



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

VISUAL DISABILITIES DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students requesting accommodations may be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under the ADA of 1990 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Appropriate documentation of the disability allows the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to determine the student's eligibility for accommodation and the appropriate academic accommodations. **PLEASE NOTE** that students should not delay meeting with ODS out of concern for not having the correct (or any) documentation. If needed, the Coordinator can discuss with the student any specific documentation needs during the Welcome Meeting. **Our priority is on meeting with students and beginning the accommodations process for them as soon as possible.** Provisional accommodations may be provided to allow students time to procure any needed documentation.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the documentation validates the presence of a visual disability, demonstrates an impact of the disability on learning, and supports the request for accommodations and services.

1. Documentation of a visual impairment must include clinical observations by either an ophthalmologist or an optometrist. Things to include as documentation of a visual impairment:
 - Cause of visual impairment: prenatal influence or congenital, infectious disease, injury, general disease, undetermined; and if it is non-progressive, progressive, or secondary complications.
 - On-set of visual impairment.
 - Clinical diagnosis: blind, partial vision, low vision; and/or level of visual disability: moderate, severe, profound. Be specific.
 - Snellen Chart measurement of acuity.
 - Visual field: central loss, peripheral loss.
 - Color measurement: ability to discriminate colors, as well as light and dark.
 - Assessment of visual efficiency.
2. Documentation should include a Functional Visual Characteristics and a physical needs assessment. It should express clinical terms as more concrete information for the setting of higher education.
3. A summary of the condition and evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity must be provided.
4. Specific cognitive processing strengths, weaknesses, and deficits should be discussed. Clear

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documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order for the college to provide appropriate accommodations.

5. A statement of 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, i.e. the implications for reading, mobility, seeing the black board.
6. Other things that are helpful to include when doing a comprehensive assessment:
 - Intelligence/Aptitude testing
 - Sensory/Motor skills
 - Academic Skills/ Concept Development
 - Social/ Emotional/ Affective Information
 - Functional Living Skills (i.e. orientation and mobility, and ADL's)
7. The documentation must include the following information:
 - Names of the assessment instruments used
 - Quantitative and qualitative information which supports the diagnosis
 - The areas of educational impact and the severity of the condition
 - Recommendations for prescriptive treatments
 - Notation of medications prescribed, if any, and potential impact on learning
 - Additional observations or recommendations which could assist us in adequately serving the student
 - The names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of the evaluator(s), as well as date(s) of testing

Please note that in reviewing the specific accommodation requested by the student or recommended by the physician/evaluator, ODS may find that while a recommendation is clinically supported, it is not the most appropriate accommodation given the requirements of a particular student's academic program. In addition, ODS may also propose clinically supported accommodations that would be appropriate and useful for the student, but which neither the student nor the evaluator have requested.

The aforementioned guidelines are provided so that ODS can respond appropriately to the individual needs of the student. ODS reserves the right to determine eligibility for services based on the quality of the submitted documentation. Documentation may need to be updated or augmented in order to be reviewed more fully.

ALL DOCUMENTATION IS CONFIDENTIAL

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