

**University of South Florida
Students with Disabilities Services**

Guidelines for Documenting Blindness and Low Vision

Students seeking support services from Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) on the basis of a previously diagnosed vision impairment are requested to submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act. The documentation should describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of substantial limitations in one or more major life activity. Documentation from a recognized agency as being eligible for services, for example the Division of Blind Services, may be considered. However specific accommodation requests may require the documentation outlined below. Please do not hesitate to **contact SDS at (813) 974-4309 if you have any questions.**

An ophthalmologist, optometrist or other qualified professional should make the diagnosis and complete the appropriate documentation.

Documentation in support of blindness and low vision should include the following information:

1. **Diagnosis:** statement of vision-related disability with supporting numerical description including visual acuity with and without correction.
 - a. Initial diagnosis
 - b. Date of last clinical contact
2. **Evaluation:** the age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the nature of the condition and the student's request for accommodations; however, documentation that reflects the current impact on the student's functioning should be submitted. Because some visual disabilities may change over time, current evaluations can be critical for providing reasonable accommodations. Depending on the nature of the disability, updated evaluations may be requested. Information that should be included in the evaluation:
 - a. Assessment procedures and evaluation instruments or tools used to determine diagnosis
 - b. Narrative summary of assessment results
 - c. Present symptoms that meet criteria for the diagnosis
 - d. Severity of symptoms
 - e. Prognosis of disorder
3. **Functional Limitations:**
 - a. Impact on major life activities
 - b. Behavioral manifestation of the disability, in particular regarding the way it impacts the student in the learning context for which the accommodations are being requested.
 - c. Any additional limitations that fall in the substantial range.

Additional helpful information to have in the documentation:

- Current treatment being received

It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified during the initial diagnostic process.

SDS will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.

*The diagnostic report must include the **name and title, license number, and signature** of the evaluator. Evaluators should not be related to the individual being assessed. A verification form is available to assist in the documentation process.*

All documentation submitted to SDS is considered confidential.

Due to the broad nature of Florida's public records and email legislation, SDS encourages students to upload documentation with the secure on-line SDS application found via the "Access SDS" icon at www.sds.usf.edu.

Documentation may also be faxed to (813) 974-7337 or mailed to:

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