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COLLEGE

Disability Policy

2021-2023

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Students with Disabilities/Additional Learning Support

Mont Rose College is fully committed to support its students with disabilities. Our Student Services Office takes care of the disability provision for the students. At the time of admission, the students are encouraged to indicate if they need additional support throughout their time at the college.

Policy Statement

Mont Rose College is committed to provide equal learning and support opportunities to all of its students and complies with the Equality Act 2010 and the amendments to the Act.

Our policy is to:

- Gradually remove barriers affecting students with disabilities
- Ensure that all students with disabilities are given appropriate advice and help after their disability assessment by the Student Services department
- Ensure that this policy is congruent with other related College policies
- Communicate the disability policy clearly to all concerned students in the medium most appropriate to them

Services offered to the students

Below is brief information about the learning support offered to the students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Mental Health Conditions, visual impairment, impaired Mobility & Hearing Impairments.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects the area of the brain that deals with language, leading to differences in the way information is processed and affecting the underlying skills needed for learning to read, write and spell. Students with dyslexia can often perform a range of complex tasks, but find learning to read and spell, organising writing, taking notes, remembering instructions, telling the time or finding their way around challenging. A way of regarding this pattern of strengths and weaknesses is as a cognitive style; dyslexia can therefore be considered as a difference in the way a student thinks and learns.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- They may have a significantly slower reading speed than other students, putting strain on their studies, and affecting their ability to remember what has been read;
- A student may experience visual stress, or have difficulty retaining, understanding and summarising what has been read;
- Their vocabulary levels may be poor and so their comprehension may suffer;
- Students with dyslexia may experience problems with their written work, including poorly constructed and slow handwriting interfering with their ability to get ideas down;
- They may have difficulty planning and structuring written work, and problems with the transition of ideas;
- Students with dyslexia may find it challenging relating theory to practice;
- They may demonstrate poor written expression or sentence structure;
- Many students with dyslexia have difficulty editing and proof-reading their work.

Student Support

- Providing handouts at the beginning of a tutorial or lecture can be the most helpful strategy, since a student with dyslexia can then concentrate on what the speaker is saying without having to be concerned with full note-taking;
- Lists of vocabulary at the beginning of a module will enable students to absorb the terms and understand them within context;
- Students should be supported in identifying new subject vocabulary in texts;

During the session:

- Offer the framework, overview and main points of a session at the beginning, and then give markers along the way to help students to distinguish important points;
- Students with dyslexia are likely to benefit from time to process information, and so it is helpful for lectures to be broken into chunks with opportunities for reflection and questions;

- Within lessons, new terms and concepts should be visible on either a board or projector;
- Any text should be large and clear, so that students can read it;
- Whiteboards should only be used to elaborate a point, or to note key words, concepts or names. They should not be used to extensive note making;
- Some dyslexic students can be easily distracted by noise or activity, and so staff should offer them choice over their seating.

Strategies:

- The use of electronic spelling and grammar checkers should be encouraged;
- Staff should allow the use of tape recorders or laptops in lectures if the student feels this is necessary;

Follow up:

- When students are required to conduct independent research, staff should give guidance on selected works, providing articles which are clearly structured and well presented to minimise reading load;
- Additionally, the breaking up of learning tasks into small steps should allow time for reinforcement and over-learning of information;

Preparing students with their assignments:

- Assignment requirements and guidelines should be clear and provided in both verbal and written formats;
- Staff should ensure that students have an accurate understanding of what they need to do, and that they have not misread any key pieces of information;
- Many students with dyslexia can get lost in following sequences and instructions; they may need help in action planning and prioritising tasks, as well as practical support with planning, structure and organisation;
- Students may also need more specific help in focusing on conventions of academic writing, such as introductions, sub-headings and conclusions;
- Students may need support in the identification of main points and relevant and irrelevant data, selection and inclusion of quotations and references, ordering points, and making transitions between points and presentation;

- Provide help with planning, organisation, writing and paragraphing. This could be through encouraging the use of assistive technology, including word processors with good spelling and grammar checks, and voice-activated and text-to-speech software such as Balabolka, NaturalReader, WordTalk or Chrome Speak;
- Offer existing essays and assignments as examples to students;
- Provide clear written directions and checklists for assignments;
- Visually highlight important information and instructions.
- How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?
- During examinations students may need extra time for reading through the paper as well as writing and checking work
- Reading work through quickly initially will help identify important content where there is weak spelling, written expression and organisational difficulty;
- Identifying what has been done well in feedback is more useful than pointing out bad grammar and punctuation.
- Where possible, use different colours when feeding back on content and on written expression to distinguish the two.

