

Visually Impaired Learner (VIL) program at Portland State University

Few occupations offer the rewards you get when working with children who have disabilities. This is especially true for those who work with students who are blind and visually impaired. The field has a critical shortage of strong teachers, especially in rural areas across the country. Successful candidates who complete the VIL program are able to choose from many job opportunities. Currently in the United States there are thousands of openings each year, and only a few universities graduating approximately 300 graduates per year - you do the math!

The 32-57-credit Visually Impaired Learner program offers a part-time online, comprehensive, graduate-level program for the preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments. The program is offered as an initial license plus masters, or as an endorsement only.*

*Must already have teaching license

Program benefits

- Online format
- One three-week summer session in Portland!
- Flexible part-time schedule
- Cohort model
- Nationally accredited by CAEP
- Learn from well respected faculty
- Collaborative clinical practica
- Emphasis on equity
- Faculty engaged in a wide variety of applied research projects
- Resident tuition rates for qualified candidates.

Memberships

Pacific & Northwest Consortium for Vision Education (PNWCVE): The PNWCVE is a five state consortium consisting of Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho and Hawaii for the purpose of preparing Teachers of Children with Visual Impairments. Students in the VIL program may be eligible to receive scholarships funded by member states; awards to students from member states may reach up to \$2,500, based upon merit.

Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP): The program provides in-state tuition to students in member states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. For more information go to <http://wrgp.wiche.edu>.



Faculty

Holly Lawson, PhD, is the coordinator of the Visually Impaired Learner program. Since 1994, she has worked in the field of visual impairment, beginning as a residential instructor for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and then the Peace Corps in Morocco. Her master's and PhD are from the University of Arizona where she held several positions in teaching and research. She came to PSU in 2014, having previously worked as an assistant professor and the coordinator for the Virginia Consortium of Teacher Preparation in Vision Impairment at George Mason University.



**Application deadline
November 1 (early) or
February 1 (regular)**

Contact:

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of Education**
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Admission Requirements

The VIL program admits students every even year. The deadline for early decision is November 1, regular decision is February 1, and final deadline is May 1.

Applications require:

- Program specific application
 - Official transcripts from every institution attended
 - Personal statement (writing prompt provided within application)
 - Resume
 - Two recommendation forms (forms are provided within application)
 - Prerequisites: SPED 418/518 *Survey of Exceptional Children**
 - Apply for scholarships; Federal funding for tuition waivers available
 - Apply for FAFSA
- * If you are already a licensed classroom teacher or special educator, many prerequisites are waived.

Sample Schedule for initial license + masters

Term	Year 1
Summer	SPED 545 Orientation and Mobility SPED 546 Braille I SPED 575 Braille III - Technology SPED 596 Research
Fall	SPED 509 Practicum SPED 510 Legal and Ethical Foundations SPED 540 Foundations of Education for the Visually Impaired Learner
Winter	SPED 541 Implications of Vision Problems SPED 547 Braille II – Nemeth Code
Spring	SPED 542 Assessment of the Visually Impaired Learner SPED 543 Reading and Literacy K-12: VIL

Term	Year 2
Summer	SPED 521 Behavior Management (if required)
Fall	SPED 509 Practicum SPED 544 Methods of Instruction SPED 576 Visually Impaired Learners with Additional Disabilities
Winter	SPED 520 Collaboration SPED 597 Issues and Policy in Visual Impairment
Spring	SPED 525 Student Teaching (if required) SPED 507 Master's comprehensive exam

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