Required Courses for Certification as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired

INTRODUCTION

The Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) is administered by the James I. Perkins College of Education, Department of Human Services.

In order to be eligible for this program, the applicant must have at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university. Applicants to the TVI program must also have a valid teacher’s certificate from the Texas Education Agency in order to be admitted to the program. Training provided to teachers from other states must meet their state requirements.

Students needing to take SPE 515, 516, 518, 519, and 552 will take courses using internet delivery often along with students in the teacher of the visually impaired program. The courses meet in the evening using programs that allow for conversation and presentation of material over the internet.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SPE 515, 516, 517, 518, 551, 552, 558

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Summer I & II

**SPE 516 – The Eye, Its Function and Health.** Designed to familiarize the student with the structure, function and possible pathologies of the eye and of the visual system and the impact of these on the process of seeing. The Functional Vision Evaluation/Learning Media Assessment process is also introduced.
SPE 517 – Communication Skills for Persons with Visual Impairments (Braille). Students are required to master reading, transcribing, and producing Grades I and II (contracted braille) of the literary braille code, Nemeth Code, and use of the slate and stylus.

First Year - Fall

SPE 515 – Programs and Services for Individuals with Visual Impairments. Foundations in Visual Impairment. Provides a broad overview of various aspects of blindness (e.g., agencies which provide services to persons with visual impairments, psychological and sociological aspects of blindness, history of the field).

SPE 552 – Instructional Strategies for Individuals with Visual and Multiple Impairments. Students study a wide array of conditions that often accompany vision loss as well as educational programming considerations, assessment, and adaptation of environments for these students.

First Year - Spring


SPE 551 – Working with Academic Students who have Visual Impairments. The role of the teacher of persons with visual impairments. Topics include resource materials, curriculum adaptations, sources and operation of special equipment, current theories and techniques for teaching students who are blind or visually impaired, and formal and informal assessment instruments appropriate for students with visual impairments.

Any time after first summer course

SPE 558 – Practicum in Special Education. Practicum in Visual Impairment. The practicum experience enables the student to apply
academic learning experiences and to integrate the academic and practical aspects of his/her preparation program. Students are required to perform a Functional Vision Evaluation and Learning Media Assessment as well as attend an IEP team meeting, write IEP goals and objectives, and perform various other activities in the TVI role. The practicum requires completion of approximately 180 contact hours with students who are blind or visually impaired (350 total across courses). In many cases your practicum course will continue across your first full academic year as a TVI (Fall and Spring) depending on your caseload and your ability to complete assessments.