What is Dyspraxia?

Dyspraxia is a specific learning difficulty that affects the brain's ability to plan sequences of movement. It is thought to be connected to the way that the brain develops and can affect the planning of what to do and how to do it. It is often associated with problems of perception, language and thought. The effects that dyspraxia have on a person's ability to function in a day-to-day environment, as well as in a learning environment, can vary.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- Students may find manual and practical work difficult; this could include problems using computer keyboards and mice, frequent spills in the laboratory and elsewhere, difficulty measuring accurately, slow, poor or illegible

handwriting, messy presentation or work, and problems with activities such as craft-work or cookery;

- They may have a poor attention span and poor short term memory and be easily distracted, especially by noise and bright lights;
- They may have difficulty following class discussions and have a slow retrieval of information, especially when under stress;
- They may struggle with written expression, demonstrating erratic spelling and punctuation, awkward and confused sentence structure, poor proof-reading and inclusion of irrelevant material in essays;
- They might have trouble keeping place while reading and writing (tracking problems) and poor relocating, meaning they cannot easily look from presentation to notes;
- They may have difficulty word finding and pronouncing newly-introduced words;
- They may speak indistinctly, loudly, quickly or slowly, interrupting inappropriately and difficulty learning foreign languages;
- Students have a tendency to reverse and mistype numbers, signs or decimal points, demonstrating frequent mistakes;
- They might struggle when using equipment such as a compass or protractor, and have difficulty with spatial awareness, for example drawing shapes, graphs and tables;
- They may be slow to complete work.

Students Support:

- Advanced provision of lecture notes, handouts and PowerPoint slides;
- Give clear handouts on the subject, and display new terms clearly on a whiteboard or PowerPoint;
- Let students use recorders or assistants for note-taking and break down work into segments;
- Repeat and summarise the main points of the lecture;
- Students should be given a choice about their seating position, as they may be easily distracted, particularly by noise and movement;
- Videoing lectures and the use of multi-sensory materials can be helpful;

- Provision of a reading list which provides guidance on a text, with support to prioritise books on the reading lists;
- Students should be given more time to frame and answer questions;
- Regular breaks should be offered, alongside frequent changes of activity;
- Instructions should be written as well as verbal.

Preparing students with their assignments:

- Provide help with planning, organisation, writing and paragraphing. This could be through encouraging the use of assistive technology, including word processors and voice-activated and text-to-speech software such as Balabolka, NaturalReader, WordTalk or Chrome Speak;
- Offer existing essays and assignments as examples to students;
- Provide clear written directions and checklists for assignments;
- Visually highlight important information and instructions.

How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?

- Students may require additional support with structuring and completing revision;
- They may need to use a laptop during examinations, or have access to a scribe
- They may need to take examinations in a separate room to avoid distractions
- Students may be given extra time

What is a Hearing Impairment (HI) or deafness?

Deafness is a term used to cover the whole range of hearing loss. The RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf people) uses the term to cover people who are: deaf, partially deaf/partially hearing, deafened, deaf/blind, hard of hearing, and tinnitus sufferers.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- The biggest problems experienced is hearing what goes on in lectures and seminars, as although lecture rooms are equipped with induction loops, not all

students find these effective. As a result, in programmes where a lot of teaching is done in seminar groups, student can fall behind in their work;

- Deaf students can need more time to assimilate the new language of their subjects - limited access to the spoken language around them inhibits the assimilation of vocabulary and forms of expression;
- Their auditory memory is likely to be less useful for them than for other students as an aid to study - it is thought that this, along with difficulties with vocabulary assimilation and the lack of 'inner voice' when reading, can significantly affect reading fluency. It may also take them longer to read, understand and retain information;
- As deafness can significantly affect language acquisition, a student's written work may appear to lack depth and maturity.

