

San Francisco State University Graduate College of Education

Education Specialist and Master of Arts Degree Programs in

Visual Impairment

Program Handbook

(Revised 08/21/25)



# Introduction

Dear students,

Welcome to the Program in Visual Impairments. This student handbook includes our program’s philosophy, information that we thought would be useful to you, and a description of program policies not addressed in University publications. It is designed as a supplement to the information, forms and links available to you on our Department website.

This is a work in progress, so please let us know if you have suggestions for additions to the handbook.

Sincerely,

Adam Graves, Ph.D., TSVI Assistant Professor

Program Coordinator: Program in Visual Impairments

### Adjunct Faculty

Marijke Devos, TSVI, VI Program Academic Advisor

Sharon Sacks, Ph.D., TSVI

Patricia Leader, Ph.D., TSVI, COMS

Kathy Abrahamson MA, (check VRT)

Bobbi Pompey, MA, check VRT)

Stephanie Herlich, MA, TSVI, COMS

Shelby Zimmerman, MA, TSVI, COMS

Liz Barclay, MA, TSVI

Adrian Amandi, MA, TSVI

Kayle Edwards, O.D.,FAAO

Leslie Edmonds, MA, TSVI

Erin Foley, Ph.D., TSVI, COMS

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# Program Faculty Contact Information

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Title** | **Office Location** | **Contact Information** |
| Adam Graves | VI Program Coordinator | BH 163-C | [adamgraves@sfsu.edu](mailto:adamgraves@sfsu.edu) |
| Marijke Devos | VI Program Academic Advisor | Off Campus | [mxdevos@sfsu.edu](mailto:mxdevos@sfsu.edu) |

# Program Philosophy

By bringing sound theoretical principles into practice, the Program in Visual Impairments at San Francisco State University strives to create opportunities for preservice and in-service professionals to acquire expertise designed to empower persons with visual impairments and their families to effectively meet the challenges of all children and adults in today’s complex world.

# Core Values And Program Objectives

**Learners with visual impairments benefit from educational experiences that take into account their unique learning needs that require the acquisition of knowledge and skills in alternative ways including tactile, visual, and auditory.**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competence in assessment and instruction to promote functional literacy in Braille, print, and auditory methodologies and to design educational environments utilizing the most appropriate media and technology to promote learning.

**Students with visual impairments are a heterogeneous population, requiring the availability of a wide range of curricular and placement options in order to foster participation in the home, school, and community in ways that meet the particular needs of individual learners.**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate skills in collaborating with an array of professionals as well as families in order to facilitate learner participation and growth within the context of their educational experience.

**Competencies to instruct learners with visual impairments must address individual needs across a broad age range (birth to 22 years), a variety of visual conditions (mild visual impairment to total blindness) including cerebral visual impairment or DeafBlind as well as learners who have visual impairments and multiple disabilities.**

Candidates experience a program that combines intensive didactic and diagnostic training for specific skill acquisition along with fieldwork to promote competency in working with a wide spectrum of visually impaired children and young adults.

**Addressing cultural and linguistic diversity is emphasized throughout the program in didactic course work and field experiences.**

Candidates are expected to participate in field assignments that include diverse populations. Issues related to the effects of cultural and linguistic differences are infused and addressed throughout the curriculum**.**

**Methods to promote access to the Core Curriculum and instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum must be addressed in programs for learners with visual impairments. This includes an array of areas including compensatory skills to access the core curriculum, functional academics, communication modes, orientation and mobility, social skills, independent living, recreation and leisure, career education, transition beyond high school, assistive technology, sensory efficiency, and self-­‐determination.**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate assessment and differentiated instruction in these areas using a variety of techniques to promote competencies for a range of learners leading to active participation in school, home, work, and community environments. Candidates are expected to demonstrate competency in all required core and expanded core curriculum areas by passing all required state assessments for subject matter and field specific certification.

**The program emphasizes an individual differences approach to developmental issues related to visual impairments, looking at both learner characteristics and environmental circumstances in order to develop appropriate instructional strategies.**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding the effects of adventitious and congenital visual impairments as well as the impact of various conditions on learning and development given the unique life circumstances of each individual. Candidates are also expected to be able to identify and address social barriers that contribute to the inaccessibility of educational and rehabilitative services for visually impaired individuals.

**Families and social networks have a profound impact on the social-emotional development of learners with visual impairments across age ranges that must be taken into account in any educational program.**

Candidates are expected to demonstrate competencies, emphasized throughout the program, related to understanding the effects of visual impairment on family dynamics and social interaction as well as techniques to promote effective interaction with families.

