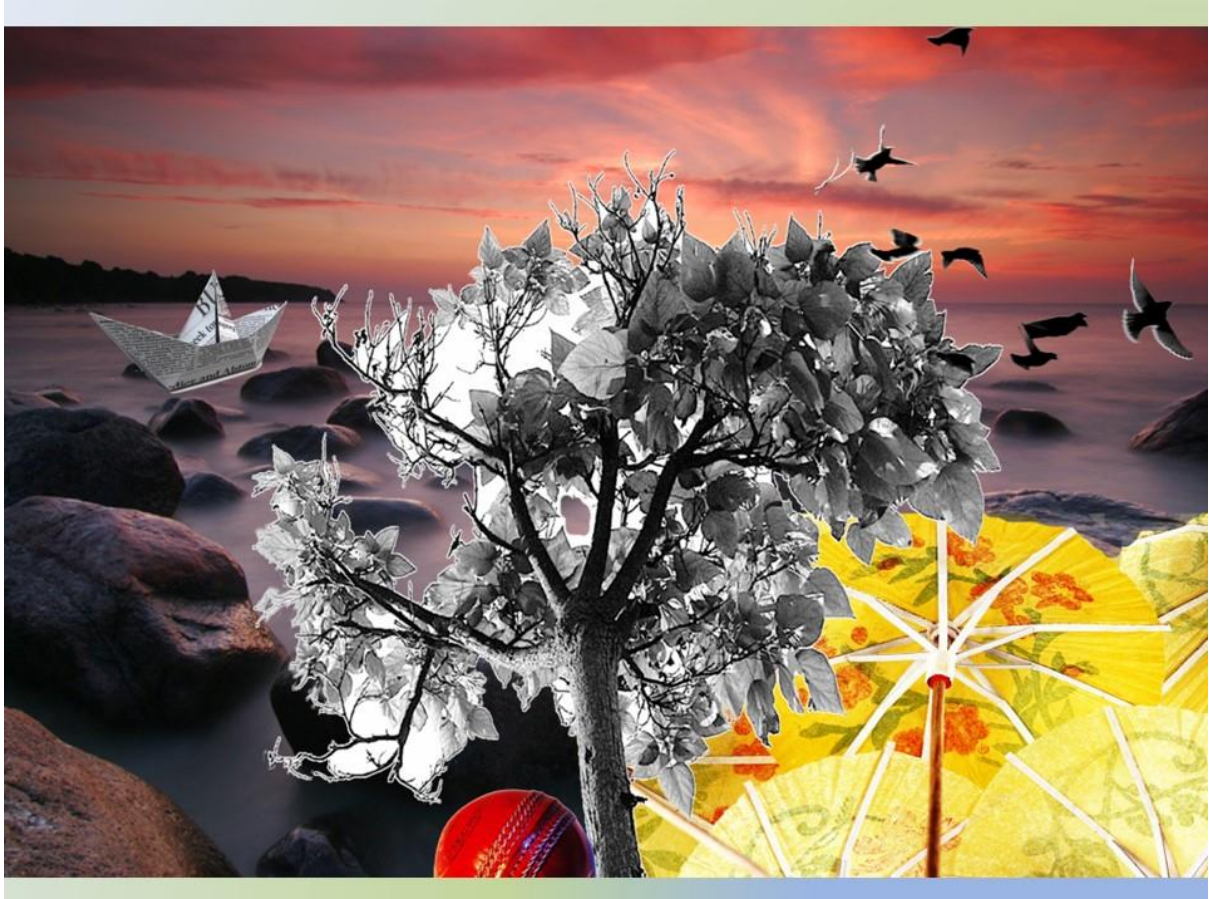


# DIVERSEMINDS@MASSEY



HealthCare+  
It's good to belong

## Student information

This information pertains to supporting autistic, ADHD and dyslexic students in academic settings and comes from a variety of sources including local and international information, peer reviewed research and research conducted at Massey University.

There are resources specific to Autism, ADHD and dyslexia but a lot of the information and resources also apply to all neurodivergent students.

## Who is DiverseMinds@Massey?

We are a group of academics who want to empower neurodivergent students and staff and celebrate being neurospicy.



