completing handwritten exam assignments.

Some may further find it difficult to finish an oral exam within the prescribed time limit, as extreme pain, fatigue and functional impairments make it hard to take an exam on the same terms as their peer students. If these students experience the above-mentioned challenges during an exam, they can apply for extended exam time, which would enable them to take extra breaks.

Internships

Students with arthritis may find working a 37-hour week problematic because of pain and tiredness, making it difficult for them to complete an internship on the same terms as their fellow students. In this context, the students could be advised to open a dialogue with the internship workplace to jointly find the best possible way to conduct the internship. For example, the students could be given slightly less demanding tasks.

Social activities

Some students with arthritis may find participating in social occasions at their educational institution challenging. Wishing to avoid aggravating their severe pain or tiredness, they may be compelled to bow out of activities.

Worth knowing

- Students with an arthritic condition may have periods of absence when being treated for their disease.
- Some may become exhausted and need to rest during the day.
- Some may need to switch between sitting, standing and walking during a teaching session.
- Feel free to enter into a dialogue about support options for dealing with the challenges these students may experience as a result of their arthritic condition.
- If the students struggle to handle physical textbooks, it can be considered whether they can be granted a SPS licence for Nota.

Find out more:
Gigtforeningen / www.gigtforeningen.dk

Asthma and allergies

Asthma and allergies are hypersensitivity disorders and often mutually related. However, a person can have asthma without having an allergy and vice-versa.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease in which the lungs are affected by an inflammatory condition. The disease can occur at any time of life in children, young people and adults. The symptoms of asthma include shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, a dry cough, a cough with phlegm, wheezing, chest tightness and laboured breathing during physical exertion. Various factors that may be difficult to control can exacerbate asthma:

- Allergies, for example, air-borne allergens like pollen, fur-bearing animals and house-dust mites.
- Irritants such as perfume, tobacco smoke, cold damp weather and cooking or candle fumes.

Allergy is a condition where the body's immune system overreacts to otherwise harmless substances. Signs of an allergic reaction include:

- irritated, itchy eyes, a runny nose, sneezing or asthma with coughing or difficulty breathing, typically caused by air-borne allergens.
- food allergy, which typically causes hives, hay fever, asthma, abdominal pain and, in the worst case, anaphylactic shock with low blood pressure and fainting.
- contact allergy, which typically causes eczema if the skin comes into contact with a substance that is not tolerated.
- As well as having symptoms affecting their eyes, nose and lungs, some people with asthma and/or allergy may also feel unwell and tired.

Asthma and allergies in study-related contexts

Students with asthma have varying symptoms. The substances to which these students react also vary, as does how the allergic reaction manifests itself. With medical treatment and knowledge about their condition, many can lead an essentially normal life without major discomfort, although their condition may deteriorate for brief periods. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with asthma and/or allergies are outlined below.

Teaching situations

In general, students' specific hypersensitivities to various particles or allergens can affect their concentration, energy level and learning outcome.

The indoor climate of a classroom that contains numerous particles from dust, perfume, moisture and fungal spores can induce or aggravate asthma and allergy symptoms. It is also advisable to be aware of any open doors and windows, which may cause hay fever and asthma symptoms in students allergic to air-borne pollen. Animal allergens can be brought into the room via other students' clothing, and cleaning agents can release gases in a room, all of which can affect allergy sufferers by inducing or exacerbating asthma or hay fever symptoms. In some cases, airborne allergens from food and snacks brought by fellow students can pose a risk to people with food allergies. Regardless of which of the above-mentioned challenges a student is exposed to, the situation will shift attention and energy away from the teaching, for which reason the student may not get its full benefit.

Physical activities can worsen asthma, and outdoor teaching in the pollen season can similarly exacerbate hay fever symptoms as well as trigger asthma symptoms. In creative and practical subjects, skin contact with allergenic substances such as tools, welding materials and plants can cause eczema. The smell from certain materials including paint, glue and wood can trigger sensitive airways and mucous membranes, and substances like wood dust can irritate and exacerbate hay fever and asthma symptoms. The frequent hand-washing with soap and water required in some subjects can cause skin irritation. In such situations, it would be advisable to purchase allergy-friendly products. In classes involving food products, for example, steam from cooked fish and particles from nuts, eggs, milk and peanuts may act as irritants if students come into skin contact with or ingest or inhale them. Students experiencing one or more of the above irritants will find their concentration as well as their learning outcome are affected.

Group work

Students with asthma and/or allergies may feel generally unwell and extremely tired, which makes it hard for them to devote the same energy to group work as the other group members. To avoid feeling inferior, students could tell their study group about their asthma and/or allergies..

Independent study and preparation

The general feeling of malaise and extreme fatigue may make it difficult for students with asthma and/or allergies to sustain the necessary discipline independent study requires. Ultimately, some students therefore risk missing out on academic knowledge relevant for completing an exam. Others, however, benefit from independent study because they can structure their daily studies, take breaks as needed and avoid allergenic substances.

Exams

Students with uncontrollable allergies or asthma may feel generally unwell and fatigued, which makes taking an exam problematic. Taking an exam in the pollen season can be particularly challenging for pollen allergy sufferers, as can winter exams for students allergic to house-dust mites. These situations can prevent such students from performing at the level they might have without allergies or asthma.

Internships

When it comes to choosing an internship, it can be a good idea to help students think about how their everyday life will play out during this period. It may also be relevant to discuss with them whether the upcoming working environment will aggravate their asthma and/or allergies.

Social activities

Asthma and allergies can occasionally pose a challenge in terms of social activities. These students may have sensitive airways and mucous membranes in their eyes and noses. They may therefore have a slight reaction to substances that irritate the airways (irritants), just as allergens from animals, for example, can also trigger symptoms.

Irritants and allergens can particularly trouble students in social contexts because the students feel they are being a nuisance when asking other people to make allowances for them.

Worth knowing

- If students tend to have symptoms during an exam period, urge them to contact their student counsellor well ahead of the exams to inquire about the options for extended exam time.
- In the pollen season from February to October, allergies may affect some students to a degree that compels them to stay indoors as much as possible. As such, they are often prevented from taking part in outdoor social activities, which may make them feel socially isolated.
- Bear in mind that students with asthma and/or allergies may feel generally unwell and exhausted

Find out more:

Astma-Allergi Danmark / www.astma-allergi.dk

Autism

Autism spectrum disorder is an umbrella term for a range of fundamental developmental disorders characterised by symptoms in three core areas: deficient social skills, communication, and limited flexibility and imagination. Autism is a spectrum term that refers both to how one perceives the world and to how one interacts with other people. People with autism all have problems in the same core areas, but are affected differently and to varying degrees. A cognitive challenge for one person may be a strength or skill for another.

People with autism generally have trouble interpreting verbal and non-verbal communication such as gestures, mimicry and tone of voice, and may take things very literally. Furthermore, people with autism are often sensorily challenged and, when outdoors, may feel overwhelmed because their senses take in everything at once. They may feel sensory impacts more or less intensely – for example, they may have a heightened sense of colour, sound, touch or smell.

People with autism who experience persistent, excessive strain may end up with stress or anxiety.

Autism in study-related contexts

Students with autism may have varying support needs depending on how challenged they are in the various core areas. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional abilities in various educational contexts should be done to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Open, individual dialogue with these students is therefore essential. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with autism are outlined below.

Study starts

Many students with autism need predictability and a plan – especially when starting their studies and everything is new and different. Students with autism may therefore benefit from having a study start plan detailing what is going to happen and for how long, as well as what activities are mandatory. These students may additionally need to visit the school or college before commencing their studies and be shown the rooms.

Teaching situations

Teaching situations can be generally challenging for many students with autism since, being unable to filter their sensory impressions, they absorb them all – visual images, sounds, smells and touch alike. Students with autism may be challenged in certain teaching situations where concentration may be difficult for them, for example, when others around them are chatting. An overload of sensory impressions can cause them to tire easily. In this connection, they may need sensory shielding, such as the opportunity to withdraw and take a break in another room. Students with autism may also find it hard to grasp the overall picture and need a plan and predictability. Without predictability and structure, these students spend a great deal of energy on creating an overview themselves. It may therefore be a good idea for the teacher to upload teaching materials for these students in good time and to stick to the established plan.

Group work

Working in groups can be challenging for students with autism as well as their fellow group members. Students with autism can find communication and social activities challenging, a situation that can be manifested in a difficulty understanding other students' reactions and needs.

Other students in the group may also find that students with autism lack situational awareness. People with autism may take a long time to get to know other people and to feel secure in their relationships. Accordingly, students with autism may benefit from being part of the same study group for a lengthy period and thus not having to relate to too many new people.

Independent study and preparation

Students with autism may be challenged when it comes to both independent study and preparation, as they may generally have great difficulty creating an overview and plan for themselves. Accordingly, they may need assignments that are described in detail and simple to tackle. Students with autism can also benefit from assistance with creating an overview and structure. Such help could be provided in the shape of structural systems or support involving an SPS counsellor, for example.

Exams

Students with autism may have trouble creating an overview and structure. This can prove a challenge in exam situations where they may have difficulty with open question exam assignments such as analysis. Students with autism may often find more structured, concrete exam assignments less taxing. It may therefore be a good idea for students who have difficulty getting an overview to apply for special examination conditions.

Internships

An internship may be synonymous with new working methods, new colleagues and an unfamiliar place. New, unpredictable situations can be daunting for students with autism and may cause their symptoms to become more pronounced. These students may find it beneficial to tell colleagues at their internship workplace about their condition, so they can better support and understand their circumstances.

Social activities

Social activities can challenge these students in the same way as group activities do. Students with autism may be overwhelmed and challenged in big social gatherings such as student parties or Friday bars. Most students with autism find social contexts challenging and as such expend great energy on interpreting and understanding the social interactions around them. On occasion the immense effort they must put into these situations leads them to leave early or, being unsure about what is to happen, they cancel beforehand and do not participate at all. Many students with autism do best in small social groups where they know in advance what is expected of them.

Worth knowing

- Autism can manifest differently from person to person. So, preferably ask students with autism how you can best help them.
- Bear in mind that students with autism are often literal thinkers. As such, it is a good idea to be direct when communicating with them and explain what you expect of them.
- Students with autism often need predictability, so it is advisable to prepare a plan for or with these students.
- Note that students with autism can become overstimulated or worn out, and as such may retreat into themselves or withdraw completely from a given situation.

Find out more:

Landsforeningen autisme /
www.autismeforening.dk

Center for autisme / www.centerforautisme.dk

Bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder, previously known as manic depression, is a mental health condition marked by periods of extreme shifts in mood and activity level. Persons with bipolar disorder can swing from feeling extremely energised and overly excited (mania) to being drained of energy and feeling filled with constant sadness (depression). In the past, this was called manic depression. There are two types of bipolar disorder, each determined by the degree of mania: bipolar I disorder involves major manic episodes, often with psychotic features, while bipolar II disorder involves hypomania, which is less severe. In addition, episodes of depression generally occur more frequently for people with bipolar II than bipolar I disorder. However, great individual variations exist.

During depressive periods, these individuals feel dejected, lack energy and engage in less activity, while during manic and hypomanic periods they may feel euphoric, be more energetic and engage in more activity. Some people may also experience symptoms of psychosis during manic periods. They may find themselves in a mixed state, their manic and depressive symptoms either alternating rapidly or occurring simultaneously.

Bipolar disorder in study-related contexts

The symptoms and degree of severity vary from person to person, as does the frequency of manic and depressive episodes. The episodes are interspersed with neutral periods of varying length, but some people also experience depressive or manic symptoms at times other than these episodes. How students with bipolar disorder are impacted by this disability depends on the individual student. Some will be unable to study for shorter or longer periods, while others' capacity to study will be unaffected. It is important for these students to get help and support as well as know how to take care of themselves.

Between 30% and 50% of people with a bipolar disorder may experience cognitive difficulties, which may affect their ability to remember, learn, process information and

solve problems. This does not reflect lower intelligence, but rather that their cognitive functions are impaired. Most find ways of coping with their day-to-day challenges by using new routines and practical memory devices. For example, they may keep their keys in set places or have fixed bedtimes. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with a bipolar disorder are outlined below.

Teaching situations

A bipolar disorder can have various impacts on students in teaching situations. In manic periods, they may be very active in class, sometimes to a degree others find disruptive or inappropriate. These students may also have difficulty concentrating and be restless. Depressive periods can also lead to concentration problems, but these often coincide with the student's low energy and lack of interest in what is going on (see also the section on depression).

Group work

Students with bipolar disorder can take part in group work on a par with other students. During manic or hypomanic periods, students with bipolar disorder may have a stronger presence, possibly manifested in a tendency to be over-talkative, easily distracted and inconsiderate or pushy. Conversely, during depressive periods, these students may struggle to contribute to group work or completely withdraw from it. However, individuals react to their highs and lows in different ways that do not necessarily affect the group's work. Students often find it helpful to be frank about their challenges, as this openness can foster understanding about their having a different behavioural pattern.

Independent study and preparation

The most important thing for students with bipolar disorder is to maintain a balance between their student life and day-to-day activities. Regardless of individual circumstances, a student can benefit from the support of a counsellor, teacher or mentor who can follow their progress. In this context, it may be a good idea to reconcile expectations about level of ambition and daily structure. To further regulate mood swings, students should also monitor their sleep patterns. If students are sleeping well, their general condition is good.

Exams

Stress and periods of extra pressure can trigger mania or depression in students with bipolar disorder, for example, during exam periods. Although students in a depressive period may need to withdraw to work on major independent assignments, this can be inadvisable since such isolation can worsen their depression. However, mild hypomania may in fact be useful for students working on major assignments, provided it is not long term or otherwise harmful, as a higher energy level is an effect of hypomania. Changes in sleep patterns, appetite, taste in clothing and social media behaviour can all be signs of overload. Depending on the student's circumstances, an application for exemptions or special examination conditions could be considered.

Internships

When it comes to internships, students with bipolar disorder may need clearly defined agreements regarding professional requirements, tasks and structure. A student's workload during an internship should match the student, as a heavy workload might otherwise cause stress that can trigger manic or depressive periods.

Social activities

People with bipolar disorder can often participate normally in social contexts, as their mood swings are not constant and they are usually stable and 'neutral'. In depressive periods students with bipolar disorder may be withdrawn and avoid social activities. However, during manic and hypomanic periods, students with bipolar disorder can often get a party going, but others may find their dynamic behaviour transgressive. Some people with bipolar disorder may find they enjoy greater social popularity when in a slightly manic state. This may raise expectations – their own as well as others – that they always be in a good mood and ready to create a festive atmosphere, which can be hard to live up to later.

Worth knowing

- Many people have no trouble studying, despite having a bipolar disorder. However, it is important for these students to get help and support and know how to take care of themselves.
- Bear in mind that depressive and manic periods can mean these students will be unable to manage their studies for various periods of time.
- Many students with bipolar disorder need daily structure and routines that promote stability and predictability, particularly as regards their day-to-day studies.

Find out more:

DepressionsForeningen /
www.depressionsforeningen.dk
 SIND / www.sind.dk

Borderline personality disorder

This so-called emotionally unstable personality disorder falls into two sub-types: impulsive and borderline. A personality disorder is a psychiatric disorder where a personality significantly deviates from the norm or from generally accepted behaviour. A person with borderline personality disorder (BPD) is typically impulsive and has rapid mood swings, and many have violent reactions and emotional outbursts. People with BPD are particularly prone to have a feeling of emptiness, which can mean, among other things, having no sense of identity. They may also have difficulty with self-caring. For example, they may be unaware that they are tired and thus need to take a break, or they may be unable to feel anger coming on. A person with BPD may have a deep need for contact and a fear of being abandoned.

BPD has multiple degrees of severity and a range of symptoms. However, there are some common traits:

- BPD is often caused by neglect or traumatic events such as sexual or childhood abuse.
- People with BPD have difficulty establishing close, stable relationships as they often associate such relationships with a degree of uncertainty and mistrust of others.
- Some people with BPD may exhibit self-harming behaviour.

The primary form of treatment is psychotherapy and thus psychoeducation where these individuals learn about their personality disorder. The vast majority of people with this condition get better over time because they learn to accept and restrain their emotional reactions.

Borderline personality disorder in study-related contexts

BPD can present in a wide variety of ways in study contexts, depending on the individual's circumstances. Therapeutic interventions give some students coping strategies for their BPD, making them less impeded by it, while for others the condition is a huge, lifelong challenge. Open dialogue with the students is therefore important in order

to assess and plan any needs for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with borderline personality disorder are outlined below.

Study starts

New faces, new surroundings and new, unfamiliar daily routines are a lot for students with BPD to take in, and can seem overwhelming. In this situation, a negative self-image may affect students with BPD who have feelings of emptiness, thus making them feel insecure about meeting new people. Some students may find an advance visit to their educational institution helpful so they can find out what will happen during the induction period.

Teaching situations

People with BPD may have problems concentrating, starting projects and creating structure. These students may also get stuck because they cannot organise their impressions of the external world and therefore spend a lot of time and energy trying to read and understand their surroundings. In this context, students with BPD may need a predictable, structured day with many breaks. As such, they may benefit from talking to teachers about their condition, so the necessary allowances can be made.

Group work

Students with BPD may feel very insecure about themselves, which can affect their relationships with fellow students. It may therefore be a good idea for these students to talk frankly to the group about their condition, so their fellow students can understand why they sometimes react differently. This approach can also help minimise internal group conflicts and give fellow students a chance to make

allowances. The group can also tackle the issues of lacking concentration and structure by laying a plan and motivating each other to get started on tasks.

Independent study and preparation

Since students with BPD may need structured, predictable daily routines, they may find it helpful to draw up a study, reading or weekly plan. This reduces the likelihood of periods of pressure and stress, which can negatively impact this group of students. Part-time study may also be a relevant option for some students to consider.

Exams

Students with BPD can quickly be distracted by others and experience lapses of concentration when sitting an exam. To give students a real chance to show their academic proficiency, teachers could look into the possibilities of special examination conditions for them.

Internships

An internship is often associated with being sociable and meeting new people. As in other social contexts, students with BPD may find starting an internship challenging. If the students are willing, it may be a good idea to alert the internship workplace to the challenges they face. This will help the employer to plan the working day and tasks accordingly and in a way that ensures the students derive the most benefit from their internship. Information can also help reduce the prejudices that students with this condition may encounter.

Social activities

People with BPD can be extremely unsure of themselves and of their self-identity. In social contexts, this can be seen when the students are with other more self-confident people, as they may mimic their dress style, mannerisms, tricks of speech and so on. As students with BPD can have difficulty controlling incoming impressions as well as their actions and emotions, they may make inappropriate statements or react violently. All these challenges can be mitigated if a secure, inclusive study environment with open communication can be created.

Worth knowing

- In some cases, borderline personality disorder can lead to threatened or attempted suicide. If students display such behaviour, contact a relative or refer them to a doctor or psychiatric department.
- Students with BPD can overreact angrily or respond violently. In such instances, you must remember that the personality disorder is often driving their reaction.
- The brain functions used to remember, think and learn may be under strain in people with BPD. These students may therefore need special support during their education.

Find out more:

SIND / www.sind.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

Brain injury

Brain injury can occur as a result of a blood clot in the brain, meningitis, an inflammation, a tumour, cerebral haemorrhage or an accident in which the person has suffered a trauma to the head. Brain injury can be congenital or acquired. An acquired brain injury occurs later in life and usually entails extensive changes in lifestyle and everyday living. Some people with a brain injury are slightly affected in many areas while others are severely affected in a few. The complications people with a brain injury may experience include cognitive difficulty and reduced mobility.

Among these cognitive difficulties are brain injury fatigue and problems creating an overview and structure. Such fatigue can impact a person's concentration, which may affect their memory and ability to learn. Some people with a brain injury also have speech difficulties, which tiredness may aggravate. People with a brain injury may have physical issues such as reduced mobility or problems with balance.

Generally, people suffering from brain damage experience a variety of physical and/or cognitive complications that may pose study challenges. These complications range from paralysis, vision difficulties and balance problems to memory loss, problems concentrating, brain fatigue, speech difficulties, lack of overview and structure and difficulties making decisions and taking initiative.

Brain injury in study-related contexts

The degree to which a student has encountered the challenges below in certain study contexts varies from person to person. The consequences of a brain injury often affect a person's life in every respect, and as such also their capacity to work and study for higher education. It would therefore be a good idea to contact the student counsellor before studies start to establish the best parameters for these students. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with a brain injury are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Reduced mobility and/or cognitive difficulties may make participating in practical teaching situations challenging for some students with a brain injury. Similarly, they can have trouble sustaining their concentration in theoretical teaching situations and taking notes. Vision difficulties can furthermore make it hard for them to follow blackboard teaching. Some may therefore benefit from having teaching materials read aloud by means of digital assistive aids. If students for example have vision problems due to their brain injury, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studieservice.

Group work

The consequences of brain injury may affect students to a degree that makes working with other students complicated. Students with a brain injury who have speech or cognitive difficulties may be especially challenged when communicating with fellow students about study assignments. Noise, tight deadlines and lack of structure can also cause difficulties for working with other people. Such factors can easily drain these students' energy, making it difficult for them to plan their study time according to their need for rest, extra breaks and extra reading.

Independent study and preparation

In many cases, brain injury fatigue leads to concentration problems that make it challenging for students with a brain injury to prepare for class. They may also find structuring and defining assignments themselves demanding. Many students will need help with creating this structure.

Exams

Written and oral exams alike can be challenging for students with a brain injury, and quite a few will have difficulty sitting exams on the same terms as their fellow students. Vision difficulties may make it hard for them to read and write assignments, while cognitive problems can make it hard for them to get an overview of a given assignment and plan how to complete it. Students with a brain injury may also have problems remembering information presented in class and acquired through reading. This can make the prospect of an entire semester's syllabus daunting. Students who have speech difficulties may have trouble formulating their answers in an oral exam, even if they know how to answer the questions. The benefits of special examination conditions for such students could be investigated.

Internships

An internship can be challenging for students with a brain injury. This is because reduced mobility, vision difficulties and cognitive challenges may limit the types of tasks these students can carry out at the internship workplace as well as how many weekly hours' work they can manage.

Social activities

Some students with a brain injury may have low energy levels and therefore difficulty with participating in study start events held away from their school or college. Social activities pose a special risk of sensory over-stimulation. This can be taken into consideration in the planning of social events – preferably together with the students concerned.

Worth knowing

- Some students with a brain injury are deeply affected by their functional impairment, while others experience fewer challenges. Engage therefore in open, forthcoming dialogue with these students.
- Bear in mind that they sometimes need to have information repeated because brain injury fatigue makes it harder for the brain to store facts.
- Find out whether the students can have somewhere to rest at their place of education.