Student Support:

- Context is essential for students who lip-read, so it is important to structure sessions clearly;
- Attract the student's attention before speaking; making sure you are facing them;
- Speak clearly; but avoid speaking artificially slowly, exaggerating your lips, or shouting as this affects the natural rhythm of speech;
- Make use of natural gesture and facial expression as a clue to meaning;
- Make sure that there is adequate light on your face. Do not stand with your back to windows, as this will cause your face to be in shadow;
- Position the student so that they can lip-read you easily, as well as see the projector or board and as much of the class as possible, if there is to be a group discussion. A horse-shoe seating arrangement is helpful for this;
- Make use of visual material, for instance handouts, key vocabulary, diagrams and written instructions;
- When working with any written material handouts, staff should to allow the student time to read sections before starting to speak: it is not possible to read and lip-read at the same time;
- Indicate when you are changing the subject and repeat questions asked by students;

- Check comprehension by encouraging and directing questions;
- Keep background noise to a minimum. In some cases, staff may be required to wear a microphone to enable a student to easily discern what is being said;
- Try to incorporate pauses into sessions, so that students have time to assimilate information and respond. Such pauses will also enable interpreters and note-takers to keep up;
- Write important new words on the board to fix their form;
- Allow hearing impaired students to record their lectures or to have a transcription of lecture notes or a note-taker
- If using a DVD/video for teaching purposes, be aware that the student will not be able to follow the soundtrack and will need to borrow the DVD/video or have access to subtitles or a transcript;
- Direct the student towards any relevant course materials online;
- When in a practical session staff should bear in mind that a student who lip-reads will be unable to do so whilst continuing with work tasks/observations simultaneously. Therefore, ensure the student can follow both what you are saying and what you are doing;
- Special provision may need to be made for field trips or placements. The student may cope well in a lecture but may need additional support in the open air or in a noisy workplace. Be prepared to be flexible and discuss possible options with the student well in advance.

Preparing students with their assignments:

- Clearly differentiate between primary and secondary reading: deaf and hard of hearing students may have a slow reading speed and this will allow them to better manage their workload;
- The student may have difficulty in extracting meaning from text, and thus information may be misinterpreted. When setting assignments, be aware that the student may require the language of exam papers and assignment briefs to be modified – especially if their first language is BSL.

How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?

- Clarity about the learning objectives will be very helpful in determining acceptable modifications, which will be different for different types of assessment, or for different parts of the assessment. For example, a student with auditory difficulties may have no additional difficulty in completing a written exam paper, but invigilators may need to provide oral information during the examination, e.g. about changes to the exam paper, in writing;
- Students may need extra time, reserved seating at the front of the exam room and additional reading time at the start of timed assessments,
- Responses may need to be conveyed by a student using sign language, which can then be verbalised by an interpreter, and written by a scribe;
- For some students who are born with a hearing impairment, written English may be deaf English, i.e. in the word order of sign language, which is very different from the word order of English. If the subject of the assessment is what is understood rather than how this is expressed, then signed responses may be acceptable.

Only 30 – 40% of words are visible on the lips, so 60 – 70% is guesswork using context and other visual clues.

- Attract the student's attention before you start speaking;
- The ideal distance for communicating with a deaf person is 2m;
- Clear speech is essential for successful lip reading. It is important to maintain the normal rhythm of speech, perhaps slightly slower than normal, with clear lip patterns;
- Shouting results in distortion of clarity and distortion of normal facial and lip reading patterns;
- Don't obscure the mouth with hands, pencils etc, and remember it is difficult to lip read someone who is eating or smoking;
- Stand still when speaking to a deaf person: your face must be clearly visible;
- Be aware that some speakers use distracting head or body movements and irrelevant gestures, which will also interfere with understanding;
- Helpful gestures and facial expressions will facilitate understanding;

- Speak one at a time if in a group and try to make sure the deaf person is included in conversation. It is better if group discussions are carried out in a circle or horseshoe configuration, so that all speakers are visible. Finally, speakers should make themselves known before starting;
- During discussions it is helpful to echo questions, answers and contributions from the front so all can hear clearly;
- Try to stand facing the light source, as lip reading is difficult when the speaker's face is in shadow;
- It is easier to understand a sentence than an isolated word because there is more chance of establishing context;
- It is helpful if you signpost a change in subject before moving on;
- If you are not understood, try repeating, rephrasing or writing down the message;
- The most important factor for successful lip reading is a good knowledge of written and spoken English. So, there are likely to be difficulties if English is not the first language of the deaf person or if there is a lot of new vocabulary and concepts to take on board;
- Lip reading requires intense concentration. If the lip reader is tired, ill or under stress, communication may break down or take a little longer, so don't give up.