# Credential Program Overview

SFSU’s specialist credential program in the area of visual impairments is a two‐tier program. Most of the course work is completed during the first tier. The second tier is to be completed through San Francisco State University and the candidate’s school district of hire.

The program emphasizes the preparation of teachers who serve students with visual impairments from birth through 22. Visual impairments range from mild low vision to functional or total blindness. Many students have additional disabilities such as physical impairments, learning disability, or cognitive delays. Students’ abilities may range from those who are gifted to those who require extensive educational supports. Roles will vary according to teaching assignment, but credential candidates in the visual impairments area are prepared to teach in infant and preschool programs for children with visual impairments, resource room programs, itinerant programs, and residential school programs.

This Specialist Credential program includes competencies applicable to the teaching of all children with disabilities, as well as those specific to the preparation of teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVI). Course work is designed to provide credential candidates with both the theoretical and philosophical foundations, as well as methodological and curricular considerations and adaptations required to be a successful practitioner.

Five essential components comprise the preliminary credential program: (1) general education requirements (6 units); (1) the basic special education program (9 units); (3) a health education requirement (1-3 units) (4) core methods courses in visual impairments (42 units); and (4) student teaching (12 units). To receive a California clear credential candidates must create an induction plan and complete an [induction program](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/teacher-induction) designed for the professional development of the credential candidate related to assessment, instruction, progress monitoring, collaboration, and professional development activities after receiving their initial certification..

As one of only two personnel preparation programs in the state of California, all coursework in the specialist credential program in Visual Impairments is offered online. To ensure that the program meets all state practicum requirements, some courses may require candidates in the program to travel to the SFSU or California School for the Blind campus or another designated location to receive up to four days of instruction that is delivered in-person. This focus on providing online coursework combined with minimal face-to-face instruction is to accommodate applicants from rural and remote areas of the state with limited resources for travel and to meet the needs of all local education agencies in California with students who require the services of certified TSVIs.

During Student Teaching Fieldwork candidates may be placed in K-12 and transition programs with SFSU Cooperating Teachers for one day per week for 12 weeks, except for teacher candidates who have an intern credential (<https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/intern-credential>) and who can complete practicum requirements in their own programs in a public school. Student teacher candidates are required to provide at least three observations and three review/evaluation meetings either via an online video chat service or at the school site. During the semester of student teaching, intern teachers can use their current placement or programs as a student teaching site. The program evaluation criteria are documented by the student and evaluated by the SFSU supervisor prior to the student teaching semester. During student teaching (SPED 730--400 hours) the teacher candidates are mentored by a Cooperating Teacher and a SFSU University Supervisor who conducts at least 3 on-site observations followed by both face-to-face and written evaluations. Observations and contemporaneous evaluations may be conducted via zoom for students in remote or distant areas of the state.

## Program Policies for Methods Courses

### Passing grades

A passing grade for methods courses in the Visual Impairments Program is a B- or above. If students earn a failing grade (C+ and below), they have one opportunity to earn a passing grade by re-enrolling in the course when it is offered during the following academic year.

### Additional policies

* All classes are presented in an online format. Some courses may require students to travel to the California School for the Blind or SFSU campus or other designated site to complete up to 4 days of in-person lab work.
* Students must arrive to class on time. Repeated tardiness will result in lowered course

grades (i.e., a grade will be lowered one step for every four tardy arrivals to class).

* If students miss more than three classes, they receive an F grade for the course.
* A passing grade must be earned for all courses taken prior to enrollment in the methods courses.
* Courses in which the student has withdrawn must be completed with a passing grade before enrollment in methods courses.
* A student must have a 3.0 GPA the semester before enrollment in methods courses.
* Attendance of in-person lab day sessions is required. Students who fail to attend in-person lab days will be assigned an incomplete grade for the course and will be required to attend that course’s in-person lab day the next time that the course is offered.

##### Student Teaching

* Four hundred student teaching hours must be completed (not relevant for intern teachers). These hours are scheduled during student instructional time (exception: hours participating in IEP meetings and staff training outside student instructional hours).
* All student teachers receive two 50-minute prep periods per week of student teaching.
* Due to the additional demands of student teaching, students will not be permitted to take more than 6 units (or 2 additional courses) of coursework during the semester in which they complete their student teaching.

### Alignment with CalTPA

All VI Methods courses are also designed to support students to successfully complete and receive a passing score on both cycle 1 (Math) and cycle 2 (Literacy) of the California Teacher Preparation Assessment (CalTPA) which are required prior to being awarded for the Preliminary Education Specialist credential.

