

Duke University
Disability Management System—Student Access Office (SAO)

Low Vision or Blindness Documentation Guidelines

These guidelines outline the information necessary to validate a low vision or blindness impairment, its impact on the individual's educational performance, and the need for accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain his/her documentation and to present a copy to the ***Disability Management System—Student Access Office***. Any correspondence regarding adequacy of the documentation will be sent to the student. If additional information is requested, it is the student's responsibility to obtain the additional information and/or testing. The final determination of appropriate accommodations rests with the ***Disability Management System—Student Access Office*** based on a review of the documentation as outlined below. A prior history of accommodations, without demonstration of current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of accommodations. If no prior accommodation has been provided, the evaluator must include an explanation as to why no accommodations were used in the past, and why accommodations are needed now. All information obtained in diagnostic and medical reports will be maintained and used in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements. Generally, a minimum of two weeks is needed for SAO to complete the review of clinical documentation.

Qualifications of the Evaluator

The professional conducting the evaluation and making the diagnosis must be qualified to make the diagnosis and to recommend appropriate accommodations. The documentation must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and/or specialization. All evaluation reports must be typed on letterhead, signed, dated, and legible.

Documentation must be Current

The provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon the assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic functioning; therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide current documentation. If the documentation is inadequate in scope or content, or is not relevant to the individual's current functioning and need for accommodations, an updated evaluation may be required.

Necessary Components of the Evaluation

- A) A vision assessment or evaluation from an ophthalmologist with a primary diagnosis/pathology with visual acuities and/or visual field restrictions.
- B) A low-vision evaluation of residual vision function, when appropriate.
- C) Medical information relating to the student's needs and status of the student's vision (static or changing) and its impact on the demands of a university academic program.
- D) A list of any assistive technology and/or adaptive equipment currently being used, including a description of the equipment, its brand name and its model.

Questions

Questions about these guidelines should be directed to Dr. Emma Swain, Director of the Disability Management—Student Access Office, at (919) 668-1267, eswain@duke.edu, or mailed to Box 90142, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708.