Mental Health Conditions:

A mental health condition impacts a person's thinking, feeling or mood and may affect his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis. Many conditions are temporary and may respond to rest, counselling or medication. However, individuals may also experience long term difficulties which are interspersed with periods of good and poor health. Mental health conditions can include:

Anxiety

This could be temporary and acute, for example around stressful periods such as exams. Alternatively, it could be a long term diagnosed disorder that can have a significant impact on how the student finds day to day activities. Symptoms of anxiety could include panic attacks, persistent worrying and unpleasant physical and psychological symptoms.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

This is a mental health condition where a person has obsessive thoughts and/or compulsive activity that cause a significant impact on daily life.

Depression

Symptoms may include persistent feelings of sadness, guilt, helplessness and poor sleep to name a few. In its severest form it can be life threatening as people can suffer from and act on suicidal thoughts.

Personality Disorders

Mental health conditions that affect how people manage their feelings, emotions, thoughts, behaviour and how they relate to other people.

Eating Disorders

Abnormal eating habits or behaviour surrounding eating, and which negatively affects a person's physical or mental wellbeing.

Schizophrenia

A psychiatric diagnosis that could include: a lack of interest in doing things, being disconnected from feelings, difficulty concentrating, wanting to avoid people, hallucinations and hearing voices. Symptoms and severity can vary significantly in different people with this diagnosis.

Bipolar Disorder

A psychiatric disorder characterised by extreme changes in mood – from periods of overactive, excited behaviour – known as ‘mania’ or ‘manic episodes’ – to deep depression. Symptoms and severity can vary significantly in different people with this diagnosis.

Self-harm

This can be a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, old memories, or overwhelming situations and experiences. It can be a significant symptom of various mental health conditions including depression and personality disorders.

Alcohol or Drug Misuse

In regards to students, this refers to the problematic use of alcohol and/or drugs that adversely interferes with the individual's health, work, study, safety or other social interactions. This could be substances that are deliberately used to alter perception or feelings and includes alcohol, illegal drugs, 'legal highs' and medication (when not used as medically prescribed).

What challenges might this cause someone at college?

- Students may have difficulties concentrating during class;
- Some students may have extreme difficulties with presentation and public speaking;
- Student may take medication that affects their memory, particularly short-term;
- For many students, their mental health may be variable, which affects their attendance, punctuality and behaviour;
- During times of difficulty, they may be unable to engage in the learning until relevant emotional issues are resolved;
- Students may demonstrate variable progress; regression can be common, and success can mean that some students may be reluctant to move on;
- They may be unable to organise their time effectively;
- Students may struggle to complete assignments on time;
- They may lack self-esteem or confidence, which impacts on their learning;
- They may have difficulty working in group situations;
- A student may suffer from anxiety or panic attacks, exacerbated by their environment or current workload;
- They may be absent from class for prolonged periods;
- Students may take medication which affects their ability to participate;

- They may have problems attending class or studying due to side effects of medication.

Student Support:

- Ensure course materials are available online and in advance where possible, so students can prepare for the session, or catch up on any work they have missed;
- Incorporate breaks into class time to support students who can feel overwhelmed in the learning environment;
- Offer students regular timeslots where they can contact staff to discuss any problems or concerns;
- Allow students time to process information before asking questions, and be sympathetic towards those who find speaking in front of others difficult;
- Carefully manage group situations, ensuring that students are supported, particularly as some mental health conditions can manifest through unsocial behaviours or actions;
- Help students to manage their time and organise work, for example breaking tasks down into manageable chunks;
- Students may need to sit near to exits so that they can leave easily (for example if they suffer from severe anxiety or panic attacks).

Preparing students with their assignments:

- Be aware that students with mental health conditions may have significant issues leading up to exams and deadlines. If possible try to be available for contact and appointments to discuss any issues prior to and during such periods;
- Assessments, particularly when formal (assignments and examinations), can be stressful and cause the student to perform below standard. Practice and reassurance may help a student to overcome this;
- Give students plenty of notice regarding deadlines and assessments;

People with mental health difficulties may have experienced rejection by those who have not understood their needs. Feedback must therefore be delivered carefully, and

establishing a good relationship with plenty of encouragement can prove extremely helpful;

Students can sometimes be withdrawn or disruptive due to lack of understanding of tasks, or a feeling of inadequacy to demands. Being aware of this possibility allows tutors to intercede and attempt to break the cycle of failure;

It is helpful to distinguish on reading lists between core and secondary texts, so that students can prioritise and direct their energies effectively;

Encourage students to make use of free assistive technology, to support them with managing their workload and organising and structuring their work. This includes text-to-speech software Balabolka, Natural Reader, WordTalk and Chrome Speak, and mind-mapping software MindView and MindGenius;

How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?

