Documentation Policy for Visual Disabilities

Students who are seeking support services from the Disability Support Services Office at EWU on the basis of a visual disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information will be kept in a separate file in the DSS office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation shall be borne by the student.

The definition of legal blindness is vision that can only be corrected to the acuity of 20/200 or more. Another criteria for legal blindness is if peripheral vision measures 20 degrees or less. Students not considered legally blind may be eligible and need accommodations. Other vision issues to consider are tracking, extreme photosensitivity, nystagmus, eyelid muscle issues, or low vision.

Documentation should show current impact of the disability. The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the stability of the vision disability and the current status of the student. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying reasonable accommodations.

Any vision loss evaluation would be considered to be in the medical domain and require the expertise of an appropriate licensed eye care professional (ophthalmologist or ophthalmologic surgeon; an optometrist would not be appropriate). The documentation should include:

1. the diagnosis of the eye disorder, date of most recent visit, and its pathology specific to this individual.
2. a brief description of the severity of the vision loss, preferably in layman’s terms, and current impact or limitations.
3. include any medically relevant testing results.
4. a description of assistive devices or services currently prescribed or in use, including the possible effectiveness of these devices or services in an educational setting.
5. a description of the expected progression or stability of the vision loss over time.

Suggestions for reasonable accommodations with supporting evidence can be included. The final determination for providing appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with the University. The Disability Support Services office reserves the right to obtain clarification regarding the documentation, if necessary.