



## DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR VISUAL DISABILITIES

### **Assessment Providers**

A licensed Doctor of Optometry or a licensed medical doctor with certification in Ophthalmology will be viewed as qualified to substantiate disabilities of vision. Ophthalmologists are the primary professionals involved in the diagnosis and medical treatment of individuals who are blind or experience low vision. Optometrists provide information regarding the measurement of visual acuity, as well as tracking and fusion difficulties (including, but not limited to, eye movement disorders, inefficiency in using both eyes together, misalignment of the eyes, lazy eye, focusing problems, visual sensory disorders, and motor integration).

### **Assessment Documentation**

Documentation serves as the foundation that legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations. Documentation must be current. In most cases, this means a diagnosis has been made and/or treatment has been prescribed within the past three years. Because the provision of all reasonable accommodations and services are based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his/her academic performance, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation. Recommended documentation should be typed on official letterhead and include:

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.
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.

**Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated.**