



SPED8926

Foundational Studies in Blindness/Low Vision

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

Macquarie School of Education

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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NextSense Institute

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NextSense Institute

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Lecturer

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NextSense Institute

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NextSense Institute

Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9.00am-5.00pm

Administration

Shyam Howlin

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NextSense Institute

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MDisabilityStud

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit provides foundation knowledge in the cause and implication of disease and blindness/low vision across the age spectrum. The student will develop a broad view of the low vision needs of individuals and the role they can play in meeting these needs.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Apply knowledge of the visual system including the eyes, the brain and human visual development to demonstrate an understanding of the human visual process.

ULO2: Apply knowledge of human anatomy and body system development to contextualise the impact of disease on the human body.

ULO3: Interpret clinical findings and vision behaviours to develop appropriate vision profiles that accurately report the visual capacity of an individual with blindness/low vision.

ULO4: Analyse the impact of blindness/low vision across the age spectrum by applying broad and coherent knowledge of disorders of the eye and visual system.

ULO5: Critically reflect on literature and discussions that explore public perceptions, to develop a personal advocacy standpoint addressing issues encountered by people with blindness/low vision.

General Assessment Information

Academic honesty

At all times, students should be aware of and apply the Macquarie University policy on academic honesty (<https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=3>)

In accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy a student must take responsibility, be proactive, take ownership and hold oneself responsible for ensuring all information and content, including citations and references in their assignment, have been generated and communicated in an ethical, honest and responsible manner. Failure to show responsibility by checking the accuracy and integrity of your own content, citations and references, or the submission of falsified content, is a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Information on the acceptable and permitted use of generative artificial intelligence tools (GAIT) is outlined in the instructions for each unit assignment task.

Assignment preparation guidelines

- All assignments must be submitted in a format that is accessible for people who are blind or have low vision
- Word limits (+/- 10%) are strictly applied and must be adhered to. Work above the word limit will not be marked.
- Allow a left and right-hand margin of at least 2cm in all assignments.
- All assignments should be types using a minimum of Arial, 12-point font and 1.5 spacing.
- Faculty assignment cover sheets are NOT required.
- The assignment title page should include the student's name, student number, unit code, title of the assignment and correct submitted word count.
- All assignments must be submitted electronically through Turnitin as a **Word document – do not submit as a pdf.**
- Students must use the Turnitin Similarity Report as a learning tool to improve their academic writing and, in consideration of the report outcome, attend to any potential academic integrity issues, prior to submission of the final version of the assignment.
- Students are strongly encouraged to upload a draft copy of each assignment to Turnitin at least one week prior to the due date to obtain a Turnitin Similarity Report. The Turnitin Similarity Report provides students with a similarity index that may indicate if plagiarism has occurred. Students will be able to make amendments to their drafts prior to their final submission on the due date.

Use of Generated Artificial Intelligence Tools (GAIT) in assignment preparation

Students should be aware of and apply the University policy on academic integrity (see: <https://policies.mq.edu.au/document/view.php?id=3>). Any student suspected of using unauthorised AI in an assignment will be referred to the Faculty of Arts Discipline Committee. Penalties can include reduced marks for an assignment, being awarded '0' for a task, failing an entire unit, being excluded from a course of study. Please see each assessment task description/rubric for expectations about AI.

Use of GAIT in SPED8926 assignment preparation

For all SPED8926 assignments, students are not permitted to use any content or ideas generated by third parties or artificial intelligence sources (i.e., GAITs) for **any purpose**, including summarising texts on the subject. Students may continue to use spelling/grammar checkers, e.g., Microsoft spell-check, Grammarly, and Turnitin Draft Coach; and referencing software, e.g., Endnote and Mendeley.

Engaging with GAITs for all SPED8926 assignment tasks constitutes and will be treated as a breach of academic integrity.

Assignment submission guidelines

All assignments must be submitted electronically. Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used to check all written assignments. It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their submitted work is in a format compatible with Turnitin software for plagiarism checking. Submissions must meet the required file type and formatting specifications outlined in the assignment guidelines. Failure to submit work in an acceptable format may result in delays in processing your submission and potential penalties for non-compliance with assignment requirements. If you are unsure about the file format or have technical difficulties, it is your responsibility to seek assistance before the submission deadline. Students should be careful to check that they submit the correct file for an assignment as no re-submissions will be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file. It is not the responsibility of unit staff to contact students who have failed to submit assignments. If you have any missing items of assignment, it is your responsibility to contact the unit convenor.

For written assignments, the Turnitin Similarity Report must also be submitted using the correct Turnitin submission point at the time of assignment submission.

Online quizzes

Online quizzes are an individual assignment task and **MUST BE COMPLETED by each student individually**. Similarities in responses between students will be checked and investigated for possible collusion.

In submitting responses to an online quiz, students agree that they will:

- have an awareness of, and act in accordance with the Macquarie University Academic Integrity Policy and the standards set out in Schedule 2 (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/academic-integrity>)
- adhere to standard principles of ethical behaviour that apply to professionals such as themselves.
- complete the quiz with integrity and honesty and when they do otherwise, understand that they risk causing personal reputational and academic harm.
- demonstrate an understanding of the impact of unethical behaviour on their chosen professional role in supporting people with sensory disability.
- not to participate in any unacceptable academic activities such as cheating, collusion, deception, fabrication, impersonation, obstruction, plagiarism and/or sabotage
- refrain from copying any or all aspects of the quiz using screenshots, photos or other methods.
- refrain from sharing any aspects of the quiz on social media or in other ways.
- not include content in their answer/s that have previously been submitted for academic credit in this or any other unit.
- submit answers which are their own work.