Find out more:

Hjerneskadeforeningen / www.hjerneskadet.dk

Hjernesagen / www.hjernesagen.dk

Cerebral palsy (CP)

Cerebral palsy (CP) is an umbrella term for a group of developmental disorders, also known as spastic paralysis, that are caused by damage to the brain occurring either congenitally or in early childhood. The way CP affects people depends on which parts of the brain are implicated. Cerebral palsy can cause problems with mobility, limb use, eating or speaking. Over time, joints and bones may become deformed as a result of muscle stiffness and imbalances. In addition to visible motor disabilities, the brain damage can cause cognitive issues. Although often less visible than the motor problems, these issues can have a major influence on these students' chances of participating in social and academic contexts. Many people with cerebral palsy have problems processing sensory impressions. Some also have hearing problems, sight, speech and language difficulties as well as a sensitivity to noise and light. People with CP may have or have had epilepsy.

Cerebral palsy (CP) in study-related contexts

People with cerebral palsy often experience pain, poor balance, muscle weakness, joint deformities and reduced mobility, all of which can have consequences in various study contexts. Motor difficulties and pain can lead to fatigue, which is often exacerbated by physical exertion. Students with CP may also experience exhaustion in connection with cognitive challenges such as problems with concentration, working memory, the faculty of combination, structure and overview as well as difficulties completing a course.

However, in the absence of relevant documentation produced from a neuropsychological examination, many people with CP find it hard to describe the significance and consequences of their cognitive difficulties. This is because it was not until 2005 that CP was recognised as a cognitive functional impairment rather than just a motor functional impairment. People with pre-2005 CP diagnoses may therefore need an examination precisely describing the type and scope of their cognitive challenges. Examples of some

study-related challenges that can arise for students with CP are outlined below.

Study starts

At study start, students with CP may benefit from gaining an overview of the given educational institution's physically accessible facilities, which they may need if they use a wheelchair or have a walking impairment. They may also need to know the induction schedule for the first few days so they can plan for any challenges.

Teaching situations

Students with CP may have reduced memory or attention challenges, which can prevent them from taking notes during class. This can cause excessive strain as they strive to remember everything or do twice the work – writing notes after class, for example. Both activities can exhaust these students. Some may additionally have difficulty physically getting to classrooms, with many having spatial and directional issues and some using wheelchairs or having walking impairments. Students with CP may have cognitive difficulties entailing the need for individual assistance, for example, in the form of support from a mentor; assistance with major written assignments and managing and structuring the syllabus; extra counselling; and extended exam time.

Group work

Mental fatigue can arise in social contexts and when students with CP read or write on a computer. Depending on their cognitive challenges, students may have difficulty maintaining their concentration, remembering what they are reading or structuring their work, all factors that may impact them during group work. They may find it helpful to

structure work together with the group, so that the group members can delegate tasks and motivate each other to start working.

Independent study and preparation

To avoid falling behind and ending up under time pressure, students with CP may need help and support to gain an overview of their subject syllabus. In fact, they may find cognitively demanding tasks such as reading, writing or working on a computer mentally exhausting. Moreover, they may have cognitive challenges with structuring their work, creating an overview and concentrating as well as difficulties with completing an assignment. If students with CP struggle to carry or handle physical textbooks, an SPS licence for Nota's Studservice could be considered so they can order their books in a digital format.

Exams

Students with CP may have problems working under time pressure. Their cognitive challenges may also impact major written assignments, as they may need help structuring the assignment. In this connection, students could benefit from finding out whether they are eligible for special examination conditions or meet the requirements for mentor support.

Internships

The internship workplace must offer good physical accessibility and be mentally and cognitively comprehensible for students with CP. Such comprehensibility may mean ensuring that they have a structured work plan, are assigned manageable tasks or given varying types of work to prevent them from becoming over-tired from too much computer work. This can be accomplished in cooperation with the employer if the students are open and can talk about the challenges they experience.

Social activities

Students with CP who have reduced visual perception may have trouble interpreting social interactions and activities. Accordingly, they may tend to fail to turn up at social events for fear of feeling excluded. Socialising may also demand more energy from students with CP. They may find it helpful to tell fellow students about cerebral palsy and the challenges it occasions. This will enable their fellow students to better support them and make allowances. It may also help dispel some of the misconceptions students with CP may encounter.

Worth knowing

- Cerebral palsy (CP) is not just a physical function limitation; it can also affect a person's cognitive functions.
- Pain and cognitive issues can cause exhaustion in these students, with the cognitive issues being particularly difficult to describe and understand. For example, students with CP may have difficulty processing visual impressions, and visually demanding tasks may therefore fatigue them.
- Some people think that individuals with CP have low intelligence or cannot speak properly, but this is a misconception. CP does not impact intelligence, and the spasticity is typically what affects the ability to pronounce words.

Find out more:
Cerebral Parese Danmark / www.cpdanmark.dk

Coeliac disease

Coeliac disease is a chronic auto-immune condition in which gluten proteins trigger an inflammation of the interior lining of the small intestine. An inflammatory reaction occurs when a person with coeliac disease eats food containing gluten, thus reducing the intestine's ability to absorb vitamins, minerals and other important nutrients. This can lead to various deficiencies. Untreated, coeliac disease can cause symptoms such as diarrhoea, abdominal pain, tiredness and exhaustion, mood swings, joint and muscular pain and bloating. A person with coeliac disease who eats gluten always risks damaging the intestine, regardless of whether the person experiences any symptoms. Some get pronounced symptoms even after eating small quantities of gluten, while others have no particular symptoms even though the intestine has suffered damage.

Coeliac disease in study-related contexts

There is no medical treatment for coeliac disease, which can only be treated by the complete exclusion of gluten from the diet. With the right treatment, students with coeliac disease will be able to lead an essentially normal life. The challenges of the disease are most often apparent in social contexts, or when students have to eat food prepared by others, since they do not know whether the food served is completely gluten-free. These challenges often cause problems in social contexts, where ignorance of coeliac disease can stigmatise students with the condition because they need a special diet. The challenges will vary from person to person, as some are more affected than others. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students who suffer from coeliac disease are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with coeliac disease have to be constantly aware of what they eat and drink. As such, they may find themselves in the dilemma of, on the one hand, not wishing to attract attention because of their special diet and, on the other, being compelled to think about what they eat. Ignorance about coeliac disease challenges some students because other people may find it hard to understand that even small amounts of gluten pose a problem. Another issue is that fellow students may be unaware that a wide range of common, processed foods can contain added gluten. Others may also have difficulty understanding the problem of cross-contamination. Accordingly, utensils used for food containing gluten may not be used to prepare gluten-free food unless they have been thoroughly cleaned. Students with coeliac disease thus have to check all foods originating from places like canteens, cafés and supermarkets.

Teaching situations

In teaching situations, issues for students with coeliac disease arise the moment food and drink comes into the picture, for example, during outings, excursions or study trips. You can help students with coeliac disease by letting them know you are aware of the challenge and possibly finding a solution with them.

Internships

The need for a completely gluten-free diet can cause social challenges for these students during an internship. Students may experience other challenges arising from their desire not to draw attention to their special dietary needs

while also being compelled to think about everything they consume. They need to be alert to canteen food, food-to-go, food served in social contexts, at work, etc. You can jointly decide with the students whether the internship workplace should be informed about their condition.

Group work

Students may also feel different from or misunderstood by their fellow group members. As such, group work may make students with coeliac disease feel bound to explain their condition, as many people are unaware of what living with coeliac disease entails. Students with coeliac disease might find it helpful to speak openly about it with their fellow students. A study group can also support students in this respect.

Independent study and preparation

At times, these students may experience pain, fatigue, mood swings or other disease-like symptoms caused by gluten intake. This may affect the motivation and energy they need to sustain the concentration required by independent study and preparation. However, they may also find the independent study elements to be an advantage for them, allowing them to plan their own time, take breaks as necessary and avoid not only food containing gluten but also the associated worries.

Exams

During exam periods, students with coeliac disease may have difficulty preparing themselves for how and how greatly pain and other symptoms will affect them. If these students have periodic challenges completing their exams, they could be informed about the options for applying for exemptions.

Social activities

Social gatherings are the most common challenge for students with coeliac disease because many involve food and drink. The disease can often prompt the misconception that students with coeliac disease are special or difficult because they cannot eat the same foods as everyone else. Social activities may therefore cause students with coeliac disease to expend a lot of energy thinking about their situation. People with this condition may to a certain extent avoid social contexts involving food and drink, because of both the real fear of falling ill and the fear of standing out or being a nuisance.

Worth knowing

- Coeliac disease is often termed gluten allergy, which is a misnomer because the condition is not an allergic reaction but an auto-immune bowel disease. People with coeliac disease have to avoid gluten at every single meal for the rest of their lives.
- Even small amounts of gluten pose a risk to people with this condition. Countless processed foods contain some amount of gluten.
- Bear in mind that students with coeliac disease must be constantly alert to what they consume, and that this can draw the attention of those around them

Find out more:

Dansk Cøliaki Forening / www.coeliaki.dk

Concussion

Concussion arises when the head is subjected to a hard blow or some form of acceleration that causes inflammation and micro-structural brain damage. In other words, concussion is a brain injury that may result in temporary loss of normal brain function. Concussion is not necessarily caused by direct contact with an object, but may also result from a violent jolt or similar movement. Some of the most common symptoms of concussion include headache, concentration and memory problems, dizziness, exhaustion, tiredness and sensitivity to sound and light.

The degree and duration of a person's concussion can vary. Every year, many people are diagnosed with concussions that have short-term effects. However, some also experience longer-term complications. Long-term concussion or its complications are also known as post-concussion syndrome. People with this syndrome may have such symptoms as chronic headache, vision problems, excessive dizziness and extreme difficulty concentrating. The best treatment for concussion is to give the person peace and quiet as well as time to recover. Accordingly, a person with concussion must not be exposed to high stress or pressure levels, as this can aggravate the condition.

Concussion in study-related contexts

Students suffering from concussion or its complications need to be given peace and quiet and should avoid unnecessary stress. They should therefore take extra breaks somewhere quiet, away from excessive noise and light that might strain them. The types of challenges and the degree to which students with concussion encounter can vary. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with concussion are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Teaching situations can be challenging for some students with concussion complications, which can cause concentration problems and tiredness that make maintaining focus during classes or lectures difficult. A sensitivity to sound and light can make it hard for some students to complete a study programme involving a great deal of online teaching. Such sensory overload can aggravate a student's headaches, dizziness and fatigue.

Group work

Participating in group work can be challenging for some students with concussion as they may experience a high degree of exhaustion, concentration difficulties and tiredness. As such, they may be less up to working with other people. In this context, some may feel excluded from the social activities associated with their programme, as they may feel their capacity to work with other students is limited.

Independent study and preparation

Carrying out independent study may be challenging for some students with complications from concussion. The sustained concentration required for a higher education programme with vast amounts of independent study can be daunting. However, as higher education programmes vary in the amount of independent study entailed, students should be advised about the amount of such study on the programme and how they can best structure their work.

Many people with concussion complain of problems with binocular vision. People who suffer from binocular vision problems may have difficulty judging distance and have bouts of double vision, and reading may give them head-

aches. Therefore, many students with concussion can have trouble spending long periods in front of a screen, which is a large element of independent study and class preparation.

Exams

Sitting exams may be challenging for some students with concussion or its complications because of their problems with memory and concentration. Some may also experience tiredness, exhaustion and dizziness, which may make completing an exam difficult. Accordingly, they may need more time to complete and prepare for exams than their fellow students. These students should therefore be informed about the options for obtaining extended exam time and thus sitting exams on equal terms with their fellow students.

Internships

Students with concussion may be sensitive to light and noise, which can be problematic during their internship. Some may find it difficult being part of an environment not adapted to their issues with these and other disturbing stimuli. In this context, some may find an internship particularly exhausting and thus a barrier to their completing a full-time internship.

Social activities

Some students with concussion or its complications may have trouble playing an active role in social events, which often involve a lot of loud as well as background noise. Students with sensitivity to light and noise may feel compelled to withdraw from social activities, leading some to thus feel excluded. This may make it hard for them to complete their studies, as the social community plays a key part in student well-being.

Værd at vide

- Det kan være svært at se på studerende med en hjernerystelse, hvornår de er overbelastede. Spørg derfor gerne ind.
- Studerende med en hjernerystelse kan have behov for hyppige pauser til at skabe ro og få hvile.
- Studerende med en hjernerystelse kan have nedsat kognitiv kapacitet. De kan derfor have svært ved at følge de andre studerendes tempo.
- Studerende med en hjernerystelse er særligt følsomme over for stress. Derfor kan det være en god idé at overveje, hvordan det kan undgås at påføre de studerende stressbetonet arbejde, samt formidle muligheder for hjælp og fleksibilitet på studiet.

Læs mere:

Hjernerystelsesforeningen /
www.hjernerystelsesforeningen.dk

Cystic fibrosis

Cystic fibrosis is a chronic, inherited multi-organ disease. The disease makes a person's lungs particularly susceptible to bacteria, which, over time, will reduce their lung function. In the gastrointestinal system, the pancreas will often fail to produce the enzymes the body needs to digest food. The disease affects individuals in vastly different ways. The disease can present as thick mucus in the airways, lungs and digestive system; rattling or wheezing breathing; chronic cough; frequent lung infections; and poor digestion. Cystic fibrosis can also cause liver, kidney and bone problems.

The disease will often require daily, long-term symptom relief treatment. People with cystic fibrosis spend about one to three hours daily on vital treatment including medication, inhalants and pulmonary physiotherapy. They will also have to attend monthly check-ups at one of Denmark's two cystic fibrosis centres. Many will be hospitalised several times a year, and for some, cystic fibrosis will also mean lung transplant surgery.

Cystic fibrosis in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's medical condition, challenges may arise in various educational contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with cystic fibrosis are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Various teaching situations may be challenging for students with cystic fibrosis, as they will often be absent owing to the monthly hospital check-ups for their illness and the time-consuming symptom treatment they need. Part-time study or virtual teaching options could therefore be investigated. In general, classes and interaction with others entail a risk of bacteria and infection. Good hygiene and sanitisation are therefore important for students with cystic fibrosis, a consideration that fellow students and teachers are advised to observe when in contact with these students. Students with cystic fibrosis may also feel extra tired, which can affect them in a teaching situation. Some also cough a lot, which might bother both them and other students.

Group work

Group work can be difficult for students with cystic fibrosis if they have periods of frequent absence. Good hygiene is another factor since interacting with a study group increases the risk of bacterial infection. However, a study group can also be extremely helpful for these students, for example, by sharing class notes with them during their periods of absence.

Independent study and preparation

Some students with cystic fibrosis may have less energy and need to spend time on daily home treatment, check-ups and hospitalisation periods. This may mean that, at certain times, they may be unable to set aside time for study. Consequently, they may fall behind, with gaps arising in their academic knowledge. It may be relevant for some students to study part-time or join a mentoring scheme.

Exams

Some students with cystic fibrosis have numerous, extended periods of absence due to their illness and treatment. This can lead to gaps in their academic knowledge, which can pose a challenge when it comes to sitting exams. Accordingly, compensatory measures and special examination conditions may be needed.

Internships

Students with cystic fibrosis are advised against internships in industries that are harmful to the lungs. An example in point is agricultural work, which will often involve a high prevalence of bacteria and fungal spores. Other types of work also involve dust, fumes or other irritant gases. Strenuous physical work or working in cold or damp weather may be problematic for students with cystic fibrosis. The industries students with cystic fibrosis find suitable in their given situation vary.

Social activities

Participating in social activities can be demanding for some students with cystic fibrosis because their daily treatment takes a great deal of their time and energy. Students may feel extra tired, causing them to opt out of social activities to allow more energy for their studies, treatment and other daily activities. In this respect, it should be pointed out that cystic fibrosis is often an invisible disease.

Worth knowing

- Cystic fibrosis is a serious, chronic multi-organ disease, and the degree to and way in which it affects individuals vary greatly.
- Students with cystic fibrosis may have extended absences, as they often spend much time receiving daily treatment and attending regular check-ups in specific locations, at times even having to be hospitalised for treatment.
- Bear in mind that students with cystic fibrosis can experience extreme fatigue, which can lead to absence as well as affect their participation in class teaching, group work and social activities.

Find out more:
Cystisk Fibrose Foreningen /
www.cystiskfibrose.dk

Deafness

Danish sign language is the mother tongue of signing deaf people in Denmark. By contrast, spoken Danish is usually the mother tongue of hearing-impaired people (see also the section on hearing impairment). Danish sign language is an officially recognised language that differs from the sign languages of other countries – exactly as spoken and written languages differ from country to country. Signing deaf people can use Danish sign language to express themselves fully and freely, and they use trained sign language interpreters to communicate with hearing people. A sign language interpreter translates a deaf student's sign language into speech and vice-versa. In other words, the interpreter simultaneously translates everything said in the room.

Some people are born deaf; others are born with a hearing impairment that worsens over the years; while yet others become deaf as a result of an accident, disease or trauma. Hearing loss can be particularly anxiety provoking, potentially casting people with sudden hearing loss into an identity crisis or causing them to feel shame, exhaustion and grief as well as concerns and anxiety about further losing their hearing.

People who become deaf later in life may experience effects such as:

- exhaustion
- headaches
- neck muscle pain
- concentration problems
- lack of mental and physical energy because they expend great effort communicating with people who cannot sign or show no consideration for their condition.

Deafness in study-related contexts

Signing deaf people can follow an educational programme on a par with others, provided they are granted a sign language interpreter. The type of help and support deaf students need varies. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for deaf students are outlined below.

Teaching situations

As well as difficulties hearing, signing deaf students may also find concentrating, persevering and creating overview challenging, as well as structuring and planning their course of study. These challenges may be reflected in teaching situations where the students may feel tired and listless because of the intense concentration needed for communicating. This is partly because they cannot hear what is going on around them and thus miss minor comments or important points. This makes repetition particularly important. Sudden scheduling changes can also present a challenge for deaf students, because sign language interpreters have to be booked in advance, and such bookings are not easy to change. Teachers can help by making timetables and important dates accessible well ahead of time, thus enabling students to plan their use of interpreting services, among other things. Teachers should also be attentive to whether the students have the option of using assistive listening equipment or devices, and counselors can help find out whether the students need secretarial help.

Group work

Deaf students may have difficulty concentrating and be short of mental and physical energy during group work. Sign language communication with hearing people requires them to have good speech discipline, and everyone involved – the deaf students, sign language interpreter and the given hearing person – to maintain eye contact and be attentive. This strain grows only larger when deaf students have to expend extra energy on keeping up with and participating in group conversations and working out who said what. Depending on how much teaching and assignment work has preceded the group sessions, concentration issues and exhaustion can also affect the outcome of group work.

Exams

Deaf students may need special examination conditions to help them complete an exam on an equal footing with their fellow students. They might benefit from extended exam time, as communicating through an interpreter takes longer. It may also be relevant for some to have a Danish text translated into sign language during the exam preparation time, as the two languages do not have the same grammar.

Internships

Deaf students may have difficulty finding an internship because many businesses and employers are unaware of the audio assistive aids available or of how a workplace can be adjusted to accommodate signing students. Accordingly, some students may need extra help for seeking an internship, for example, when contacting a business or employer. Helping students to call a workplace can reduce these challenges. In this context, it is important to help the students finalise the contract, as there is no guarantee the sign language interpreter will be available when the business or employer returns the call.

Social activities

Deaf students may face communication challenges and misunderstandings in social contexts. This is particularly difficult because sign language interpreters do not accompany deaf students to extra-curricular activities, which may make them feel excluded from the student community and withdraw socially. As such, it is important to be mindful of deaf students who may feel isolated and lonely. Explaining their social needs to fellow students can help encourage a culture of inclusiveness and thus foster a psychologically safe study environment.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that deaf people may perceive themselves as a linguistic and cultural minority because of their unique language and common culture, which differ from those of hearing people.
- Signing deaf students who have a team of sign language interpreters to interpret for them during their studies are often responsible for planning interpreting schedules, etc. – a task that places further demands on their time and energy.
- Deaf students have to devote energy to getting used to student life, embracing a new academic environment, asking for breaks during class and planning their team of interpreters.

Find out more:

Danske Døves Landsforbund / www.ddl.dk

Depression

Depression is a psychological condition whose severity varies from light to moderate or severe depression. The commonest symptoms include low mood, lethargy, lack of motivation or interest in things, difficulty concentrating, sleep problems, changes in appetite, feeling of hopelessness, helplessness, negative thoughts about oneself and self-reproach. Severe depression can give rise to suicidal thoughts, and severely depressed people may become delusional or hallucinate. A combination of congenital inherited vulnerability and external factors can lead to depression. Depression may be experienced once, periodically or repeatedly, or it may be chronic. Once a person has suffered from depression, he or she is at greater risk of having new bouts of depression – particularly if the right help or treatment has not been given. People who suffer from depression are at greater risk of getting other mental or physical illnesses.

Depression in study-related contexts

Depression can reduce a person's capacity to work, and as such can also affect a student's capacity to study. The impact of depression on students varies, depending on the severity of the condition. Some students with depression will be unable to study actively, while others will be able to complete their study programme despite being depressed. However, because many find it hard to acknowledge they have a depression (or an impending one), they may not receive the right help. This may exacerbate and prolong the depression. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with depression are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students with depression often lack energy and may find it hard to concentrate. Their low energy level may come across as idleness and reluctance, but does not reflect lack of willingness to take part in the teaching and meet the requirements made. Rather, the illness causes an inability to mobilise the resources required by a given activity. Depression can also occasion periods of recurring absence, which may give reason to look into whether students can follow classes virtually.

Group work

Students with depression may have difficulty concentrating in group sessions, and some will even find it hard to muster the energy to attend group sessions. Furthermore, students with depression may find involving themselves in the social aspects of group work demanding. Students suffering from depression may lose interest in being with other people. They may have negative expectations of themselves, feeling they have nothing to contribute to the group and will only cause the others trouble instead. They may also struggle to concentrate or devote energy to the group's work. These challenges may cause them to withdraw and stay away from group meetings.

Independent study and preparation

Students with depression may find it hard to structure their work. Accordingly, they may find the independent study elements unmanageable and therefore postpone assignments and preparation, despite this being inexpedient. For some, such postponements may mean they fail to complete assignments or prepare for class.

Exams

Concentration difficulties, low energy and poor overview may affect these students in both written and oral exams. Depression may affect some so severely that they are unable to sit an exam or have to spend longer than normal on their assignments. In such cases, it should be looked into whether the student needs special examination conditions or other forms of exemption.

Internships

Students with depression may need to be clearly informed of the expectations to be met during their internship. It is important to be aware that an internship may bring extra challenges in the shape of new surroundings, new people, new and undefined requirements, other social expectations and long travel distance to the internship workplace or other logistical challenges. This may mean, for example, that students have difficulty managing their classes, assignments and exams alongside their internship.

Social activities

Because students with depression sometimes lack energy, motivation and interest, participating in the social aspects of their studies may be challenging. They may therefore withdraw from social life.

Worth knowing

- Some flexibility in study work and internship scheduling can help students with depression as their energy levels will vary in the course of a day.
- These students may need to restart their studies gradually when returning after a period of frequent absence due to depression.
- They may try to retreat into themselves as a result of the challenges depression presents. Feel free to ask how the students are getting on with their programme and whether they have anyone with whom to discuss their challenges.

