

BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED FACT SHEET

Students who are blind or visually impaired (VI) vary significantly in their visual ability. Some students may be able to see large forms, only use their peripheral vision or may be completely blind. Many students use visual aids such as magnifiers and assistive technology. They might use a cane, service animal and Braille; these items assist them in gaining access to the classroom but not necessarily the classroom materials. The following accommodations and suggestions enable access to materials in the classroom.

Possible accommodations assigned by the DRC; you will receive a service letter from the DRC delineating the appropriate accommodations for a particular student.

Note Taker or Tape Recorder	Preferential Seating – front row
Assistive Technology – Convert Books to CD/ Braille	Note Taker
Screen Enlarger	Laptop allowed to take notes
Alternative Test Format	Reader/ Scribe for Tests
Talking Calculator	Registered Service Animals

Faculty Suggestions:

If possible, provide advanced copies of handouts, notes, or PowerPoint slides in class or online.

If tests need to be converted into an alternative format, i.e. Braille, please submit tests at least two weeks prior to the scheduled exam date.

When addressing the class, speak directly to the students. If speaking directly to a student with a visual impairment, look directly at them.

Do not shout when conversing with students that are blind/visually impaired; provide verbal descriptions of visually presented material.

Be descriptive in lectures and when giving directions, avoid words such as “this, there and that”; a poor verbal example would be “meet over there.” Instead, a more descriptive description would be “meet at the first floor at the information desk in the library.”

Do not pet the student’s service animal without permission.

If a student who is blind/visually impaired requests assistance leaving a building during an emergency, bend your left arm into a 90-degree angle, allow the students to grasp your arm; walk slightly in front of the student to safely guide them.

For more information about visual impairments, visit the “From Where I Sit” video series:

<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/resources/lana.shtml>

Disability Resource Center
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