

Guidelines for Documentation of Visual Impairments

Students who are seeking services from Northwest Florida State College's Disability Support Services on the basis of a diagnosed visual impairment are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This means a diagnosis by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. Protection under Section 504 and ADA civil rights statues is based upon documentation of a disability that **currently substantially limits** some major life activity including learning.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids on the basis of a visual impairment. The Counselor, Disability Support Services is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

The documentation should include:

- A current (within the past three years) diagnosis, typed on letterhead, written in English, dated, and signed by a qualified professional.
- **Not Acceptable:** A doctor's prescription pad note, handwritten notes on this sheet, or a school plan such as an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 plan. An IEP or 504 plan may be included and used as part of a more comprehensive evaluative report.
- The specific medical condition which causes the visual impairment.
- The degree of visual acuity, including with corrective lenses.
- The extent of the visual fields.
- Whether the condition is temporary or permanent, and if it is stable or progressive.
- Whether the condition is mitigated by corrective lenses or medication.
- A description of the functional limitation(s) caused by the disability.
- In addition to information from a qualified ophthalmologist, student may include information from an agency such as the Florida Division of Blind Services.
- Appropriate reasonable accommodations and services are individually determined by Northwest Florida State College/Disability Support Services in consultation with the student on the basis of information in the documentation provided.

After documentation is reviewed, student needs to make an intake appointment with the Coordinator. All documentation is confidential and should be submitted to:

Elizabeth Smith
Counselor of Students with Special Needs
Northwest Florida State College
100 College Boulevard
Building E Room 148
Niceville FL 32578

(Telephone and TDD 850 729-6079)
(Fax: 850-729-5300)

Florida Relay Service 800-955-8770