

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES: FOR LOW VISION OR BLINDNESS

Students who are requesting services from Disability Support Services at National University of Health Sciences are required to submit documentation under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations and the right to equal access to programs and services. A diagnosis of a disability alone does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the ADAAA. To establish the need for a reasonable accommodation, the documentation must indicate the disability substantially limits one or more major life activities, and supports the request for services, accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

This document provides guidelines necessary to establish the impact of the disability on the individual's educational performance and participation in other University programs and activities, and to validate the need for accommodations.

Submitted information must be current and comprehensive in order to avoid unnecessary delays in granting the accommodations. Students may be asked to provide updated comprehensive information if their condition is potentially changeable and/or previous documentation doesn't include sufficient relevant information. All documentation must conclude with a section devoted to recommendations linked to the disability that are appropriate to the educational program.

1. Documentation of a visual impairment must include clinical observations by either an Ophthalmologist or an Optometrist. Things to include as documentation:
 - a. Cause of visual impairment (prenatal influence or congenital, infectious disease, injury, general disease, undetermined). And if it is non-progressive, progressive, or secondary complications.
 - b. On-set of visual impairment.
 - c. Clinical diagnosis (blind, partial vision, low vision) and/or Level of visual disability (moderate, severe, profound). Be specific.
 - d. Snellen Chart measurement of acuity.
 - e. Visual field (central loss, peripheral loss)
 - f. Color measurement (ability to discriminate colors, as well as light and dark)
 - g. 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. Appropriate academic skills testing: In the case of optometric examinations where perceptual deficiencies are diagnosed (as opposed to deficiencies in acuity), appropriate academic skills testing must be conducted to verify the impact of the condition on the examinee's ability to take exams.
4. Specific cognitive processing strengths, weaknesses, and deficits should be discussed. Clear documentation of deficit areas is necessary in order for the university to provide appropriate, reasonable 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 blackboard, the ability to function on a standardized test).

All documentation must include the following:

- a. Names of assessment instruments used and dates of testing.
- b. Quantitative and qualitative information that supports the diagnosis.
- c. The areas of educational impact and the severity of the condition.
- d. Previous history of the disability and verification of any previous testing.
- e. Recommendations for reasonable accommodations the university may provide.
- f. Notation of medications prescribed, if any, and potential impact on learning.
- g. Additional observations or recommendations that could help the student.
- h. The names, titles, addresses, phone numbers, state of license and license number of the evaluator(s).

Please note that in reviewing the specific accommodation requested by the student or recommended by the physician/evaluator, Disability Support Services 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, Disability Support Services 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 Disability Support Services can respond appropriately to the individual needs of the student. Disability Support Services reserves the right to determine eligibility for services based on the quality of the submitted documentation. Documentation may need to be updated or supplemented in order to be considered complete. **Students who submit partial or incomplete documentation that does not meet the guidelines will not be eligible for services or granted accommodations.**

Send all documentation to:

Disability Support Services
National University of Health Sciences
200 E. Roosevelt Road
Lombard, IL 60148
630-889-6655 Fax