

Blind or Vision Impaired

A person who is blind or vision impaired is unable to see well, even with the use of glasses or contact lenses.

Most people who are blind or vision impaired have some degree of sight and the effects of vision impairment can vary greatly e.g. a person may have only peripheral vision or blurred vision.

What difficulties can be experienced by students who are blind or vision impaired?

- Student may require access to course materials in an accessible format due to difficulties seeing print.
- Difficulties with campus and website accessibility.
- Difficulty, or inability, with note-taking during classes/lectures
- Assistive Technology may be required e.g. a computer with enlarged interface, desktop video magnifier, Screen Reading Software .
- Use of a personal assistant may be required.
- Academic tasks such as reading and completing assignments may take significantly longer.
- Students who have been recently diagnosed may experience emotional difficulties and/or difficulties with practical tasks.

What can you do to support these students?

- Design course materials so that they can be produced in an accessible format on request. A Microsoft Word file is very accessible and can easily be manipulated by the student into a format that suits them.
- Provide the student with lecture notes, in a suitable format, in advance of the class.
- Read power-point slides aloud and describe diagrams used in lectures and tutorials.
- Give students who require course materials in an alternative format, such as Braille or e-book, reading lists in advance and assistance with prioritising readings. The production of texts in alternative formats is time consuming and costly.
- Permit the student to use Assistive Technology in the classroom.
- Consider the student's needs when planning field trips or other activities.
- Support the student if they have difficulty meeting deadlines.
- Consider the exam needs of the student if there is a class test or mid-semester exam.
- If in doubt, ask the student!

Useful Resources

- www.ncbi.ie
- www.ahead.ie