Characteristics and General Information

Visual impairments range from minor loss, which is somewhat correctable, to complete blindness. This is an area where there has been an explosion of useful technology. Computerized reading machines, voice synthesizers and machines for enlarging textbook print are often available in local public libraries.

An important fact to keep in mind with students without the ability to read is that many have not been taught Braille, and therefore must listen to all of the material. This reliance on listening poses challenges and may slow down the pace at which they can take in information; listening to a book takes longer than reading the same book. Additionally, the student probably tapes class lectures instead of taking notes and has to listen to portions of those to review for exams. So, a request for additional time to complete assignments is indeed a legitimate request.

Possible Accommodations and Helpful Teaching Strategies

- Make textbook selections early so that students will have the necessary “lead time” to order taped texts
- Provide lists of texts and class syllabi in advance for readers and for recording these materials on tape
- Provide taped books or other written materials
- Facilitate front-row seating
- Provide enlarged print books and written materials
- Give extended time for examinations
- Provide alternative forms of examinations available- taped, oral with professor, dictated to a scribe
- Give special assistance in laboratories and during other experiential components of class