

MEd in Vision Studies

TEACHER OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

...A degree program for those who want to work in an educational setting with students who are visually impaired.

The Program

The University of Massachusetts Boston offers a Master of Education (MEd) in Vision Studies for individuals who are interested in qualifying for state licensure as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment. Offered by the UMass Boston School for Global Inclusion and Social Development and supported by the Northeast Regional Center for Vision Education (NERCVE) through the Institute for Community Inclusion, this online distance education program combines both web-based and face-to-face curriculum features.

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 defined by the National Professional Standards of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Division on Visual Impairment, as well as by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education state licensing requirements.

Graduates of the program can expect to find employment opportunities in various public and private instructional settings, including state and federal agencies, as well as public school systems and private institutions.

The MEd in Vision Studies Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment track requires the completion of 37 graduate academic credits. Students looking for initial licensure as a TVI may have additional state teacher education testing requirements, depending on the regulations of the specific state in which they wish to teach. These requirements, along with individual student backgrounds, will determine the need for any additional coursework. Licensure testing and additional requirements must be completed prior to practicum placement.

Core Courses for MEd in Vision Studies Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment Track		
Program of Study	Courses	Credits
SPE-G 621	Introduction to Disabilities	3
VISN 602	Education of Students with VI	3
VISN 603	Braille Communications I	3
VISN 604	Visual Functioning	3
VISN 605	Implications of Low Vision	3
VISN 610	Braille Communications II	3
VISN 611	Technology and Visual Impairment	3
VISN 612	Orientation and Mobility and Independent Living Skills	4
VISN 613	Assessment for Students with VI Including Those with Additional Disabilities	4
VISN 614	Instructional Strategies for Students with VI Including Those with Additional Disabilities	4
VISN 619	Practicum in TVI	4
		Total 37 credits



Course Descriptions

SPE-G 621: Introduction to Disabilities

The focus of this course is to provide a foundation in the field of special education. Students will explore philosophical, historical, and sociological issues related to this area. Federal and state legislation will be presented (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - 97, No Child Left Behind Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). Critical issues and controversies will be highlighted. Both typical and atypical development will provide a framework for understanding disabilities. The required curricular, behavioral, and social interventions that are associated with identified disabilities will be explored. How to facilitate and support placement in the least restrictive environment will be discussed, as well as strategies for enhancing student outcomes. Specific concerns relative to linguistic and racial background and their impact upon special needs placement and interventions also will be explored. The critical role of parents will be emphasized.

VISN 602: Education of Students with Visual Impairment

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

VISN 603: Braille Communications I

This course will train students to teach reading and writing of contracted braille. Students will learn to write literary braille using both Perkins brailier and

slate and stylus, and reading methods will be studied. Reading problems and remediation will be discussed. Techniques used in education and rehabilitation will be included. The use of technology to produce braille will be reviewed.

VISN 604: 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.

VISN 605: Implications of Low Vision

This course is designed to train professionals to work with individuals who have low vision in both rehabilitation and educational settings. Through selected readings and presentations on the theoretical and practical aspects of low-vision, participants will acquire a solid knowledge base and become comfortable with various low-vision concepts and methods for integrating visual needs and adapted equipment within an educational/rehabilitation environment. In addition, small group activities, case studies, and simulation will be incorporated throughout the course to provide participants with the practical application of skills and techniques learned.

VISN 610: Braille Communications II

This course builds on the literary braille code skills introduced in VISN 603. Students will study tools used in mathematics, including Nemeth code, Scientific Notebook software, and the abacus. Braille formats typical of educational materials will be studied. Students will review the literary braille code.

VISN 611: Technology and Visual Impairment

This course will assist students in understanding assistive technology to meet the educational needs of children who are blind and visually impaired. The goal is to educate the students about assessment, acquisition, and implementation of assistive technology to foster academic independence in their blind and visually impaired students. In addition, students will be able to identify the latest and most appropriate technology for the needs of the visually impaired child. Legal issues, funding, inclusion of technology on the IEP and resources for support and training will be discussed.