- Kathryn McGuigan (she/her) ally, Auckland campus, Psychology  
[k.mcguigan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:k.mcguigan@massey.ac.nz)
- Ruth Gibbons, ally, Auckland campus, Anthropology [r.gibbons@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.gibbons@massey.ac.nz)
- Sharon Crooks (ADHD lived experience), Manuwatu campus, Psychology,  
[s.crooks@massey.ac.nz](mailto:s.crooks@massey.ac.nz)
- Natalie Mathews (ADHD lived experience), Auckland campus, Sociology,  
[n.mathews@massey.ac.nz](mailto:n.mathews@massey.ac.nz)
- Te Awatea Ward [Z.Ward@massey.ac.nz](mailto:Z.Ward@massey.ac.nz) ;
- Nicola Macaulay [N.G.Macaulay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:N.G.Macaulay@massey.ac.nz)
- 

## Pathways to support at Massey University

1. Disability support services
2. Student health and counselling
3. Teaching and learning support
4. Other students

5. Staff allies e.g DiverseMinds@Massey
6. Website

### Disability Support Services

Disability support staff can help you with issues such as:

1. timetables
2. choosing subjects (courses)
3. time management skills
4. special arrangements for exams such as a separate room or use of a computer
5. extensions for assignments
6. lecture/ classroom aids
7. accessibility / getting around campus
8. alternative formats
9. accessing and participating in lectures, labs, studios, and contact courses
10. accessing specialist equipment or assistive technology
11. communicating with lecturers
12. connecting with other university services
13. meeting study demands and staying on track
14. guidance on applying for alternative test and exam arrangements.

<https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/services-and-support-for-students/disability-services/>

### Student health and counselling

There are both health and counselling services on campus and can be accessed by distance students as well.

<https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/services-and-support-for-students/counselling-services/> - (this is the website about counselling).

<https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/services-and-support-for-students/student-health-centres/health-centre-services/> - (this is the website about health services).

### Teaching and learning support

People at the Centre for Learner success can help you to develop studying and learning skills. They can provide you with tips on how to: organise your study and time management, write essays and reports, understand your assignment tasks, arrange the reference lists and bibliographies, read efficiently and effectively, improve your language and literacy skills.

Look at this website for the range of support services to help improve your academic writing and study skills <https://www.massey.ac.nz/study/study-and-assignment-support-and-guides/academic-support-services/>

To locate guides check out study and assignment support and guides at <https://www.massey.ac.nz/study/study-and-assignment-support-and-guides/>

Other students

Student association <https://www.massey.ac.nz/student-life/services-and-support-for-students/student-associations-clubs-and-societies/student-associations-at-massey/> or [Te Tira Ahu Pae – Just another WordPress site](#)

Facebook groups such as CoHSS or external students at Massey

[DiverseMinds@Massey](#) monthly check-in

Purpose is just to get together and share experiences from anyone who self-identifies as neurodivergent (diagnosed or not). Focus of these is on struggles with study and social life of university. Not necessarily specific to ASD, ADHD, or Dyslexia .....

**We meet on-line every 2nd Friday of the month 12pm-1pm.  
April 14th, May 12th, June 9th, July 14th, August 11th,  
September 8th, October 13th, November 10th  
Join <https://massey.zoom.us/j/85102770189>**

Autism group – will start soon

ADHD group – will start soon

## **1. Website/stream site**

<https://www.ruth-gibbons.com/project05>

Until we get a dedicated stream site or website this will be a place to locate resources.

### Transition and Orientation

University is not the same as school. There is more independence but along side this, it can feel like you are not supported. Becoming aware of the differences can help you manage your expectations.

Every university provides support and services to their students. These services are available to ALL students. You are no different to any other student who needs help, so do not be afraid to find out what services and supports are provided by your university and ask them for help when you need it.

Be aware you may need to ask for extra support and plan your own timetable. At universities, there is not the same daily routine or relationship with your teachers. Some days you might study all day. On other days you might study for only part of the day, or may not even have to attend classes at all, but you will be expected to do a lot of work outside class times.

It might be helpful to come up with a plan on how to do the things to make you successful e.g. get help to have an email to send to lecturers, get a support person to come with you to disability support services, get them to be your advocate till you are ok to do this yourself, have a description of what your needs already planned out in a document you are happy to share.

1. Speak to someone in the disability or accessibility support unit at university before you arrive on campus. You will learn about the different support services offered at your institution and what you need to do before you arrive on campus. Or make a time and come in and talk in person. Whatever is best for you.
2. Familiarize yourself with the campus before classes begin. Locate your classrooms/lecture halls. They should be open so you can go in and work out the best place to sit. The maps can be located here
3. Check to see if your university is open on the Massey app. Practice getting to university (driving, public transport) at the busy times.
4. Attend orientation events. You will learn more about what is offered at the university and how to get involved. This is also a great opportunity to meet people and join clubs that interest you.
5. Join the student association. There are disability and student advocates to help you.
6. Do a tour of the library.
7. Set up your Wifi and try your student log-in. There are IT people to help you on campus and via distance.
8. Get your student ID, it is useful for printing, getting into things like the movies cheaper.

It may all be overwhelming and stressful so make a plan

- Locate the quiet spaces early on e.g. library, disability support room.
- Bring support people with you, they are welcome on campus too.
- Come to campus before orientation week
- Get into stream (the on-line system) two weeks before semester starts.

### Disclosure of diagnosis

Consider disclosing your diagnosis to the university. It is the only way you will be able to access the resources and services available to you. Often this just means that you inform the disability support services and they can work out who needs to be told and for what reasons.

There is legislation that gives you rights to access support services to help you reach your full academic potential. There are policies from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Disability and within the university. You have every right to be supported in your studies.

Please note that to receive reasonable adjustments and accommodations, disclosure at university requires documentation of your diagnosis. You should bring whatever documentation you had in high school or any medical documentation you might have.

If you are self-diagnosed and are facing financial hardships then please discuss this also with disability support services.

### [Glossary of terms at university](#)

**Assessment:** A piece of work which is marked or graded. Assessment can take a variety of forms including written assignments (essays or reports), examinations, laboratory work, oral presentations, and practical assignments. Attendance at some classes may be required as part of the assessment: check this as soon as possible after you commence study.

**Attendance:** Records of attendance are often maintained by teaching departments and may impact upon a student's successful completion or even be a compulsory requirement. Often however, attendance is not monitored.

**College vs School:** Within many universities, there are colleges and schools. For example, at Massey University, Psychology is in the School of Psychology which is within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Contact hours or contact time:** The number of hours per week a student spends in class (classes include - Tutorials, lectures, workshops and practical sessions). OR the equivalent of the study required in your own time if you are doing distance study.

**Course:** Depending on the university, course could mean one of two things: 1) the degree or diploma you are enrolled in or 2) another name for subject.

**Credit:** Recognition of prior learning granted towards an academic program.

**Elective:** A subject that is chosen according to your interests, or a non-compulsory subject. Some restrictions may apply to what electives you can select.

**Lecture:** A lecture is a formal presentation by an academic staff member at university, usually to a large number of students. Lectures may include the use of handouts and audio-visual presentations. Opportunities for asking questions or discussing the material being presented are usually limited.

**Statement of results:** A formal record of your academic results recorded against your module.

**Subject:** A subject is a particular area of study. For example, Accounting 101, Biology 101. However, some universities may use the word 'course' or 'unit' instead of 'subject'.

**Tutorial:** A tutorial is a learning opportunity in which students discuss the key topics, concepts and ideas of the course with their tutors. Tutorials are closely linked to assessment and often involve small group discussions and group work. All students are expected to prepare for tutorials by reading required material and preparing questions and/ or answers to questions. Students are also expected to participate actively in class discussions and small group activities. Tutorials often complement the lectures given for a course and usually run for one or two hours.

## What to expect at university

At university, it is on your own initiative to complete your work and study for your courses. You will also experience more independence than you did in high school. It is important to learn how to effectively manage your time.

If you are feeling depressed, anxious, stressed, or struggling with other personal matters, be sure to contact the counselling centre. The different resources and services offered may help you get back on track and feel your best.

If you are a full time student you should treat your studies like a full-time job. The expected amount of time *per course* is 10-15 hours per week.

### Lectures

In universities, some lectures may have hundreds of students. Unlike high school, attendance at university lectures is generally not compulsory; that is, the lecturers will not mark the roll at the start of each class. However, it is highly recommended that you do attend all your lectures to help you learn the lecture content and to keep connected with the course. If you miss classes it can be very difficult to catch up.

