# Visual Impairment (VI) Fact Sheet

It is vital to ensure that students who are blind or have a visual impairment have access to resources and to learning in your classroom and can work independently outside the classroom; ways of doing this will vary widely from student to student, but there are some strategies which are helpful to many visually impaired students.

Good practice when teaching or supporting students with a visual impairment:

- **Think about the layout of the classroom** – some visually impaired students will need help in understanding and navigating the layout and may struggle if unexpected changes are made.
- **Adjust lighting and seating to facilitate visual access** – in general, avoid glare from the board and, more specifically, follow any advice given for individual students via their support plan.
- **Encourage a calm working atmosphere with minimal background noise** – visually impaired students are more dependent on hearing what is being said.
- **When speaking to the class, stand in a well-lit position, facing people** but not in front of a window, where your face will be in shadow.
- **Manage class discussions** so that the speaker is introduced by name and only one person speaks at a time.
- **Always read out what is written or displayed on the board.**
- **Describe and explain any diagrams or illustrations.**
- **Be prepared well in advance** – to allow time for any resources to be modified and enlarged or put into a different format. This may need to be done by SSP's (and/or the VI Team) and will need advance preparation.
- **Produce resources in Word and make them available to the student electronically** – they will then be able to enlarge them for themselves and/or use a computer reader.
- **Ensure the layout of resources is uncluttered.**
- **Be aware of assistive technologies and how these can support the student** (you can read more about them here)
- **Avoid placing text over a background illustration or pattern.**
- **Use an appropriate font size for the student.**
- **Use a sans serif font** such as Arial, Calibri or Century Gothic and avoid italics and underlining.
- **Avoid poor quality photocopies.**
- **Use black or blue pens** when using the whiteboard and 'say as you write'. Check individual students can see these colours.
- **Use black pen when marking work** and ensure any handwritten feedback is large enough to be legible. Mark electronically where you can so that feedback can be read out using read aloud software.
- **Explain any video clips you use,** or arrange for the student to have access to them in advance and watch them prior to the session.
- **In exams the student may need modified/enlarged papers** – these have to be ordered well in advance.
- **The student may be entitled to more than 25% extra time in exams** – and possibly a reader, practical assistant or word-processor. They will also need these for any internal tests or mocks that you do.
- **If the student wears glasses or uses a magnifier or magnification software, don't assume this solves all their problems,** and be aware that using these will take additional time and effort.