Students with a visual impairment

The difficulties facing students with a visual impairment include:

- finding their way into and around the built environment, especially in unfamiliar situations;

- feeling isolated from other researchers, both in their team/ department and in seminars/ conferences/ workshops etc;

- using observational techniques;

- dealing with text materials (reading and writing);

They may also have a Guide Dog whose needs should be taken into consideration.

Solutions could include:

- providing orientation and mobility training for the new environment;

- providing someone to help the student find their way around, at least in the early stages;

- the provision of adaptive/ assistive equipment and software (e.g. text-to-speech software; software that produces files in Braille; Braille note-taker; digital recorders);

- someone to read material to the student;

- the support of non-disabled members of the team to introduce the student to team members and escort the student to events;

- a peer support worker who can use their visual observations to supplement the student's other data collection methods;

- ensuring detailed forward planning for the support required for fieldwork, conferences etc.