VISN 612: Orientation and Mobility and Independent Living Skills

This course examines the functional implications of vision loss on primary activities of daily living, with emphasis in basic methodologies of orientation and mobility and rehabilitation teaching. Exploration of life skills essential to independence will be addressed in relation to student and adult populations. Weekly lecture content will be enhanced by functional lab activities designed to give the student the opportunity to experience and critically assess the effectiveness of current methodology.

VISN 613: Assessment for Students with Visual Impairment Including Those with Additional Disabilities

This course examines and explores the unique educational needs of children with visual impairments and children with visual and multiple impairments as well as techniques for assessment related to teaching these children in a full array of educational settings from ages 3-22. Topics include assessment specifically designed for students with visual impairments, and those in the expanded core curriculum. Issues related to team approaches to assessment and evaluation

are also presented. This course requires (a) classroom lectures, discussions and group work, (b) reading and video assignments, (c) research assignments, (d) varying field-based experiences, and (e) completion of several case studies.

VISN 614: Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students with Visual Impairment Including Those with Additional Disabilities

This course examines and explores the unique educational needs of children with visual impairments and children with visual and multiple impairments as well as techniques for instruction related to teaching these children in a full array of educational settings from ages 3-22. Topics include program planning for core and expanded core curriculum, adaptive techniques, and diverse communication systems. The necessity for a transdisciplinary approach will be stressed. The course requires (a) classroom lectures, discussions and group work, (b) reading and video assignments, (c) research assignments, (d) varying field-based

experiences, and (e) completion of several case studies.

VISN 619: TVI Practicum

The TVI practicum encompasses a supervised practicum, a practicum seminar and a capstone portfolio. The practicum provides 300 hours working with students who are visually impaired, ranging from Pre-K through Grade 12.

The practicum seminar consists of 6 modules dealing with professional issues related to the field of TVI. The seminar is designed to inform and support students as they complete their practicum experiences.

Pre-registration for the TVI practicum is required one semester prior to enrollment. Student must provide documentation of 100 clock hours of pre-practicum experiences, passing score reports for all required licensure exams (MTEL), passing score on the braille Proficiency Test, and a cumulative GPA of 3.0. The practicum site must be approved by the program coordinator.



The Application Process

Apply to the UMass Boston Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment track by completing the standard graduate application provided in the Graduate Studies Bulletin or at www.umb.edu/admissions/grad, where you can print out an application or apply online with a credit card. As part of the application process for the university, you are also required to:

- Obtain three letters of recommendation, using the forms provided by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Emphasis should be placed on academic and professional references.
- Complete all testing required by the university. You will be required to take the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL): Communication and Literacy.
- Submit an official transcript from each institution attended; a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admissions to a master's degree program.
- Complete your statement of interest and intent by submitting a two-part essay.
 1. Explain your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies (approximately 300 words).
 2. Indicate your specific interest and discuss the type of work you would like to do in your intended field (at least 1,200 words).

Please note that this statement will be reviewed for both your overall message and your ability to write at the graduate level. Proofread your writing carefully; it is ranked according to its clarity, grammar, and syntax.



SCHOOL FOR GLOBAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



For more information about the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment program, visit www.nercve.org.

The Northeast Regional Center for Vision Education (NERCVE) is an established center within the Institute for Community Inclusion and is academically affiliated with the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at UMass Boston.

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.



ABOUT UMASS BOSTON

With a growing reputation for innovative research addressing complex urban issues, the University of Massachusetts Boston, metropolitan Boston's only public university, offers its diverse student population both an intimate learning environment and the rich experience of a great American city. UMass Boston's ten colleges and graduate schools serve nearly 16,000 students while engaging local, national, and international constituents through academic programs, research centers, and public service activities. To learn more about UMass Boston, visit www.umb.edu.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applicants are accepted into the program one time a year for the summer semester. Summer application deadline is March 1st.