

## Resources

### General

Always ask people who have disabilities what their particular needs are and make reasonable adjustments according to their specific requirements. Two people with the same disability may not have the same needs.

### Visual Impairments

There is a large range of visual impairments, each with a different effect on the individual. Whilst some conditions cause blurring, others may cause an oscillating image or loss of central or peripheral vision; loss of form, colour, contrast or light. Some people may be registered as blind or partially sighted: it is useful to note that even somebody who is registered blind may have some small amount of useful vision. As the range of effects is so wide, it is a good idea to ask the student about the most appropriate support.

### Support

#### 1. Signage

- Large clear maps, signs and labels are essential. It is good practice to produce these in Braille. People who have been visually impaired since birth tend to have learned to read Braille, whereas people who have become visually impaired later in life tend not to have acquired that skill.

#### 2. Written and Visual Information

- Always produce information in more than one format (e.g. in large print and on audio tape). Receiving information in an electronic format can be very useful to visually impaired students because many of them will have access to computers and software programmes which can read out information.
- Having an electronic copy of written information will make it easier to produce it in a variety of formats, e.g. Braille.
- Ensure that programme-related information displayed on noticeboards is duplicated by E-mail, verbally or as a handout in an alternative format.

#### 3. Orientation

- Give individual students the opportunity to be guided around their new environment (e.g. a specific building or lecture theatre) so that they can familiarise themselves with it. This may take longer than a standard guided tour, and may need to be repeated.

#### 4. Lectures, Seminars and other Classes

- Many visually impaired students can benefit from preferential seating.
- It is good practice to organise seating arrangements before the first lecture.
- Provide as many auditory cues as possible. For example, it is good practice to read out overhead transparencies and describe diagrams in detail.
- In seminars, try to indicate new speakers and who is speaking.

### Good Practice for Supporting Students with Guide Dogs or Hearing Dogs

- Always consult individual students about their specific needs.

- Treat the dog as a working dog, not as a pet.
- Do not distract or pat the dog without the owner's knowledge and permission.
- It is good practice to provide a bowl of water for the dog.

For more information, see

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association [www.gdba.org.uk](http://www.gdba.org.uk)

## Sensitive Responses to Disability

Think about the words you use.

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use instead</b>
the handicapped	disabled people
the disabled	disabled people
Cripple, invalid	disabled person
Spastic	person who has cerebral palsy
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of...	has or with... (the condition or impairment)
mentally handicapped, retarded, subnormal	learning impaired
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
able-bodied	non-disabled
disabled toilet*	accessible toilet*

Source: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk) (\*not on the scope list)