



Special Needs information leaflet: Visual Impairment

1 Studying with visual impairment

There are many types of visual impairment. People are visually impaired when they suffer from scotoma or tunnel vision, when they have double vision or see flickering lines, when their vision is impaired by flickering areas, flashes or glares, and not least when they see bright points, hazy, blurred or distorted images. Visual impairment is caused by diseases such as cataracts or glaucoma, by retinal diseases, eye injuries and prenatal injuries. A newly emerging visual impairment or blindness changes the living conditions of the person concerned and their environment. Someone who is blind or strongly visually impaired is only able to carry out some activities – particularly also activities that are relevant to studying – under difficult conditions or with someone else's help. This can have consequences for the organisation of studies. For autonomous studying to be guaranteed, the person concerned will have to acquire visual impairment skills in courses or in interaction with other visually impaired people, and will occasionally depend on aids and possible support. This will facilitate orientation and guarantee mobility, enhance the safety of those concerned and support them in the communication and the processing of written information. Support requirements vary according to the situation and major, which is why a personal meeting is very important in order to be able to define the necessary measures together.

2 Possible support options

The following measures have a supporting impact on most students concerned:

- During a course, acoustic information is of central important (describing images, explaining graphs, etc.)
- Background noise is distracting (please close windows, ask people in the classroom to be quiet, etc.)
- Ideally, visual representations and their descriptions are handed out to visually impaired students in advance. This will make a detailed description during the course unnecessary. Please make sure that the handouts are in a suitable format for the individual student's reading technique (discuss this with the student in advance).
- If possible, please support the implementation of literature research, the writing of notes, etc., in cooperation with the students concerned, the Special Needs Advice Center and the Department of Compensation for Disadvantages.
- Literature lists and required reading should be made known as early as possible since the production of texts that can be read with specific voice output programs is time-consuming.
- Please store the texts as PDF files in the text mode, not in the graphics mode (only in this way will the text be legible for specific voice output programs).
- Make concrete verbal statements during the course (e.g. "If you combine this example with that on the blackboard..." BETTER: "If you combine the example of the bell curve I described before with the linear regression on the blackboard...").
- It may happen that an audio recording of the course is helpful. In such a case, students can approach faculty members to discuss options and rights of use.
- In examination situations, in particular, the cooperation of all those concerned is important. They will receive specific information from the person concerned; this information is also provided in the notification for compensation for disadvantages.
- The persons concerned will be notified in writing of any adaptations to examination situations after consultation. The procedure is described on the Special Needs website:
www.unisg.ch/de/universitaet/hsgservices/beratung/beratungsstellen/special+needs/nachteilsausgleich

3 Contact

If you have any questions and concerns, please contact the Special Needs Advice Center:
Special Needs Advice Center; specialneeds@unisg.ch; +41 71 224 31 91
or: nachteilsausgleich@unisg.ch; +41 71 224 22 23.

The above information refers to the following source, where you can also find further information:
<http://www.sbv-fsa.ch/de/sehbehinderung>