Find out more:
DepressionsForeningen /
www.depressionsforeningen.dk

Diabetes

The two most common forms of diabetes are type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is a chronic illness that is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. Type 1 diabetes is not caused by an unhealthy lifestyle, which can, however, lead to type 2 diabetes. As no one really knows why some people develop type 1 diabetes, the disease can be neither prevented nor cured. With type 1 diabetes, the body ceases to produce insulin. This means a person's blood sugar levels have to be regulated by several daily insulin injections. The insulin dosage depends on the person's blood sugar measurements, the carbohydrate content of their diet and their activity level. People with type 1 diabetes thus have to learn to live with the disease for the rest of their lives. Type 2 diabetes usually affects adults. Although sometimes genetic, the disease can also be triggered by overweight, insufficient physical activity or various forms of medication. The body gradually loses its ability to absorb insulin, no longer producing it in adequate amounts.

The body requires sufficient insulin to signal body cells to absorb the sugar from food and drink and thus supply the body with energy. Frequent symptoms of diabetes are tiredness, low mood, headaches, increased thirst, frequent urination, and stomach pains.

There are other forms of diabetes besides types 1 and 2:

- LADA, latent autoimmune diabetes in adults, or type 1½ diabetes, in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells, as with type 1 diabetes. Since this disease develops slowly, it is rarely discovered before the age of 30.
- MODY, maturity onset diabetes of the young, is the term for a group of rare, little-known forms of diabetes. People with this condition may experience the same symptoms as with other forms of diabetes.
- The term secondary diabetes covers various types of diabetes that result from other diseases or medical treatment.

other daily challenges than normal, including challenges in study contexts. However, all students with diabetes will to some extent have to address their disease in study contexts. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with diabetes are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Some students with diabetes may find maintaining concentration during teaching challenging if their fluctuating blood sugar levels make them feel tired or unwell. Poor concentration may therefore may be a sign of high or low blood sugar. Some might find extra breaks during teaching necessary so they can measure their blood sugar and regulate it with insulin or a high-carbohydrate food or drink.

Group work

Some students with diabetes feel self-conscious about measuring their blood sugar and taking insulin in front of their co-students. Some consider this a very private act, and have to withdraw from social activities several times a day to find somewhere to be alone. Such problems may therefore cause some of these students to withdraw from group work with new people. If possible, it is a good idea for students with diabetes to MOODY talk openly about their condition with their fellow students, thus making it easier for them to understand, address and help with any challenges that may arise.

Independent study and preparation

Because fluctuating blood sugar levels can make students with diabetes feel down and exhausted, they may have trouble finding the physical and mental energy for study preparation. In particular, students with poorly managed diabetes may be cognitively affected, which in turn can adversely impact the energy they need to read, hand in work and prepare for class.

Exams

Some students with diabetes may feel particularly stressed in exam situations because they have to allow time to measure blood sugar and thus time to take insulin or eat to stabilise their levels. In addition, exam tension and nerves tend to affect the body's blood sugar. Students with diabetes therefore have to spend extra time dealing with their fluctuating blood sugar levels to prevent themselves under-performing academically. They may also need extra breaks for frequent lavatory visits during an exam. Students with diabetes who recognise these problems can contact the student counselling service, which can help with information about applying for extra exam time.

Internships

Some students with diabetes may find working at a workplace that is unaware of their condition challenging. For example, they may be uncomfortable taking an insulin injection in front of new people. As such, it may be a good idea for them to be open about their disease and tell the internship workplace about it. This will make it easier for the workplace, including colleagues, to make allowance for and understand these students' challenges.

Social activities

Some students with diabetes feel self-conscious about measuring their blood sugar and taking insulin in front of others. This may make joining in social activities with new people daunting. If these students find participating in social activities demanding, they could try opening dialogue about diabetes and its challenges with their fellow students. This can help their fellow students understand and address the challenges as well as support the student with diabetes.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with diabetes may need to attend an out-patient clinic for check-ups, which may lead to absence.
- Since diabetes is not always visible, it can be difficult to see that a student has the disease unless they tell others about it themselves. You must therefore be open and forthcoming if a student approaches you about his or her disease.
- Be aware that students with diabetes may need to use their mobile phone during class to scan their sensor, or need to eat or use the lavatory during a teaching session.

Find out more:

Diabetesforeningen / www.diabetes.dk

Videnscenter for diabetes /

www.videnscenterfordiabetes.dk

Diabetes in study-related contexts

Students manage their diabetes in different ways and react differently to the burdens the disease brings. Students with recently diagnosed diabetes or who have just started using new treatment equipment have much to think about. A student with a recent diabetes diagnosis may therefore face

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia is a cognitive functional impairment that affects the ability to learn, remember and understand numbers, mathematical principles and arithmetic procedures. People with this condition can have difficulty reading and writing numbers and getting to grips with tables, units, numerical sequences and basic arithmetic. They may also have problems planning how to use their time and estimating distances or directions. Dyscalculia can thus be perceived as a disability in higher education because students often need to obtain an overview of key dates or determine how much time they need to complete a given assignment. In some cases, dyscalculia can impact a student's academic self-esteem, motivation and educational choices. If dyscalculia is suspected, the first step is to test and assess the student, after which the need for support can be clarified. The granting of Special Educational Support (SPS) depends on an individual assessment of the student's particular needs as well as the support options available at the given place of education. Many digital aids are currently available for students to use in the course of their studies.

Dyscalculia in study-related contexts

Dyscalculia can present in many ways in various study contexts. As such, challenges and needs can vary from person to person. If possible, students should be open and explain their challenges with numbers, sequences or time so that counsellors, teachers and fellow students can support them in the best possible way. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with dyscalculia are outlined below.

Teaching situations

As a rule, students with dyscalculia spend more time and mental energy on preparation, planning their own time and creating a visual task overview than their fellow students. Teaching materials and schedules must therefore be available well ahead of time. Teachers can hand out PowerPoint presentations before class so that students can copy the tables and add supplementary notes instead of having to write everything down themselves.

Group work

Students with dyscalculia can have problems feeling included in a study group because they sometimes work more slowly and find it harder to grasp an assignment than other group members. It is therefore important that they are open about their condition and explain their challenges with number comprehension, overview and sense of time to their study group. At group exams, students with dyscalculia may need extended exam time or other aids.

Independent study and preparation

When doing preparatory work and other independent study, students with dyscalculia may run into problems with creating structure and overview as well as prioritising their time. This may be linked to the fact that the students' normal study strategies may no longer match up to the programme requirements. It may therefore be a good idea for these students to test new calculation and planning strategies, take plenty of notes or create a visual representation of tasks involving numbers. Another suggestion is using their mobile phone's timer or setting alarms for days with important deadlines. Students can also test various digital aids that simplify calculation processes, for example, the Dyscalculator and PhotoMath apps or the

MathSolver program. Voice-controlled assistants can also be used for recording arithmetic problems or formulae, as they can convert them into number symbols and calculations.

Exams

As regards exams, the parameters of the study programme regulations or exam form concerned can be a challenge for students with dyscalculia. They may find the set time of mathematics or statistics exams particularly challenging, as they spend longer on reading, writing and planning how to tackle an assignment than other students. Students with this condition therefore often need to use digital aids such as pocket calculators in the form of computer algebra systems (CAS) or various smartphone apps. In some cases they may need to apply for special examination conditions such as extended exam time or permission to use digital aids.

Internships

Students with dyscalculia who have been granted Special Educational Support (SPS) or digital aids need to find out whether this support also applies to their internship. They may need help obtaining an overview of their SPS options during an internship. These students can benefit by explaining their dyscalculia at the internship workplace so their new colleagues can support them in the best possible way.

Worth knowing

- Some students do not realise that dyscalculia is the cause of their difficulties. If you discover that a student is making arithmetic errors or has a poor sense of time, you can inform him or her of the possibilities for a test, an assessment and support.
- Consider whether PowerPoint presentations and key dates can be made available well ahead of time, as this may give students with dyscalculia more mental resources.
- Students with dyscalculia may need to graphically visualise tasks, need digital aids for simple arithmetic processes or extra time for mathematics assignments or written exams.

Find out more:
Danmarks læringsportal / www.emu.dk

Dyslexia

People with dyslexia have trouble making a connection between letters and sounds, which means students with this condition have difficulty reading and writing. They may spell erratically, read slowly, have problems with memory and with understanding what they read as well as have difficulty structuring their time. Dyslexia can therefore be perceived as a disability in higher education, where students are expected to meet high standards of written presentation and have the ability to gain an overview of large amounts of reading matter. In some cases, dyslexia can impact a student's academic self-esteem, motivation and educational choices.

Students with dyslexia documented through a dyslexia test can gain access to the Nota digital library and be granted digital reading and writing technologies (LST) through the SPS service (Special Educational Support). The most widely used reading and writing technologies are digital text-to-speech (read-aloud), word prediction, speech-to-text (dictation) and OCR conversion programs. However, reading and writing technologies are not a miracle cure in themselves. Students need training in understanding a digital reading voice and effectively using word prediction or speech-to-text technologies.

Dyslexia in study-related contexts

Dyslexia can present in various ways in study contexts. However, the challenges and needs can vary from person to person, and also depend on the study programme in which the given person is engaged. Students' openness about their difficulties is therefore positive, enabling counsellors, teachers and fellow students to support them as best possible. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with dyslexia are outlined below.

Teaching situations

As a rule, students that are dyslexic expend more time and mental energy on preparation, reading, and taking notes than those who are not. If students with dyslexia receive materials such as PowerPoint presentations and assignments ahead of class, they can reuse the text and add supplementary notes, thus reserving more mental energy for the actual teaching. Teaching materials must therefore be available well in advance, in a digital format that enables students to use reading and writing technologies. As a teacher, you must take note of whether the teaching materials have been scanned and OCR-converted – converted from image to text format. Otherwise, the students' reading and writing devices cannot read the text aloud. As a teacher and counsellor, you can also recommend students to find textbooks as e-books, for example through the Nota digital library.

Group work

Some students with dyslexia may find it hard to feel academically included and motivated in a study group. They often spend longer reading and have more trouble writing or understanding what they read than the rest of the group. Other students with dyslexia may benefit greatly from study group discussions. If students are open about their dyslexia, their fellow students can support them better in a range of situations or better understand how their reading and writing technologies work.

At group exams, students with dyslexia may need extra time for preparation or for the exam itself. In this context, teachers should consider the form in which group exams are conducted.

Independent study and preparation

Depending on the programme structure, students with dyslexia may find that independent study poses a range of challenges and needs. They may have general difficulty structuring major written assignments, creating an overview or planning their own time. No matter how well students with dyslexia know their condition, during a higher education course they can still encounter new reading and writing challenges that their usual study strategies will prove insufficient to meet in terms of the programme requirements.

Accordingly, it may be a good idea for them to test new note-taking techniques, search strategies or strategies for reading aloud. For example, students can skim read with a high reading aloud speed, search for certain words on a PC using CTRL + F and CMD + F on a Mac, or use the direct dictation function in Word or Google Docs. They can also download IntoWords or AppWriter onto a smartphone and use these apps to scan texts or read them aloud. With the Google Translator App, students can also take a photo of a text and have it translated to a text-to-speech language of their choice.

Exams

Students with dyslexia may find the set time of written exams challenging, as they spend longer on reading, writing and planning how to complete an assignment than students who are not dyslexic. They may therefore need to apply for special examination conditions such as extended exam time or permission to use reading and writing technologies.

Regarding exams it is important that exam materials are available in a digital, OCR-converted form. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, their SPS counsellor can help them order exam materials in a digital format that enables them to use their reading and writing technologies.

Internships

If students with dyslexia accept an internship, their employer must be informed of their need for reading and writing technologies. Counsellors can help them apply for Special Educational Support (SPS) during the internship. Students can also tell the internship workplace about their dyslexia so the employer can adapt and adjust the tasks to their reading and writing difficulties and need for support. Applications for SPS during an internship must be made through the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment (STAR).

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with dyslexia can order digital textbooks and exam materials from Nota if they have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice. With a Nota membership and an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, students can order textbooks and other materials that are not already available in Nota's library.
- Find out whether texts, assignments and PowerPoint presentations can be provided well in advance in digital, OCR-converted form, as this can make studying more manageable for students with dyslexia.
- Try to plan study activities that allow students with dyslexia to use reading and writing technologies if needed, including at exams, for which they can often also apply for extra time.

Find out more:
 Ordblindeforeningen /
www.ordblindeforeningen.dk

Eating disorders

An eating disorder is a mental health condition. People with an eating disorder all have a problematic relationship with food, their body and their weight. Although girls and young women are most commonly diagnosed with eating disorders, the condition can also affect boys and men.

Diagnostically, eating disorders are grouped into three main diagnoses:

- **Anorexia**, also known as anorexia nervosa. People with anorexia have a distorted image of their bodies and often neglect to eat or under-eat because they do not want to put on weight or have a strong desire to be slimmer. Some also exercise excessively or resort to other means of losing weight. Anorexia therefore generally leads to extreme weight loss.
- **Bulimia**, which shares certain similarities with anorexia. The desire to lose weight is a characteristic of both these disorders. However, bulimia differs in that instead of starving themselves, people first eat huge amounts of food before forcing themselves to vomit it up again. Other means of compensating for weight gain after over-eating include excessive exercising, laxatives or diet pills.
- **BED (Binge Eating Disorder)** is an eating disorder where people compulsively over-eat, after which they feel guilty, ashamed or disgusted. People who engage in this type of compulsive eating, which happens episodically, lose control and eat a lot of food in a short time. People with BED often have a low sense of self-worth and negative thoughts about themselves. The over-eating can be perceived as an attempt to relieve negative thoughts or calm emotional chaos.

Atypical eating disorders that do not fit any of the three categories also exist. Eating disorders can have both physical and psychological symptoms and consequences.

Eating disorders 0in study-related contexts

Many students with an eating disorder do well in their studies because they are highly focused on performing well and achieving high grades – some are highly perfectionist and put in extraordinary efforts. However, because eating

disorders can present in various ways, how they affect students varies.

Students who starve themselves for periods of time and become malnourished can experience cognitive difficulties that impact their capacity to study. Students whose condition requires treatment may be partly or fully absent from their studies because of their treatment and/or hospitalisation. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with an eating disorder are outlined below.

Study starts

Study start events often involve eating and drinking, and students with an eating disorder may be unable to cope with attending such events. To accommodate this, the option of bringing one's own food could be offered as this can help them feel secure. Attendance at some of the activities could be made optional.

Teaching situations

Students with an eating disorder may be affected by cognitive difficulties. This may be reflected in problems with memory and concentration, for one reason, because their thoughts revolve on food and weight. Students severely affected by their eating disorder may have difficulty keeping up with the teaching and the study programme generally. Accordingly, some will need Special Educational Support (SPS) in the form of a mentor scheme or faculty support teacher, while others may require certain exemptions.

Group work

Food often features in group work situations because it can be a focal point of a meeting or because group members eat while working. This can be challenging for students with an eating disorder as they sometimes struggle to eat with others or to watch others eating. This does not mean

the other study group members should fall in line with the students who have the condition, as this gives the eating disorder the upper hand. However, it may mean some of these students will prefer to work on their own so they can avoid having to address the social aspect of eating or worrying about food becoming a focus.

Independent study and preparation

Students with an eating disorder often demand a lot of themselves and thus also of their study efforts. They may feel the need to prepare extra thoroughly, for example, studying the entire syllabus and more. They may consider suggested reading as something they must read and not merely optional. As such, they impose more work on themselves and risk feeling a failure if they cannot manage everything.

Exams

Eating disorders can become exacerbated up to, during and after exam periods. In an exam situation, students with an eating disorder may have trouble concentrating because their thoughts constantly revolve on food and meals, and/or because they are not getting enough to eat and drink. Cognitive challenges can also affect students in exam situations. Students focusing intensely on performing well may have difficulty decoding what is expected, and instead risk over-performing out of fear of failing to meet expectations.

Internships

Students with an eating disorder often need control over how their day is planned as well as a clear structure, manageable tasks and precisely defined expectations. This also applies to internships. Canteens and communal eating can pressure students with this condition to such an extent that they do not want to complete an internship. If the students so wish, staff can help by talking to the internship workplace about the issue, thus ensuring that an on-site internship supervisor is informed.

Social activities

Students with an eating disorder can be withdrawn or choose to stay away from social activities – particularly if food is involved. These students may therefore find forming social relationships during their studies difficult. As such, they may need the support of a counsellor, mentor or fellow student to help them in social contexts. hænge.

Worth knowing

- These students' need for support depends on the stage of their eating disorder. Talk, therefore, to the students about what type of support they need.
- Students who have a great deal of absence owing to their eating disorder may find returning to their studies problematic. In this situation, having a designated contact person at the educational institution to follow up can be a great help.
- Students with an eating disorder may need clearly defined expectations about study requirements, as they may be overly focused on performing well and thus placing unrealistically high demands on themselves.

Find out more:
Landsforeningen mod spiseforstyrrelser
og selvskade / www.lmsos.dk
SIND / www.sind.dk

Endometriosis

Endometriosis is a painful, chronic condition that affects not only the female reproductive system but sometimes also the surrounding organs. This gender-specific condition only affects women of child-bearing age. Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the uterus lining starts to grow in other places, typically the ovaries and fallopian tubes, the ligaments that hold the uterus in place, the bladder, the intestines and the area between the vagina and the rectum. Endometriotic tissue responds to the hormones produced by the ovaries and therefore bleeds during menstruation. Unlike menstrual blood, blood shed from endometriotic tissue has nowhere to flow but into the abdominal cavity, which leads to inflammation in the surroundings. This causes tissue to grow together, which leads to scarring.

The symptoms of endometriosis differ from woman to woman, ranging from ordinary menstrual pains to severe abdominal pain. The most common symptoms are pain before and after menstruation, pain during ovulation, pain during and after sexual intercourse, pronounced fatigue, pain when urinating and defecating, diarrhoea, constipation, nausea, heavy and irregular periods and involuntary childlessness. The pain of endometriosis often leads to exhaustion. The condition can be treated with hormones, surgery and painkillers.

Endometriosis in study-related contexts

Students with endometriosis have varying support needs, depending on the challenges they face. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Open, personal dialogue with the individual students is therefore essential. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with endometriosis are outlined below.

Study starts

Telling new fellow students about having menstruation issues and a chronic gynaecological condition can be challenging. The condition will prevent some students from actively participating in study start activities as they need extra rest and at times painkillers.

Teaching situations

Endometriosis is often associated with severe pain in and around the abdominal region, but if scarring or endometriotic tissue also affects the main nerve pathways in the pelvic region, some students may have problems sitting down and leg pain. The pain may be so severe as to cause some students to pass out. Depending on the individual symptomatic profile and menstrual cycle, at times the pain may be so great as to prevent a student from going to classes and attending studies generally. Students with endometriosis may therefore have difficulty keeping up with the teaching programme and thus feel they lack the knowledge to sit an exam.

Group work

Students with endometriosis can experience wildly fluctuating symptoms, with pain varying from day to day and even from hour to hour. In these cases, other people may have difficulty understanding how a student can be fine in the morning, but have to go home sick at lunchtime. For this reason, these students should consider talking to the other group members about what having endometriosis is like. Students will often be able to carry out group work if the work is planned and if they can lie down with a heat pad while working.

Independent study and preparation

At times, endometriosis may entail doctor's visits and/or hospitalisation. The severity of the disorder and degree of pain may influence the amount of energy the student has to devote to active study. Students with endometriosis also tire faster, meaning they need more breaks. They may want to look into the support options available for meeting any challenges connected with planning and structuring their studies.

Exams

Since students with endometriosis can find foreseeing their symptoms at exam time difficult, they might benefit from applying for special examination conditions if necessary. Accordingly, the students should be informed about the documentation requirements.

Internships

Endometriosis may be so complicated and painful for some students as to make it difficult for them to manage a full working day at an internship. It would therefore support these students to know which aids can ease their difficulties and thus enable them to complete their internship. Visiting the internship workplace before students start their placement can be beneficial, as work tasks can be planned, and the students can get an idea of where to withdraw for a break.

Social activities

Studying in itself may be so demanding for some students with endometriosis that they have no energy left for other things such as social activities. For others, a lack of resources along with the fatigue, pain, heavy bleeding or gastrointestinal problems can drain their energy and thus compel them to carefully select which activities to attend. Telling fellow students about their situation can help the other students better understand why cancelling social activities can be necessary at certain times.

Worth knowing

- Endometriosis is a chronic disorder that is painful for many. However, the condition affects women differently.
- Remember that, for most women with endometriosis, pain is compounded by fatigue. Furthermore, many hide their pain.
- Look into the availability of such aids as adjustable-height desks, which enable users to sit or stand while working, or office chairs that relieve pain while students are seated.
- Many of these students may need to lie down owing to pronounced fatigue or to sit down with a heat pad.

Find out more:

Endometrioseforeningen / www.endo.dk

Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a chronic neurological condition with varying degrees of severity. The symptoms can present as repeated, spontaneous changes in sensation, awareness and/or motor disturbances caused by abnormal electrical impulses in parts of the brain. The convulsive seizures many associate with epilepsy are by no means the most common symptom of the condition. The seizures vary widely. For example, people with epilepsy may suddenly feel a strange bodily sensation, lose consciousness temporarily or be able to hear but not understand what they hear. A person with epilepsy may also have a seizure in which they continue with whatever they were doing, but are unconscious. They may also act inappropriately with respect to the given situation, such as speak incoherently. Even if seizure-free, many people with epilepsy also experience cognitive difficulties, such as learning, memory and concentration problems. These problems may affect their ability to set a goal, plan how to achieve it and evaluate their own efforts to do so.

Epilepsy in study-related contexts

The type and extent of challenges in study contexts are linked to such factors as the type of epilepsy, seizure frequency, medication and how long the student has lived with the condition. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Epileptic seizures can bring limitations and challenges in study situations. In addition, a large proportion of students with epilepsy experience cognitive difficulties, even if seizure-free. Many also suffer mental exhaustion, which can affect their capacity to complete a course of study within the prescribed completion time. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with epilepsy are outlined below.

Teaching situations

The cognitive challenges, coupled with any seizures and exhaustion, can affect many students with epilepsy in teaching situations. Memory and concentration problems may complicate these students' learning process, making it difficult for them to achieve the academic targets within the prescribed time. This may be evident during lectures, where they can easily forget what the lecturer has just said. The problems may also be reflected in teaching situations where the focus is on acquiring practical skills. These students may also take longer to complete theoretical and practical study assignments. If students with epilepsy struggle to handle physical textbooks, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studierservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studierservice.

Group work

Students with epilepsy may find participating in group work on an equal footing with other students hard because they often face cognitive challenges. This can be seen, for example, through longer latency responses, a slower working pace and lower energy as well as a lack of overview and structure. Students with epilepsy can frequently have extensive mental exhaustion problems, which presents a challenge to some during group work that is continually interrupted by social elements and thus sometimes takes longer. Likewise, fearing a seizure in front of a group of their peers, these students may withdraw from study groups, for example. Teachers and fellow students should therefore be aware of the special challenges students with epilepsy can experience. It will often be pertinent for them to pay attention to group size, as students with epilepsy can benefit from having a relatively small group of people to deal with.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study can pose a challenge to students with epilepsy as the condition often impacts their executive functions. Among other things, this means they may have difficulty independently structuring and planning work as well as setting targets and completing their plan. This may give students with epilepsy such problems as starting and completing reading tasks or assignments.

