

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES: LOW VISION OR BLINDNESS

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides academic accommodations to students with diagnosed disabilities. The purpose of documentation is to assist ODS in determining a student's disability* information and their eligibility to receive accommodations. The information you provide will be kept within the student's file at ODS, where it will be held securely and confidentially.

Students requesting accommodations must provide documentation from a qualified healthcare professional. These professionals are generally trained, certified, or licensed to diagnose and treat conditions, including an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

School plans such as an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan are often insufficient without accompanying information or testing results. Clinical chart notes or printed electronic records from a patient portal are also generally insufficient. Information or evaluations submitted should be from age 13 or older. A history of accommodations alone does not guarantee the provision of similar accommodations at UA. The final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with ODS.

Please provide a typed and signed letter, on letterhead, addressing the following information. We invite you to attach any other documents or information you deem relevant in supporting the student's academic accommodations request.

1. Diagnosis

- (a) Date of diagnosis
- (b) Primary diagnosis as listed in the most recent version of the ICD

2. Evidence of impairment

- (a) Include the results of a recent ocular assessment, low-vision evaluation, or visual acuity assessment.
- (b) Describe and interpret the results of the above measures.

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- (c) Based on the results, how will the student be functionally limited in an academic setting? Are deficits in color vision, sensitivity to light, susceptibility to eye fatigue, etc. present?
- (d) Describe the duration (i.e., stable, progressive, temporary, etc.) and severity (i.e., mild, moderate, severe) of the vision loss.

3. Treatment Plan

- (a) Address aspects of the student's treatment plan that should be considered when determining academic accommodations.
- (b) Address any assistive technologies or visual aids that should be considered.

Please share your letter with the student so they can upload it with their ODS application (found on our website, www.ods.ua.edu).

*The legal definition of disability is a mental or physical condition that substantially limits a major life activity compared to most people. Substantial in this context means a notable, significant, meaningful limit / difference to the manner in which the individual engages in the activity, the conditions necessary for them to engage in the activity, the duration for which they can engage in the activity, or the frequency which they engage in the activity. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and the proper functioning of major bodily systems.

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