Remind students of the procedures for applying for extensions and extenuating circumstances often, making any necessary applications or documentation for this easily accessible;

- Adhere to examination arrangements, such as extra time or a separate room

What is Asperger Syndrome?

It is an autistic spectrum disorder caused by a biological brain dysfunction. As with all autistic spectrum disorders it affects communication, social interaction and imagination.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- May have an overriding, all pervasive single interest
- Difficulty coping with change. New projects/exam times can be especially difficult
- May have obsessions which interfere with learning – e.g. rigid rules and routines
- May remember facts but not remembering doing something
- If the course is their single interest, but they are not interested in some aspects of the course, they may not apply themselves to those aspects

- Distress at lack of information may cause increase in coping mechanism such as repetitive behaviours (muttering, other verbal habits), panic, incessant questioning.
- Takes language literally. May be confused by certain terms and respond in a way that seems cheeky or rude.
- Non-verbal communication problems: e.g. blank facial expressions, limited eye contact
- Problems with social relationships: Difficulty making and keeping friends, may come across as arrogant and rude
- Difficulty understanding or communicating feelings
- Problems empathising with others: may say things that distress without seeing themselves as responsible; in group work may not naturally consider other people's wishes or needs
- Language Peculiarities: Overly dull speech, speaking in a monotone, hyper-correct use of grammar and vocabulary
- Clumsiness: Poor gross motor skills, poor co-ordination, and ungainly movement

Student Support:

- Get to know your student's particular needs in advance
- Be prepared to meet the student before the start of the course to discuss needs
- Provide clear, detailed information about structure of course, practical arrangements, assessment requirements and deadlines
- Give explicit instructions and make intentions explicitly clear
- Be consistent in approach: If a change is inevitable give clear, specific information as far ahead as possible
- Be patient, encouraging and supportive
- Discuss with the student whether he wants other students to be made aware of his condition
- Present material in a structured way
- Use clear, unambiguous language
- Provide subject lists, glossaries of terms and acronyms

What is a Physical Disability?

Physical disabilities affecting students can take many different forms. They can be temporary or permanent, fluctuating, stable or degenerative, and may affect parts of the body or the whole of it. Some students with physical disabilities, long term illness, neurological conditions or acquired brain injury may also have perceptual and processing difficulties. Fatigue and absence from lectures may also be significant.

A physical impairment may affect a student's mobility or dexterity to varying degrees. They may use mobility equipment such as a wheelchair or crutches on a regular basis, or this may fluctuate from day to day. The impact of a student's physical impairment may also vary, depending on the task they need to complete or the time and resources available to them. For example, they may require the support of others to enable them to carry out daily tasks, or they may need to consider issues around accessibility, distance, and the physical tasks involved when making day to day decisions.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- Students with physical disabilities, neurological conditions or acquired brain injury may have perceptual difficulties, and these can take different forms. Some students have difficulty actually receiving information by seeing or hearing, while others can see or hear but cannot process the information they receive. This can cause difficulties with reading and writing, for example in locating the correct place on the page, or moving from left to right when reading or writing;
- Students with a neurological impairment, who stammer or have other speech and language difficulties, along with students who are deaf or who have partial hearing, may all have difficulty communicating through speech;
- People with communication difficulties are often thought to be far less able than they really are. It is important to check personal responses to ensure there are no automatic assumptions being made concerning a student's intelligence and ability if their speech is very slow or slurred. The potential of these students often goes unrecognised;

- Memory difficulties may be a major issue faced by students who have acquired brain injury;
- Students with short-term memory difficulties may find it very hard to remember instructions;
- Some students may have fluctuating memories; they will be able to complete a task in one session, but be unable to do it in another, making it difficult to record progress;
- Memory also affects students' ability to sequence. Some students with long-term memory difficulties may not learn even after many repetitions and much practice, and appear to 'start again' each time. It is important to remember that memory difficulties do not correlate with a student's intelligence;
- Some students need help with day-to-day studying. For example they may need someone to take notes, assist with experiments, carry or open books or physically write assignments on their behalf;
- A person may have problems articulating their thoughts in a spoken way (dysphasia), or injury or medical conditions such as a stroke or cerebral palsy can lead to a lack of control of the muscles involved in producing speech. Fluency difficulties such as stuttering and stammering may also occur.
- Students may experience lack of concentration or fatigue as a result of pain, medication or sleep problems.