Exams

Depending on the exam form, students with epilepsy can face a range of challenges. Mental exhaustion and difficulties with overview may make it hard for them to focus and work effectively in a timed exam. The pressure of an exam situation may trigger a seizure or anxiety about having one, which in itself may trigger a seizure. It may therefore be relevant to look into a student's options for being granted special examination conditions.

Internships

Depending on the type of epilepsy and how well managed it is, an internship can present students with this condition certain challenges. The safety of students who are prone to seizures should be taken into account if, for example, the work entails using machinery or being in a laboratory. If the internship involves working with children or vulnerable groups, the possibility of seizures should also be discussed, specifically what they look like and how the employer should act if such a seizure occurs. In a more theoretically based internship, students with epilepsy may have difficulty independently planning their work and may become mentally fatigued, for example, because of the new demands regarding learning and overview made on them. Attention to the students' commuting time may also be relevant, as a long commute may increase fatigue.

Social activities

Some students with epilepsy may be reluctant to take part in social activities because keeping up with social interaction can be hard for some, while others may be concerned about having a seizure. General exhaustion can additionally impact the students' energy reserves when it comes to taking part in social activities.

Worth knowing

- Find out whether students with epilepsy can be helped to create structure and an overview as well as get started and sustain momentum, as a great many have cognitive challenges.
- Bear in mind that many students with epilepsy may need more frequent breaks and more time for assignments and exams as well as longer intervals between them.
- Students with epilepsy often need more manageable assignments, possibly broken down into smaller elements. It may be worth considering whether this need can be met.

Find out more:

Filadelfia, Specialrådgivning om Epilepsi /

www.filadelfia.dk

Epilepsiforeningen / www.epilepsiforeningen.dk

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterised by widespread pain due to abnormalities in the way the central nervous system processes pain. This makes the nerve cells overly sensitive, thus amplifying the pain signals transmitted around the body. Although changing from day to day, the symptoms of fibromyalgia typically include chronic muscle and joint pain, which often leads to fatigue as well as sensitivity to sound and light. These symptoms may restrict daily activities. Fibromyalgia can lead to disturbed sleep, memory problems, reduced physical resilience and trouble concentrating. Fibromyalgia can be an 'invisible' disease, as the pain or discomfort a person experiences is not always apparent.

Fibromyalgia in study-related contexts

Since the symptoms of students with fibromyalgia change from day to day, the challenges they encounter will similarly vary. They have periods with good days and less pain, while at other times persistent pain and discomfort will limit their daily activities and routines. Students with fibromyalgia may find that their condition is 'invisible' to the people around them, as this chronic disease has no visible outward signs. As such, some students may have difficulty getting people to understand the multiple challenges their disease can pose. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with fibromyalgia are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Some students with fibromyalgia may find it hard to participate in teaching situations on the same terms as their fellow students. In practical teaching situations requiring students to function well physically, students with reduced functional capacity and widespread pain may find participa-

tion challenging. During lengthy lectures with many hours of sitting, students with fibromyalgia may start getting pains and need to change their working position during the session.

Having light and sound sensitivity, some will have to grapple with high noise levels or sharp light. Accordingly, they may migrate to a quiet spot in the room where the incoming daylight is also the least intrusive.

Group work

Because students with fibromyalgia show no symptoms, they may find that other people do not take their functional impairment into consideration. These students' pain and fatigue can also make maintaining concentration challenging, despite their work standards' being as high as those of their fellow students. They could therefore consider opening a dialogue with the other group members to tell them about their disease and the various challenges they face. This can make it easier for fellow students to understand and help meet their challenges as well as support them.

Independent study and preparation

If a student's study programme involves a great deal of independent study or many hours of preparation, it may be an advantage for such students to have a good home office with seating that enables an ergonomic sitting position and with options for switching between standing and sitting. Unless such needs are considered, the student may have to deal with substantial pain. Some students with fibromyalgia may also have serious problems with concentration and fatigue, which can make it hard to muster the energy for class preparation and independent study.

Exams

Students with fibromyalgia may, for example, have difficulty sitting long written exams, because their pain and fatigue make concentrating for many hours a demanding undertaking. Completing an oral exam within the prescribed time can also be difficult for some students, as extreme pain, fatigue and trouble concentrating make it hard to achieve this on the same terms as their peer students. The possibility of special examination conditions could be explored for students with fibromyalgia who recognise these problems.

Internships

The pain and fatigue of fibromyalgia may make working a 37-hour week problematic for students with the condition, so a full-time internship could prove challenging for them. To help them work on equal terms, one could advise them to talk to their student counsellor and the internship workplace to jointly determine how best to conduct the internship. For example, the students could be assigned fewer demanding tasks, work reduced hours, take more breaks and have the possibility of using a resting room at the workplace.

Social activities

Participating in social student life may be challenging for some students with fibromyalgia if they are in great pain or extremely tired. Wishing to avoid aggravating their pain, they are usually compelled to bow out of activities. This can give rise to feelings of exclusion from social student life.

Worth knowing

- Focus on what the students are capable of rather than what they are not. This can be a good way of encouraging an open dialogue about their need for support.
- Bear in mind that some students with fibromyalgia need to attend treatment for their condition. During treatment, they may have periods of frequent absence.
- Consider whether it would be possible for students exhausted by their fibromyalgia to rest during the day.

Find out more:
Fibromyalgiforeningen / www.fibromyalgi.dk

Generalised anxiety disorder

People with generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) feel anxious to an extent that adversely impacts their daily lives. Their worries have nothing to do with specific situations, but concern a wide variety of issues such as the future, health, finances, family, how to cope with their studies or the anxiety in itself. This anxiety takes hold in the body and is expressed through physical symptoms including tension, headache, heart palpitations, stomach ache, sleep problems and shortness of breath. The disorder is also characterised by a range of psychological symptoms such as a feeling of unreality, low self-worth and cognitive issues like difficulty concentrating and memory problems.

People who suffer from generalised anxiety disorder feel some degree of anxiety almost all the time and for long periods. Their excessive worry means they feel constantly nervous, tense and anxious. Ruminating about such worries can greatly preoccupy them, while the fear of specific situations arising may lead people with GAD to avoid certain objects and situations. This disorder can therefore massively impact ordinary daily life. People who suffer from GAD disorder often find they cannot personally decide whether to worry. They may feel worrying is necessary because it better prepares them for accidents and other negative experiences. However, studies show that worrying has no such effect – on the contrary, it only generates more anxiety.

Generalised anxiety disorder in study-related contexts

Students with GAD will also often have many study-related worries about such issues as their academic, exam and social performance. Because generalised anxiety disorder comes in many guises, it affects each student differently in study contexts, both as regards the capacity to study and any support needed while studying. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with GAD are outlined below.

Study starts

As a new and unfamiliar situation, study start will present special challenges for students with generalised anxiety disorder. They may benefit hugely from having a clear outline of what is to happen and when, as well as what is expected of them.

Teaching situations

Students suffering from GAD may be so preoccupied with their worries that their ability to concentrate in teaching situations is compromised. In some cases, they can also be timid. Others, however, may dominate the environment, needing to check everything and repeatedly ask the same questions, because their insecurity is all-encompassing and their worry relentless. For example, they may be uncertain about whether they have understood correctly or read the exam date right, even though they have no reason to be in doubt.

Group work

Students with GAD can easily take part in group work, and the degree to which their anxiety might impact the work varies. In some situations, their concerns may unnecessarily dominate the study group, for instance, if their insecurity means they need constant validation from the rest of the group. In this case, these students could benefit from telling their group about their challenges so the others know how to help.

Independent study and preparation

If these students worry obsessively, they may have difficulty concentrating on study work, both at home and at the educational institution. They may have a special need to structure their work time, possibly incorporating a few breaks in which to ruminate and thus keep their worries from dominating the rest of their day.

Exams

Generalised anxiety may intensify during periods of stress, such as exam periods, when excessive worry can consume much of the students' energy. Students with GAD may also lose faith in their own abilities, regardless of how well they usually do in exams. Some will also experience exam anxiety (see also the section on phobias).

Internships

The prospect of and transition to an internship may cause much distress to students with generalised anxiety disorder. Occasionally, this anxiety may drain them to an extent that makes completing their internship seem impossible. Students excessively affected by anxiety may have a special need for internship tasks that are specific, defined and structured. The demands made on them must be clear and precise.

Social activities

Whether and how students with GAD are challenged in social situations varies greatly. Some will have multiple concerns about the social aspects of study, which can occasionally cause them to avoid social situations.

Worth knowing

- Try to balance any considerations in a way that both challenges and supports the students in continuing to do what they can and thus eschew further avoidance behaviour.
- When talking with students, avoid drawn-out conversations that delve into their worries. The more you focus on their worries, the greater they loom.
- Since students with generalised anxiety disorder may repeatedly need to check information, giving them the option of an e-mail contact may be a good idea – for one thing, because this causes less disturbance in class, and for another, because some students dare not ask questions face-to-face.

Find out more:

Angstforeningen / www.angstforeningen.dk

Psykiastrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

SIND / www.sind.dk

Hearing loss

The term hearing loss covers a condition in which people have impaired hearing in one or both ears. The various classifications of hearing loss are mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe and profound. A distinction is often made between congenital hearing loss, where a person grows up with the condition, and acquired/gradual hearing loss, where a person loses hearing later as a teenager or adult. A disease such as Menière's disease can cause hearing loss. In both cases, people with hearing loss must constantly adapt their current situation to their impairment, which can be immensely burdensome, since others around them are usually unaware of their functional impairment. Sudden hearing loss may also spontaneously occur after a person is subjected to a very loud noise or to an illness. Loss of hearing can be highly anxiety provoking, particularly for people with sudden hearing loss but also for those with acquired/gradual hearing loss, throwing them into an identity crisis or causing feelings of shame, exhaustion and grief as well as concerns and anxiety about losing further hearing.

People with hearing loss are generally treated with hearing aids or cochlear implants (CI). Cochlear implants are advanced hearing aids that can improve hearing and give people with moderate to profound hearing loss an opportunity to restore their sound perception. Most people with hearing loss use speech, while sign language is the fundamental language for others (for signing deaf people, please refer to the section on deafness). Although hearing aids amplify sound, they do not necessarily improve speech recognition for people who have discrimination loss as well as hearing loss. Discrimination loss means conversations sound muddy, with the words running together into an indistinguishable mass.

People who have become deaf later or have hearing loss may experience effects including exhaustion, lack of mental and physical energy reserves because of the great effort expended on communication, headaches, neck muscle pain, concentration problems, problems with determining direction, isolation, loneliness, and, in the worst case, depression as well as tinnitus and hypersensitivity to sound.

Hearing loss in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's degree of hearing loss, challenges may arise in various study contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Some examples of when and how study-related challenges may arise for students with hearing loss are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students with hearing loss have trouble distinguishing sounds during class and social events. Whatever the form of teaching – virtual or physical, theoretical or practical – these students will require good acoustics, eye contact, clear and explicit speech, lip-reading opportunities and good speech discipline, with one person talking at a time. Teachers should pay attention to the following factors: good lighting, absence of background noise, extra audio equipment or assistive aids, subtitled films/videos and sign-assisted communication. Otherwise, noise and teaching that is exclusively hearing-based can be challenging, preventing students from getting the maximum benefit from the teaching. Students with hearing loss may quickly feel tired because of the high demands on their concentration, whatever the form of communication. This can challenge their capacity to study, making it difficult for them to make the same progress as their fellow students within a given timeframe.

Group work

In many cases, group work can provide a suitable setting for students with hearing loss because there is less background noise and noise generally. Students with hearing loss may have a particular need for teaching and meetings to be conducted in rooms with good acoustics. As social environment is linked to academic environment and outcome, these students may need to be open about the challenges and needs hearing loss entails in various situations. This will allow the group to show greater consideration, for example, by exercising good speech discipline and making eye contact, thus better enabling students with hearing loss to contribute their academic input.

Independent study and preparation

Students with hearing loss are often better positioned to complete a programme of study if the number of assignments is evenly distributed, thus minimising the pressure. Furthermore, some flexibility in the daily student timetable may be necessary, for which reason it might be advisable to plan the syllabus and assignments accordingly. When it comes to independent study and preparation, these students can often work more efficiently as they experience significantly less background noise and noise generally. However, this means the teaching materials must be accessible well in advance and include the necessary subtitle or audio assistive aids.

Exams

These students may need compensatory exam arrangements to help them complete an exam on an equal footing with their fellow students. Relevant needs for students with hearing loss include extended exam time, subtitled videos/films, audio assistive aids and a writing or sign language interpreter.

Internships

Students with hearing loss may need help finding an internship because many businesses and employers are unaware of the aids available for people with hearing problems.

Social activities

Hearing impairment is a hidden disability that often complicates communication and causes social misunderstandings. In the worst case, people unable to belong to a community can become isolated, lonely and depressed. In environments with high noise levels, these students may have difficulty following conversations in a social context. Open communication, consideration and feeling part of a safe study environment can mitigate the social challenges.

Worth knowing

- When communicating with students with hearing loss, one should try not to be too far apart from the person. Short distances make it easier for them to understand what you are saying, even in a noisy setting.
- Be sure to speak clearly, and feel free to discuss what works best for the students when communicating.
- Students with hearing loss may need the support of a writing interpreter. It may also be relevant to apply for secretarial help for these students.

Find out more:

Høreforeningen / www.hoeforeningen.dk

Decibel / www.decibel.dk

Heart diseases

Some heart diseases are congenital while others develop later in life. A large number of young people with heart disease have often undergone cardiac surgery or similar interventions. Some will therefore have visible signs such as scarring or a bluish hue to their skin (cyanosis), while for most, heart disease is an invisible disease. Most young people with a heart condition lead a perfectly normal life, experiencing no or only a slight reduction in their daily functional capacity, while others feel more functionally incapacitated. Some of the most common symptoms in young people with heart disease are reduced stamina, shortness of breath or tiredness or fatigue brought on by physical exertion. A number of young people with heart disease find their daily lives are physically restricted.

Heart disease may give some young people mental or cognitive challenges. Heart disease can include such consequences as sadness, restlessness, a feeling of powerlessness, worry, depression, anxiety and trouble sleeping. The mental implications of being physically restricted may also be pronounced for some young people.

Heart disease in study-related contexts

The challenges in different study contexts will vary depending on the individual student's symptoms of heart disease and its effects on them. Some are unaffected by their condition while others are more challenged in their daily activities, including studying. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with heart disease are outlined below.

Teaching situations

What challenges students with a heart condition experience in teaching situations depend on their functional level and the specific situation. Practical teaching situations including physically demanding elements can challenge students physically restricted by their heart disease. Physical exertion often leaves students with heart disease short of breath and less stamina. They may therefore need to go at a gentler physical pace and/or take breaks to rest. Theoretical teaching situations can be challenging if these students also tire mentally, as this can make learning, concentrating and gaining an overview difficult. Also bear in mind that students with a heart condition may be absent for hospital check-ups and lengthy hospitalisations.

Group work

As with other teaching situations, long periods of group work can weary students with a heart condition, especially if physical elements are involved. They may need breaks and rest. Some students with a heart disease may be so mentally preoccupied with their physical limitations that they are unable to contribute at the same level as others in the group. It may therefore be beneficial to align group members' expectations, also if the students risk being absent because of hospitalisations due to their condition.

Independent study and preparation

Study time planned by the students themselves is not in itself challenging as they can plan rest breaks as needed. However, exhaustion may give some students with a heart condition problems with concentrating and learning. They may thus need more time to achieve an academic outcome than their fellow students.

Exams

Fatigue and lower stamina may challenge students with heart disease in exam situations. For example, they may find they are less fit for long-term exam work than other students may be. When sitting long exams, students with a heart disease may therefore need rest breaks as well as extra time to prepare assignments.

Internships

Extreme fatigue may affect students with a heart disease, thus posing a challenge during internship periods, particularly ones that are physically taxing. In such cases, these students may need to rest during the day at their internship workplace and/or to work at a slower pace, especially if they have physical limitations. The students' commute to the internship workplace may further increase their fatigue. Some may also have periods of absence due to hospital check-ups and long hospitalisations.

Social activities

Students with a heart disease may find that fatigue leaves them with no energy to participate in social activities. Some may also be hindered in participating in activities requiring physical effort, such as study start, parties or other physically demanding events. Accordingly, they often have to prioritise which elements to expend their energy on. However, other students with a heart condition may have no problem taking part in social activities.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with a heart disease can often expend much energy seeking help on their own and determining what information others need to be told.
- Although often invisible, heart conditions can lead to both physical and mental exhaustion. These students may therefore need to rest at their place of education or internship workplace.
- The severity of heart diseases varies. Some students may need support and individual adjustments, while others do not.
- Some want to avoid sticking out from the crowd, and as such must be met with understanding and acceptance.

Find out more:
Hjerteforeningen / www.hjerteforeningen.dk

Kidney diseases

There are many different kidney diseases, with varying symptoms and degrees of severity. The kidneys carry out numerous vital functions such as cleansing the blood, controlling the fluid-salt balance and filtering waste products. Reduced kidney function leads to full or partial weakening of these functions. Kidney disease can be congenital, but may also arise later in life. The disease can develop acutely, but can also result from conditions such as diabetes, an inflammation or high blood pressure. Kidney disease is generally classified as one of two forms: surgical or medical. Surgical kidney diseases usually affect only one kidney, while medical diseases affect both. A distinction is made between acute and chronic kidney disease. Most medical kidney diseases lead to chronic kidney failure, in some cases necessitating frequent hospital visits, check-ups and dialysis treatment, which can be very time-consuming. Examples of the effects of kidney disease include pronounced and constant tiredness, arm and leg cramps, shortness of breath, diarrhoea, itchy skin, nausea, fluid accumulation and loss of appetite. Many people in dialysis or who have had a kidney transplant also experience cognitive difficulties in the form of memory and concentration problems.

Kidney disease in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's symptoms and how advanced their kidney disease is, challenges may arise in various study-related contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Living with kidney disease will be new for some students, while others will have lived with it for a long time or always. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with kidney disease are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students with kidney disease may face challenges in various types of teaching situations. A constant, pronounced tiredness coupled with the memory and concentration difficulties that kidney patients often experience makes it difficult for them to maintain focus for a lengthy time during theoretical classes. Unless given consideration, they risk falling behind. Some ways teachers can help include uploading teaching materials, PowerPoint presentations and timetables well in advance. Practical teaching situations can also rapidly tire students with a kidney disease. It would be advisable for these students to avoid physically demanding teaching forms, particularly if they have had a fistula fitted during haemodialysis, as fistulas do not tolerate vibrations. If students with kidney disease are undergoing some form of dialysis treatment, they will often be absent, as this treatment can be time-consuming. They may therefore need the option of following classes virtually or by means of IT tools.

Group work

Constant, pronounced tiredness can make it difficult for students with kidney disease to plan and keep the appointments or deadlines required by group work. As treatment and check-ups can give rise to a great deal of absence, it might be a good idea for them to openly tell their study group about their need for support, for example, regarding discussions or note sharing.

Independent study and preparation

Fatigue can severely affect some students with kidney disease, making structuring their own time and prioritising energy for independent preparation a challenge. Time-consuming dialysis may mean less time for immersion in study, for which reason these students may not achieve the same results as other students. These students may therefore need to try out new note-taking techniques or reading strategies to attain the full academic benefit. The students can also plan rest breaks.

Exams

The parameters of certain exam forms can be challenging for students whose kidney disease causes tiredness or problems with memory and concentration. This may mean they are less efficient than other students or fail to achieve the same output, for example, at timed written exams. These students may need to take rest breaks during written exams in a resting room or on a sofa or similar place to lie down, if available. Extended exam time may therefore be needed to put students with a kidney disease on an equal footing with other students.

Internships

When starting an internship, students with a kidney disease should find out whether the job tasks are physically demanding and where they can take a rest. It might be a good idea to explain to the employer that the fatigue caused by kidney disease can affect the students' work pace and efficiency. If students are undergoing some form of dialysis treatment, they will often be absent, as such treatment can be time-consuming. If students are undergoing peritoneal dialysis (abdominal lining dialysis), awareness of the infection risk involved is also important.

Social activities

Students with a kidney disease that causes extreme tiredness or entails time-consuming dialysis may find social activities challenging. They may feel socially isolated or excluded if such events include physically strenuous activities. Although kidney diseases essentially impact the body physically, the diagnosis can also greatly affect students' mental state, motivation and well-being during their studies. A kidney disease diagnosed later in life often necessitates changes in lifestyle and everyday living, which can also mentally preoccupy these students.

Worth knowing

- Find out whether the students can get help structuring their day-to-day activities and possibly prioritising elements of the syllabus.
- Pay attention to whether a given activity is too tiring or physically strenuous, and if possible, find out whether students will have somewhere to take a rest at the place of study or during an exam.
- Find out whether students undergoing dialysis can follow teaching sessions virtually or in other ways.
- Do not hesitate to ask about the students' well-being, including the social elements.

Find out more:

Nyreforeningen / www.nyre.dk

Lung diseases

There are many different lung diseases, with varying symptoms and degrees of severity. The most common symptoms of lung diseases are shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and slight breathlessness as well as coughing, with or without phlegm. Other symptoms include wheezing or whistling breathing, chest pain and frequent infections such as colds, flu and pneumonia.

Lung diseases are long-term and often chronic, and most cannot be cured once they have broken out. The treatment depends on the specific lung disease and may consist of medication, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and oxygen. Some people will also need a lung transplant or other form of surgery.

The lung disease most frequently found in young people is asthma (also refer to the section on asthma and allergies). Other lung disorders include primary ciliary dyskinesia, diffuse lung disease, bronchitis, cystic fibrosis (also refer to the section on cystic fibrosis) and a range of other rare lung diseases and conditions that lead to impaired respiratory function and immunodeficiency.

Lung disease in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's symptoms and the severity of the disease, challenges may arise in various study contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with lung disease are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students with a lung disease may tire rapidly and feel depleted during a teaching situation. Practical parts of a teaching session that require a certain physical tempo may also be problematic for students with a lung disease, because they easily become breathless and fatigued after bursts of energetic activity. They may be challenged in environments containing particles that irritate the airways and similar irritants that can exacerbate their symptoms. In this context, teachers should consider the teaching site and the actual need for students' physical presence, as all interaction carries a risk of bacterial and viral infection. Good hygiene is therefore essential for these students and their close contacts. Students with a lung disease often have periods of recurring absence, particularly during the autumn and winter when the risk of infection is higher. This may lead to gaps in their academic knowledge, which again can lead them to fall behind. Students who can follow teaching virtually may find this boosts their study participation, both academically and socially.

