



Fact Sheet

SCHOOL FOR GLOBAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MEd 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 Resource Center for Vision Education (NERCVE), 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
VISN 602	Education of Students with VI	3
VISN 603	Braille I	3
VISN 604	Eye Anatomy and Disease	3
VISN 605	Clinical and Functional Assessment of Vision	3
VISN 610	Braille II	3
VISN 660	Intro to AT for People with VI	3
VISN 612	Orientation and Mobility Independent Living Skills	4
VISN 613	Assessment and Instructional Strategies for Students with VI Including Those with Additional Disabilities I	4
VISN 614	Assessment and Instructional Strategies for Students with VI Including Those with Additional Disabilities II	4
VISN 648	Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment	3
VISN 619	Practicum in TVI	4
Total Credits	MEd	37



Course Descriptions

VISN 602: Education of Students with Visual Impairments

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 individuals to teach reading and writing of contracted Unified English Braille. Participants will learn read embossed braille visually and to write Unified English Braille using a Perkins Braille Writer, computer keyboard for six-key entry, and a slate and stylus. Topics include teaching techniques for reading readiness, tracking, tactile discrimination, and reading methods. 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: Eye Anatomy and Disease

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: Clinical and Functional Assessment of 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 is designed for vision teachers to expand their current level of Braille competency. Students will study tools and teaching strategies used in mathematics using Unified English Braille and the abacus. Braille formats typical of educational materials will be studied. Students will review the Unified English Braille code with a focus on memorization.

VISN 612: Orientation and Mobility and Independent Living

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 activities of daily living. Exploration of functional life skills essential to independence will be addressed with consideration to student and populations. Weekly lecture content will be enhanced by lab activities designed to give the student the opportunity to experience and critically assess the effectiveness of current methodology.

VISN 613: Assessment and Instructional Strategies for Students with Visual Impairment Including Those with Additional Disabilities I

This course examines and explores the unique educational needs of children with visual impairments and children with visual and multiple impairments. Also, this course addresses techniques for assessment and instructional strategies related to specific assessments and instruction for these children in a full array of educational settings from ages 3-22. Topics include functional vision, learning media and compensatory (non-literacy) assessments specifically designed for students with visual impairments and instructional strategies related to these assessments. Issues related to team approaches to assessment and evaluation are also presented. This course requires a field-based placement/pre-practicum requirement of a minimum of 25-30 hours.

VISN 614: Assessment and Instructional Strategies for Students with Visual Impairment Including Those with Additional Disabilities II

This course examines and explores the unique educational needs of children with visual impairments and children with visual and additional impairments as well as the techniques for assessment and instruction related to teaching these children in a full array of educational settings from ages 3-22. Topics include assessment and program planning for core curriculum and expanded core curriculum as well as adaptive techniques, and diverse communication systems. This course requires a field-based placement/pre-practicum requirement of a minimum of 30 hours. 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 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. The modules will be released on a bi-weekly schedule. There will be one synchronous Talking Communities session.

VISN 648: Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment

This course provides an in-depth study of CVI and resources available for assessment and instructional strategies. Participants will further examine and explore the unique educational needs of children with CVI and the skills related to teaching these children in a full array of educational settings; Pre-K through grade 12. Topics include teaching strategies in the core and expanded core curriculums, such as: literacy, career-vocational skills, visual efficiency and compensatory auditory strategies. Instruction will also address material modifications and accommodations.

VISN 660: Introduction to AT for People with VI

This fully online course will provide an introduction to the profession of Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for People with Visual Impairments. Students will learn through demonstrations, hands-on activities, and independent learning exercises about a variety of assistive technology solutions for people of all ages who are blind or visually impaired, including: screen magnification software, screen reading software, OCR software, braille technologies, low vision devices, smart phone and tablet accessibility features, as well as other specialized devices designed for people with visual impairments. The benefits and limitations of accessibility features that are built-in to mainstream technologies compared to specialized assistive technology devices and software will be discussed. Techniques for determining the most appropriate assistive technology solutions will also be discussed. The course explores strategies for integrating assistive technology in different settings, such as in schools, homes, colleges/universities, jobsites, and avocational settings.

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 [UMass Boston \(umb.edu/admissions/grad\)](http://UMass Boston (umb.edu/admissions/grad)), where you can print out an application or apply online with a credit card. Specify that you are applying to the MEd in Vision Studies Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment. Applicants are accepted into the program one time a year for the summer semester.

The Application deadline for the summer semester is March 1st.

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 where you will:
 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.



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 UMB.edu.

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

The Northeast Resource 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.

