

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDHOOD, READING, AND
DISABILITY SERVICES**

PROGRAM IN VISUAL IMPAIRMENT



Handbook for Undergraduate Students



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Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Childhood, Reading, and Disability Services at Florida State University! This handbook has been designed specifically for students in the Program in Visual Impairment. For questions regarding the other programs within the department, consult an advisor.

You are preparing for one of the most challenging, interesting and fulfilling careers available. We want your involvement in the Program to be as easily managed as possible, and above all, for you to enjoy what you are doing. In order to make efficient progress toward your degree, it is important for you to familiarize yourself with this handbook, your academic advisor, and other faculty members.

Specialization Areas

All undergraduate students within the Program in Visual Impairment are preparing to be teachers of students with visual impairments. The specializations in Rehabilitation Teaching and in Orientation and Mobility without teacher education are offered only at the master's degree level.

The specialization in Orientation and Mobility is a limited access program. Priority is given to graduate students and, as space allows, to a few undergraduates who demonstrate a special interest and talent in this area of teaching. You must have the instructor's permission to take these classes.

Application Process

Before any steps can be taken toward entry into the department, you first must go through the application procedures required for admittance into the University as stated by the Admissions Office. Once you have been accepted to the University, the following departmental eligibility criteria must be met to be admitted to the Program in Visual Impairment:

- minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 (on a 4.0 scale)
- taken all the liberal arts courses required of majors in education
- passing scores on all parts of the FTCE General Knowledge Exam
- exemption from or passing scores on all sections of the CLAST
math – 295 reading – 295 writing – 295 essay – 6

Once the above criteria have been met and confirmed with documentation (i.e., a transcript), you must then complete a departmental application form obtained from the Department of Childhood, Reading, and Disability Services. An interview, either

in person or by phone, must also be scheduled with a departmental advisor at that time.

You will be notified of the decision of the Admissions Committee by mail within two weeks of your interview.

**Ongoing
Evaluation**

In order to complete this program and become a qualified professional in this field, you must be willing to commit great deal of time and energy. The faculty will continuously evaluate your ability to contribute to the field based on your classroom performance, practicum experiences, and demonstration of qualities necessary for successful work with blind and low vision persons. Qualities shown to be most important for success include enthusiasm, organization, clarity of presentation, and knowledge of subject mater. At any point during your program, if the faculty determines it necessary, you may be advised to discontinue in the Program in Visual Impairment for the benefit of you and/or the individuals with whom you might work.

**Academic
Advising**

Once you have been notified of your acceptance into the Department of Childhood, Reading, and Disability Services, an academic advisor will be assigned to you. You are to meet with your advisor prior to registering for classes each semester to ensure that all requirements are being met for program completion.

Academic advising is the key to successfully completing the Program in Visual Impairment. While it may be beneficial to consult other students throughout the program, DO NOT allow such consultations regarding class scheduling to replace academic advising. *It is your responsibility to make an appointment with your advisor each semester to help with scheduling.*

**Admission
to Teacher**

Upon acceptance into the program, you must complete the Admission to Teacher Education form. This form is required to add the correct major code to your record and enable you to register for “majors only” courses. It must be signed by your advisor. The form can be picked up in room 108 Stone Building. You will not be allowed to student teach without this form in your file.

**Course
Requirements**

Courses required for the undergraduate degree in the Program in Visual Impairment have been carefully designed or selected to increase your competency as a professional. Unless permission has been granted by your advisor, you must take all

courses in the order and during the semester specified in the advising materials.

Student Teaching Application

One semester prior to your planned semester of student teaching, you are required to complete a student teaching packet for the College of Education. The packet will be made available to you to purchase some time at the beginning of the semester and you will be helped to complete the forms, which are also available at the college website, through your participation in EVI 4230. Remember to complete these forms carefully, paying particular attention to spelling and grammar. The completed packet is sent to school district or agency personnel, who will decide if they want you to student teach at their school or agency based on your statements in this document. It is recommended that you have your advisor read over and edit your statements before you type them on your final copy. Your advisor will require that you submit a copy of your student teaching application, with a picture attached, for your file. Student teaching applications usually are due around the sixth week of class.

Because of the limited availability of student teaching placements in Leon County, you probably will be completing your internship in another city. We make every attempt to find you a student teaching placement at a location that meets your financial and educational needs. Many factors are considered when placing a student at a particular school. You can help us by determining the type of services to individuals with visual impairments that are available in the geographic location in which you want to live. Always though, our primary concern is that you have a student teaching experience that fully prepares you for your future career working with people with visual impairments.