- acknowledge that they are not permitted to directly copy answers from this unit's learning content or copy information from the Internet or from a GAIT source.

Special Consideration / Late Penalties

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day an assignment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends) (see: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>). Applications for extensions must be made via [Service Connect](#). After the 7th day, a mark of 0 (zero) will be awarded even if the assignment is submitted. Submission time for all written assignments is set at 11:55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided for students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assignments (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc).

Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assignments/presentations, scheduled practical assignments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. A Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

It is not the responsibility of unit staff to contact students who have failed to submit assignments. It is the student's responsibility to contact the unit convenor when assignments are missed.

Assignment marking

- Word limits are strictly applied. Work 10% above the word limit will not be marked. Work below the word count may attract a penalty.
- All assignments are marked using a clear marking scheme or a rubric.
- Marking of all assignments is moderated by the Unit Convenor.
- Turnitin plagiarism detection software is used to check all written assignments.

University Policy on Grading

Assignments will be awarded grades ranging from HD to F according to guidelines set out in the [University's Grading System](#) and [University Assessment Policy](#).

To attain a pass or higher grade in Professional Experience a student must obtain a satisfactory in both the Professional Experience component **and** a pass or higher grade in the academic component. For Professional Experience units the Professional Experience Evaluation Report is marked as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. The Macquarie Teaching Performance Assessment (MQTPA - in final WIL/PEX units) is marked as Not met, Met or Exceeds.

Results

Results shown in iLearn, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed because they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [Service Connect](#).

Withdrawing from this unit

If you are considering withdrawing from this unit, please contact the Graduate Studies Coordinator Tanya Kysa on 0484913641 or student.enquiries@nextsense.org.au, prior to withdrawing, for advice related to your progression. You can also seek academic advice via [Service Connect](#) before withdrawing, as this unit may be a co-requisite or prerequisite for units in the following sessions and may impact on your progression through the degree.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Online Quiz 1	30%	No	4 April 2025 by 11.55pm
Online Quiz 2	30%	No	23 May 2025 by 11.55pm
Online case presentation (1500 words)	40%	No	2 June 2025 by 11.55pm

Online Quiz 1

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **4 April 2025 by 11.55pm**

Weighting: **30%**

Short answer based online quiz

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply knowledge of the visual system including the eyes, the brain and human visual development to demonstrate an understanding of the human visual process.
- Apply knowledge of human anatomy and body system development to contextualise the impact of disease on the human body.

Online Quiz 2

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **23 May 2025 by 11.55pm**

Weighting: **30%**

Short answer based quiz

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Interpret clinical findings and vision behaviours to develop appropriate vision profiles that accurately report the visual capacity of an individual with blindness/low vision.
- Analyse the impact of blindness/low vision across the age spectrum by applying broad and coherent knowledge of disorders of the eye and visual system.

Online case presentation (1500 words)

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **2 June 2025 by 11.55pm**

Weighting: **40%**

A list of eye conditions will be presented. Students will construct a case study around the chosen condition, describing the typical development of the condition, clinical findings and the impact of the blindness/low vision.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Apply knowledge of the visual system including the eyes, the brain and human visual development to demonstrate an understanding of the human visual process.
- Analyse the impact of blindness/low vision across the age spectrum by applying broad and coherent knowledge of disorders of the eye and visual system.
- Critically reflect on literature and discussions that explore public perceptions, to develop a personal advocacy standpoint addressing issues encountered by people with blindness/low vision.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Required and recommended texts

Friedman, N. J., Kaiser, P. K., & Pineda, R. (2020). *The Massachusetts eye and ear infirmary illustrated manual of ophthalmology* (Fifth edition.). St. Louis, Missouri: Elsevier.

The full text is available as an eBook through [Macquarie University library](#)

Information about the iLearn site

SPED8926 has a full web presence through iLearn. All requirements for this unit begin Session 1 Week 1, 2025. Students are expected to access the iLearn site and engage with unit materials regularly during session 1.

Electronic Communication

It is the student's responsibility to check all electronic communication on a regular weekly basis. Communication may occur via:

- Official *MQ Student Email Address*
- The *Dialogue* function on iLearn
- Other iLearn communication functions

Support resources

Macquarie University has a range of services for students. If you are struggling with any aspect of academic life or career trajectory and skills, please refer to the comprehensive list of support services [here](#).

Access and technical assistance

Information for students about access to the online component of this unit is available at <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/systems/ilearn>. You will need to enter your student username and password.

Please do **NOT** contact the Unit Convenor regarding iLearn technical help. Assistance is available from IT Helpdesk ph: 02 98504357 and 1800 67 4357 or log a request at onehelp@mq.edu.au. OneHelp is the online IT support service for both students and staff.

This unit requires students to use several ICT and software skills:

- Internet access: The iLearn site contains materials for this unit; it is also required for the online submission of all assessment tasks, and for the use of Turnitin submission for ALL tasks.
- Word processing, visual representations, and document formatting: You are required to use an appropriate form of software to present your assignments.
- Uploading of assessment tasks to iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Topic 1: Introduction to the healthy human

Topic 2: Assessment of vision

Topic 3: Blindness and low vision in childhood

Topic 4: Blindness and low vision in adolescence

Topic 5: Blindness and low vision in adulthood

Topic 6: Support for blindness and low vision

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

The Writing Centre

The [Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the [Handbook](#)