



Muhlenberg College Office of Disability Services Documentation Guidelines

Blind or Visually Impaired

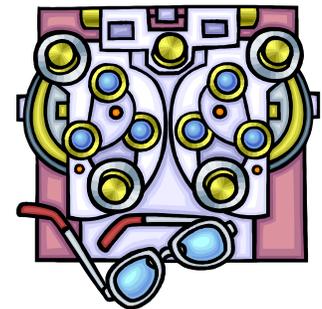
✓ Muhlenberg College students with diagnosed disabilities are eligible for protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) (revised in 2008) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended). The ADA Amendments Act 2008 retains the definition of a "disability" as (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment.

The student requesting accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services must provide a comprehensive evaluation including a complete ocular examination from an optometrist, ophthalmologist, or other qualified professional who verifies the presence of a condition that rises to the level of a disability and confirms the need for reasonable accommodations based on the diagnosed condition. The diagnostician involved in the evaluation must be a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who is 1.) qualified/ certified to evaluate and diagnose the disability, 2.) familiar with the challenges and functional requirements of a college environment, and 3.) an impartial evaluator or diagnostician who is **not** a family member **nor** in a dual relationship with the student.

When considering evaluations of individuals who are blind or who have conditions of visual impairment, Ophthalmologists or Optometrists can provide information regarding diagnosis and treatment. Visual impairments include, but are not limited to, retinal degeneration, albinism, cataracts, glaucoma, muscular problems that result in visual disturbances, corneal disorders, diabetic retinopathy, congenital disorders, and infection. Ophthalmologists are the primary professionals involved in the diagnosis and medical treatment of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Optometrists provide information regarding the measurement of visual acuity as well as tracking and fusion difficulties.

Documentation should include but is not limited to:

✓ **Diagnosis** – The evaluation must include a clear, diagnostic statement identifying the vision-related disability with supporting detailed descriptions and objective data. The standard for documentation currency is dependent upon the nature of the disabling condition, the current status of the condition, and the student's request for accommodations. If the condition that leads to the loss of vision is progressive, the Office of Disability Services would ask for documentation that is current; within the last year. Each case is evaluated on a case by case basis.



- ✓ **Assessment-** The evaluation must contain information about the assessment procedures and evaluation instruments that were used to make the diagnosis as well as a summary of the evaluation results including standardized scores, if applicable.



- ✓ **Current Status:** The evaluation should contain narrative or descriptive text providing both quantitative and qualitative information about the student's abilities that might be helpful in understanding the student's profile, including the use of corrective lenses and ongoing visual therapy (if appropriate). The evaluation must present current symptoms that meet the criteria for diagnosis; for example:

- visual acuity, as well as:
- tracking and fusion difficulties, including but not limited to:
- eye movement disorders
- inefficiency in using both eyes together
- misalignment of the eyes
- focusing problems
- visual sensory disorders
- motor integration
- visual acuity with and without correction
- medications that are being used and side effects of medication
- expected progression or stability of disability over time

- ✓ **Impact or limitation** – The evaluation should include medical information related to the student's needs and the status of the individual's vision (static or changing) and the current, functional impact of the condition in an academic setting.

- ✓ **Treatment/Therapy-** The evaluation should contain information regarding appropriate treatment, (ie. corrective lenses or on-going visual therapy), the status of corrective lenses (glasses and/or contact lenses and any other devices), treatments, medications, accommodations/auxiliary aids, and services currently prescribed or in use as related to the functional limitations previously stated.

- ✓ **Suggestions or recommendations-** The evaluation should include recommendations for reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the postsecondary level. These recommendations should be directly supported by the diagnosis and the significant impact/functional limitations of the disorder.

