



ABOUT UMASS BOSTON

The University of Massachusetts Boston enrolls some 12,000 students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. A nationally recognized model for urban universities, UMass Boston attracts students of all ages and backgrounds; as a result, classes taught at UMass Boston provide a forum for many points of view.

The UMass Boston campus is attractive, conveniently located (easily accessed by both public and private transportation), and conducive to active study and research. UMass Boston’s newly completed Campus Center provides a focal point for many student services and activities, both academic and social. Consortium agreements with the UMass Boston Healey Library afford free access to many academic library collections throughout Massachusetts. UMass Boston’s 26 institutes and centers are involved in research and public service in the areas of public policy; gerontology; media; labor; women in politics; African-American, Latino, and Asian issues; and environmental concerns.

The Northeast Regional Center for Vision Education (NERCVE) is an established center within the Institute for Community Inclusion and is academically affiliated with the Graduate College of Education at UMass Boston.



**Northeast Regional Center for Vision Education**



**www.nercve.umb.edu**



NERCVE is dedicated to improving the education and rehabilitation of children and adults with visual impairments through regionally accessible professional educator training, technology, and research.



Fact Sheet

University of Massachusetts Boston

Graduate College of Education

M.Ed. and Graduate Certificate in SPECIAL EDUCATION

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY TRACK

*...A degree program and graduate certification option for those who want to work in a professional setting assisting individuals who are blind/visually impaired reach their goal of becoming safe, efficient, independent travelers.*

Program Description

The University of Massachusetts Boston offers a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Special Education program track for individuals who are interested in qualifying for certification as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. For those individuals with existing qualifying academic credentials, a graduate certificate is also an option offered by the UMass Boston Graduate College of Education and supported by the Northeast Regional Center for Vision Education (NERCVE) through the Institute for Community Inclusion. The program combines web-based course offerings with “face to face” curriculum features and locally based pre-practicum and practicum field experiences.

Cooperatively established with federal, state, and private funding, the program is designed to both decrease students’ on-campus commitment and increase field-based mentored activities within each of the six New England states. Based on continued funding, this program offers scholarship support for students who qualify.

Curriculum content is approved by the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI). Students who complete the program of study qualify to sit for the national professional examination and resulting certification provided by the Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). Graduates of the program can expect to find employment opportunities in various settings, including state and federal agencies, and public and private schools.

The M.Ed. in Special Education in Orientation and Mobility requires the completion of 37 graduate academic credits. Individuals who would like to pursue “certification only” in

Graduate Core Courses Orientation and Mobility	
SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning	3 credits
SPE-G 615 Braille I	3 credits
SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision	3 credits
SPE-G 611 Physical Aspects of O&M	3 credits
SPE-G 641 Methods of O&M with Lab	4 credits
SPE-G 612 O&M Assessment: Children	4 credits
SPE-G 613 O&M Assessment: Adults	4 credits
SPE-G 698 O&M Internship	4 credits
Total: 28 credits	
Additional Required Courses for M.Ed.	
SPE-G 620 Education of Students with Visual Impairments	3 credits
SPE-G 621 Introduction to Disabilities for Education Professionals	3 credits
SPE-G 629 Consultation & Interpersonal Skills	3 credits
Total: 9 credits	
Total Credits Required for Degree: 37 credits	

Orientation and Mobility must have a minimum of a bachelor degree and complete a total of 28 credits. Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments may be eligible to complete the program by earning 19-25 credits.

Course Descriptions

■ **SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning**  
This course introduces the student to the anatomy and physiology of the eye and examines refraction, clinical testing procedures, and major visual disorders. The medical component of this course provides the foundation to the remainder of the course, as it looks at the functional implications of individual eye conditions on educational and vocational services.  
**Prepracticum:** 3 hours.

■ **SPE-G 615 Braille I**

This course provides basic skills in Braille transcription and codes, with an emphasis on literary Braille. Students acquire competency in reading and writing Braille using the Perkins Braille writer, and slate and stylus. This course includes methodology for teaching Braille reading to school-aged students as well as special populations such as non-literary readers.

**Prepracticum:** 2-3 hours.

■ **SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision**

This course expands on the education and rehabilitation implications of vision loss, introduced in SPE-G 614, Visual Functioning, from a functional and psychological point of view. This course will include a review of clinical procedures and the interpretation of clinical reports. Emphasis will be placed on conducting individualized functional vision assessments. Optics will be revisited in relationship to optical low-vision devices. Vision-simulation activities and the development of a functional vision-assessment kit will be utilized to provide a practical, hands-on approach to learning.

**Prepracticum:** 6-8 hours.

**Prerequisite:** SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning.

■ **SPE-G 611 Physical & Functional Aspects of O&M**

The student is introduced to the structure and function of the main systems of the human body and to chronic conditions which may affect these systems. Emphasis will be placed on disabilities most frequently seen in conjunction with visual impairments and how the combined impact will affect O & M instruction. Each of the sensory systems will also be explored, along with the mechanics of locomotion and psychomotor factors influencing mobility.

■ **SPE-G 641 Methods of Orientation and Mobility Lecture**

This course examines the foundations of learning and teaching Orientation and Mobility. A weekly on-line lecture will provide an introduction to the principles of concept development, spatial orientation, and environmental analysis as these topics relate to independent travel by individuals who are visually impaired. This course has the following prepracticum requirement:

**Prepracticum—Methods of Orientation and Mobility Lab**

This lab must be taken concurrently with SPE-G 641 Methods of Orientation and Mobility (Lecture). A major component of the lab is to give students the opportunity to learn and experience O&M skills and techniques through the use of blindfolds and low-vision simulators. After acquiring these skills, students will focus on teaching each other, then modifying the techniques for diverse populations. Students will meet for 20 sessions, totaling 120 hours throughout the semester. This lab is a field based pre-practicum experience offered by an ACVREP-certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist.