## EDUCATION SPECIALIST CREDENTIAL:

## Preliminary

## Visual Impairments

### Core Requirements

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Course # | Course Title | Units |
| SPED 788 | Law, Ethics and Instructional Planning | 3 |
| SPED 775 | Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary Education | 3 |
| EED 784 | Curriculum & Instruction in Mathematics: CLAD Emphasis | 3 |
| SPED 801 | Development, Diversity, and English-Language Learners: Special Education | 3 |
| SPED 763 | Transition Planning for Secondary-aged Students with Disabilities | 3 |
| Health Ed. | From Approved List | 3 |

### Methods Courses: Visual Impairments

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Course # | Course Title | Units |
| SPED 735 | Technology for Learners with Visual Impairments | 3 |
| SPED 749 | Medical, Educational, & Rehabilitative Implications of Visual Impairment | 4 |
| SPED 750 | Assessment for Learners with Visual Impairments | 3 |
| SPED 751 | Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairments | 3 |
| SPED 752 | Issues in Visual Impairments | 3 |
| SPED 753 | Living Skills Assessment & Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairments | 3 |
| SPED 754 | Basic Communication Skills for Learners with Visual Impairments (Braille I) | 3 |
| SPED 757 | Visual Impairment: Special Populations | 3 |
| SPED 758 | Advanced Communication Skills for Learners with Visual Impairments (Braille II) | 3 |
| SPED 655 | Basic Orientation & Mobility for Learners with Visual Impairments | 3 |

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### Student Teaching

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Course # | Course Title | Units |
| SPED 723 | Student Teaching Seminar for VI | 3 |
| SPED 730 | Student Teaching: Special Education | 9 |
|  | **TOTAL UNITS** | **61** |

In addition to these courses, students may take up to 3 units of SPED 701 (Education Specialist Intern Teacher Support Seminar) each semester they are employed under an internship credential by their local education agency and up to 3 units of SPED 702 (Education Specialist Teacher Support Seminar for California Teaching Performance Assessment) during the semesters in which they plan to complete the Cycle 1 (Math) and Cycle 2 (Literacy) California Teacher Performance Assessments (CalTPAs).

## Master of Arts in Special Education Visual Impairments (VI)

This Master of Arts degree program in special education facilitates candidates’ competency in research and scholarship and provides a comprehensive grounding in evidence-based practices in the education of learners with moderate/severe disabilities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Number** | **Course Title** | | | | **Units** |
|  | **Core Courses (9 Units)** | | | |  |
| ISED 797 | Educational Research | | | | 3 |
| SPED 788 | Law, Ethics and Instructional Planning | | | | 3 |
| One of the Following Courses: | |  | | |  |
| SPED 801 | **Development, Diversity, and English Language Learners: Special Education** | | | |  |
| SPED 779 | **Family-Centered Practices and Services for Young Children with Disabilities** | | | | 3 |
| SPED 747 | **Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments** | | | |  |
|  | **VI Courses (13 Units)** | | | |  |
| SPED 735 | Technology for Learners with Visual Impairment | | | | 3 |
| SPED 749 | Medical, Educational & Rehabilitative Implications of Visual Impairment | | | | 4 |
| SPED 750 | Assessment for Learners with Visual Impairment | | | | 3 |
| SPED 751 | Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairment | | | | 3 |
|  | **Related Studies (3 Units)** | | | |  |
| SPED 753 | Living Skills Assessment and Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairment | | | | 3 |
|  | **One of the Following Culminating Experiences (6 Units)** | | | |  |
| Option I: 2 Graduate Seminars and SPED 896 Culminating Experience Exam | | |  | |  |
| SPED 757 | Visual Impairment: Special Populations | | | | 3 |
| SPED 752 | Issues in Visual Impairment | | | | 3 |
| Option II: 1 Graduate Seminar and SPED 894 Creative Work Project | | |  | |  |
| SPED 757 **OR** SPED 752 |  | | | | 3 |
| SPED 894 | Creative Work Project | | | | 3 |
| II: SPED 881 Adv. Research Seminar and SPED 898 Master’s Thesis | | | |  |  |
| SPED 881 | Research Seminar | | | | 3 |
| SPED 898 | Master’s Thesis | | | | 3 |
|  | **Total Units** | | | | **31** |

# Useful Internet Links

## University Website Links

[Department of Special Education](https://sped.sfsu.edu/)

[Graduate College of Education (GCOE)](https://grad.sfsu.edu/)

