

The University of the Incarnate Word is committed to providing a supportive, challenging, diverse, and integrated environment for all students.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services, and activities for students with documented disabilities.

To qualify for services, the student must provide the Office of Student Disability Services appropriate documentation of his or her disability at the time services and/or accommodations are requested.

This brochure is available  
in alternate format  
upon request

\*Information provided by the University of Southern California

The University of the Incarnate Word  
**Student Disability Services**  
4301 Broadway CPO # 28  
San Antonio, TX 78209

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Administration Building Room # 105  
Phone 210-829-3997  
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# Student Disability Services

**The University of  
the Incarnate Word**



**Vision  
Impairments**

**Administration Building  
Room 105**

Telephone: 210-829-3997

## Vision Impairments

Approximately 500,000 Americans have vision impairments to the extent that they are considered legally blind. Three degrees of vision loss exist::

**Vision acuity of 20/20**—the legally blind person can see at 20 feet what the average-sighted person can see at 200

**Low vision**—limited or diminished vision that cannot be corrected with standard lenses

**Partial sight**—the field of vision is impaired because of an illness, a degenerative syndrome, or trauma. Only two percent of the people with vision impairments are totally blind; most blind people have some amount of usable vision

Blind students gain access to printed information in a variety of ways. They use Braille, taped texts, readers, raised line drawings, talking computer terminals, and/or other equipment.

Partially sighted students use large print materials, closed circuit magnifiers or other magnifying devices, large print computer terminals, or telescopic lenses. They may also use large-print typing elements for papers. Some will be able to take their own notes in a class by printing large letters with a felt tip pen. Both blind students and partially sighted students may tape-record lectures for

The student should discuss his/her needs with the faculty person as early in the semester as possible.

Partially sighted students usually benefit from using what vision they have unless it is not recommended medically (after eye surgery or during an active inflammation). Sitting in the front of the room, having large print on the chalkboard, or using enlarged print on an overhead projector may assist a partially sighted student. Overheads can also be reproduced on copy machines.

A wide range of abilities exist among partially sighted students. Some can benefit from good sources of light; others are hindered by bright light. Some visual impairments may fluctuate from time to time; others remain constant.

Most students with vision impairments will require some adaptation for taking tests. Such adaptations may include Braille or large-print text, use of closed-circuit magnifiers, a reader, a scribe, or a typewriter. Many partially sighted students cannot see well enough to use a computerized answer sheet and will need to write answers on the test or a separate sheet for someone else to record on the answer sheet. Students with visual impairments will usually need extra time on their tests, especially if they are reading the tests themselves. Student Disability Services (SDS) staff can help faculty members plan appropriate exam accommodations.

The law requires that the university provide appropriate services for students with vision impairments.

## Instructional Strategies

- Have copies of the syllabus and reading assignments ready three to five weeks before the beginning of classes, so documents are available for taping or Braille transcription
- Arrange to provide vision-impaired students with materials in alternative formats. The student must advise as to the format: large print, Braille, or audio. Contact SDS for assistance
- Repeat aloud what is written on the board or presented on overheads and in handouts
- When appropriate, ask for a sighted volunteer to team up with a vision-impaired student for in-class assignments
- Keep a front row seat open for a student with vision impairment. A corner seat is especially convenient for a student with a service animal
- Assist the student with finding an effective note-taker or lab assistant from the class
- Make arrangements early for field trips and confirm accommodations (i.e., transportation, site accessibility)
- Be flexible with deadlines if assignments are delayed by the document conversion process
- When in doubt how to assist the student, ask him or her
- Allow the student the same anonymity as other students (i.e., avoid pointing out the student or the alternative arrangements to the rest of the class)