Required Courses for the Master’s in Special Education Program With Visual Impairment Certification

INTRODUCTION

The Visual Impairment program at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) is administered by the James L Perkins College of Education, Department of Human Services.

Students are required to successfully complete 36 hours of didactic instruction in visual impairment. Practicum hours that are required for individual certifications will not apply toward the master’s degree. Students are also required to complete an individual research project, which is conducted one-on-one with the student’s SPE 570 faculty advisor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

SPE 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 521, 552, 556, 558, 570, 573.

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.** Requires the student to master uncontracted and contracted braille, Nemeth Code, and rudimentary 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.

* **SPE 558** – **Practicum in Visual Impairment.** Students are required to do a Functional Vision Assessment and Learning Media assessment as well as attend an IEP Team meetings, write IEPs, and various other activities that certified TVIs perform.

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 551** – **The Role of the Teacher of Persons with Visual Impairments.** Formal and informal assessment instruments appropriate for visually impaired students; sources and operation of special equipment, adaptation of curriculum for visually impaired learners.
Second Year- Fall

**SPE 573 – Leadership in Visual Impairment.** Designed to facilitate effective and practical development of leadership qualities, training, advocacy, and program development to improve the lives and/or educational outcomes of children, youth, and adults who are blind or visually impaired. This course will provide training that addresses leadership and program development in the areas of visual impairment.

**SPE 521 – Teaching the Expanded Core Curriculum to Students with Visual Impairments.** The expanded core curriculum includes areas such as assistive technology, compensatory skills, career education, independent living skills, recreation & leisure, etc. This class provides an opportunity to delve deeper into the importance of the expanded core curriculum and how it should be taught.

**SPE 570 – Independent Project in Visual Impairment (6 hours).** This is the capstone class of the M.Ed. program. It is broken up in two 3-semester hour courses. In this class, students develop and execute their own research project. The student will work under the direction of a faculty person in a one-on-one arrangement.

Second Year- Spring

**SPE 556 – Infancy and Early Childhood for Individuals with Visual Impairment.** This class provides an in-depth examination of how learning takes place during the first five years of life of persons with visual and visual/multiple impairments. It also provides students with vital information about educational programming and intervention strategies that apply to these children.


**SPE 570 – Independent Project in Visual Impairment (6 hours).** This is the second half of the capstone class of the M.Ed. program. In this class, students continue to develop and execute their own research project. The student will work under the direction of a faculty person in a one-on-one arrangement.
* SPE 558, while required for certification do not count towards the 36 hour requirement for a M.Ed. degree (Total hours for certification and degree– 39 hours)