

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF BLINDNESS/LOW VISION

Ophthalmologists are the primary professionals involved in diagnosis and medical treatment of individuals who are blind or who experience low vision. Optometrists provide information regarding the measurement of visual acuity as well as tracking and fusion difficulties. The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student.

The following documentation requirements will assist the Special Needs/Disability Service Coordinator in collaborating with each student to determine appropriate accommodations. Documentation services as the foundation that supports a student's request for appropriate accommodations. Recommended documentation includes all of the following:

1. A clear statement of vision-related disability with supporting numerical description that reflects the current impact the blindness or vision loss has on the student's functioning (the age of acceptable documentation is dependant upon the disabling condition, the current status of the student and the student's request for accommodations).
2. A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of evaluation results including standardized scores.
3. Present symptoms that meet the criteria for diagnosis.
4. Medical information relating to the student's needs, the status of the individual's vision (static or changing), and its impact on the demands of the academic program.
5. Narrative or descriptive text providing both quantitative and qualitative information about the student's abilities that might be helpful in understanding the student's profile including functional limitation, the use of corrective lenses and ongoing visual therapy (if appropriate).
6. A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested. It should also include the recommended academic accommodation(s) with rationale for recommended accommodations(s).

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated. The student and the Special Needs/Disability Services Coordinator collaboratively determine appropriate accommodations.