**Prerequisite:** SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning, SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision, and SPE-G 611 Physical and Functional Aspects of O&M or program coordinator approval.

■ **SPE-G 612 O&M Assessment: Children**

This course is an instructional strategies course and applies foundations and methods to the specific populations of preschool, elementary, and transition-aged children. Assessment tools are introduced and applied, with an emphasis on development of the students’ abilities in observational skills, information gathering, and task analysis in the development of specific objectives and lesson design for instructing children. Methods in team instruction, consultation, and itinerant teaching are examined. Competencies for the course will be integrated into both classroom and field-based experiences. This course has the following prepracticum requirement:

**Prepracticum—O&M Assessment: Children**

This is a field-based experience which provides the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge and learn observational and assessment strategies through direct student contact. The field site options will include experience with children, and the opportunity to diversify the experience between infants, preschool, school-aged, and transitional students. This course requires minimum daytime participation of six to eight hours per week to acquire 80 hours of instructional experience. This must be taken concurrently with SPEG-612 O&M Assessment: Children.

**Prerequisite:** SPE-G 641 Methods of O&M

■ **SPE-G 613 O&M Assessment: Adults**

This is an instructional strategies course which applies foundations and methods to the specific populations of visually impaired adults, including persons over age sixty-five, those with additional disabilities, and persons of diverse cultural backgrounds. Case studies will provide the basis for discussion and foundation to the practical experience provided in the O&M Internship. Assessment, observation, information gathering, and task analysis through lesson design are critical elements of this course, while the advanced systems of O&M are addressed in greater depth. This course has the following prepracticum requirement:

**Prepracticum—O&M Assessment: Adults**

This is a field-based experience which provides the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge and learn observational and assessment strategies through direct client contact. The field site options will include experience with social, vocational, and independent living rehabilitation agencies, with the opportunity to diversify the experience with young adult, adult, geriatric, and individuals with multiple disabilities. This course requires minimum daytime participation of six to eight hours per week to acquire 80 hours of instructional experience. This must be taken concurrently with SPE-G 613 O&M Assessment: Adults.

**Prerequisite:** SPE-G 612 O&M Assessment: Children



■ **SPE-G 698 O&M Internship**

This course is for students who have completed course work and all pre-practicum hours with both children and adults. Internships may be full-time or part-time, and interns are required to keep an ongoing diary of their experiences along with a capstone portfolio. Students must complete the clinical requirements set by AER, totaling a minimum of 340 hours.

**Prerequisite:** All coursework and program coordinator approval

■ **SPE-G 620 Education of Students with Visual Impairments**

This course examines the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education services for students with visual impairments, and gives an overview of the wide array of services and resources available to these students. Topics include legislation, service systems, roles and responsibilities of specialized service providers, and the impact of visual impairment on development.

**Prepracticum:** 2-3 hours.

■ **SPE-G 621 Introduction to Disabilities for Education Professionals**

Participants study physical, cognitive, perceptual, and psychological aspects of the atypical developmental patterns of children and adolescents with varying disabilities. They explore the conceptual frameworks for understanding normalcy, which address cultural, racial and ethnic expectations, family, community, and peer group norms, sex role demands, and psychological definitions. The course also examines the implications of federal and state laws, regulations, and policies related to students with disabilities and special educational needs. Emphasis is given to the relative effectiveness of differing remediation and therapeutic approaches for school-aged students with special needs.

**Prepracticum:** 16 hours.

■ **SPE-G 629 Consultation and Interpersonal Skills**

Students demonstrate an understanding of the principles involved in consultation and interpersonal skills. Intervention strategies and interviewing techniques are stressed. Discussions include dynamics of the team process, roadblocks to communication, and analysis of a school system, with subsequent in-service recommendations. Students will have an opportunity to apply these learned skills while examining theory concurrently.

## The Application Process

Admissions to all UMass Boston graduate programs are coordinated through the **Office of Graduate Admissions**. All materials and correspondence should be directed to the Office of Graduate Admissions, Campus Center, Upper Level, UMass Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125. You can contact the UMass Boston Graduate Admissions Office at **617-287-6400**. For program information requests, please visit the O&M page on the NERCVE web site, [www.nercve.umb.edu](http://www.nercve.umb.edu).

**Apply to UMass Boston by** completing the standard graduate application, provided both in the *Graduate Studies Bulletin* and at [www.umb.edu/admissions/graduate](http://www.umb.edu/admissions/graduate), where you can either print out an application or apply online using a credit card. **Clearly specify that you are applying to the “Special Education Program: Orientation and Mobility” track.**

As part of the university’s application process, you are also required to:

**Obtain three Letters of Recommendation**, using the forms provided by Graduate Admissions in the standard application. Emphasis should be placed on academic and professional references.

**Complete all testing** required by the university. If you do not already have a master’s or doctoral degree, you will be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Miller Analogies Test (MAT), or the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL).

**Submit an official transcript** from each institution attended. A minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admission to the program as a master’s degree candidate.

**Complete your Statement of Interest and Intent** by submitting a two-part essay. In the first part (approximately 300 words), explain your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies. In the second part of the essay (at least 1,200 words), indicate your specific interests as they relate to the graduate program you are applying to and discuss the type of work you would like to do in your intended field.

**Application deadline: November 1 for Spring admission and April 1 for Fall admission.**

**For more information about:**

**The UMass Boston  
M.Ed. and Graduate Certificate in  
Special Education: Orientation  
and Mobility Track**

**Visit Our Website:  
[www.nercve.umb.edu](http://www.nercve.umb.edu)**

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