

## **Documentation Guidelines for Visual Disabilities**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are guaranteed equal access to academic programs and university services. In order to request an accommodation as the result of a visual disability, a student must provide the Office of Disability Services (ODS) with documentation indicating that the disability substantially limits some major life activity, specifically learning. Such documentation should include:

**1. Diagnostic Statement**

A clear statement of vision loss, with a summary of present symptoms which meet the criteria for a diagnosis of a visual disability. Documentation should be current, preferably within the last three (3) years (the age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the condition and the current status of the student). Types of documentation can include visual acuity assessments and Certificate of Blindness.

**2. Diagnostic Criteria Used**

A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a narrative summary of evaluation results, if appropriate.

**3. Substantial Limitation Statement**

A statement of the functional impacts or limitations of the vision loss on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.

**4. Progression/Prognosis**

Medical information relating to the student's needs, the status of the individual's vision (static or changing) and its impact on the demands of the academic program.

**5. Recommendations**

A statement regarding the use of or recommended need for, assistive devices, accommodations or auxiliary aids as appropriate for the individual. Recommendations from professionals with a history of working with the individual provide valuable information for the review process. The recommendations will be included in the evaluation of requests for accommodation and/or auxiliary aids. Where such recommendations are congruent with the programs, services, and benefits offered by UHD, they will be given deference. When recommendations go beyond services and benefits that can be provided by the university they may be used to suggest potential referrals to local area services providers outside of the university.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated.