

## **Visual Impairment**

A vision impairment refers to when you lose part or all of your ability to see (or vision). The impairment must persist even with the use of eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Keep instructions brief and uncomplicated as much as possible. When repeating instructions, repeat exactly without paraphrasing.
- Clearly define course requirements, the dates of exams, and when assignments are due. Provide advance notice of any changes.
- Present lecture information in a visual format (e.g., chalkboard, overheads, PowerPoint slides, handouts, etc.).
- Use more than one way to demonstrate or explain information.
- When teaching, state objectives, review previous lessons and summarize periodically.
- Provide vision-impaired students with materials in alternative formats at the same time the materials are given to the rest of the class. The student must specify the preferred format, such as enlarged font.
- Make instructional on-line course materials available in text form. For that material which is graphical in nature, create text-based descriptions of material. Repeat aloud what is written on the board or presented on overheads and in handouts. Pace the presentation of material. If referring to a textbook or handout, allow time for students to find the information. Allow students to tape lectures.
- When appropriate, ask for a sighted volunteer to team up with a vision-impaired student for in-class assignments.
- Keep a front row seat open for a student with a vision impairment. A corner seat is especially convenient for a student with a dog guide.
- Assist the student with finding an effective notetaker from the class.
- Be flexible with deadlines if assignments are held up by the document conversion process.
- Provide hand-outs (preferably electronically) in advance of lectures and seminars, and allow audio-taping where possible to assist review of notes. Some students may need handouts and tests on colored paper to reduce glare.
- Give advance warning and guidance about reading lists and other course resources, to allow students to transcribe essential material into accessible forms.
- Give verbal description of visual aids or writing on whiteboard or slides, and spell aloud difficult words or names. Talk through calculations or procedures as they are carried out.

- Diagrams and charts can be presented in tactile form by using a special plastic film, or for partially sighted students by using thick black pen lines or enlargement from A4 to A3.

#### **Cause:**

- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Trachoma
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Amblyopia, or the lack of use of an eye in childhood
- Eye injuries, such as accidentally being poked in the eye at work
- Inherited conditions, such as retinitis pigmentosa
- Infections such as German measles and chlamydia that can be transmitted from the mother to a fetus during pregnancy
- Age-related macular degeneration

#### **Symptoms:**

- Double vision.
- Sudden onset of blind spots, seeing halos around lights, or having areas where your vision is distorted.
- Having a painful, red eye.
- Having trouble seeing objects on either side.
- Having problems reading or seeing at night.