During academic registration, you must register for 12 hours of student teaching (EVI 4331), just as any other class. You must obtain a course reference number from the Department secretary before registering.

Graduation Check

To ensure that all of the academic requirements have been fulfilled for the Program in Visual Impairment, ask your advisor for an informal graduation check to determine if you have taken all courses required for the degree. A formal graduation check must also be completed in the Office of the Registrar one semester prior to your planned semester of graduation. This check is to confirm that all of your lower division academic requirements have been met. It is also advisable to meet with the undergraduate coordinator in room 108 Stone Building.

Once your grad check is complete, it is your responsibility to apply for graduation. Your name is NOT automatically added to the graduation list. Applications for graduation can be obtained and submitted in the Graduation Section of the Registrar's Office. The deadline for applying for graduation usually falls during the first week of classes (when you are student teaching in another part of the state). For more details regarding the graduation process, call the Registrar's Office at 644-1050.

Exit Interview

If you have been a loan recipient through the Office of Financial Aid during any term in which you attended FSU, you must attend an exit interview prior to graduation. This meeting is intended to inform you of your loan obligations once you are no longer considered a student. The interview is scheduled through the Cashier's Office in 109 Westcott. For more specific information regarding the interview or your individual status as a loan recipient, contact the Cashier's Office at 644-4469.

Student Teaching

The student teaching experience is intended to allow you the opportunity to put "theory into practice." Under the supervision of a qualified teacher or adult service provider who has at least three years of experience, you will first observe how s/he manages the assigned caseload of visually impaired students or clients. Gradually, you will take on responsibility for more and more of the planning, teaching, and evaluation of these individuals.

Critical to the success of your internship will be the expression of enthusiasm and interest in your new role as a student teacher. You can demonstrate your enthusiasm before even starting your internship by calling your supervising teacher to set a meeting time, by offering to observe him/her teach before your assigned date, or by asking to review student files before you begin the internship. *Above all, do not be late for your first meeting.* It is always a good idea to drive the route to your school or agency on a weekday at the time you would normally be traveling before your start date.

You will be required to purchase a student teaching manual when you are enrolled in EVI 4230, Educational Management. Read this manual carefully and follow its guidelines. If you cannot meet a deadline, please contact your university supervisor.

You will be assigned a university supervisor to help guide you through your internship. You should feel free to call this individual

whenever you have questions, problems, or triumphs you want to share. The university supervisor will arrange to make a minimum of two visits during the semester to observe your teaching and to discuss your progress with you and your supervising teacher.

**Florida
Teacher
Certification
Exam (FTCE)**

The FTCE is a state exam that you are required to pass in order to graduate. If you are planning to teach in Florida, you must take (and pass) the following two sub-tests:

- The general test, titled Professional Education, is required of all teachers in the state and focuses on information presented primarily in your Schooling, Ed Psych, and Applied Behavior Analysis classes.
- The subject area exam (SAE) in Visual Impairment.

You may take both of these sub-tests on the same test date.

It is best to plan to take these tests toward the end your student teaching semester, when both the theoretical information and the practical application of it are still fresh in your mind. You will have two years after beginning teaching to pass both sub-tests. If you pass the test after your internship has been completed, your graduation will be retroactive to the date of the end of your internship.

Study guides for preparation for the Professional Education and each subject area exam are available. They can be purchased for less than \$5.00 at:

Florida Department of Education
Education Materials Office
Room B-01, Collins Building
(corner of Gaines and Duval)

**Finding
Employment**

The Program keeps an updated computerized list of employment opportunities in the field. When requested, your advisor will assist you in your job search by keeping you informed of job announcements for positions for which you might be qualified. This service is available for both new graduates and graduates who are seeking to change their current employment situation.

**Teaching
Certificate**

Applications for Florida Teaching Certificates and the for fingerprinting are available in Room 108 Stone Building. Any police/sheriff's department will handle the fingerprinting for you.

You cannot be fully certified to teach in Florida unless you have been hired by a Florida School District. It is possible to begin the certification process, however, early. Contact the Certification Office at the Department of Education for more details.

**AER
Certification**

Your advisor will assist you in the completion of the documents necessary to receive certification in Orientation and Mobility from AERCVP, if you are eligible.