

Vision Disabilities

Students seeking support services from postsecondary institutions in the State of Washington on the basis of a vision disability may be required to submit documentation of a disability to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information shall be kept in a separate file in the appropriate office as designated by each institution. 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 higher*. Another criterion is: *peripheral vision measuring 20 degrees or less*. However, students not diagnosed as legally blind may be eligible and need accommodation. Other vision issues to consider may include, but are not limited to: tracking, extreme photosensitivity, nystagmus, eyelid muscle issues, and low-vision.

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 a qualified licensed eye care professional. The documentation should include:

1. The date of the most recent visit, diagnosis of the eye disorder, and its pathology specific to this individual;
2. a brief description of the severity of the vision loss, 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.

With supporting documentation, suggestions regarding academic adjustments and auxiliary aids may be included. However, the final determination rests with the postsecondary institution.