Graduate Program in Orientation and Mobility (Certification Only)

INTRODUCTION

The Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility (O&M) program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) is administered by the James L Perkins College of Education, Department of Human Services. Students already holding at least an undergraduate degree can be eligible for O&M Certification by taking 33 credit hours of prescribed courses. A student who is certified as a teacher of the visually impaired can be eligible to add O&M certification by taking 21 credit hours*.

Typically, students who enter the masters program have already finished either the COMS or the TVI program. This means that they come to the program with 18 to 21 of the needed 36 semester hours. Since this is the case, students continuing into the M.Ed. program are required to complete the following classes. Successfully complete 36 hours of didactic instruction in visual impairment / orientation and mobility.

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.

The following courses are required to be eligible to take the National Exam for Orientation & Mobility Certification from The Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). Passing that test is required in order to be certified as an O&M Specialist by ACVREP and to use the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) title.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SPE 500, 515, 516, 518, 519, 552, 593, 594, 595

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
**SPE 500 – Beginning Clinical Practicum in Orientation and Mobility (6 hours)**
An analysis and implementation of those skills, techniques, and principles which enable an individual with a visual impairment to move independently with safety and efficiency.

**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.

**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.

**SPE 593 – Intermediate Practicum in Orientation and Mobility**
Supervised practicum experience (60 hours minimum) teaching orientation and mobility to individuals with visual impairment. Allows the student to apply personal values, theory, and a philosophy of working with persons with disabilities.

**First Year- Spring**
**SPE 518 – Orientation and Mobility Skills and Concepts**
Development of children with typical eyesight versus children with visual impairment. Body imagery, concept development, spatial awareness, and mobility are emphasized. Basic mobility skills including cane concepts and techniques and human guide are addressed.

**SPE 519 – Low Vision**

**SPE 594 – Advanced Clinical Practicum in Orientation and Mobility**
Additional 60 hours minimum of supervised practicum experience teaching orientation and mobility to individuals with visual impairment. Allows student to apply personal values, theory, and a philosophy of working with persons with disabilities.

**Second Year- Summer**
**SPE 595 – Practicum in Orientation and Mobility (6 hours)**
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**INTERNSHIP** should be taken after completing all of the other required courses. Per ACVREP Guidelines, internship requires 350 hours of one-on-one instruction under the supervision of a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Internship placements vary depending upon the needs of the student and availability.

**Additional Information**

* Certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired only need to take SPE 500, SPE 519, SPE 593, SPE 594, and SPE 595 if a transcript review shows they have taken SPE 515, 516, 518, and 552 or their equivalent within the last seven years. O&M certification will only accept courses taken for university credit. Alternate certification courses cannot be used towards O&M certification.

**SPE 500** is known as the blindfold course and involves 60 clock hours of instruction under the blindfold as well as 6 hours per week of seminar. The course will be offered during the summer and students will have to be able to come to campus at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX for approximately 6 weeks of daily instruction (in the summer). If accepted for grant funding, the expenses for room and board will be covered (the grant will also cover all or a portion of tuition and most fees for training). In rare instances a graduate student can complete the blindfold course during the spring semester. In those VERY rare cases, graduate students will attend classes along with undergraduates and receive weekly training over the 16-week semester. No support for room or board will be offered for students who pursue this option.