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# Disability Policy

## 2023 - 2025

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## **Students with Disabilities/Additional Learning Support**

Mont Rose College is fully committed to supporting 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 providing 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 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 a difference in how 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 to relate theory to practice;
- They may demonstrate poor written expression or sentence structure;
- Many students with dyslexia have difficulty editing and proofreading 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, 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 on a point or to note keywords, concepts, or names. They should not be used for extensive note-making;
- Some dyslexic students can be easily distracted by noise or activity, so staff should offer them a 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 that 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 students understand what is being assessed and successfully demonstrate this?
- During examinations students may need extra time to read through the paper and write and check 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.
- Use different colours when feeding back on content and written expression to distinguish the two where possible.

### **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 has 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 proofreading, 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 causing difficulty in 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 that 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, the 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 gestures and facial expressions 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 easily lip-read you and see the projector or board and as much of the class as possible if there is to be a group discussion. A horseshoe 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 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 incorporating pauses into sessions, so 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 toward any relevant course materials online;



- When in a practical session, staff should remember that a student who lip-reads will be unable to do so while continuing with work tasks/observations simultaneously. Therefore, ensure the student can follow both what you are saying and what you are doing;
- Special provisions 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 extracting meaning from the 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 students understand what is being assessed and successfully demonstrate this?

- Clarity about the learning objectives will be very helpful in determining acceptable modifications, which will be different for different assessment types or 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 verbalized 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 the conversation. It is better if group discussions are carried out in a circle or horseshoe configuration to make all speakers 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 the 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 good written and spoken English knowledge. 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 daily. 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 that 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 significantly impacts 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 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 negatively affect a person's physical or mental well-being.

## **Schizophrenia**

A psychiatric diagnosis 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;
- Students 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 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 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 that 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 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 a lack of understanding of tasks or feeling inadequate 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 students understand what is being assessed and 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 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 that interfere with learning – e.g., rigid rules and routines
- May remember facts but not remember 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 an increase in coping mechanisms such as repetitive behaviours (muttering, other verbal habits), panic, and 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 coordination, 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 the needs
- Provide clear, detailed information about the structure of the 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. They may use mobility equipment such as a wheelchair or crutches regularly, or this may fluctuate from day to day. The impact of a student's physical impairment may also vary, depending on the task they must complete or the time and resources available. 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 considered far less able than they are. It is important to check personal responses to ensure no automatic assumptions are 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 a 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 ensure 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 hands. 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 with limited 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 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 computers are available to provide access to lab procedures that require fine motor coordination, dexterity, and precision. For example, clamps can be used to stabilize 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 to complete 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 students understand what is being assessed and 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 of 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 are 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 proofread 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 a deep shadow;



- Speakers should stand in a well-lit place facing the students, but not with their backs to the window as their faces 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 other speakers to say their names 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 a 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 the 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 use free assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software Balabolka, Natural Reader, WordTalk, 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 need to practice 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, and Multiple Sclerosis. Students are advised to call us for advice or visit to speak to us in confidence about the support available.

## **Trips**

All courses that offer trips or other off-campus activities will take into consideration all students' needs and requirements. In the student handbook, it states the expectations of students when participating in trips or other off-campus activities. Module leaders are already informed about students with disabilities/personal challenges and will contact the welfare department if they require any further information.

If, for any reason, a student is not able to attend a trip due to their disability, an alternative experience will be offered to ensure that they meet the learning objective.

## **Placements**

Students have the option of finding their own placement, or they can receive support from the employability department. If they decide to seek support from the employability department, the department, with the student's consent, will receive a copy of the student's needs summary, this ensures that they can find an appropriate placement for the student. If the student finds a placement independently, we encourage the student to disclose any personal challenges/disabilities to the placement provider to ensure that they provide them with the necessary reasonable adjustments.

## **Student experience**

Mont Rose College works to make sure that all aspects of the student experience are inclusive for disabled students. This takes into consideration extracurricular activities, service provision, information access, teaching and learning, and facilities. The College is able to provide all students with equal access to opportunities through the partnership work of our staff, who share the joining responsibility.

## **Employability**

The College has an employability department that supports students with personal challenges/disabilities. With the consent of the student, information about their disability/personal challenge will be shared with the department; this ensures they will be able to support the student effectively by taking their disability into consideration when supporting them with the following:

- CV editing
- Cover letter support
- Job search assistants
- Placement support -

## **Retention**

In the event of a student's disability or personal challenges causing an interruption to their studies, the College will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the student can continue their course. In order to determine the support and reasonable adjustments necessary for a student to continue their studies, the College may undertake procedures outlined in the 'Fitness to Study' policy.

The College will need to ensure that the requirements for professional bodies are still met where a programme of study includes them. The College will provide assistance

when looking into alternatives where it is not possible for students to remain, continue or restart their studies. The College will need to ensure that the requirements for professional bodies are still met where a programme of study requires them. The College will provide assistance when looking for alternatives where it is not possible for students to remain on or continue or restart their studies.

### **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 endeavor 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.