SUPPORTING TERTIARY STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT
What is VI?

Visual Impairment (VI) is a functional loss of vision that cannot be corrected by optical lenses, medication and/or operation. The level of vision loss can be classified into total blindness (no perception of light) and low vision (severe to moderate and mild) in relation to visual acuity, visual field, and other factors. In addition, color-blindness is another common form of VI. Students may suffer from partial or total color blindness. Generally, students with VI may use specialized eye glasses, assistive technology, canes, and/or guide dogs.
What support do students with VI need in university life?

Reasonable accommodations and support may enhance their learning and adaptation in different aspects of university life, examples of which include:

**LEARNING**
- Provide course materials and notes to the student in accessible formats in advance (e.g. in electronic format, Braille)
- Enlarge images and font sizes of text, or allow the use of magnifier for reading
- Allow recording of lectures for later review

**ASSESSMENT**
- Extended time for assessments
- Rest breaks during assessments of long duration
- Allow the use of assistive devices in assessments (e.g. computer, screen reader and screen magnifier) to display questions and type answers
- Use enlarged question papers and provide more space (e.g. by combining two tables) to write

**COMMUNICATION**
- Address the student and identify yourself first before conversation and inform the student when you leave

**SELF-MANAGEMENT**
- Allow extra time for learning and memorizing new routes to unfamiliar locations
- Contact CEDARS to arrange a fire evacuation plan if there are foreseeable difficulties in using stairs to escape in an emergency
How can I interact with students with VI?

**TIPS FOR TEACHERS/TUTORS**

- Provide verbal or typed descriptions to images, figures, special symbols and videos
- Allow the student to attend classes with a guide dog
- Allow the student to sit closer to light source but avoid direct sunlight

**TIPS FOR PEERS**

- Offer help to find seats and navigate on campus
- Name and describe the surroundings, people and objects on the go, in classes and during activities
- Describe information shown in classes that is not included in lecture notes
- Offer help to elaborate handwritten materials
- Offer help to take or share notes in classes
Thanks a lot for those students who helped me to take notes when I could not see the powerpoint during lectures. The helping hands are really invaluable to my university school life.

Cheung, Year 3 student

All HKU students can contribute to building an inclusive campus. Volunteer opportunities include:

- Offering academic support (e.g. note-taking, study skills coaching)
- Providing social skills coaching
- Organizing activities to promote inclusion and diversity
- Working with people in recovery of mental illness
- and many more!

Get in touch with us to find out more.
Available Support for Students with VI

CEDARS Counselling and Person Enrichment (CoPE) Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support

We are committed to supporting students with disabilities or Special Educational Needs (SEN) in overcoming barriers and achieving successful university education. The support provided is meant to “level the playing field” without undermining academic core requirements of a course.

The listed suggestions are not exhaustive and the support needed by students varies individually. Students with special needs are encouraged to meet with us for needs assessment and advice.

For enquiries, please contact us at:

📍 Room 301-323, 3/F, Main Building
📞 (852) 3917 8388
✉️ cedars-SEN@hku.hk
🌐 https://www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-support/

For community resources available for students with SEN, please visit http://wp2.cedars.hku.hk/sen-resources/
To learn more about other types of SEN, please visit www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-leaflets