Documentation Guidelines for a Vision Issue

To receive accommodations for a vision issue in a university setting students should submit clinical
documentation that sufficiently delineates its nature. The information should be presented in such a
way that a layman can understand it. It should also explain how the circumstances will substantially
limit the student’s ability to function in relation to important aspects of college. It should be written
by a licensed ophthalmologist, optometrist or equivalent specialist and meet the following criteria:

1. It’s written on an agency’s letter head paper and indicates the address and phone number.

2. It indicates the author’s credentials and expertise for evaluating the vision issue.

3. There’s a summary regarding the development and any significant changes to the issue over time.

4. There’s the summary of an appropriate vision assessment, including important measurements
   and an explanation of significant results.

5. An appropriate vision related diagnoses is outwardly included.

6. There’s a description of the functional limitations caused by the vision issue, their magnitude
   is rated (mild, moderate, severe, etc.), and an explanation regarding how they can be expected to
   change over time. There should also be an explanation regarding how the limitations will impact
   the student’s academic functioning (taking tests, writing lecture notes, completing reading
   assignments, writing papers, etc.) and how they’ll limit any other important aspects of college.

7. There are recommendations regarding the reasonable and appropriately accommodations that are
   needed to create equal access and opportunity for college.

Concise statements may be sufficient if they adequately address the focus of all the various topics (a-
f, above). Documentation that’s primarily paperwork copied directly out of a patient’s file may not
meet these guidelines (i.e., if it doesn’t discuss limitations in a college setting). Similarly,
documentation may not meet all the guidelines if it simply recommends how a student should be
accommodated (i.e., doesn’t adequately describe current clinical circumstances or explain their
limiting impact). The idea is that documentation should provide adequate information to allow
accurately understand why specific accommodations will be necessary. Thus, the best form of
documentation is probably the summary of a recent evaluation with a concise letter written
specifically for this purpose.