Some lecturers will record the lectures and post these recordings onto stream but some will not. Most will share the powerpoint slides with you.

**What do you do in a lecture? How to take notes? How to stay focused???**

### Independent Learning

Learning at university is different from learning at high school. As a tertiary student, you have to learn to become more independent in your studies. You are expected to manage your study timetable and deadlines. This may include:

- Preparing for classes before they start by reading class notes, textbooks and other recommended materials,
- Finding your own resources for completing your assignments from the library or internet,
- Making sure you complete and submit assignments on or before their due date,
- Making your own study plan can help you organise your time.

If you experience difficulties with your subject (course), do not be afraid to ask your teachers for help.

*Figure 1: the differences between school (secondary) and university (tertiary) expectations*

Secondary	Tertiary
Guided homework tasks to assist learning.	Self-directed revision throughout semester. Need to set your own homework.
Study time is often structured by the teacher.	Need to manage your own time.
Study tasks are fairly evenly spread throughout the year.	May have many assessments (such as assignments and exams) due at the same time.
Concepts are often simpler.	Concepts are often more challenging to understand.
Writing tasks may not require in-text references and reference lists.	In-text references and reference lists required for most writing (Check your university's website for the specific rules for referencing).
Smaller amounts of directed reading.	Extensive reading of text books and journal articles required and need to critically evaluate what you read.
Less emphasis on online materials.	Online systems used to communicate important information, for example, lecture notes, assessment information.
Easy to ask for help from teachers.	Help is available, but you need to know who to ask or where to look online.

*Courtesy of Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre (OTARC) at La Trobe University – Transition to University <https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/transition-to-university/parents-carers#parents/carers/transition-orientation>.*

### Online resources

Many subjects, units, courses or programs use online resources. These include: subject (course) notes, lecture/ class notes, Lecture/ class presentations, handouts and other reading materials, audio recordings of classes or lectures (you can listen to classes or lectures online if you were unable to attend), video recordings of classes or lectures (you can watch classes or lectures online if you were unable to attend), class discussion boards, blogs, links to readings held in the library, links to related websites and online articles.

### Learning about learning

Learning is not simply remembering and memorising what is taught by your teachers and lecturers. At university, you will need to develop higher order thinking skills. Many assessment tasks will require you to go beyond simply remembering and repeating information. You may be asked to apply what you have learnt to new situations or to analyse and evaluate information. This could mean analysing a writer's arguments and evidence and making judgements about them (evaluating). The highest level thinking skill is creating. This refers to the creation of new knowledge that has never been known before. This is a skill that is normally developed at postgraduate level.

Need help to develop studying and learning skills? The academic and learning skills unit at your university should be able to assist you.

Do ask your tutors, other students in the class and your lectures for help or clarification.

### Some tips for organising your study

- Make sure you understand the subject (course) outline. The subject outline is usually provided to you before or during the first lecture.
- Make a list of what assessments or assignments have to be done in order of the date they are due. You can also add the percentage value the assessments are worth. For assessments worth smaller percentage values, you may want to spend less time working on them. For assessments worth larger percentage values, you may want to



spend more time. For example, you would want to spend more time on an assignment that is worth 50% compared to an assignment that is worth 5%.

- Set out a study schedule
- You should prepare for classes/lectures by downloading the class notes and readings and completing them before class
- Do any further study such as revisions immediately after the class/ lecture. For example, if you had class during the day, you can revise the class notes in the evening of the same day.
- Confirm with teachers/ lecturers the concepts that you are trying to learn by setting up a time to speak to them or email them your questions
- You might find 'to do' lists useful. Some lecturers will provide these for you. You should prioritise the tasks. If you are not sure what is most important, do ask.

### Be realistic and be aware

It can be easy to set impossible goals and try and push through when you should stop and try and adjust what you are doing. Make a self-care plan that allows you to take care of yourself. Also university often is not that accommodating or good for people with sensory issues or attention span limitations. For example,

- Lectures and tutorials are noisy and long with many distractions
- Not all subjects are going to be interesting and inspiring
- The assessments instructions are often not detailed enough so are overwhelming
- There is a lot of reading

But you can be successful! It is about working out what is best for you such as changing your timetable, dropping a subject, working via distance, getting a study buddy to be your body double, ...

Use the strategies that you have learned so far but be open to changing how you work. This can be a work in progress!!