



Visual Discomfort Strategies for Faculties to Support Achievement

Visual discomfort relates to visual discomfort when reading. Symptoms include illusions of shape, movement and colour in the text, distortions of the print, loss of print clarity, and general visual irritation. Visual discomfort can cause sore eyes, headaches, frequent loss of place when reading, and impaired comprehension.

The following guidelines will support this student to access and achieve positive results on your course.



Student Attributes

- Determination
- Hard working



Student challenges

- Overwhelmed by visual information affecting focus and learning.
- Organisational difficulties.
- Keeping up with reading requirements.
- Processing written information.



Blackboard Ally

Course content to be made accessible via [Blackboard Ally](#).

An overview of Blackboard Ally and how to make course content accessible can be found [here](#).



Handouts, PowerPoints and Written Information

- Use a coloured page background, white is too bright.
- Use a softer colour than black for the text.
- Use san serif font e.g. Ariel, Lucinda Sans, Calibri.
- Justify text to the left to provide even spacing between words which supports tracking.
- Use a 12pt font with a minimum of 1.5 spacing.
- Use a minimum of 24pt font in PowerPoint
- Break down long pieces of text, using headings, bullet points and using **bold** to identify key words.
- Do not simultaneously use bold, underlining and colour to stress a point; it is overwhelming.
- Provide students with an accessible electronic copy of your information that they can alter to their specific needs.



Lecture / Seminar

Students benefit from preparation:

- Present material in different ways using visual aids, such as graphs, flow charts, mind-maps, video clips, music, pictures and colour.
- Consider the layout of the room. Is it cluttered? Can students face away from information on the walls?
- Support students if you require them to read e.g. reduce the amount they are required to read, use assistive technology.



Reading Lists

Students benefit from clear reading lists:

- Use a sans serif font e.g. Ariel, Lucinda Sans, Calibri in 12pt font, with a minimum of 1.5 spacing.
- Split into **essential**, **extra** and **exceptional** categories to support students to prioritise their reading.
- Use a line space between each reference to differentiate one reference from another.



Use Assistive Technology

- Students can access a range of [Assistive Technology Software](#) to support their learning.
- Allow the use of iPads/devices in seminars to listen to written material if they struggle to read quickly (text to speech).

- Allow use of iPads/devices in lectures/seminars to allow for notetaking using assistive technology software.
- Encourage the use of Dictaphones, laptops, iPads and iPhones.

Encourage your students to use apps:

- Inspiration for mind mapping.
- Zotero for referencing.
- Pomodoro to support efficiency.
- Quizlet and Study Shack to develop flashcards for revision.
- Robobrain.org will convert items such as book pages into accessible formats.



Recording lectures and seminars

Students may benefit from recording information:

- Allow students to record lectures /seminars on their own devices e.g. phones / laptops. It enables students to focus on the lecture content and gives time to process information.
- [Panopto](#) is a video platform available in many lecture theatres.



Sharing and Further Information

- All tutors/lecturers should be made aware of the student's SpLD.
- The information in this Student Support Recommendation must be shared if the student studies a module with another faculty, or goes on placement, or abroad.
- Further information for staff on [accessibility and inclusive practice](#)



Resources

- [Specialist resources](#) to support neurodiverse students.
- The library has a range of [Study Skills resources](#) available
- [Blackboard Ally](#) and Accessibility at the University of Southampton

[Further information for students and specialist support](#)



Student Disability and Inclusion Team

University of Southampton
Room 2113, George Thomas Building,
Highfield, Southampton
SO17 1BJ



+44 (0)23 8059 9599



studenthub@soton.ac.uk