Group work

Students may find participating in group work tough if their lung disease and reduced lung capacity cause them to tire quickly. Good hygiene can be another challenge since interacting with a study group brings a higher risk of viral and bacterial infection. Students with a lung disease often have periods of frequent absence, which can also cause problems with group work.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study and personal study planning is not generally associated with any risk for students with a lung disease, as they can plan accordingly. However, they may work more slowly and have less energy, which can mean they need more time for an assignment than other students.

Exams

Sitting an exam can challenge students with a lung disease, as they tire rapidly and expend all their energy. Their lung disease may cause these students difficulty achieving the same efficiency as other students. Special examination conditions for certain forms of exam may be relevant for some students.

Internships

Students with a lung disease would be well advised to avoid internships in certain industries if this training affects and irritates their breathing. Examples in point are internship workplaces with a lot of dust or cramped spaces and agricultural work, which will often involve a high prevalence of bacteria and fungal spores. Work involving smoke, heavy perfumes/air fresheners, strong cooking fumes, steam or other gases that can irritate the airways and cause them to contract should also be avoided.

Physically demanding work or working in cold or damp weather may also be challenging for students with a lung disease, as this can aggravate their symptoms. For some students their lung disease can lead to frequent absence.

Social activities

Students with a lung disease may have difficulty joining in social activities, as physical activity rapidly saps their energy, potentially leading to tiredness and social isolation. Another relevant consideration is whether the social activities take place in surroundings that irritate the airways, such as rooms with dust, cooking fumes or smoke or the outdoors in cold weather. A focus on hygiene is also important, as students with a lung disease are more susceptible to serious viral lung infections. Frequent absences may make them feel socially excluded. They may also have to set priorities for their daily life, cutting out social activities in order to have more energy for their academic work.

Worth knowing

- At times, students with a lung disease may be fit and well, and at others very ill.
- Students with a lung disease often have problems with tiring rapidly because their decreased lung capacity means they expend a great deal of energy.
- Think about whether the surroundings in which a given study activity takes place will expose students with a lung disease to airway irritation.
- Find out whether these students can virtually follow teaching sessions at times. The autumn and winter months are particularly demanding for students with a lung disease, as the risk of frequent infections increases.

Find out more:
Lungeforeningen / www.lunge.dk

Metabolic disorders

Metabolic disorders is a broad term for several types of disease, all usually permanent. These are hormonal diseases caused by the over- or under-production of metabolic hormone by the thyroid gland. The body's metabolism affects all its cells, and the term metabolic disorders covers the diagnosis of abnormally high or low metabolism as well as tumours in or cancer of the thyroid gland.

The general consequences of metabolic disorders include fatigue or restlessness, weight loss or gain, constipation or diarrhoea, increased sensitivity to cold, joint and muscle pain, and heart rhythm disturbances. Metabolic diseases can also cause psychological and cognitive symptoms such as problems with memory and concentration and difficulty with maintaining focus and overview, as well as planning and executing actions. Cognitive symptoms are seen particularly in connection with abnormally low metabolism. Studies have shown that untreated low metabolism may increase the risk of negative, depressive thoughts. The symptoms of metabolic disorders are most pronounced when the condition goes untreated or is unregulated with medicine.

Metabolic disorders in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's metabolic disorder, challenges may arise in various study contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with a metabolic disorder are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Depending on the given teaching situation, challenges may arise for students with a metabolic disorder. Any cognitive symptoms such as memory and concentration

problems and slower brain activity can make it hard for these students to gain the maximum benefit from theoretical teaching sessions. The students may also tire quickly and experience muscle and/or joint pain. As such, their symptoms may be challenging in practical and physically demanding teaching situations. Students with a metabolic disorder may experience restlessness rather than tiredness, but still struggle to focus their attention on the content of the teaching. These students may generally need more time to understand and process the teaching as well as require scheduled breaks.

Group work

Working in groups can be challenging if students with a metabolic disorder experience fatigue as well as memory and concentration problems. This can frustrate the individual student as well as the other group members, particularly if the group is unaware that the cause is a metabolic disorder, and therefore does not necessarily mean that students with the condition are not committed to and interested in being part of a successful group effort.

Independent study and preparation

Students with a metabolic disorder can find lengthy, independent study preparation challenging, as they often experience problems with concentrating and focusing their attention. This may lead to difficulties with obtaining an overview, establishing a structure or plan for independent work and ultimately succeeding in doing so.

Exams

Students with cognitive challenges arising from a metabolic disorder may be challenged to maintain the same level of efficiency and concentration as their fellow students, for example, during a timed written exam. Slower brain activity may mean they cannot achieve the same as other students. Slow brain activity, concentration difficulties and fatigue can also pose challenges during oral exams. For example, these students may also take longer to process and answer oral questions during a conversational exam. The limited preparation time prior to an oral exam may similarly pose problems. If necessary, the student can be informed about the options for exemptions and special examination conditions.

Internships

When starting an internship, students with a metabolic disorder may need to have their work planned according to their natural daily rhythm, as the levels of metabolic hormone follow this pattern. If an internship entails varying work hours, this may aggravate the student's symptoms. It is important to be aware that students with a metabolic disorder can often experience fatigue, concentration and memory problems as well as slower brain activity. These issues can be particularly challenging in a new environment where they have to learn to work in new ways. The internship workplace should be informed about the student's situation so the employer can adapt the work tasks and is aware of the need for rest breaks.

Social activities

Participation in social activities can be challenging for students with a metabolic disorder due to fatigue and lack of energy, especially those with low metabolism. In addition, constipation or diarrhoea can also be barriers to these students' participation in social activities.

Worth knowing

- Metabolic disorders can present varying symptoms and degrees of severity depending on whether their metabolic rate is too low or high and how well-managed the student's condition is.
- Find out whether work can be planned according to the given student's natural daily rhythm, as the levels of metabolic hormone follow this rhythm. Fluctuating rhythms can aggravate the student's symptoms.
- Students with a metabolic disorder can experience both good periods and more challenging periods. Do not hesitate to ask them how you can best support them and show them special consideration during challenging periods.

Find out more:

Stofskifteforeningen / www.stofskifteforeningen.dk

Migraine and headaches

The range of headache disorders includes migraine, tension headaches, post-traumatic headaches and cluster headaches.

- Tension headaches can have numerous causes such as physical or mental strain that causes neck muscles to contract. Tension headaches are a chronic functional impairment for some, while other people are affected from time to time.
- Post-traumatic headaches can result from concussion, with the person experiencing severe headaches and difficulty concentrating.
- Cluster headaches are a rare form of headache that often presents as excruciating attacks of pain that at times can require complete bed rest.
- Migraine is a disease that can affect the entire body, sometimes causing severe headaches with nausea, vomiting and over-sensitivity to light and sound. A migraine attack can last as long as 72 hours, and may be aggravated if the person is exposed to noise and sharp light. In many cases, migraine is a chronic, incurable condition. People suffering from chronic migraine have headaches for at least 15 days a month. In addition, they often have tension headaches with nausea and sensitivity to light and sound on the other days.

Migraine and other forms of headache hinder various functional capacities, thus causing challenges in everyday life. Taking things easy, resting and avoiding unnecessary stress may relieve some of the symptoms.

Migraine and headaches in study-related contexts

Some students suffering from one or more headache disorders may find relief for their symptoms if they take things calmly, rest and avoid unnecessary stress. During attacks students may be confined to bed, and the resulting frequent absences can be challenging. These students may therefore find completing a programme of higher education tough.

Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students who suffer from migraine or headaches are outlined below. However, the degree to which the condition hampers students in study contexts varies from student to student.

Teaching situations

Periods of multiple migraine attacks and severe headaches can be so debilitating that students need complete bed rest for several days and are thus often unable to take part in teaching sessions. These students may therefore need virtual or digital access to teaching sessions. Their sensitivity to sound and light can also make attending a whole day of teaching problematic, as they may also need to rest during the day. They may have particular trouble attending sessions with sharp or flickering light or being in classrooms with a lot of noise or loud sounds. Students with one or more forms of headache disease may also have difficulty concentrating because of the pain, which slows learning. As such, it may be helpful to observe scheduled breaks.

Group work

Participating in group work may be challenging for some students with migraine or headaches as pain and fatigue can mean they do not feel up to such effort. They can also have periods where their attacks prevent them from participating in their groups, which can sometimes make them feel excluded.

Independent study and preparation

Attacks may confine students to bed for many days and affect their concentration, making independent study and preparation difficult. Furthermore, during these periods students with migraine and headaches may find they have limited mental and physical energy. This may demotivate them and make it hard to keep up with the syllabus. Independent study can also prove a good solution for some students suffering from headache disorders, as they can structure their days, taking breaks as necessary and avoiding disturbing sounds and lighting effects. If students for example have vision problems due to migraine or headaches, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studieservice.

Exams

Exam periods can be stressful for and aggravate the symptoms of students with migraine or headaches. Some may have an attack on the exam day, resulting in an inability to complete the exam. As such, severe headache, nausea, concentration difficulties and tiredness can make completing long written or oral exams challenging for students with migraine or headaches. It may be relevant to look into whether the students need special examination conditions.

Internships

Students with migraine or headaches may find completing an internship hard, as their many absences, nausea, severe headaches and sensitivity to sound and light can challenge them in this respect. They may find it difficult working in an environment where allowances are not necessarily made for sensitivity to noise or sharp light. In this context, some may feel extremely fatigued, thus making it difficult for them to complete a full-time internship.

Social activities

As these students do not know when an attack will strike and thus confine them to bed, planning and actively participating in social study events can be complicated. This can lead to feelings of exclusion, since they are compelled to cancel many social gatherings because of an attack or lack of energy caused by their symptoms.

Worth knowing

- Students who suffer from migraine or other forms of headache disorder may have attacks that confine them to bed for up to 72 hours.
- Some students may need to rest during the day. In fact, a great number can experience tiredness and even exhaustion, and, by resting, can avoid becoming overstrained.
- Urging students to apply for read-aloud textbooks, for example, can be a good idea.
- With a Nota membership and an active SPS licence, students can order their textbooks as e-books or possibly audiobooks through Nota's Studieservice.

Læs mere:

Migræne & Hovedpineforeningen /
www.hovedpineforeningen.dk

Motor disability

Motor disability is a general term for a wide range of syndromes and diagnoses. Accordingly, the degree to which people with a motor disability are affected by their functional impairment varies, but the term primarily denotes people whose limbs are functionally impaired. They may also face cognitive challenges including fatigue, concentration difficulties and structuring challenges. Motor disability can be congenital, but may also arise later in life.

The following is a list of the most common diagnoses related to motor disability:

- Cerebral palsy (see also the section on cerebral palsy)
- Acquired brain damage (see also the section on brain damage)
- Rheumatic conditions (see also the section on rheumatism)
- Muscular atrophy (see also the section on muscular atrophy)
- Parkinson's disease
- Spina bifida
- Spinal cord injury
- Sclerosis (see also the section on sclerosis)
- Post-polio complications

Motor disability in study-related contexts

Since motor disability is a broad term covering a wide variety of diagnoses and syndromes, providing a comprehensive description of any educational challenges can be difficult. Motor disability limits the activities of the individual's daily student life to varying degrees, but will usually be associated with some form of challenge. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with a motor disability are outlined below.

Study starts

Study start can be a challenging time for students with a motor disability, for example, if they are unfamiliar with the physical surroundings of the educational institution and thus do not know the easiest ways to get around. An advance visit to the educational institution can help these students get an idea of its physical accessibility. If they

have cognitive issues related to their motor disability, gaining an overview of and structuring a new study programme can also prove challenging.

Teaching situations

Places of learning that fail to make allowance for accessibility pose a challenge for students with motor disabilities. For example, a last-minute change of class location can cause problems because the students, often unable to use the direct way, have usually identified another, more accessible route to the class in advance. Students with a motor disability may need special computer aids and writing tools. During class, some may also require a helper to assist them with practical matters such as lifting books or handling writing implements and a computer. Functional impairment in the upper and lower limbs can also make it hard for students to participate in practice-oriented teaching on equal terms with their co-students.

Group work

Some students with a motor disability may have speech difficulties or reduced mobility that can make communication challenging during group work or when working on assignments. In such cases, encouraging open dialogue between students with a motor disability and their fellow students can make it easier for other students to help with and understand some of the issues students with a motor disability can face.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study and preparation can pose challenges for some students with cognitive difficulties. Many will experience problems with concentration and fatigue as well as with creating structure and overview. Students with a motor disability may therefore need their study materials supplied well ahead of time, as this will make studying more manageable. Students with a motor disability who have difficulty handling physical textbooks may need membership of the Nota digital library. With an active SPS licence to Nota's Studiereservice, students can order the books required for their studies in digital format.

Exams

Some students with a motor disability will find it challenging to sit an exam on equal terms with their fellow students. Some students with severely reduced functional capacity may need physical or digital exam aids as well as extra exam time. The functional impairment of students with a motor disability can lead to pain during lengthy written exams. Furthermore, some may need frequent lavatory visits, which can also take some time. As such, they may need extra breaks during an exam. Oral exams can be challenging for students with a motor disability who have speech difficulties and therefore require more time to answer questions, for example. Students with cognitive difficulties may need more preparation time to get to grips with an exam assignment.

Internships

Disabilities may to a certain extent hinder students with a motor disability in completing any internship required by their study programme. Since many students with a motor disability have reduced mobility, the application process must take into account the physical surroundings of the internship workplace, as such students must be able to make their way around the location.

Social activities

As students with a motor disability are often challenged by their reduced functional capacity, they may in this context experience physical accessibility issues during social activities. They may also have difficulty participating in events involving a high level of physical activity, in turn leading them to feel excluded. Ultimately, this can mean they do not complete their studies, as social well-being is an important element of a good student life.

Worth knowing

- Meet students with a motor disability on their own terms and invite them to an open dialogue. Avoid reminding them of what they cannot do.
- Do not hesitate to ask them how you can best help them meet any challenges they might have.
- Some students with a motor disability may benefit from talking to other students in a similar position and who face study challenges. If the students are interested, you can suggest that they contact relevant associations.

Find out more:

Dansk Handicap Forbund /
www.danskhandicapforbund.dk

Multiple sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic condition in which the immune system attacks the nerve cells to varying degrees. Over time, the progress of MS means that messages from the brain to various parts of the body weaken or fail to reach their destination.

A distinction is made between three forms of multiple sclerosis:

- Relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis, the most common form of MS, is characterised by attacks. Such an attack of the disease varies in length and may last days, weeks or months. During an attack, the person may experience new symptoms or existing symptoms may worsen. After an attack, the symptoms often improve (remission), and then almost or completely disappear until the next attack (relapse). Depending on the intensity, an attack often leaves permanent damage.
- Primary progressive multiple sclerosis is characterised by a gradual worsening of symptoms. It starts more insidiously, and the symptoms worsen more gradually than with the relapsing remitting form.
- Secondary progressive multiple sclerosis is the form that many people with relapsing remitting MS eventually develop. It is characterised by the progressive deterioration of the person's functional level.

People with MS can have a variety of symptoms, both physical and cognitive. The physical symptoms can include sensory disturbances, pain, vision problems or paralysis in parts of the body, while the cognitive challenges can manifest as problems with memory and concentration. People with MS may also tire quickly, both physically and mentally.

Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in various study contexts should be done to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with multiple sclerosis are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Depending on the students' general condition due to the MS, and whether they are having an attack, challenges may arise in various teaching situations. Pain, sensory disturbances, paralysis and vision problems are potential consequences of MS that can pose barriers in both practical and theoretical teaching situations. The cognitive symptoms of multiple sclerosis can also be a challenge for students trying to grasp and process study content. In many cases, the total sum of symptoms causes students with MS to tire quickly, coupled with the fact that they also often have to expend extra energy to gain the same academic benefit from the teaching as other students. As such, these students may often need a slower work pace, both physically and mentally. They may also be frequently absent, for example, during an attack when they may be debilitated by a complex, painful pattern of symptoms.

Group work

Working in groups can be challenging if students with MS are experiencing symptoms or attacks. This may lead to absences, and they may be unable to make the same contribution as when they have milder symptoms.

Independent study and preparation

Cognitive disturbances can cause students with MS difficulty with concentrating and focusing their attention on a task, which leads to challenges when they have to read or

prepare something on their own. This may mean students with MS have problems creating an overview and structuring or planning independent work, and accordingly have to spend more time or energy in order to achieve an academic outcome. If students with multiple sclerosis struggle to handle physical textbooks, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studieservice.

Exams

Some students may have cognitive challenges as a result of their MS, which can make it hard for them to maintain the same level of efficiency and concentration as other students sitting the same exams. Students with MS may also take longer to process and answer questions at both oral and written exams. Conversely, some students with multiple sclerosis may have very few or no symptoms during periods of remission. In these cases, MS will often not prevent the students from sitting their exams.

Internships

The degree to which challenges arise during internships as well as how and possibly when they occur depends on the individual student. Some students with MS may be very restricted in a physically demanding internship place, while this is not an issue for others with the same condition. It is also important that students with MS avoid stressful work as much as possible, as over time, this can provoke an attack or a relapse. Accordingly, it may be a good idea to align requirements and expectations with the internship workplace. Dialogue with the employer may be particularly important for students with a progressive form of sclerosis or who are experiencing a relapse, as this may lead to absence. Some MS students may be wheelchair users, and for them, the physical accessibility of the internship workplace is a relevant consideration.

Social activities

Participation in social activities can be challenging for students with MS who are constantly affected by symptoms or are experiencing a relapse. Physical and mental exhaustion are examples of some of the challenges students with MS may encounter. Pain and paralysis can also prevent their taking part in social events. Other students with MS may have no or few MS-related barriers to participation in social activities.

Worth knowing

- Uncertainty about the disease may preoccupy students with MS and can often be a huge psychological burden.
- Many people with MS do not want to stand out, and may therefore be reluctant to seek help.
- Consider whether you can avoid imposing stressful work on these students, as it can provoke attacks and exacerbate the consequences.
- Since multiple sclerosis can lead to vision problems, students with MS may need to be given presentation and study materials well in advance or possibly obtain Nota membership.
- Look into physical accessibility at the school or college, as sclerosis can lead to physical limitations.

Find out more:

Scleroseforeningen / www.scleroseforeningen.dk

Multiple sclerosis in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's symptoms and the severity of the MS, challenges may arise in various educational contexts. At times, some students with MS are unaffected by the disease, while others will be more severely affected to a debilitating degree – either by attacks or by constant symptoms. The cognitive challenges and fatigue caused by MS can often impact a course of study.

Muscular dystrophy

Muscular dystrophy is an umbrella term for a group of diagnoses whose common trait is the effect on nerve-muscle interaction. The condition is generally characterised by the gradual weakening of individual muscles or larger muscle groups. In many cases, it also causes muscles to shrink. Although muscular dystrophy is a chronic disease from the onset and is incurable, early treatment can in some cases delay its symptoms. Muscular dystrophy varies in many ways: the stage of life at which the different forms occur, whether it is congenital, the way in which the condition develops and the challenges that may arise. The severity of muscular dystrophy also varies. Some people with the disease will need extensive help with everyday living, for example, from helpers or ventilators. Conversely, others may have few symptoms. Because the muscles waste away, most people with muscular dystrophy find they have less stamina and energy, which can lead to both physical and mental exhaustion. Some muscular dystrophy diagnoses may also entail cognitive problems.

Muscular dystrophy in study-related contexts

Depending on how the disease impacts the individual student, challenges may arise in a number of study contexts. Some students with muscular dystrophy may need extensive assistive services, while others can study on equal terms with other students. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with muscular dystrophy are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with muscular dystrophy may use a wheelchair or have difficulty walking, which can pose physical accessibility challenges. It may therefore be relevant to open a dialogue with the students before studies start as this can

ensure they know about the facilities with physical accessibility, such as lifts, lavatories and parking facilities for both academic and social events.

Teaching situations

Practical teaching sessions requiring physical effort may challenge students with muscular dystrophy, who often tire faster during physical activity. Some may also be hindered if the surroundings do not make allowance for students who use wheelchairs or ventilators. They may also encounter physical barriers if they have to transport themselves between classrooms. Some students with muscular dystrophy may also be cognitively challenged, which can make it difficult for them to gain the same academic benefit from a teaching situation as their peers. Some will also need a helper to accompany them to all teaching situations and provide both personal and practical assistance, including help with taking notes. Students with muscular dystrophy who have difficulty carrying or handling physical textbooks could look into whether they could become a member of the Nota digital library. With an active SPS licence, students can order digital textbooks through Nota's Studieservice.

Group work

Students with muscular dystrophy may have less physical and mental stamina during group work, and some may be unable to contribute on a par with the other group members. The sense that their lower stamina is inhibiting the study group may cause them mental distress. Moreover, some students with muscular dystrophy need a practical/personal helper to take part in the group. The breathing capacity of some students with muscular dystrophy may also be impaired, which may affect how long they can speak for, for example. It can be helpful for the group to be aware of the students' challenges so they can offer the best possible support.

Independent study and preparation

Study and preparation time planned by the students themselves is not, as a rule, considered challenging, as students with muscular dystrophy can personally assess which surroundings will best accommodate their condition. Those who tire rapidly and have difficulty concentrating and maintaining an overview may have to spend extra time and energy on the independent elements of their study programme.

Exams

When it comes to exams requiring students' physical presence, attention to physical accessibility is a relevant consideration. Some students with muscular dystrophy may expend a great deal of energy considering their transport options and travelling long distances, which can make exams all the more physically and mentally exhausting. Students whose breathing is compromised and who use a ventilator may find talking during an oral exam takes a great deal of their energy. As such, these students will do better if the examining teacher and external examiners allow them the time they need to talk. If these students have other exam-related challenges, the option of applying for special arrangements or other support could be looked into.

Internships

An internship can be demanding for students with muscular dystrophy as they can tire easily – both physically and mentally. Often being unknown territory, an internship workplace may require students to expend extra energy on navigating their new surroundings, including such factors as different floor and ground surfaces, long distances and whether tables/chairs are optimal. Students who use a wheelchair may also find a lack of physical accessibility or of a wheelchair-friendly layout at the internship premises to be an impediment.

Social activities

Social activities including physically strenuous elements can be challenging for students with muscular dystrophy, as they often exert a great deal of energy to use their muscles. One should be aware whether the given social activities take place in physically accessible surroundings that accommodate the fact that it takes energy for students with muscular dystrophy to transport themselves over long distances and they may use wheelchairs.

Worth knowing

- Muscular dystrophy is a chronic disease from the onset, and the functional capacity of people with this condition gradually deteriorates.
- In some cases, muscular dystrophy brings not only physical but also mental and cognitive challenges.
- Ensure that students with muscular dystrophy have physical access to teaching sessions and internships.
- Students with muscular dystrophy are often very cautious and exert a lot of physical and mental energy when taking part in academic and social activities, including finding out about physical accessibility (eg, stairs, surfaces, distances).

