

Staff Guidance

Disability : Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.)/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)/Post-viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS)

Characteristics

Predominantly: severe fatigue following mental or physical activity. Can be a cumulative effect.

Additionally: muscle and joint pain, muscle twitching, difficulties with short-term memory, concentration and focus, word retrieval, palpitations, sore throat, enlarged glands, headache, 'flu-like' feelings, mood swings

Symptoms vary from time to time and from person to person. Stress, physical and mental activity each can precipitate relapses or intensification of symptoms.

Effects on self and study

Possible difficulties with regular attendance, keeping up with reading and assignments, reduced confidence due to memory difficulties and the need to 'ration' study time.

People with such diagnoses can fear being misunderstood as work-shy or uncommitted to their studies especially as the conditions have unpredictable effects (people can be OK one day and unable to get out of bed the next).

People with ME/CFS/PVFS need to pace themselves: measure energy expenditure against relaxation in order to avoid extreme fatigue and maximise effective working time. This is often a particular difficulty for 1st year students for whom managing academic work, personal care (shopping, cooking, laundry) and social life presents a new set of challenges.

Potential Reasonable Adjustments

Assistance with prioritising reading is helpful

Making agreements about attendance (including not asking for repeated provision of 'sick notes')

Making sure lecture notes are available online

Allowing recording of lectures

Rest breaks for examinations

Extensions to deadlines and staggering of deadlines allowing pre-planning of work schedule for a semester