



The following is a table comparing the previous criteria with the key changes to [P.I. 11.36\(3\)](#), Wis. Admin. Code addressing identification of students who are blind and visually impaired. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams must use the new criteria to identify a sensory impairment, including blind or visually impaired, for referrals for special education dated on or after August 01, 2021. The updated rule may be found here: [Wisconsin Legislature CR 20-072 Rule Text](#).

Previous Rule	Revised Rule
Visual impairment means even after correction a child's visual functioning significantly adversely affects his or her educational performance.	Blind and visually impaired means even after correction a child's visual functioning adversely affects educational performance.

The terminology in s. PI 11.36 (3) was updated from pupils with a “visual impairment” to pupils who are “blind or visually impaired” in order to recognize the difference between blindness and visual impairment.

Previous Rule	Revised Rule
A certified teacher of the visually impaired conducts a functional vision evaluation which includes a review of medical information, formal and informal tests of visual functioning and the determination of the implications of the visual impairment on the educational and curricular needs.	A teacher of the blind and visually impaired licensed under s. PI 34.051 conducts a functional vision evaluation which includes a review of medical information from an ophthalmologist or optometrist, formal and informal tests of visual functioning, and a determination of the implications of the blindness or visual impairment on the educational and curricular needs of the child.

The rule was updated to include the specific Wisconsin teaching license for teachers of the blind and visually impaired to assess functional vision.

Revisions to Wisconsin's Law on Blind and Visually Impaired Identification: June 2021

Previous Rule	Revised Rule
<p>An ophthalmologist or optometrist finds at least one of the following:</p> <p>Central visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after conventional correction.</p> <p>Reduced visual field to 50° or less in the better eye.</p> <p>Other ocular pathologies that are permanent and irremediable.</p> <p>Cortical visual impairment.</p> <p>A degenerative condition that is likely to result in a significant loss of vision in the future.</p>	<p>This requirement was removed from state rule.</p>

This specific required findings documented from an ophthalmologist or optometrist was removed to align with the federal (IDEA) definition of blindness and visual impairment (see [IDEA Sec. 300.8\[c\]\[13\]](#)).

Previous Rule	Revised Rule
<p>Orientation and mobility needs were evaluated to determine if there are related mobility needs in home, school, or community environments.</p>	<p>An orientation and mobility specialist licensed under s. PI 34.089 evaluates the child to determine if there are related orientation and mobility needs in home, school, or community environments. A child may meet the criteria under this subdivision even if they do not have orientation and mobility needs.</p>

The rule was updated to include the specific Wisconsin license for an orientation and mobility specialist to assess the student. The revised rule clarifies that a student can meet criteria as a student who is blind or visually impaired without having orientation and mobility needs.

Revisions to Wisconsin's Law on Blind and Visually Impaired Identification: June 2021

Previous Rule	Revised Rule
The evaluation was conducted by: An orientation and mobility specialist, or A teacher of the visually impaired in conjunction with an orientation and mobility specialist.	This section was removed from state rule but revised elsewhere.

Specific roles of teachers of the blind and visually impaired and orientation and mobility specialists are clarified in other parts of the revised rule. These revisions clarify that a Wisconsin licensed orientation and mobility specialist must complete the assessment of a student's orientation and mobility and that a Wisconsin licensed teacher of the blind and visually impaired must assess the student's functional vision.