



**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.

# NERCVE

**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. IN SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**TEACHER OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS TRACK**

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

**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 state licensure as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. 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, 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 Impairments, as well as by the Massachusetts Department of 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 M.Ed. in Special Education track in “Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments” 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 become licensed. 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.

Graduate Core Courses Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments	
SPE-G 620 Education of Students with VI	3 credits
SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning	3 credits
SPE-G 621 Intro to Disabilities	3 credits
SPE-G 615 Braille I	3 credits
SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision	3 credits
SPE-G 619 Braille Communications II	3 credits
SPE-G 640 O&M and Independent Living	4 credits
SPE-G 622 Technology and Visual Impairments	3 credits
SPE-G 642 Assessment & Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students with VI	4 credits
SPE-G 643 Assessing & Teaching Students with Multiple Disabilities	4 credits
SPE-G 698 Practicum in Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (300 clock hours)	4 credits
Total Credits Required for Degree: 37 credits	

**Course Descriptions**

■ **SPE-G 620 Education of Students with VI**  
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 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 621 Introduction to Disabilities**

Participants study physical, cognitive, perceptual, and psychological aspects of the atypical developmental patterns of children and adolescents with varying disabilities. Students 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 education needs. Emphasis is given to the relative effectiveness of differing remediation and therapeutic approaches for school-aged students with special needs. The course includes a field-based component. **Prepracticum:** 16 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. By the end of the course, students will be required to read unaltered embossed Braille by visual or tactile means. **Prepracticum:** 2-4 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, from a functional and psychological point of view. The 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 619 Braille Communications II**

This course builds on the literary Braille code skills introduced in SPE-G 615. 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 with a focus on memorization. **Prepracticum:** 2-4 hours. **Prerequisite:** SPE-G 615 Braille I.

■ **SPE-G 640 O&M and Independent Living**

This course examines the functional implications of vision loss on primary activities of daily living, with emphasis on basic methodologies of Orientation and Mobility and Rehabilitation Teaching. Exploration of life skills essential to independence will be addressed, with attention to a diverse population of children with a variety of visual capabilities. Weekly lecture content will be enhanced by functional lab activities designed to give students the opportunity to experience and critically assess the effectiveness of current methodology. **Prepracticum:** 5 hours.

■ **SPE-G 622 Technology and Visual Impairments**

This course will assist students in understanding assistive technology to meet the educational needs of blind and visually impaired children. The goal is to educate students about the assessment, design, and implementation of assistive technology designed to foster academic independence in these children. In addition, students will be able to identify the latest, most appropriate technology addressing the needs of students with visual impairments. Discussions of legal issues, the inclusion of technology in the IEP, and resources for support and training will also be included. **Prepracticum:** 5 hours. **Prerequisites:** SPE-G 615 Braille I and SPE-G 619 Braille Communications II.

■ **SPE-G 642 Assessment and Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students w/ VI**

This course develops skills related to teaching children with visual impairments in a full array of educational settings. Topics include: assessment and teaching strategies, material modification, and program planning for the visually impaired learner. Issues related to direct service provision, consultation roles, and team approaches to assessment, evaluation, and teaching are also presented. This course requires a one-half-day-per-week, field-based placement in a prepracticum experience. **Prepracticum:** 25-hour minimum. **Prerequisites:** SPE-G 620 Education of Students w/ VI, SPE-G 615 Braille I, SPE-G 621 Intro to Disabilities, SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning, and SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision, SPE-G 619 Braille Communications II, SPE-G 640 O&M and Independent Living Skills, and SPE-G 622 Technology & VI.

■ **SPE-G 643 Assessing and Teaching Students with Multiple Disabilities**

This course is a dedicated examination of the unique assessment and teaching methodologies that may be used by Teachers of Visually Impaired Children when the child has multiple disabilities. Topics include: functional assessments, program planning, adaptive techniques, and diverse communication systems. In order to generalize the information for use with a heterogeneous population, this course emphasizes the educational implication of neurological insult. The necessity for a trans-disciplinary approach will be stressed. The course requires (a) two (2) on-campus weekends, (b) Web-based assignments, (c) regularly scheduled Web-based discussions with instructor, and (d) field-based, prepracticum experiences. The instructor and in-state mentor(s) will be available for support and assistance. **Prepracticum:** 25-hour minimum. **Prerequisites:** SPE-G 620 Education of Students w/ VI, SPE-G 615 Braille I, SPE-G 621 Intro to Disabilities, SPE-G 614 Visual Functioning, and SPE-G 616 Implications of Low Vision, SPE-G 619 Braille Communications II, SPE-G 640 O&M & Independent Living Skills, SPE-G 622 Technology & VI, and SPE-G 642 Assessment & Instructional Strategies for Teaching Students w/ VI.

■ **SPE-G 698 Practicum in Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)**

The TVI Practicum consists of a supervised practicum and capstone experience for preservice professionals within the TVI Program working with students who are visually impaired, ranging from Pre-K through Grade 12. Preregistration for the TVI Practicum is required one semester prior to enrollment, along with documentation of 100 clock hours of prepracticum experiences. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a passing score on all three MTEL examinations are required to begin the TVI practicum. The practicum site must be approved by the Program Coordinator.

**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 TVI page on the NERCVE web site, **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**, 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: Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments” track.**

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

■ **Obtain three Letters of Recommendation**, using the forms provided by the Office of 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 Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) Communication and Literacy Exam, Graduate Record Examination (GRE), or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). The MTEL is the preferred test, since it will be one of the three tests required for MA DOE licensure.

■ **Submit an official transcript from each institution** of education attended. A minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 GPA 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, explain your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies (approximately 300 words). In the second part (at least 1,200 words), indicate your specific interest and discuss the type of work you would like to do in your intended field. 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 very carefully: It is ranked according to its clarity, grammar, and syntax.

Please note: Prepracticum hours listed are an estimate and are subject to change according to instructors.

All information contained in this Fact Sheet is subject to change due to Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations and University of Massachusetts Boston policy changes.

**Application deadline: April 1 for Fall admission.**

**For more information about:**

**The UMass Boston  
M.Ed. in Special Education  
Teacher of Students w/ Visual  
Impairments Track**

**Visit Our Website:  
www.nercve.umb.edu**

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The M.Ed. in Special Education/Teacher of the Visually Impaired Track is a cooperative project with the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston, and Children's Hospital.

This project is supported by the U.S. Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services and in part by the New England State Departments of Education and the Hilton/Perkins Program of Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, MA.

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