Læs mere:

Muskelsvindfonden /

www.muskelsvindfonden.dk

Rehabiliteringscenter for Muskelsvind /

OCD

OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) is an anxiety disorder that manifests as unwanted, recurring compulsive thoughts and behaviours. These thoughts can be hard to dispel and may pivot on such anxieties as fear of infection/chemicals, injury/accident or exaggerated doubt about order/symmetry. To drive away the unpleasant thoughts, the person may feel compelled to check certain things over and over again, or carry out mental counting or cleaning rituals. In some cases, OCD occurs along with other mental health conditions like depression, eating disorders, Tourette's syndrome or other anxiety disorders and phobia.

People with OCD usually know that their thoughts about impending disaster and their compulsive behaviours are absurd and exaggerated, but in the middle of an OCD-provoking situation, their fear often seems realistic and their behaviours necessary. Accordingly, people with OCD often spend a lot of time and energy avoiding given situations, social contact or certain places to alleviate their discomfort and compulsion. However, this evasive behaviour can aggravate the compulsive symptoms and start a vicious circle.

OCD can cause cognitive difficulties and affect the person's social relationships, self-worth and daily quality of life. Feeling ashamed and that they should pull themselves together, many hide their symptoms in social contexts.

OCD in study-related contexts

OCD can present in a wide variety of ways. Both the severity and type of the OCD symptoms can have a bearing on what sort of support students need. Some only have occasional compulsive symptoms while others are severely debilitated. Some compulsive symptoms like fear of infection or exaggerated perfectionism can affect the students' ability to function academically. Other OCD symptoms are restricted to home life and thus have no direct impact on their student life. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's needs for guidance, support and ex-

emptions in such contexts should be carried out. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with OCD are outlined below.

Teaching situations

In teaching situations, students with OCD may be tense, lack concentration and feel distanced because, to subdue their anxiety or doubt, they must often pour their energy into carrying out or suppressing thoughts and mental rituals. Some may therefore seem absent-minded, irritable, tired or defeatist, while others may stay away from class and incur increasing absences.

As a teacher, you can upload PowerPoint presentations, key dates and other teaching materials in good time to enable students to prepare for class. Teachers can also make structure an element of their teaching sessions, for example, by outlining the day's programme at the start of the session, repeating key salient points and observing scheduled breaks. Some students with OCD need things to be systematic, because this frees up more energy for them to take part in academic and social activities.

Group work

Group work may present obstacles for students with OCD, as they often devote more time and energy to reading and completing assignments than their fellow students. Mental rituals, constant doubt about their own performance or other people's unpredictability may cause some students with OCD to socially isolate themselves. They may therefore benefit from being open with their fellow students and telling them about their challenges or need for structure. This will enable study group members to support these students in good and bad periods.

Independent study and preparation

Students with OCD may struggle to plan and organise their own time because compulsive thoughts and behaviours are often disruptive, interfering with their preparation and independent study. Reading, writing or remembering certain things can be time-consuming and difficult if one feels the urge to double-check whether a given assignment has been done correctly or to check things over and over again. This can drain the student's energy as well as lead to delays and undesirable postponements of deadlines.

Students who dare confront their OCD may find this gives them greater flexibility in their student life at home. Among other things, they can set themselves specific milestones, writing down important information on a daily or weekly basis. They can also print out weekly schedules that give them a visual overview.

Exams

Exam periods can often cause compulsive symptoms to flare up. Students with OCD may generally have a hard time handling the uncertainty often associated with both oral and written exams. They may be in doubt about their programme's academic requirements or anxious about how others see them or about the pressure of timed written exams. Some students may need to know key dates or specific exam requirements. Others may need to adjust their own expectations and divide an exam into smaller parts. As a counsellor, you can tell them about the options for exemptions and special examination conditions.

Internships

An internship can be challenging for students with OCD, as a new place, new colleagues and unpredictable work assignments can exacerbate their compulsive thoughts, feeling of isolation and rituals. As such they may need a clearly structured internship. Some may also need to visit the internship workplace before starting and make a note of whom to call if they are sick. They may also need to work fewer hours or require other support during their internship.

Social activities

In some cases, compulsive thoughts and behaviours may strain students with OCD and demand their energy to a degree that compels them to socially isolate themselves. Some avoid social activities and may have difficulty being included. Others benefit from social activities, which can keep their thoughts and rituals at bay for a period. If students with OCD tell their fellow students about their challenges, these peers can provide better support or show consideration for them.

Worth knowing

- As a counsellor or teacher, you can focus on the moments when the student's OCD is absent. This can boost the students' self-confidence.
- Bear in mind that structure, preparation and milestones can free up more mental energy for students with OCD.
- Compulsive thoughts and behaviours can affect students with OCD in various ways and with widely varying degrees of severity. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions.

Find out more:

OCD-foreningen / www.ocd-foreningen.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

SIND / www.sind.dk

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bones, also known as bone fragility. The disease is caused by the loss and weakening of bone mass, but external signs are rarely visible because the bones weaken from within. The result is weak, porous bones so lacking in calcium that they easily break.

Although osteoporosis most commonly affects the elderly, some young people can also be affected. These include:

- **people with another condition that affects the absorption of calcium in the bones, for example, intestinal diseases that prevent calcium from being adequately absorbed**
- **people who have or have had eating disorders where their long-term calcium intake has been insufficient to build/maintain their bones normally**
- **people being treated with cortisones or other medicinal treatment that accelerates bone deterioration**
- **pregnant women unaware of their calcium intake and whose body therefore steals calcium from their bones to ensure the foetus gets enough calcium.**

The treatment is medication and a focus on diet, exercise and rest. During the day, people who suffer from osteoporosis may experience pain, tiredness and reduced mobility. They may have periods of hospitalisation due to bone fractures, treatment with plaster casts and subsequent rehabilitation.

Osteoporosis in study-related contexts

Osteoporosis presents challenges to varying degrees for individual students depending on the severity of the condition, on whether the student has fractures and, if so, the location of these fractures. For example, broken bones in the spine have a greater long-term impact on daily studies than a broken wrist. The degree of challenges also depends on how much time the student has to spend on rehabilita-

tion/exercise and rest. As such, students may need to plan a day that alternates between work, rest and rehabilitation/exercise. The extent to which this is possible depends on the educational institution's individual assessment of the students as well as which allowances can be made and any support options available. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with osteoporosis are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Some students with osteoporosis may have trouble carrying heavy books to and from their school or college. Therefore, they could be encouraged to apply for extra books to keep at the educational institution.

Students with osteoporosis may find participating in practically oriented teaching sessions challenging since their fracture risk is greater. They may also be in pain, and their functional capacity may be impaired. Tiredness and the need to change position or maybe rest can also mean these students find long lectures or teaching from the blackboard challenging. As such, it may be a good idea for them to wear compression clothing that can support the body in seated or standing teaching situations. In addition, students with osteoporosis may have more days of absence due to treatment, frequent appointments, rehabilitation, physical pain and fatigue, all of which can lead to gaps in their academic knowledge.

Group work

Because their problems and need to rest are not always apparent, students with arthritis may feel that fellow students fail to consider their challenges. Accordingly, as a higher education member of staff, you may find it a good idea to talk to students about openly discussing their osteoporosis and potential challenges with their fellow students. This

would prevent these students from feeling excluded from group work.

Independent study and preparation

For students with osteoporosis, finding the time and energy to prepare for classes or exams can be challenging, because they have to plan daily routines that alternate between work and rest, yet also allow time for exercise. This also applies to the period after a new fracture, where they have doctor's appointments and rehabilitation sessions.

Exams

Students with osteoporosis may have difficulty sitting long written exams, because their physical pain and fatigue may mean they need to change positions and rest. Furthermore, having to wear plaster casts and attend rehabilitation sessions can face these students with additional challenges in the period following a fracture.

Some may also find oral exams challenging, because their pain, fatigue and functional impairments make it hard for them to take the exam on the same terms as their fellow students.

Internships

Some students with osteoporosis may find working a 37-hour week problematic because of pain and tiredness, for which reason it can be difficult for them to complete an internship on the same terms as their fellow students. Students with osteoporosis could therefore be advised to talk to the internship workplace about how to jointly find the best possible way of conducting the internship. Examples of solutions could be agreement on tasks with a low fracture risk as well as the possibility of having a personal workstation with an adjustable office chair, a height-adjustable desk and rest options. In some cases, permitting the student to complete a part-time internship may have to be considered.

Social activities

Some students with osteoporosis have difficulty finding the time and resources to participate in social occasions at their school or college. They may therefore often have to decline despite wanting to join in. These students may sometimes have to assess how much risk an event entails and only attend certain parts of it.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with osteoporosis often quickly use up their energy and get tired. As such, it may be a good idea to look into whether the educational institution and/or internship workplace has somewhere for them to rest.
- Students with osteoporosis may need to vary their working positions. You can therefore suggest that they apply for special office chairs or similar items.
- Bear in mind that students with osteoporosis may have to take days off for doctor's appointments, and for periods of severe pain or rehabilitation.

Find out more:

Osteoporoseforeningen / www.osteoporose-f.dk

Panic disorder

Panic disorder is characterised by sudden, intense anxiety attacks, often with no apparent reason for the anxiety. The body reacts as though in serious danger, but in reality this is an intense, exaggerated response to the actual danger. The physical symptoms of panic disorder are extreme. People affected by the disorder may have difficulty breathing, their fingers may tingle, and their sight may blacken. The symptoms may be reminiscent of a heart attack, and the person may be convinced he or she is going to die. Thus, having a panic attack can be terrifying, and may lead to anxiety about the anxiety itself. In other words, people who suffer panic attacks may be anxious about where and when the next attack will come.

Panic disorder can cause people to try to avoid certain situations expected to trigger panic attacks. This can lead to a vicious circle where they find it increasingly hard to leave their own house for fear of being confronted with situations that can set off such attacks. This can develop into a condition known as agoraphobia.

Panic disorder in study-related contexts

Panic disorder can also come of the blue, meaning that students can also have a panic attack at their school or college. Few people experience frequent panic attacks. Accordingly, for many the fear of having a panic attack and the avoidance behaviour this entails are what disrupt their student life. The impact of panic disorder on students varies, as does the type of support they need. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with panic disorder are outlined below.

Study starts

Students who suffer from panic disorder or agoraphobia may need specific information about what the induction programme involves and where activities take place. Before starting their studies, some may need to practise the route to their educational institution or to visit it to familiarise themselves with the premises. An agreement about where the students can seek help if they have a panic attack can also be a good idea. For example, there may be a place where they can sit and where a staff member is available. Simply making such agreements will often be sufficient to calm the students, without their ever having to resort to them.

Teaching situations

Students with panic disorder may be concerned about what will happen and what others will think if they have a panic attack during a lecture or in a classroom. Such worries may be so intrusive as to interfere with their concentration during class, which can affect their learning. Students may find specific situations anxiety-provoking, such as making a presentation. For some, worries about having a panic attack at college or university may mean they cannot cope with attending class.

Group work

Whether group work is challenging depends on the individual student with panic disorder. However, many will generally find it easiest having a fixed study group whose members know about their challenges and what to do if students with panic disorder feel insecure.

Independent study and preparation

Some students with panic disorder may be challenged by a low energy level, racing thoughts and concentration lapses. Most of them find independent study and preparation relatively problem-free, as they can adapt the surroundings to suit their needs, for example, working from home if leaving home is difficult. However, if independent study is the programme's primary form of study, a possible consequence is that these students do not practise leaving home, which can aggravate conditions such as agoraphobia.

Exams

Exams themselves and the exam setting can both challenge students with panic disorder. In some cases, a few practical considerations can be taken, for example, which room to hold the exam in, as this can ease the student's situation. Students who dread having a panic attack during an exam may benefit from agreeing in advance with the examining teacher what he or she should do if they go blank during the exam. For example, the examiner could pose an easy question to get the students back on track. If a student has a panic attack, the examiner must remain calm and remind him or her to take deep breaths and that the situation will pass. In some cases, the exam may have to be stopped, so the examiner and external examiner would do well to decide beforehand on the steps to take in such an event. If necessary, students can be informed about special examination conditions or other support options if they experience exam anxiety.

Internships

Multiple aspects related to an internship can challenge students with panic disorder. Even the very act of getting to the internship workplace can be problematic for students afraid of leaving home or using public transport. Students may also worry about having sudden panic attacks in front of new people or in a new place. As such, students may find it helpful to make an advance agreement about where to seek help if they have a panic attack.

Social activities

Place and context can determine what challenges students suffering from panic disorder and/or agoraphobia will face when taking part in social activities. Some will avoid attending social activities such as Friday bars or study trips for fear of having a panic attack in the middle of the event. They may also be anxious about what others will think if they have a panic attack.

Worth knowing

- Ask students with panic disorder and/or agoraphobia how they want to be supported during their studies, as their needs may differ.
- Be cautious about suggesting exemptions such as allowing the students to avoid certain situations, as the students may need to practise managing them.
- Importantly, if a student has a panic attack, remain calm and remind the student that the situation will pass and that he or she should try to take slow, deep breaths. If this does not help or you are concerned that the student's reactions have a physical cause, you should fetch help.

Find out more:

Angstforeningen / www.angstforeningen.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

SIND / www.sind.dk

Personality disorders

A personality disorder is a psychiatric disorder where a personality significantly deviates from the norm or from expected, generally accepted behaviour. Personality disorders is a broad term for a range of disorders. Examples of personality disorders include borderline personality disorder (see also the section on borderline personality disorder), dependent personality disorder (dependent and helpless) and dissocial personality disorder (irresponsible and inconsiderate).

Personality disorders manifest in various ways. However, some characteristics are common across the personality disorder spectrum:

- The diagnosis is often seen in people who have been subject to childhood traumas such as a high conflict level in the home, neglect or sexual abuse.
- The deviant personality traits cause problems in relationships with other people and thus significant difficulties with everyday living.
- People with a personality disorder see these character traits as part of their personality.
- The condition presents in the person's way of thinking and feeling, as well as in how they control their impulses, behave, and seek to have their needs satisfied.
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours are a potential psychological consequence.

Individual or group psychotherapy is the primary form of treatment. Most people with a personality disorder find their condition improves as they age, with approximately a third of those diagnosed in their youth no longer having the disorder 20 years later. Their recovery is due, among other things, to their having learnt to accept and control their emotional reactions.

Personality disorders in study-related contexts

Students with a personality disorder have different symptomatic profiles. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's situation and functional abilities in various educational contexts should be carried out to plan and clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with a personality disorder are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with a personality disorder can find starting a new education programme and getting to know new people overwhelming. In this context, they may find forging relationships with other people challenging, as they can feel insecure about meeting new people. It may be a good idea for these students to visit the educational institution before starting their studies, so they can get to know the surroundings and identify quiet places where they can withdraw to rest and take a break.

Teaching situations

Students with a personality disorder may have problems concentrating, creating structure and getting started on assignments. They may also get stuck when attempting a task, and may find incoming sensory impressions distracting. Their personality disorder can make it difficult for them to organise their sensory impressions, and they therefore spend a great deal of time and energy on understanding and interpreting their surroundings. These challenges can disturb and affect the individual student's academic outcome. As such, they may benefit from talking to teachers about their condition and the related challenges, so the necessary allowances can be made. These students may also need help with structuring their daily study routines and getting started on projects, for example, through the SPS service (Special Educational Support).

Group work

Working in a group can sometimes be hard for students with a personality disorder. They may have difficulty concentrating, creating an overview and starting assignments. Some may also have trouble showing consideration for and working with others. This does not necessarily reflect these students' personality, but it can be a trait that is accentuated when they are under pressure. It may therefore be a good idea for these students to explain the implications of having a personality disorder to help the other group members understand why they sometimes react differently. In this way, the group can better accommodate some of the challenges and help with creating a task overview and motivating the student in question to get started.

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Independent study and preparation

Students with a personality disorder may have difficulty structuring their study work and concentrating for long periods of time. They may therefore need help with starting and structuring their assignments. Testing new reading and writing strategies that prioritise the need to take mental breaks may be a good idea.

Exams

As students with a personality disorder may find it hard to maintain concentration and get started on assignments, these students may find it relevant to apply for special examination conditions for both written exams and oral preparation. This way they can avoid becoming distracted by others, thus minimising issues.

Internships

Depending on the students' symptomatic profile and the impact of the personality disorder on their daily life, an internship can either provide a safe setting for them or be very difficult. No matter what, it can be beneficial for the internship workplace to know about the students' challenges so the working day and tasks can be individually adapted.

Social activities

Some social contexts may seem unmanageable because these students' personality disorder makes them feel insecure. As such, a safe study environment is important for them, as this diminishes the challenges. Students with a personality disorder may have difficulty being in touch with their feelings and thus also taking care of themselves so they do not become overloaded. Overload can make them lose their social filter when it comes to expressing thoughts and impressions. This can sometimes cause them to make inappropriate statements or react violently, which may make it difficult for them to foster social relationships.

Worth knowing

- It is important to remember that students with a personality disorder have not chosen their own personality and as such cannot simply change it.
- In some situations, these students can have a violent or exaggerated reaction, and accordingly it is important to bear in mind that this reaction is often a product of their personality disorder.
- In some cases, personality disorders can lead to threatened or attempted suicide. If students display such behaviour, contact a relative or refer them to a doctor or psychiatric department.

Find out more:

SIND / www.sind.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

Phobias

A phobia is an anxiety disorder in which the person affected has a fear of certain objects or situations. Anxiety that is so overwhelming as to make daily life difficult is termed a phobia.

Phobias are typically grouped into three categories:

- **Agoraphobia**, which is fear of leaving home and being in open spaces or crowded places. Agoraphobia often occurs along with panic anxiety (see also the section on panic anxiety).
- **Social phobia**, the fear of certain social situations. Social anxiety can also be more general as well as occur in any type of situation (see also the section on social anxiety). Exam and performance anxiety can resemble a social phobia, because they arise in situations where one is assessed by others, something that people who suffer from social phobias fear.
- **Simple phobias**: fear of specific things such as heights, certain animals or confined spaces.

Some phobias are very common and easily recognisable, such as fear of heights or spiders. However, some people have mild phobias, while others experience phobias so severe as to interfere with their normal lives. The problem is tied to the great deal of time people with a phobia spend organising their lives to avoid their anxiety-triggers, precisely because the physical symptoms of anxiety, which include heart palpitations, dizziness and nausea, can become so severe.

Phobias in study-related contexts

In study contexts, the wide variety of phobias means that how and when they affect students will differ. The degree to which phobias affect students' capacity to study is also individual. Remember, however, that students with phobias may also be posed with challenges indirectly related to their studies. For example, problems may start as soon as they leave home or use public transport to get to their school or college. Problems with sleeping and concentration are other common phobia-related issues that may affect students' study efforts.

Study starts

Students with a phobia may have a special need for tangible information about what study start involves and where the activities take place. Before starting their studies, some may need to practise the route to their school or college or to visit it to familiarise themselves with the physical surroundings.

Teaching situations

Not all students who suffer from a phobia will be affected in teaching situations. However, teaching situations directly involving elements that trigger students' phobias may affect some students. In other cases, the surroundings in a given teaching situation may trigger a student's anxiety – for example, the trip from home to the place of study or the physical setting of the campus (lifts, open spaces, etc).

Group work

Phobias can raise challenges for some students during group work. Special situations may trigger anxiety or cause them to avoid group meetings. Examples in point are situations in which they have to read aloud or present a text they have studied. For others, elements of the physical context in which group work takes place may trigger anxiety.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study will typically be easier than other study forms for students with phobias because they can study in surroundings that suit them best. As with all other forms of anxiety, it should be remembered that these students gradually lose their ability to cope with difficult situations if they never practise it.

Exams

Depending on the type of exam, some phobias can affect these students in exam situations. The physical surroundings or other exam-related factors can be challenging for students with anxiety. In the worst case, this can mean a student fails to attend or complete an exam. In some cases, practical considerations can be taken, for example, which room to hold the exam in.

Students suffering from exam anxiety may find all types of exam challenging. Exam nerves are common and in most cases positive, as this nervousness helps sharpen the senses and makes us extra focused. However, such nervousness has negative consequences for some students. For these students it can be a good idea to make an advance agreement with the examining teacher about what he or she should do if the students are so affected that they go blank during the exam. For example, the examiner could pose an easy question to get the given student back on track. If a student has an anxiety attack, the examiner must remain calm, reminding him or her to take deep breaths and that the anxiety will pass. In some cases, the exam may have to be stopped, so the examining teacher and the external examiner would do well to decide beforehand on the steps to take in such an event.

Internships

It depends on the student with a phobia whether and how they will be affected during an internship. The very fact of starting an internship and being in a new place with new people, new tasks and new demands can trigger certain phobias, social phobia, for example. With other types of phobia, the physical factors (open-plan offices, confined lifts, etc) and other circumstances connected to the internship may trigger anxiety.

Social activities

The place and context of a social activity may determine whether students with phobias have trouble participating in it. Some phobias may restrict students in terms of attending social occasions like Friday bars and study trips. Students who are hard hit by specific phobias may seek to avoid certain situations or surroundings and therefore stay away from particular social functions. For some, the very act of forging social relationships may be challenging, while others are less affected in social contexts.

Worth knowing

- Higher education staff may be surprised to discover the challenges phobias can entail, which makes it particularly important for them to listen to students' personal experiences.
- Be cautious about unnecessarily suggesting exemptions, as allowing students to avoid certain situations may prevent them from practising this skill.
- When handling a situation, consider whether a student is being overcome by nerves or is actually having an anxiety attack. Look into the possibilities: for example, who will help students back on track if they go black, or can a given activity be postponed if students cannot complete it?

Find out more:

Angstforeningen / www.angstforeningen.dk

SIND / www.sind.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a chronic, auto-immune inflammatory disease that can affect the entire body and have mental health implications. Common symptoms of psoriasis are outbreaks of red, flaky patches of skin. However, the appearance and severity of psoriasis can vary greatly from person to person. The patches can appear anywhere on the body, but typically affect the elbows, nails, scalp, buttocks and hands. Psoriasis can also affect the joints, a condition known as psoriatic arthritis that results in swollen, stiff and painful joints (see also the section on arthritis).

Skin psoriasis is grouped into various types depending on how the condition manifests: plaque psoriasis (approx. 90% of all cases), guttate psoriasis, inverse psoriasis, nail psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, scalp psoriasis and generalised pustular psoriasis. Psoriasis is also categorised according to degree of severity: mild, moderate and severe. Seventy percent of people with psoriasis are estimated to be mildly affected, 20% moderately affected and 10% severely affected. However, even if a person is categorised as having mild psoriasis, the disease can still have great psychological significance.

Psoriasis often flares up at times and dies away again. The outbreaks generally occur as a result of physical or mental strain – a so-called trigger factor. Examples of physical strain include injury to skin, certain types of medication or infections. However, psychological strain, such as stress or psychologically demanding periods, often causes flare-ups. The treatment of skin psoriasis or arthritic psoriasis varies according to the type and severity of the psoriasis and can sometimes be intensive and widespread. Furthermore, some of the drugs used to treat moderate to severe psoriasis can have certain side-effects such as nausea and tiredness.

