

# Visual Impairments



## Possible Student Characteristics:

- Struggle with glare or reduced lighting.
- Difficulty learning visual concepts.
- Difficulty getting to class because of transportation problems.
- May depend on a service animal to get to class.

## Teaching Tips:

- Let student know the course materials you will be using several weeks prior to the start of classes if asked. A student who needs the materials in alternative formats will need time to have requests processed.
- Do not assume that a blind/visually impaired student knows Braille. Only a small percentage of students with visual impairments know and use Braille.
- Do not assume that blind/visually impaired students have great technological skills. A student who has been visually impaired since birth probably has better knowledge of alternative format technology than someone who recently lost his sight. Also, the level of technology instruction in K-12 varies widely, so some students may come to college better prepared than others. Knowing their skills helps you to better help them.
- When writing on any type of board, be sure to say out loud what you're writing.
- Consider the student with a visual impairment when you're showing a film in class. If it's available, get a copy of the film in audio-described format. This allows the student to hear descriptions of important scenes. Or you can have other students explain what is being shown on the screen. With both these accommodations, you'll need to have the student view the film in another room so other students will not be disturbed.
- When having class discussions, encourage all students to say their names before they talk. This can help the student with a visual impairment keep up with the conversations.
- Use audible or textual aids to improve learning.
- Provide rich verbal descriptions of concepts.
- For handouts, use black type on white paper for high contrast and avoid shiny paper.