Student Support:

- Allow sufficient time on the timetable for students to move between teaching venues;
- Allow scheduled breaks during lectures, tests and exams, in addition, some students may need to take more frequent rest breaks and sometimes get up and move around during lectures to relieve pain and stiffness;
- Some students may need to sit down to deliver all or part of their presentations;
- Check that teaching rooms are accessible in advance, as well as ensuring that seating arrangements and routes into the room allow access for wheelchair users;
- Check the need for equipment and special reserved space in the room or near the room,

- Be sensitive to a student's need to be absent to attend regular medical appointments
- Make sure the student can see the instructor, whiteboard and/or screen at all times;
- Be aware that students with upper-body weakness or paralysis may be unable to raise their hand. Make eye contact to include the student in classroom discussions;
- Allow for the use of adaptive technology (for example, screen reader or screen-enhancement software such as screen magnification);
- Flexible delivery, including the use of electronic media, will be particularly helpful for students who need to be absent occasionally;
- For people who have limited use, or no use, of their hands or arms, there is a range of both specialist and more general equipment which may be helpful. Tape recorders can be useful to back-up note taking;
- Permit tape-recording of lectures and seminars to help students catch up with any sessions they have to miss;
- Consider how fieldwork, teaching practice or laboratory work will be carried out, and whether the student needs the help of an assistant, Lab tables, sinks, and other workspaces should allow wheelchair access and proper workspace height;
- Aisles should be wide and clear and storing materials and equipment should be within the reach of someone in a wheelchair;
- An adjustable workstation is beneficial for students with wheelchairs as well as for students of various heights; for students with limited use of their hands, a range of adaptive devices for lab equipment or for computers are available to provide access to lab procedures that require fine motor coordination, dexterity and precision. For example, clamps can be used to stabilise objects, or software can be used for measuring and graphing;
- Working closely with a lab partner can provide access to a lab activity for some students with disabilities;
- Students with communication difficulties may find group work and tutorials challenging, and may need time to gain confidence before joining in. It may be

helpful to meet with the student beforehand and discuss what they feel comfortable with.

Preparing students with their assignments:

- Consider the time that will be needed for completing assignments, including research time. Work may need to be dictated onto tape or an oral presentation be given;
- Adapted keyboards or software may be essential for people who cannot write as well or as quickly as others;
- Software is available that will predict what a student is writing from the first few letters of the word and this is particularly useful for those whose writing speed is slow. Voice recognition software may also be useful

How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?

The student may require extra time, a reader or a scribe

- A student may need adapted or assistive technology
- Online tests should be assessed for accessibility;
- Students may need a screen reader to read aloud the information on the screen, or screen-enhancement software that allows the user to magnify the computer screen or change the contrast,

What is a Vision Impairment (VI)?

The term visual impairment covers a whole spectrum of people from those who are only slightly affected, to the very small proportion who are totally blind and cannot distinguish light from dark. Only a small minority or partially sighted people have no useful vision.

People who have been blind since birth may have missed out on informal opportunities for learning to read, for example through the experience of signs and labels in everyday life. They will also have a conceptual framework for such concepts such as distance, dimensions and scale that is not drawn from visual images. They might have missed out on gathering everyday practical information about the world around them, which sighted people take for granted, and may therefore need to be introduced to new situations in a practical experimental manner before moving on to form concepts.

What challenges might someone with this diagnosis face at college?

