

## **Assistive Technology access to information**

**Braille** is the tactile representation of text. Not all blind people read Braille but for those who do, ensure sufficient time is allowed for notes and exams to be transcribed. Consult your Teacher/Consultant.

- Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) enlarges print onto a computer screen.
- Micro recorders are useful for recording meetings, conferences etc.
- Monocular hand-held mini-scopes magnify information to provide a close-up view.
- Large print software programs magnify text on the computer screen eg: *ZoomText*.
- *ZoomCaps* computer keyboards provide more visible keys.
- A portable Braille can manually record directly into Braille.

**Screen readers** (computer software) enable a person to hear, review and edit text that is typed on the computer screen.

JAWS [www.quantech.com.au](http://www.quantech.com.au)

Keynote Gold; OutSPOKEN; TextHELP!  
[www.pulsedata.com](http://www.pulsedata.com)

WYNN What You Need Now!  
[www.synapseadaptive.com](http://www.synapseadaptive.com)

Dragon Naturally Speaking; Dragon Dictate  
[www.nuance.com](http://www.nuance.com)  
[www.morethanable.com](http://www.morethanable.com)

<http://voicerecognition.com>

Computing Out Loud <http://out-loud.com>

Speaking to Write  
[www.edc.org/spk2wrt/](http://www.edc.org/spk2wrt/)

**Adjustments** may need to be provided to enable a person with a disability to gain equitable access to education. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- modifying or providing equipment
- modifying assessment procedures
- changing course delivery
- modifying educational premises.

Adjustments must be determined in consultation with the student concerned.

For further advice contact your  
**TAFE NSW Teacher/Consultant**

### **Other sources of support**

#### **Vision Australia**

<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/>

#### **Blind Citizens Australia**

<http://www.bca.org.au/>

#### **Guide Dogs NSW/ACT**

<http://www.guidedogs.com.au/>

#### **Choosing Your Path—**

#### **Disclosure: It's a Personal Decision**

<http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/rdlo/disclosure/>

#### **Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission**

[www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au)

#### **Disability Discrimination Act 1992**

#### **Disability Standards for Education 2005**



## **Blind or Vision Impairment Awareness**

***Some advice and strategies  
for teachers***

TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW

## ***What is Blindness or Vision Impairment?***

A person is considered legally blind if they are unable to identify less than 6/60 distance vision or a restriction of this visual field to 10 degrees of arc. This means that what people can usually see at 60 metres a person with a vision impairment can only see at 6 metres.

Vision impairment varies from person to person and may range from blurred vision, reduced depth and distance perception, sensitivity to glare, tunnel vision to poor night vision. Vision impairment may impact on a person at birth, deteriorate over time or occur suddenly as a result of an accident, hereditary condition, diabetes, glaucoma, stroke, eye infections and congenital conditions.

It is estimated that less than 5% of people with a vision impairment are legally blind. Most people have some useful vision. The amount and kind of sight they have, and how well they are able to use it, depend largely on the diagnosis of their particular impairment. An appropriate environment can, however, greatly increase a person's ability to function independently.

## ***Positive interactions in the learning environment***

### ***Communicating***

Be conscious of additional messages you may convey non-verbally such as facial expressions and body language and attempt to verbalise these. For example, you may need to convey that someone has nodded or smiled to indicate agreement.

- Introduce yourself by name and introduce anyone else who may be present.
- Always face the person and speak normally, neither louder nor more exaggerated.
- Say when you are leaving the room.
- Ensure that the student is aware of any room changes, not relying on a note on the door or board.

### ***If a person requires assistance***

- Ask if the person would like any help.
- Allow them to take your arm and walk about half a pace behind you; never grab them or try and lead them.
- Ensure that the path of travel is clear, especially if the person uses a cane.
- Give clear and concise information about what is ahead.
- Don't use gestures to indicate directions.
- Use clear indicators such as 'two steps to your right'.

### ***When approaching stairs***

- Advise whether you are going up or down and how many steps there are.
- Say when you are reaching the top or bottom of the stairs.
- Advise when there are signs like "work in progress" or "slippery when wet."

### ***When guiding a person to: a chair***

- Place their hand on the back of the chair.
- Indicate which way the chair is facing.

### ***a car***

- Place their hand on the roof of the car so they can bring their hand down to touch the back of the car seat.

### ***Guide dogs***

- Anti-discrimination legislation makes it unlawful for a person with a guide dog to be refused entry to any building or public transport.
- A guide dog will be highly trained. It is important not to interfere in any way in the interaction between the guide dog and its owner.
- Do not feed, pat or talk to the guide dog.
- Take into account the dog's needs for food and water, always checking with the owner first.
- Ensure there is adequate access to outdoor areas for exercising and toileting.
- If you are asked to take a guide dog for a walk, be sure to ask the owner or regular handler for any special instructions on how to handle the animal.