

# The Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire

**The Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire is a straightforward questionnaire comprising ten items, taking only a few minutes to administer. Eyecare practitioners can investigate visual stress in patients by scoring frequency of reading symptoms experienced on a 0-5 Likert scale. A total visual stress score can then be summed to assess overall visual stress severity.**

## Product Specification

### Background

Visual stress (occasionally referred to as Meares-Irlen Syndrome or Scotopic Sensitivity Syndrome), is a reading disorder characterised by perceptual distortions and discomfort when reading passages of text, and when viewing striped patterns –often called ‘pattern glare’. At present, visual stress is diagnosed by eyecare practitioners with a specialist interest in the condition, on an ad-hoc basis. The Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire was developed to aid diagnosis of visual stress, through analysis and synthesis of pertinent reading symptoms in a study of over 1200-undergraduate university students.

### Overview

The Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire is a straightforward questionnaire comprising 10 items, taking only a few minutes to administer. Eyecare practitioners can investigate visual stress in patients by scoring frequency of reading symptoms experienced on a 0-5 Likert scale. A total visual stress score can then be summed to assess overall visual stress severity.

### Key Features

The questionnaire has been developed for eyecare practitioners. The test is concise and can be quickly administered either verbally by the examiner or with the individual self-completing this in written format. The 10-items included in the questionnaire explore specific aspects of the symptom profile of visual stress.

### Applications

Clinical visual stress assessments

Example uses

Clinical visual stress assessments

Specific learning difficulty clinics

Primary, secondary & tertiary education centres

High street optometric practices

NHS orthoptic, ophthalmic and optometric clinics

Permitted Use

## Category

Healthcare Digital Tools &  
Questionnaires  
Other Educational Tools &  
Materials

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Whilst there are no restrictions on who may use the Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire, we recommend that it be used in conjunction with a clinical visual stress/reading difficulty assessment, typically performed by optometrists, orthoptics, educational psychologists and educators, after a full eye examination has been conducted.

\*Please note that the Questionnaire will only be made available once the licence transaction is completed.\*

#### Details of Authorship

This digital asset was developed by researchers at the Centre for Optometry & Vision Science, School of Biomedical Sciences, Ulster University. The asset was initially conceptualised by Mr Darragh L. Harkin, Prof. Julie-Anne Little and Dr. Sara J. McCullough. The intellectual property of this asset remains with Ulster University.

#### Journal References

In Preparation: Harkin, D.L., Little, J.A., McCullough, S.J. (2024) An Exploratory Factor Analysis of Visuoperceptual Reading Symptoms in Adults with Visual Stress: Development of the Ulster Visual Stress Questionnaire. *Vision Research*

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<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/biomedical-sciences/research/optometry-and-vision-science>

#### Key Word(s)

Visual Stress

Reading difficulty

Questionnaire

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