Psoriasis in study-related contexts

With medical treatment and knowledge about their condition, many students with psoriasis can lead an essentially normal life without major discomfort. However, an individual's symptoms can vary over time, with periods where the disease worsens or flares up. Depending on the individual

student's symptoms, the severity of the disease and current treatment, challenges may arise in various study contexts. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with psoriasis are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Some students with moderate to severe psoriasis may have periods of absence for hospital visits while their disease is being diagnosed and treated. The pain and itching that are a major symptom of some types of psoriasis can affect these students' level of study activity. Students may also feel tired and lack resources because the disease saps their energy – particularly during flare-ups, sometimes also affecting their sleep. The side-effects of treatment can cause fatigue in some people, meaning they may have difficulty maintaining focus during class as well as reading the same amount and completing the same assignments as their fellow students.

Group work

Like teaching situations, working in groups can be challenging for some students with psoriasis. During periods of extensive absence or lack of energy, students may have difficulty meeting deadlines or keeping agreements made in study group contexts. Students with psoriasis may also feel different or misunderstood by other group members, and group work may compel them to explain their condition.

Independent study and preparation

At times, some students with psoriasis may suffer from itching, pain, fatigue, anxiety, depression or lack of energy. This can make it difficult for them to plan and structure their independent study time. They may also need to factor

in time for rest periods. Additionally, students with severe psoriasis may require time-consuming treatment whose side-effects impact the intensity and volume of their work. This can leave them with less time or energy for immersion in their studies, and they may thus need more time for an assignment than other students would have spent.

Exams

Students with psoriasis may find it challenging to take exams at periods when their condition flares and they have less mental and physical energy. They may thus need special examination conditions in order to be on an equal footing with other students. It should be noted that high-pressure study periods can negatively impact psoriasis and thus increase the risk of flare-ups, with exam periods, for example, putting students under extra psychological and work pressure.

Internships

Internships in certain industries can challenge some students with psoriasis. For example, students with psoriasis on their hands may find certain forms of manual work challenging. Similarly, pain and lack of energy may mean students with psoriasis are unable to keep up their work tempo and efficiency, particularly when their condition flares up. They may also be frequently absent in connection with the diagnosis and treatment of their psoriasis. Visible psoriasis on the hands or face, for example, can be an additional psychological challenge during an internship, when the students may find themselves in unfamiliar situations and possibly stigmatised because of their disease. The students may thus face the dilemma of having to decide whether to explain the visible symptoms or keep it private.

Social activities

Participating in social events may be challenging for some students with psoriasis because of their limited energy, particularly during a flare-up. Some also tend to find themselves stigmatised, which can potentially cause them to withdraw from the social community, and students with visible psoriasis may be particularly challenged in this respect.

Worth knowing

- It is a myth that psoriasis is contagious. Psoriasis is not infectious.
- Try not to impose unnecessarily stressful work on students with psoriasis, as the condition has a tendency to flare up during busy, stressful periods.
- Do not hesitate to ask students about what support would help them during their studies and be mindful of periods when the disease flares up.
- Find out whether students need individual arrangements during their studies or in connection with exams.

Find out more:
Psoriasisforeningen / www.psoriasis.dk

PTSD

PTSD is an abbreviation for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD can arise if a person has been involved with or witnessed one or more violent events that cause a trauma. Many associate PTSD with soldiers or people who have been to war, but the disorder can also occur as a reaction to other traumatic experiences such as rape, abuse, violence or robbery. PTSD is a psychological condition or stress reaction caused by extreme mental stress.

The symptoms of PTSD can be both physical and psychological. Among the most common are reliving violent events in nightmares or flashbacks, anxiety, memory and concentration difficulties, problems sleeping, low self-esteem and personality changes. More severe symptoms include depression and feelings of guilt, hallucinations, memory loss and thoughts about dying or suicide. In some people, PTSD leads to alcohol, hash or substance abuse.

PTSD in study-related contexts

PTSD affects numerous aspects of student life, physical and psychological alike, which can lead to challenges in their everyday activities and studies. The way students live with PTSD and the extent to which the condition disrupts their daily life vary greatly, as the symptoms students experience are highly individual. Some may be extremely aware of their surroundings and thus have difficulty being out among other people. Everyday life can seem overwhelming, and some will find active study impossible for shorter or longer periods of time. When given individual consideration and the right support, others can complete their studies on equal terms with their fellow students. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with PTSD are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with PTSD can find commencing studies particularly difficult, because everything is unknown and unpredictable, and new academic requirements are made of them. If possible, students might benefit from being well-prepared, for example, being informed about what to expect during the first few weeks and being shown the physical premises in advance.

Teaching situations

PTSD symptoms such as memory and concentration difficulties can make it hard for these students to benefit fully from the teaching. Many students with PTSD have less energy, making it hard for them to take part in teaching sessions. Furthermore, incidents during teaching situations can act as triggers that cause anxiety and produce flashbacks. Examples of such incidents include unexpected and/or loud noises that in themselves are not dangerous. A smell or other sensory impression that the students associate with a trauma can have the same effect. The physical teaching setting can thus impact students with PTSD, and as such they might find some classrooms unpleasant to be in while feeling at ease in others. It might be a good idea to discuss how fellow students and teachers can accommodate the students' challenges and needs in teaching situations.

Group work

Various factors can trigger anxiety in students with PTSD, and the way such triggers affect students during group work and other study constellations thus also differs. For example, a student who has been assaulted by a man may find being alone with male fellow students difficult. Other factors can also make group participation difficult. Fellow

students may also find that these students seem unfocused or act strangely. They may be preoccupied with checking their surroundings or need to sit in a certain way when working.

Independent study and preparation

Some students with PTSD may prefer to work from home, as external surroundings may overwhelm them. However, lack of concentration, energy and overview may make dealing with the independent elements of a study programme hard for others to deal with, and they may therefore need support with structuring this part of the programme.

Exams

PTSD sometimes prevents students from handling complex assignments, and they get stressed about tasks others generally find easy. This can have a bearing in exam situations, which the students may find overwhelming. During oral exams, students with PTSD may have problems articulating themselves and finding the right words. It might benefit these students to make an advance agreement with the examining teacher about what he or she should do if they go blank during the exam. For example, the examining teacher or external examiner should wait while the student searches for the right words and refrain from posing new questions. If necessary, the options for exemptions and special examination conditions can be looked into.

Internships

The transition from school or college to internship can be particularly challenging for students with PTSD, and they may need extra support at this time. Students with PTSD often need security and predictability, and a clear internship plan is therefore key. Another good idea is to inform the internship workplace about the individual student's needs, provided the students agree with this. Information about PTSD can promote an understanding of the condition

and give the employer an opportunity to make the right allowances. It can be useful to explain the practical parameters, as small changes can have great significance for these students. They may feel most comfortable working at an office workstation with an unimpeded view of the door, or may relax better if they do the driving rather than sitting in the passenger seat.

Social activities

Some students with PTSD will find social contexts challenging, because dealing with their emotions in front of others is difficult for them, and they may feel irritable or have temper outbursts. Being with other people or in crowds can also trigger anxiety. Students with PTSD thus tend to become isolated, even though they may previously have been sociable and outgoing.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with PTSD often need predictability and a secure setting.
- Find out whether there is a quiet place or room where they can take breaks in the course of a study day, as they may find noise and the company of many people unmanageable.
- Be open and listen to the students' needs, even though these needs may not seem immediately logical. There may be reasons for these needs that the students do not want to share. Be creative when coming up with possible solutions with the students.

Find out more:
Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a brain disease that affects and disrupts a person's thoughts, emotions, actions and sensory perceptions to varying degrees. The most common symptoms include delusions or hallucinations, sensory disturbances, disorganised speech and emotional changes. Physical complications such as behavioural and motor disturbances are also seen. Some people with schizophrenia find they have little energy as a result of their condition or its medical treatment.

People with the disease often have or have had one or more psychotic diagnoses. A psychotic episode can occur quite suddenly, with the person typically showing symptoms such as having hallucinations or hearing voices. The severity of the effect on some people means they have difficulty distinguishing between reality and their own imaginings. The various forms of schizophrenia all have different dominant traits. Since other psychoses also share common traits with schizophrenia, psychoses are not always a sign of schizophrenia. Psychotic symptoms can arise as a result of such conditions as depression, bipolar personality disorder and substance abuse.

Schizotypal personality disorder (STPD) is a mild form of schizophrenia. Many of the symptoms of this condition are the same as for schizophrenia, but are typically milder and the psychoses short-lived. Students with STPD often lead satisfying student lives, but are generally more vulnerable than other students. Accordingly, their challenges and support needs will often be the same as those of students with schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia in study-related contexts

Students with schizophrenia can face multiple challenges but, with the right treatment and support, many can complete an educational programme. These students are vulnerable to pressure and stress, which can exacerbate their symptoms and trigger psychoses. Another characteristic of schizophrenia is extreme sensitivity to sensory impressions (visual impressions and sounds, for example). This means these students may have trouble organising their impressions of the external world and thus find focusing

on situations like teaching and exams difficult. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with schizophrenia are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with schizophrenia can find new faces, large gatherings and new places daunting and overwhelming. They may therefore need special support during the induction period – for example, for getting to their place of education. Having the opportunity from day one to talk to a counsellor or other support person who knows about schizophrenia and can help give them a good start is also important.

Teaching situations

Students who suffer from schizophrenia may have difficulty learning new things. This is caused not by low intelligence but by the cognitive difficulties arising from schizophrenia that can make learning, concentrating and memorising challenging. Groups of strangers, large and small alike, can be overwhelming for these students and potentially give them problems in keeping up with class. Accordingly, some would benefit from following classes online from home, and it would be a good idea for practical sessions to be conducted in surroundings that are as calm as possible.

Group work

Students severely affected by schizophrenia may find becoming integrated in the academic and social elements of group work problematic. Some may therefore prefer to work in smaller groups where they eventually feel secure. The cognitive difficulties students with schizophrenia can experience may mean they need more time to complete assignments than other group members. Group work may also be affected if these students have problems with forgetfulness or lack of overview.

Independent study and preparation

Students with schizophrenia may have trouble taking initiative and making decisions. A low energy level and racing thoughts may make it hard for them to focus on studying. They may have difficulty creating an overview when working on assignments, as they may drown in little details and lose sight of the bigger picture. This can overwhelm them and make it hard for them to finish a task. These students may therefore need more time for tasks such as preparation and assignments, as well as a support person to help them obtain an overview and create structure.

Exams

Stressful periods can exacerbate the symptoms of students with schizophrenia, and exam periods can therefore be problematic. Cognitive difficulties can similarly pose challenges for such students in exam situations while their extreme sensitivity to sensory impressions may mean they need peace and quiet. An example in point is written exams, where they struggle with being in the same room as other people. During oral exams, students with schizophrenia may experience disorganised speech, which may present as saying words and sentences that make no sense to other people.

Internships

The prejudices about schizophrenia that abound can cause challenges in connection with an internship. It may therefore be a good idea to inform the internship workplace about the student's schizophrenia, as this can help dispel such prejudices and create a good environment. A shorter working week or other special considerations may be necessary for many students with schizophrenia to avoid placing too much pressure on them. Dealing with new people and unfamiliar places can be difficult, and these students may also need frequent rests, as well as structure and predictability.

Social activities

Schizophrenia can manifest itself in ways that can make social interaction difficult for students with the condition. For example, they may find it hard to relate to and/or pick up on other people's thoughts and feelings. Being with other people can also rapidly overwhelm them, potentially causing them to become introverted and isolate themselves from others.

Worth knowing

- Explore the possibility of a room for students with schizophrenia to rest in, as they may need rest breaks during a study day.
- Structured, predictable daily routines are important for this group of students, and avoiding stress is crucial as stress is a psychotic trigger.
- People live with schizophrenia in different ways. However, with treatment, many can function well on a daily basis, and with the right support many can also complete a higher education programme.

Find out more:
 Skizofreniforeningen /
www.skizofreniforeningen.dk
 SIND / www.sind.dk

Social anxiety disorder

Social anxiety disorder, the fear of social situations, is a mental health condition in which a person is afraid of other people speaking ill of them. Social anxiety differs from ordinary shyness and performance anxiety in being more serious and disabling, to such a degree that people with the condition have difficulty dealing with daily life. For example, they may have trouble using public transport or going to their place of education. The very thought of a certain impending situation can trigger anxiety symptoms in some. They may try to avoid situations they are afraid they cannot handle. However, this is a strategy that actually aggravates their symptoms.

Social anxiety disorder can present in the form of physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, dizziness, stomach cramps, nausea and blushing. In addition to these symptoms, some may be afraid of other people noticing the symptoms.

Some people with social anxiety disorder may also experience other forms of anxiety and/or depression.

Social anxiety disorder in study-related contexts

Social anxiety disorder can manifest in a wide variety of ways in study contexts, depending on the individual's circumstances. Some students have coping strategies that reduce the negative impact of anxiety. Others may be so afflicted at various periods of time that they have difficulty attending class or sitting exams, or simply fail to do so. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students with social anxiety disorder are outlined below.

Study starts

New faces, a completely new place and new, unfamiliar daily routines are a lot for many people to take in, but for students with social anxiety disorder they can seem completely overwhelming. Working in smaller groups

with fewer people to relate to is helpful for some of these students, while others find small groups more intimidating than larger ones, where they can hide to some extent. Knowing exactly what the induction period entails is a help for students with social anxiety disorder because it allows them to prepare mentally for the specific activities.

Teaching situations

Social anxiety arises in situations where students feel exposed to the critical attention of other people, for example, making a presentation or reading in front of others. Another situation students may find difficult is asking questions in class – both in front of others and one-to-one. Some students may find attending lectures with large audiences intimidating, while others have more difficulty with small teaching sessions, because they cannot hide. Consequently, students with social anxiety disorder may find such situations uncomfortable or even stay away completely from teaching sessions. Clear communication about what is planned for individual classes can be helpful – for example, whether they will involve teaching from the blackboard, group work or homework review. These students may also need agreements about when they will be asked about something, so they have a chance to prepare. They can also agree on what the teacher should do to encourage such students to speak up.

Group work

Participation in group work can be challenging for students with social anxiety disorder. Students severely affected by their condition may find speaking out in a group or asking questions of others demanding. Fear of what the other group members will think of them may mean they also find it hard to say no to tasks in such settings.

Independent study and preparation

Studying alone in their own safe space can work well for students with social anxiety disorder. Some prefer the option of following teaching online or taking tests from home when possible. This approach can be helpful at times when students need special support. However, it is important to clarify whether this is a genuine need, so the students are not exempted from something of which they are capable, as this can reinforce their issues.

Exams

At an oral exam, the prospect of having to sit across from people who are to assess their performance can cause students with social anxiety disorder either to fail completely to attend the exam or to be so affected that they cannot say what they intended. This rarely reflects lack of preparation or of academic proficiency; fear of being negatively assessed or of their mind going blank can paralyse these students. It may be a good idea for the examiner and the students to agree on what the examiner should do if the students go blank during the oral exam.

Students with social anxiety disorder will typically find written tests easier to handle, home assignments in particular, because they do not need to worry about being observed while they work. By contrast, written exams being taken by many people in the same room can trigger anxiety in students who are preoccupied by how others around them will assess them. Depending on the student's anxiety, an application for exemptions or special examination conditions could be looked into.

Internships

New social relationships can intensify the anxiety of students with social anxiety disorder. For some, the magnitude of their anxiety outweighs their desire for an internship, or makes it difficult for them to turn up for the internship. Meeting new people during an internship can be anxie-

ty-provoking for these students, and they may have difficulty saying no to work tasks that are too much for them for fear of negative repercussions.

Social activities

Social anxiety can cause students to withdraw from situations where their anxiety normally surfaces. Some students with social anxiety disorder may find parties and large gatherings particularly challenging, and as such, they risk becoming isolated. Others may attempt to take part and ease their anxiety with alcohol, for example.

Worth knowing

- By all means ask students with social anxiety about what support would help them during their studies, as their needs can vary greatly.
- Take care to avoid suggesting exemptions when unnecessary (for example, excusing students from speaking in class) as they may need to practise things they find difficult.
- Students with social anxiety disorder may need clear information about upcoming events such as study starts, exams and social occasions so they know what to expect and can prepare accordingly.

Find out more:

Angstforeningen / www.angstforeningen.dk

Psykiatrifonden / www.psykiatrifonden.dk

SIND / www.sind.dk

Stammering

Stammering is a speech disorder and a social communication problem. This speech disorder prevents the person from saying what they want to express when they want to do so. Stammering, or stuttering, can affect a person's life situation, and in some people gradually develops into a debilitating disability. The conversation partner's reaction may also influence the degree of a person's stammer. Stammering is believed to be caused by a combination of multiple factors –hereditary, psychosocial and language-development related.

Stammering can be divided into two forms of expression: external and internal stammer. External stammer denotes the audible symptoms of stammering and the visible accompanying gestures. Internal stammer refers to the emotions and limitations that the external stammer can cause in the form of anxiety, avoidance or feeling of inferiority. In adults, internal stammer is often the biggest problem because the person becomes increasingly aware of their own symptoms. The consequences of internal stammer can also be reflected in the external stammer in that the tendency for repetition, prolongation and blocked words often becomes more pronounced and entrenched. The person affected may also try to avoid situations involving oral communication.

Stammering is treated by a speech-language therapist who works with speech techniques and emotional reactions to stammering so that the person can communicate in a more relaxed and fluent manner.

Stammering in study-related contexts

Some people have a slight stammer and speak relatively fluently, while for others, speaking is a great effort. In addition, an individual's stammer is constantly evolving. The degree of external and internal stammering depends greatly on the situation and conversation partner. Accordingly, the type of support a student will need in specific contexts will also vary. Examples of some study-related challenges that may arise for students who stammer are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students who stammer experience a range of symptoms to varying degrees during teaching situations. They will also have various strategies for handling their stammer. For some, a classroom will be a safe place that does not provoke serious symptoms. Others, however, will associate a classroom with frustration and shame, and try to avoid speaking out in class. This may cause such students to bottle up their knowledge, ideas or questions, and ultimately, in some instances, they will not gain the desired benefit from the teaching.

Group work

Joining in group work or other social contexts can be a fraught experience for students who stammer. They may have difficulty taking the initiative to speak, keeping a conversation going or getting academic arguments across. They should, therefore, try to speak openly with their fellow students about their stammer, so the others know what to be aware of and can help give students who stammer a better chance to express themselves. However, discussing their challenges publicly can be daunting for these students. In particular, if they expend a lot of energy on hiding their outer stammer, the inner conflicts connected with stammering will loom large.

Independent study and preparation

Independent study or individual preparation will not usually affect these students' study work. However, preparing presentations or oral exams can nonetheless occasion worry about oral performance. The fear of experiencing a severe bout of stammering can be debilitating and a demotivating factor for the student, who may try to avoid studying. Students may find it helpful to test various oral presentation strategies such as using cue cards, speaking in short sentences and taking deep breaths.

Exams

Students who stammer may take longer to formulate their answers at an oral exam than other students. In such cases, it would be helpful if the examining teacher and external examiner are aware of the students' situation. They can thus take care not to interrupt or finish students' sentences for them and give them the time they need to express themselves at their own pace. At written exams, these students are basically not challenged by their stammering difficulties. Depending on how challenged they are, they may need to apply for special examination conditions.

Internships

A person who stammers can often have difficulty navigating new environments and people, particularly to start with. This also applies to internships, where students have to relate to and communicate with new people. Employers who are aware of the student's challenges can help to create a secure environment.

Social activities

Stammering can be a social barrier, for example, at lunch-times, Friday bars or study start activities. Taking the initiative to talk to new people may be daunting, and students who stammer may take longer to become socially active. If a student who stammers withdraws from a social activity, this could be a sign that they need to recharge their batteries and to spend time on their own with less social interaction. In many cases, the voice-related challenges will become more manageable once these students have grown accustomed to a social circle and feel at ease there.

Worth knowing

- Students must be given enough time to speak. Students who stammer, or stutter, often feel a sense of failure if others interrupt them or finish their sentences for them.
- Problems with stammering can make it hard for these students to ask a student counsellor or similar person for advice about exam exemptions.
- Do not hesitate to ask the students about their stammer-related needs and how you can support them.

Find out more:
Stammeforeningen / www.stammeforeningen.dk

Stress

There is a difference between feeling stressed in the sense of being busy and experiencing burnout from stress, when the body and psyche shut down because one has been under too much pressure for a long time. This section focuses on the latter: burnout from stress. Stress develops gradually over a period of time of imbalance between a person's individual resources and the pressure they experience. Stress is thus a reaction to long-term pressure that exceeds our capacity to deal with such strain. Long-term stress can sometimes cause other disorders, the most common being depression and anxiety.

Stress can cause numerous symptoms including headaches, heart palpitations, dizziness, tiredness and sleep problems, lethargy, ill humour, irritability and anxiety. People with stress can also experience cognitive symptoms – the impact on the functions executed by the brain – which can present as memory problems, concentration difficulties and problems with overview.

Stress in study-related contexts

Although students' stress is not necessarily caused by the pressure of studying but may be due to personal issues, it can influence their capacity to study. Stress can in fact lead to cognitive difficulties and other challenges that make following a course of study difficult. However, the impact on an individual student's study capacity varies. Some students with stress will need a break from their studies while others can continue actively studying at a level matching their capacity at the given time. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with stress are outlined below.

Study starts

Students embarking on a new study programme after a period of stress-related illness may need to start gradually. Predicting how a student will react to commencing studies and how much they can manage can be difficult. Students who have or have had stress often place high demands on themselves and become unsure of whether they are doing well enough. They may therefore need a very clear explanation of what is expected of them during the study programme.

Teaching situations

Since students with stress can have difficulty concentrating, teachers or fellow students may get the wrong impression that they are not engaged in the teaching. Students with stress may also struggle to complete assignments because their cognitive abilities are temporarily impaired. They may also tend to lose sight of the bigger picture or forget messages. For example, they may find taking organised notes difficult because this requires them to follow the teaching while noting down and organising what is being said.

Group work

During group work, students with stress may come across as being irritable, uninterested or difficult to work with. They may also be forgetful and miss group appointments. Some students with stress may also dominate in group work while others withdraw, with increasing absence as a result. It may therefore be a good idea for the group to talk about how having a student with stress or who has returned after a period of absence due to stress can affect group work. In this context, the group must make realistic agreements, as well as be open to the strengths of the student with stress, which can compensate for areas where they perhaps contribute less.

Independent study and preparation

Stress can cause difficulties with overview, and students with this condition may find keeping up with their studies daunting. Stress can also lead to indecisiveness. These students may need support to create structure in their daily student life and to set realistic expectations about the effort they put into studying.

Exams

The pre-exam period of study can be particularly challenging for students with stress. They may be uncertain about whether they have studied enough or feel guilty about taking time off, which in turn adds extra pressure. Stress can also affect students during the exam itself; for example, problems with recall and obtaining an overview can cause them difficulties. If necessary, these students can be informed about exemptions and special examination conditions.

Internships

Students who have or have had stress may need help to gain an overview of the tasks required of them during their internship. They may also need the employer to clearly define how the tasks are to be performed, thus enabling them to prepare as best possible and plan their work in a way that avoids too much pressure. On occasion, some students may be struggle so much with stress that they have to work reduced hours, take a break from their internship or postpone it.

