

# Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments

## College of Education

The Department of Early Childhood, Special Education, & Counselor Education offers a Master of Science degree in the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments. The program uses a hybrid course delivery model including both face-to-face and online courses. Face-to-face courses occur on weekends and in the summer at either the Kentucky School for the Blind (KSB) in Louisville or at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

A Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) educates children in a variety of learning and instructional topics including: assessing and evaluating educational strengths and needs including functional vision and learning media assessments; determining appropriate services and instructional goals; and providing training in the use of adapted materials and devices. A TVI also provides direct instruction in the expanded core curriculum which includes compensatory academic skills, career exploration, sensory efficiency skills, social skills, assistive technology, recreation and leisure activities, self-determination skills, and independent living skills.

The University of Kentucky has the distinction of offering the only program to train teachers of the visually impaired in Kentucky.

## Application Requirements

Applicants must have completed a bachelor's degree in any field with a minimum of 2.75 overall or 3.0 GPA in the last 30 credit hours to apply.

Applications must include the following:

- Resume/CV
- Personal Statement
  - 1-2 page statement on why you want to be a TVI
- Official transcripts from all previous universities or colleges
- Three (3) references

## Application Information

Go to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments – Graduate page at:

<https://www.uky.edu/academics/masters/teacher-preparation-program-visual-impairments-graduate>

and follow the “Apply Now” link. In “Plan of Study” the Admission Category should read “Masters degree”, then “Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairment” for the Program. Applications are

accepted on a revolving basis; however, candidates must start the BVI course sequence in the fall semester.

## Degree Requirements

Program completion requires passing grades in all BVI coursework totaling 33 credit hours with an overall GPA of 3.0, successful completion of field experience(s), and satisfactory demonstration of all program standards.

### Practicum and Field Experience Requirements

Practicum is embedded in the BVI courses throughout the program. Each semester, a minimum of 15 hours working with children who are blind and visually impaired is required. Summer practicum consists of an intensive week at an approved program.

Each candidate is required to complete a field experience of no less than 40 days at the end of the program. Each candidate must have a caseload that meets the minimum requirements of:

- Preschool or elementary academic student
- Middle or high school academic student
  - At least one of the academic students must have low vision
- Braille instruction
- Student with complex needs

### Required Program Coursework

- BVI 580 Introduction to Visual Impairment (3)
- BVI 582 Anatomy & Physiology of the Eye (3)
- BVI 583 Braille Codes I (3)
- BVI 611 Methods for Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (3)
- BVI 614 Braille Codes II (3)
- BVI 615 Assistive Technology for Students with Visual Impairments (3)
- BVI 616 Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired (3)
- BVI 617 Visual Impairments and Multiple Disabilities (3)
- BVI 618 Assessment of Children with Visual Impairments (3)
- BVI 710 Student Teaching/Field Experience in Visual Impairments (6)

**Total 33 Credits**

### Teacher Certification

This degree does not necessarily lead to teacher certification. Candidates should contact the program's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) about additional teacher certification requirements. Information is also available on the program website at: <https://education.uky.edu/edsrc-programs/teacher-prep-visual-impairments/>

## Course Descriptions

**BVI 580 INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (3)** This course will provide an introduction to the educational programs and services for students with blindness and visual impairments. Content of this course will focus on the historical foundation of the field, the developmental and psychosocial aspects of individuals with visual impairments, an overview of legislation, influential agencies, and service delivery methods. The impact of vision loss on early childhood development will also be covered. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments, Orientation and Mobility program, or instructor permission required

**BVI 582 ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF THE EYE. (3)** This course will cover the anatomy and physiology of the eye, including visual development. Causes of ocular and neurological visual impairment will be addressed, treatments, and their impact on learning. Course topics will include optics, low vision devices and services, environmental adaptations, and interpreting eye reports. Learners will have the opportunity to directly observe a low vision evaluation and will learn the components of a functional vision assessment. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments, Orientation and Mobility program, or instructor permission required.

**BVI 583 BRAILLE CODES I. (3)** This course is designed to teach the literary braille code. Students will become proficient in transcribing both uncontracted and contracted braille utilizing a Perkins Braille, slate and stylus, and six-key entry computer software with proper formatting. Students will also learn appropriate techniques for reading braille both tactually and visually. In addition, the history of the braille code will be covered as well as current resources. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments, Orientation and Mobility program, or instructor permission.

**BVI 611 TEACHING METHODS FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (3)** This course is designed to examine how to teach and modify the core curriculum for students who are blind or visually impaired. Topics will include: adaptation of general education classroom materials, IEP development and implementation, lesson planning, and braille literacy. Prospective teachers will develop organization skills and strategies necessary to be efficient in delivery of services as a teacher of the visually impaired. Prereq: Successful completion of BVI 580, Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments, or instructor permission.

**BVI 614 BRAILLE CODES II. (3)** This course studies advanced braille codes with a special emphasis on braille mathematics utilizing Unified English Braille (UEB) and the Nemeth Code. Other codes covered are music and foreign language (French, German, and Spanish). Braille formats will also be taught, including how to correctly transcribe and format materials for braille users, including preparing worksheets and tests for students. Competency in using the Cranmer Abacus will also be mastered. Prereq: Successful completion of BVI 583 (Braille Codes I) or proof of competency in literary braille along with admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments, or instructor permission.

**BVI 615 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (3)** This course introduces a wide variety of technologies for people who are blind or visually impaired. Students will

learn about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as it relates to technology, as well as proprietary software and hardware. Technologies covered include, but are not limited to: Screen readers, screen magnification, electronic note takers, refreshable braille displays, braille translation programs, magnification hardware, scanning and OCR programs, and accessible digital book options. A wide variety of computers, tablets, and smart phone options will be explored. Instructional strategies for teaching technology skills will be emphasized. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments or instructor permission.

**BVI 616 EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM FOR BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED. (3)** The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique needs. This course will explore all nine areas of the ECC including: compensatory or functional academic skills, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills and self-determination. Participants will have the opportunity to observe and work with students in a summer program and teach skills from the ECC. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments or instructor permission.

**BVI 617 VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES. (3)** This course is designed to provide students with knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement programs for persons who have visual impairments and additional disabilities. Topics include assistive technology, augmentative and alternative communication, literacy instruction, sensory processing, adaptive behavior, and self-help skills. An emphasis will be placed on adaptations that enhance functioning for persons with developmental delays, autism, medical conditions, deaf-blindness, communication disorders, and those with common syndromes and eye disorders related to multiple disabilities. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments or instructor permission.

**BVI 618 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (3)** This course covers various types of assessments used to evaluate students who are blind or visually impaired. Participants will discuss testing and assessment including the development of standardized tests and their applicability for individuals with visual impairments, as well as alternate assessments. Students will practice assessing and planning educational programs for students with visual impairments by completing a Functional Vision/Learning Media Assessment, as well as assessments in assistive technology and the Expanded Core Curriculum. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program in Visual Impairments or instructor permission.

**BVI 710 STUDENT TEACHING/FIELD EXPERIENCE IN VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (3-12)** This is a supervised student teaching/field experience working with children, preschool through graduation age, who are blind or visually impaired. Candidates will apply best practices for working with children who are blind or have low vision, including those with additional disabilities. Successful completion of this course will demonstrate the candidate's ability to apply methods of teaching that include assessment, program planning and implementation, appropriate environmental and academic modifications, and instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum. Candidates will also have to demonstrate appropriate classroom and/or caseload management strategies based on their placement. Prereq: Admission to the Teacher

Preparation Program in Visual Impairments and approval by the Visual Impairment Program Faculty Chair.