The University of Louisiana at Monroe
Counseling Center

Documentation Guidelines
Blindness and Low Vision

The University of Louisiana at Monroe is committed to providing educational opportunities to qualified students with disabilities for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. In order to establish that an individual is covered under these laws, students must submit current documentation (i.e., visual assessment, records and information) confirming that their diagnosed disability substantially limits one or more major life activities as compared to the average person in the general population. Accommodations are not granted on the basis of a diagnosis; they must be tied to current functional impairment(s). The diagnosis of a disorder/impairment alone does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the federal laws.

The following guidelines are designed to provide students and medical providers with a common understanding and knowledge base of the components of documentation which are necessary to validate the existence of blindness or low vision, its impact on the individual’s educational performance, and accommodation(s) that are necessary in the post-secondary setting.

These guidelines contain information regarding:

I. Qualifications of the Medical Provider
II. Currency of Visual Assessment Report
III. Rationale and Justification for Each Requested Accommodation

I. Qualifications of the Medical Provider

The professional conducting the evaluation must be qualified to make the diagnosis and make recommendations as to necessary accommodations. The documentation must include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure and/or specialization. Diagnoses of blindness and low vision documented by family members will not be accepted even when the family members are otherwise qualified by virtue of training and licensure/certification. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

II. Currency of Visual Assessment Report

Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the assessment of the current impact of the impairment on academic functioning, the visual assessment report must address the individual’s current level of functioning and the need for accommodations.
If the documentation is not relevant to the individual’s current functional impairments and need for accommodations, additional information may be required.

**III. Rationale and Justification for Each Requested Accommodation**

Accommodation requests are not granted on the basis of a diagnostic label: they must be tied to history and current functional impairment(s). A link must be established between the requested accommodations and the current functional limitations of the individual that are pertinent to the anticipated academic environment.

It is also important to include information regarding any prior accommodations or auxiliary aids; including the specific criteria used to grant prior accommodations/auxiliary aids, the conditions under which the accommodations/auxiliary aids were used and whether or not they were not effective.