Social activities

Stress can affect students' ability to form social relationships. Some will find taking part in social activities unmanageable because they get easily overwhelmed. At times, they may have difficulty dealing with their fellow students and tend to become irritable.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with stress may have a particular need for clearly structured days with scheduled breaks. They may also need help with setting realistic goals and timeframes.
- The word stress is often used as a synonym for being busy, but a person can certainly have stress without being busy, in the same way as one can be busy without having stress.
- People who have experienced burnout from stress once can easily become overburdened again. Accordingly, they should be supported from the start to ensure they recover and hopefully can manage their studies later without special support.

Find out more:
SIND / www.sind.dk

Tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity

Tinnitus is a sound that usually only exists inside the head of the person hearing it. It is important to understand that tinnitus is a symptom and not a disease in itself. Tinnitus is usually caused by a defective nerve signal arising somewhere in the auditory system that is transmitted to the brain's auditory centre, where it is interpreted as a buzzing, screeching, whistling or ringing noise. Tinnitus is a normal concomitant symptom of hearing impairment, but can also occur independently, for example, in connection with reactions to pressure such as stress. Other causes of tinnitus include whiplash and skull fracture, certain medications, tension in shoulder, neck and jaw muscles and noise trauma.

The condition is incurable, but people with tinnitus can learn to manage their condition by such means as sound or conversation therapy.

Increased sound sensitivity (hyperacusis) is defined as low tolerance to ordinary everyday sounds, which are perceived as actually painful to the ears or head. In most cases, increased sound sensitivity is caused by a change in the way the brain processes sounds, affecting its ability to filter out irrelevant background noise from useful information. Numerous factors, including stress, anxiety, tinnitus and hearing impairment, can impact the brain's filtering function. This function is also often influenced by concussion and whiplash, and, as such, increased sound sensitivity can arise without the presence of other sound or hearing problems. Increased sensitivity to sound often accompanies tinnitus, but can also occur alone.

The condition can be treated with conversation, behavioural and/or sound therapy, which enable people to better handle their noise sensitivity.

The possible negative effects of **tinnitus** and **increased sound sensitivity** include difficulties receiving enough sound to understand while at the same time avoiding loud, bothersome noises; social isolation; problems being in large groups and noisy surroundings, both during leisure time and in student life; concentration difficulties; low energy; fatigue; sleep problems; low stress threshold; and feeling that life is unbearable (in severe cases of tinnitus).

Tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity in study-related contexts

As these negative effects occur individually and the symptoms vary, the degree of tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity has a bearing on how this condition affects students and their studies. Some examples of when and how study-related challenges may arise for students with tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Because tinnitus can interfere with some students' sound perception and reduce their ability to concentrate, they may find it hard to concentrate on teaching and listening for long periods at a stretch. Very bothersome noises can put students with increased sound sensitivity under pressure in certain situations such as large gatherings or noisy surroundings, which teaching situations can be at times. When students with tinnitus and/or increased sound sensitivity participate in a teaching session – whether virtual or physical, theoretical or practical – it is worth bearing in mind certain key factors for providing good, equal learning conditions. Examples include good acoustics and a low level of background noise as these students may otherwise miss out on academically relevant knowledge and thus fail to get the most out of the teaching. In turn, this will affect their chances of completing their studies and sitting exams.

Group work

Learning to ignore tinnitus takes practice, and students with the condition may therefore have less energy. However, group work can be an advantage for students with tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity as the levels of

background noise and sound are generally lower or easier to control, making communication more effective. These students might benefit from talking to their fellow students about their functional impairment, placing the other students in a better position to make allowances and making working together as a group more pleasant for everyone.

Independent study and preparation

Students with tinnitus and/or increased sound sensitivity may benefit if the stress and pressure of independent student life and individual preparation can be lessened, as these factors tend to exacerbate the symptoms of their functional impairment. If these students experience fatigue, lack of energy and/or sleeping problems as a result of their condition, it might be helpful to spread the assignment load over longer periods of time.

Exams

Some students with tinnitus and/or increased sound sensitivity may need to sit written and oral exams in a private room to minimise bothersome noises. Other special examination conditions can also help give these students equal opportunities for participating without being affected by their functional impairment.

Internships

As with teaching sessions, these students may need extra support for the process of finding an internship if they are experiencing a lack of energy, low stress threshold or concentration difficulties.

Social activities

These students may feel under pressure in large groups or noisy environments, where they perceive the sounds as highly bothersome. This may cause them to withdraw from large social events, which can be noisy. Some feel alone with their problem because it can be difficult to explain to others. Tinnitus and increased sound sensitivity affect sleep, sociability, level of activity as well as interaction with family, friends and classmates. Stress, worry, inner restlessness, anxiety and concentration difficulties are other typical reactions. It can be beneficial for these students to talk openly about their functional impairment and for allowances to be made in the form of a secure study environment, as this will reduce the social challenges.

Worth knowing

- Find out whether you can help the students to structure their time in relation to homework and exams, addressing such issues as concentration, energy and fatigue.
- Do not hesitate to ask the students about the challenges and discomfort they experience.
- Bear in mind that students severely affected by tinnitus can sometimes feel that life is unbearable.
- If seriously impacted by their functional impairment, these students may find it relevant to consider options for part-time study, which can reduce the pressure they feel.

Find out more:
Høreforeningen / www.horeforeningen.dk

Tourette's syndrome

Tourette's syndrome is a complex neurobiological condition believed to be caused by a dysfunction in the brain involving abnormal activity in its neurotransmitters. The condition leads to involuntary movements called motor tics, as well as the involuntary production of sounds, known as vocal tics such as whistling, grunting or throat clearing. Tourette's syndrome also often causes problems with concentration, hyperactivity, obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours, as well as sensitivity to sensory impressions such as external noises. Some can manage their sounds in certain social situations, for example, when shopping with others or at the cinema. Controlling these sounds is hard work and can be quite exhausting. Others take no notice of their tics and sounds and allow them to come and go. The tics make many people with Tourette's syndrome restless, and they may need to be physically active to calm this unrest.

Tics can be classified as simple and complex tics:

- Simple motor tics include blinking, grimacing, shoulder shrugging, jerking of the head, stomach movements, leg kicks, pursing the lips or sudden jerky movements.
- Complex motor tics include jumping, clapping, touching oneself or others, exaggerated gesticulation or mimicry of others' movements, gestures or body language.
- Simple vocal tics include whistling, wheezing, coughing, spitting, sniffing, throat clearing, growling noises, screams and puffing.
- Complex vocal tics include words, phrases or sentences that interrupt the speech flow similar to stammering, offensive sexual expressions, parroting and mimicking other people's language.

Tics that are demanding for the body to carry out, for example, in the neck and shoulders, can cause physical pain, and the person may need treatment and exercises from a physiotherapist or trainer.

Many people with Tourette's syndrome have additional diagnoses, the most common being ADHD and OCD. Depression and autism spectrum disorders can also co-occur with Tourette's syndrome.

Tourette's syndrome in study-related contexts

Since the symptoms of Tourette's syndrome vary in frequency and intensity, the support students need in different study situations will also vary. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with Tourette's syndrome are outlined below.

Study starts

When starting their studies, students with Tourette's syndrome may find it helpful to tell others about what it is like living with this condition. This will inform fellow students and teachers of their situation, so they can show the proper consideration. It may also help dispel some of the misconceptions students with Tourette's syndrome may encounter.

Teaching situations

Some students with Tourette's syndrome can suppress their tics for a while, but this takes energy, concentration and effort. When suppressing their tics to avoid disrupting class, they may have difficulty concentrating on the teaching and the academic work. When students deliberately suppress their tics, the tics often return with renewed strength when the students no longer have the energy to hold them back. In practical teaching situations, students with simple and complex motor tics may be challenged when carrying out practical tasks. Students with Tourette's syndrome are often aware of what triggers their tics, and as such need to think about the practical tasks they perform to ensure they do not come to any harm.

Group work

As with teaching situations, students with Tourette's syndrome can experience the urge to suppress their tics in group contexts to avoid disrupting the work. However, it should be reiterated that it is rarely beneficial for students to suppress their tics for long periods of time, as they often have a sudden release of stronger tics after trying to control them. It may therefore be a good idea to tell the study group about the challenges of having Tourette's syndrome, as this can help create a secure, comfortable space where their tics are accepted.

Independent study and preparation

Students with Tourette's syndrome may have more tics during busy periods and fewer at more relaxed times. In this context, they can benefit from having a planned and structured syllabus, as this reduces the pressure during exam periods, for example. It may be relevant for the students to look into the options for getting help or support with planning and structuring work, for example, from the SPS service.

Exams

Students with Tourette's syndrome may find they have more tics in high-pressure situations, for example, during oral and written exams, when tics can interfere with their performance. It may therefore be helpful for them to look into the options for being granted special examination conditions. If students have vision problems due to Tourette's syndrome, a membership of Nota digital library could be considered. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order the textbooks required in a digital format through Nota's Studieservice.

Internships

It is practical if students with Tourette's syndrome embarking on an internship explain their condition and its potential challenges to the internship workplace. That way, the internship can be planned and optimised to meet the needs of the student.

Social activities

Some students with Tourette's syndrome can come across as pushy and dominating in social situations because of their tics. Furthermore, their obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours and sensitivity to sensory impressions, such as noise, can also affect their energy and desire to take part in social activities. However, the degree to which people with Tourette's syndrome are challenged in social situations varies.

Worth knowing

- Bear in mind that students with Tourette's syndrome may need to withdraw to find peace and quiet, as things can sometimes become a bit overwhelming and difficult to deal with.
- Some students may have more symptoms in busy periods and as such need support with planning their studies.
- Do not hesitate to initiate a dialogue. It can be beneficial for students with Tourette's syndrome to tell teachers and fellow students about their functional impairment and the challenges it occasions. It may also help dispel some of the misconceptions students with this syndrome encounter.

Find out more:

Dansk Tourette Forening / www.tourette.dk

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease (hereafter colitis and Crohn's disease) are both chronic, incurable autoimmune diseases that affect the digestive system. Colitis attacks the lining of the colon, while Crohn's disease attacks all the tissues in the bowel and digestive tract. Crohn's disease thus manifests more strongly outside the digestive system.

The two diseases can have similar symptomatic profiles. At times, colitis and Crohn's disease may break out and flare up, while being milder and in remission at others. About 25% of people with these conditions get no symptom relief, nor can their disease be brought under control. The typical symptoms of outbreaks of colitis or Crohn's disease are frequent, watery diarrhoea containing blood and mucus; severe abdominal pain; general malaise; low appetite, often with weight loss and poor nutrient uptake; and fatigue. Other effects of colitis and Crohn's disease include joint pain, swelling and inflammation, eye problems (for example, inflammation of the iris), abscesses and other skin changes. In addition, colitis or Crohn's disease often presents psychological challenges such as worrying about outbreaks, the unpredictability of which can lead to anxiety or social isolation in people with these conditions.

People with colitis or Crohn's disease need frequent check-ups at a specialist department, which can be time-consuming. For most people, the treatment itself consists of treating the symptoms with immunosuppressants. In serious cases, biologics are needed, given either as injections or as infusions administered over a few hours' time. If medication fails to relieve the symptoms, surgery may be necessary, for example, an ostomy, a pouch procedure, or a resection of the inflamed bowel section. After an ostomy, the patient will normally be referred to an ostomy outpatient clinic.

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease in study-related contexts

The challenges in different study contexts vary depending on the individual student's symptoms of colitis or Crohn's disease and on whether the disease has flared up. Accord-

ingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with these conditions are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Students with colitis or Crohn's disease may find participating in class problematic whenever their disease flares up since this entails frequent lavatory visits. They may also experience general challenges such as pronounced fatigue and the associated difficulty in concentrating. Worries about faecal accidents as well as about access to and the location of lavatories may mentally preoccupy students in teaching situations, thus preventing them from gaining the full academic benefit. Practical teaching sessions with physically tough and demanding elements can also pose a risk of exacerbating the diseases. Students who have periods of recurring absence could look into their options for following the teaching digitally.

Group work

As with other teaching situations, group work can be taxing for students to participate in if they are frequently absent because of flare-ups or lack of energy. In this connection, students with colitis or Crohn's disease may find it hard to meet deadlines or group agreements. Students may also feel different from or misunderstood by their fellow group members. As such, group work may compel these students to explain their disease.

Independent study and preparation

Study time planned and completed by the students themselves is rarely a challenge, since working in familiar, homely surroundings can be pleasant in the face of possible symptoms, including frequent lavatory visits. However, students with colitis or Crohn's disease may be so affected by fatigue that personally structuring their work and/or achieving the same academic outcome as their fellow students can present a challenge.

Exams

During a flare-up, students with colitis or Crohn's disease may find both oral and written exams challenging to complete under ordinary conditions if the symptoms are causing significant problems. The unpredictability of bowel diseases complicates the process of planning and applying for exemptions ahead of an exam. Also, colitis and Crohn's disease often cause pronounced fatigue, a hurdle that may need to be addressed in connection with an exam. Furthermore, exam periods can be stressful, creating psychological pressure that can negatively impact colitis and Crohn's disease and increase the risk of an outbreak.

Internships

For students with colitis or Crohn's disease, an internship may be best planned with in-built flexibility that enables the work to be adapted to the given student's symptoms and medical history. Brief or long periods of sick absence can be expected for these students when their disease flares up. This can cause concern, as students may have difficulty meeting the attendance requirements for the internship.

Social activities

Some students with colitis or Crohn's disease can have problems taking part in social activities because of low energy or fatigue. They may have little desire to be with others, particularly during periods with active symptoms and disease flare-ups. Some students with colitis or Crohn's disease may also tend to withdraw from the social community because they are concerned that the disease will flare up or break out or because they are dealing with a disease that is active and symptoms have flared up.

Worth knowing

- Colitis and Crohn's disease fluctuate between periods of outbreak and remission.
- Find out whether these students can be allowed some form of flexibility that makes allowance for their symptoms.
- Bear in mind that students with colitis or Crohn's disease may often be concerned about the complexity of the disease, which can affect them both physically and psychologically.
- Feel free to ask about the students' well-being, including their needs and challenges.

Find out more:

Colitis Crohn Foreningen / www.ccf.dk

Stomiforeningen COPA / www.copa.dk

Visual impairment

Visual impairment is used as an umbrella term to denote people who are blind, severely visually impaired or visually impaired. A visual impairment can be due to any number of things, including genetic retina disorders and optic nerve diseases. Some causes of visual impairment are genetically determined, arising early or late in life, while others are typically age-related or due to accidents. The social classification of visual impairment used in Denmark defines 6/60 as the limit for social blindness. A person with a visual acuity of 6/60 is severely visually impaired and from a distance of 6 metres can see what a normally sighted person can see from 60 metres. A visual impairment is almost always a chronic condition, and measured with the best correction, which means that nothing can be done to improve the person's sight. A visual impairment can pose mobility, communication, psychosocial and practical challenges.

Visual impairment in study-related contexts

The need for support depends on how challenged the individual student with a visual impairment is, as this varies from person to person. The obstacles and challenges that students with visual impairments experience also depend on various circumstances such as the degree of impairment and how long they have had the impairment. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in various study contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with a visual impairment are outlined below.

Study starts

Students with a visual impairment may face mobility challenges when navigating a new place of education, and they may therefore find an advance visit relevant so they can practise getting around. It may also be difficult for these

students to participate in large gatherings with a lot going on. Teachers and other instructors should therefore ensure, as far as possible, that the information they are to present is available well ahead of time and in a digital format. They must also remember to read out the information displayed on slides and similar presentation materials.

Teaching situations

Examples of communication challenges for students with a visual impairment include following the teaching from the blackboard or online. Solutions like uploading PowerPoint presentations and other teaching materials well ahead of time and in digital format can be a good solution. These students must also be able to utilise their compensatory assistive devices on the digital teaching platforms used, and the teacher must be aware of the importance of describing slides and figures. Making teaching materials available and enabling students to use them together with assistive technologies such as speech and magnifying programs will reduce communication challenges.

Some classrooms may be fitted with special equipment for doing exercises during class. In these cases, students with a visual impairment may have challenges navigating the room, and as such may need secretarial assistance during practical teaching sessions.

Group work

Students with a visual impairment expend a great deal of energy working out how best to contribute in group work situations. They will often take longer to read, write or complete an assignment than the rest of the group. It may be a good idea for them to strike a balance between undertaking specific tasks and being flexible in group sessions. They might benefit from explaining how and when they find their visual impairment particularly challenging, so the

other group members can also strike a balance and support these students.

Independent study and preparation

Students with a visual impairment can spend a lot of time and energy on creating an overview during independent study. If the students have an active SPS licence to Nota's Studieservice, they can order textbooks and exam materials in an accessible format such as e-books, audiobooks, and digital Braille books. Their SPS counsellor can help them order exam materials in a digital format that enables them to use their reading and writing technologies in advance through Nota's Studieservice. The student also needs teaching and presentation materials well in advance, so they can prepare and participate on equal terms with other students.

Exams

Students with a visual impairment may need extra time for written exams, because they sometimes need more time to familiarise themselves with the exam material and prepare a written document than other students. They may find it hard to obtain an overview of the document using magnifying and speech programs, because these compensatory measures focus on one thing at a time rather than the document as a whole. This also applies when it comes to setting up a layout. Students with a visual impairment may also need extended preparation time for oral exams.

Internships

When students with a visual impairment embark on an internship, it is important to remember that they can perform a wide variety of jobs and tasks provided they have the right compensatory measures. This is very much a question of ensuring that the internship workplace is aware of the student's impairment so the relevant adjustments can be made. Good, relevant guidance is also crucial for both student and internship workplace. This guidance is provided by the Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted (IBOS).

Social activities

Students with a visual impairment may find they have to expend an extraordinary amount of energy in social contexts, because social norms can create misconceptions if people present forget that they cannot always decode facial expressions and body language. These students therefore have to point out these challenges to their fellow students, which can make becoming part of a community difficult. The students may gradually have identified some good routines or techniques for handling this, but every new meeting can pose challenges.

Worth knowing

- Various types and combinations of assistive devices are available for students with a visual impairment. The assessment is carried out by the counselling service at the Institute for the Blind and Partially Sighted.
- If a student's sight worsens, they will need new aids, and you can help guide them through the process. Learning new programs and how they work with digital platforms takes time.
- Bear in mind that deterioration of a student's remaining sight may occasion the need for psychosocial support, for example, via a network or mentor scheme with other students with a visual impairment.

Find out more:

Dansk Blindesamfund / www.blind.dk

Instituttet for Blinde og Svagsynede / www.ibos.dk

Whiplash (piskesmæld)

Whiplash, a complex condition caused by physical injuries, covers a range of injuries to various body tissues. Whiplash typically occurs when a vehicle has been rear-ended hit in the rear and a powerful movement severe blow causes injury to the spinal column and neck, jerking the head violently and suddenly back and forth. The injury often also causes concussion (see also the section on concussion). Whiplash can also occur during contact sports or after a fall or assault.

Although most people who get whiplash recover over time, some experience long-term symptoms. Examples of after-effects include pain in the neck, shoulders, arms or lower back; headache; fatigue; vision problems; dizziness; sleep problems; over-sensitivity to sound and light; ringing ears; and cognitive challenges. The cognitive challenges may present as slower reading speed as well as memory, learning and concentration difficulties. Other effects can include mental health challenges caused, for example, by pain, crises, and sudden life changes affecting physical capacity, family life, career, sport and social relationships.

Whiplash in study-related contexts

Depending on the individual student's symptoms and after-effects of the whiplash, challenges may arise in various study contexts. Accordingly, a specific assessment of the individual student's functional capacity in such contexts should be carried out to clarify any need for support and exemptions. Examples of some study-related challenges that can arise for students with whiplash are outlined below.

Teaching situations

Pain and stiffness can mean that students with whiplash can have trouble with both extended periods of sedentary work and active work. In theoretical teaching situations,

these students may have trouble sitting for long periods, for example, during lectures, when reading or when working at a screen or computer. Students with whiplash may also have cognitive challenges in the form of problems with memorising, concentrating and learning, which can demand more energy from them to gain the same benefit from teaching situations as other students. Physically demanding teaching situations can also be challenging for these students if, for example, they have to stand up for a long time, lift heavy objects or bend their neck to carry out certain tasks. Accordingly, students with whiplash may find it helpful to have the option of switching between periods of rest and activity to relieve pain and other symptoms. As such, this need may be a relevant consideration for teachers.

Group work

Situations involving group work can be challenging for students with whiplash if they experience fatigue, pain or have difficulty with concentration and recall. They may in fact be unable to perform to their previous level before the accident, which can frustrate both them and the rest of the group. For this reason, it might be a good idea for students with whiplash to explain to group members what their challenges are and when they arise, thus fostering mutual understanding.

Independent study and preparation

When it comes to independent study and preparation, students with whiplash can plan their work according to their level of pain, fatigue and need for alternating periods of rest and activity, including variations in working position, which will often be an advantage for them. However, reduced reading speed as well as memory, learning and concentration difficulties may still give them problems, causing them to work more slowly when learning and processing

new knowledge. In some cases, they may therefore need help to structure and prioritise the syllabus.

Students with whiplash who have difficulty reading physical textbooks could look into whether they can become a member of the Nota digital library. With an active SPS licence, they can order digital textbooks through Nota's Studieservice.

Exams

During both oral and written exams, students with whiplash may have visual problems and cognitive difficulties such as slower reading speed and trouble with recall and concentration. These challenges may mean they cannot do the same amount of work as other students, for example, during a timed written exam. Students with whiplash often find having sit and work for long periods difficult, and they may find it relevant to look into whether they can stand up and move around during an exam and/or take a break to rest. It may also be relevant to find out whether they need other compensatory measures during lengthy exams in order to accommodate their need to alternate between rest and activity.

Internships

When it comes to embarking on an internship, it is important to pay attention to whether these students have symptoms such as cognitive challenges that affect their working speed. Students with whiplash may have difficulty with physically demanding work requiring heavy lifting, static tasks, working with their hands at chest height, bending their neck to carry out certain activities and standing up for long periods. They may also find extended periods of sedentary work challenging, including spending a long time reading or working at a computer screen.

Social activities

Students with whiplash may experience pains in the neck, lower back, arms and head, and suffer from sound sensitivity and rapid fatigue, all factors that pose barriers to participation in social activities. Conversely, many may benefit from taking part in such activities to keep them from becoming socially isolated during their studies.

Worth knowing

- Whiplash can be an invisible functional impairment and in some cases can cause long-term or chronic symptoms that can debilitate the person to varying degrees.
- The possibility of rest and/or being physically active during teaching sessions, internships and lengthy exams is generally a good idea for students with whiplash.
- Find out whether support can be provided for students with whiplash, for example, help with structuring the syllabus and support for major assignments and exams.

Find out more:

Whiplashforeningen

www.whiplashforeningen.dk

UlykkesPatientForeningen

www.ulykkespatient.dk

Whiplashguiden / www.whiplashguiden.dk

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Students with physical or mental disabilities

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