- A student may find managing their workload more time consuming;
- They may need longer to read printed material than other students and may not be able to read at all without using special computer software or equipment;
- It may take them extra time to process printed information;
- Skim reading may be very difficult or impossible and reading cause fatigue or eye strain;
- Finding books in the library may be impossible without assistance;
- It may take longer for students to write down lecture notes, and they may be unable to see PowerPoint slides or board work;
- Diagrams and new vocabulary can be problematic unless an oral description or additional clarification is given;
- There may be delays in starting writing because of the extra time needed for reading;
- It may take longer to proof-read written work and to put a bibliography together;
- Presentation requirements may not be met unless the student has support in doing this;
- They may also experience difficulties with face to face communication if they are unable to read facial expressions or body language.

Student Support:

- Some students may need to use a tape recorder to record lectures and discussions;
- Encourage students to sit where they can hear and see (for those with some residual sight);
- Keep aisles and open spaces free from obstructions, and check for protrusions at head height;
- Ensure good lighting, as small adjustments can make a huge difference. Requirements will differ from person to person; glare can be as problematic as deep shadow;

- Speakers should stand in a well-lit place facing the students, but not with their backs to the window as their face would then be in shadow;
- Give precise instructions and thorough explanations, as students with visual impairments may not have had the breadth of experiences to make the sort of closures to spoken communication that are available to sighted students;
- State orally everything that is written on PowerPoint presentations;
- Make sure that course and reading materials are available well in advance of the session - in extra-large print if required;
- Provide booklists in advance as students may need extra time to cope with a heavy reading load;
- Students who are reliant on taping lectures as a way of receiving information may need a translation of visual material into an auditory form;
- You should consider alternative ways of conveying information from diagrams, graphs, charts and other complicated visual material;
- Refer students to websites containing visually accessible information;
- Provide students with a disk or hard copy of lecture material, or printed copies. Provision of these can enable students with language and comprehension difficulties to devote more attention to listening;
- Ask others speakers to say their name prior to speaking;
- Provide any textual material in an accessible format in advance of the session;
- For practical classes, consider auditory displays of visual information (such as talking thermometers), tactical displays of visual information (such as beakers with raised markings), clamps and other devices for holding items of equipment, and hand held, illuminated magnifiers;
- Students with visual difficulties working in laboratories can also experience problems with textual materials as well as equipment. In these circumstances, alternative formats, verbalising text or interfacing lab equipment with computer with large print or speech output can all be useful adjustments;
- Students with visual impairments may experience problems with laboratory layout and may require extra assistance to help them familiarise themselves with layout and location of equipment;
- It may not be appropriate to have a guide dog in a lab environment where others may trip over it - it will depend on the individual setup and you should undertake

a risk assessment. If this is the case, you may need to provide a secure room where the guide dog can wait.

Preparing students with their assignments:

- It is helpful to distinguish on reading lists between core and secondary texts, so that students can prioritise and direct their energies effectively;
- Before recommending websites and e-resources, ascertain whether these are accessible to students with visual impairments;
- Be prepared to accept oral alternatives if written work is not essential, for instance a student may be able to submit a taped assignment;
- Encourage students to make use of free assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software Balabolka, Natural Reader, WordTalk and Chrome Speak, and mind-mapping software MindView and MindGenius

How can I make assessments accessible, to ensure that students understand what is being assessed and can successfully demonstrate this?

- Understanding the nature of a student's visual impairment will be very helpful in determining acceptable modifications, as a student may be considerably disadvantaged by part of an exam paper with a heavy concentration of text, such as multiple choice questions, but have no additional difficulty in reading and understanding brief essay titles;
- Examinations, fieldwork and tests may require some adjustments to be made for the student, e.g. large print materials, a reader, a scribe, or special equipment such as a scanner. They may also may need to practise with such aids prior to examinations.
- Students with visual difficulties may require examination papers in formats such as Braille, tape or enlarged print;
- They may need the questions or titles of the assignment to be read to them, or provided on disk, if appropriate access technology is available.

Other

Students may have other conditions affecting their studies, i.e. epilepsy, asthma, Multiple Sclerosis. Students are advised to call us for advice, or visit to speak to us in confidence on the support available.

Note

In order to qualify for special consideration, students will have to present the College with a valid medical assessment from a recognised doctor. The College will endeavour to identify a student's special requirements. However, the responsibility for initiating these arrangements lies wholly with the student.

Equality & Diversity

Mont Rose College is fully committed to providing equal opportunities for all of its students and staff. We greatly value diversity in our student body and we think it is one of our strengths. At Mont Rose College we have an environment where we treat everyone equally irrespective of their race, gender, marital status, religion, colour, nationality, disability etc.