[GCOE scholarships](https://gcoe.sfsu.edu/current-students/scholarships)

[Division of Graduate Studies](https://grad.sfsu.edu/)

[Forms for Culminating Experience](https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/grad-forms)

[Intern Credential Program](https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/intern-credential)

[Disability Programs and Resource Center](https://access.sfsu.edu/)

## Blind, Visually Impaired and DeafBlind Links

[California Deaf-Blind Services](https://cadeafblind.org/)

[CEC Division on Visual Impairment and](https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/)

[Deafblindness](https://dvidb.exceptionalchildren.org/)

[Association for Education and Rehabilitation](https://www.aerbvi.org/)

[Of the Blind and Visually Impaired](https://www.aerbvi.org/)

[California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTEBVI)](https://www.ctebvi.org/)

[San Francisco Light House for the Blind and Visually Impaired](https://lighthouse-sf.org/)

[American Printing House for the Blind (APH)](https://www.aph.org/)

[California School for the Blind](https://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/)

[National Federation of the Blind](https://nfb.org/)

[American Foundation for the Blind](https://www.afb.org/)

[Braille Institute](https://www.brailleinstitute.org/)

[National Center on DeafBlindness](https://www.nationaldb.org/)

[Perkins School for the Blind](https://www.perkins.org/)

## Other Useful Links

[TASH](https://tash.org/)

[CalTASH](https://tash.org/chapters/cal-tash/)

[Council for Exceptional Children](https://exceptionalchildren.org/)

[Association for Positive Behavior Support](https://apbs.org/)

[CAST: Center for Applied Special Technology](https://www.cast.org/)

[The Iris Center](https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/)

[Paula Kluth: Toward Inclusive Classrooms & Communities](https://inclusionrules.com/)

[CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/)

[Common Core State Standards (ELA/Math)](https://corestandards.org/)

[California Standards: Science](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pl/ngssstandards.asp)

# Course Descriptions

## General Special Education Program (18 Units)

The courses in the General Special Education Program provide students with a foundation in the concepts and instructional methods that are required for all educators entering the field of Special Education.

### EED 784 Curriculum & Instruction in Mathematics: CLAD Emphasis (3 units)

Methods and materials for teaching mathematics to linguistically and culturally diverse elementary school students. Review of content of mathematics curriculum, classroom organization, assessment, and guided experiences in schools.

### SPED 775 Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary Education (3 units)

Applies research on instructional approaches in elementary curriculum for individuals with mild to moderate disabilities accessing general education curriculum. Includes curriculum and instructional strategies across core content areas, with an emphasis on emergent literacy skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and comprehension). A grade of B- or better is required.

### SPED 788 Law, Ethics, & Instructional Planning (3 units)

Legal foundations and requirements providing public education services to students with disabilities. Policy development, advocacy programs, IEPs, family support plans, technology and universal design, intervention and post-secondary transition.

### SPED 801 Development, Diversity, and English-Language Learners: Special Education (3 units)

Typical and atypical language/literacy acquisition of culturally and linguistically diverse children and adolescents, and influence of various language-based disabilities on the evaluation and development of communicative competence in second language and bilingual students. Addresses CCTC Standards for preparing to teach English language learners with disabilities.

### SPED 763 Transition Planning for Secondary-­‐aged Students with Disabilities Students with Disabilities (3 units)

Strategies to facilitate the transition from early childhood educational and related services, to services provided in K-12 schools, and to facilitate self-determined careers, post-secondary education, and community living for secondary-aged students with disabilities.

### Health Education Course (3 units)

All students are required to take a Health Education course offered through the Department of Special Education or from a list of approved courses offered through another institution.

## VI Methodology Courses (31 Units)

The core methods courses in the VI program afford the candidate additional course work to expand and apply the content acquired in general special education courses as it pertains to the education of students with visual impairments.

### SPED 735 Technology for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Specialized technology and computer integration for individuals with visual impairments. Use of devices: closed circuit television, word processors, large print displays, voice output, electronic note takers and adaptive materials such as talking calculators and tactile graphics.

### SPED 749 Medical, Educational, & Rehabilitative Implications of Visual Impairment (4 units)

Anatomy, physiology and disorders of the eye, and the functional/educational implications of vision loss. Assessment of low vision, use of prescriptive and non-­‐ prescriptive low vision aids to optimize use of vision. Application to individualized program planning and implementation.

### SPED 750 Assessment for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Formal and informal assessment to determine the unique educational needs and appropriate learning media for individuals with visual impairments. Selection adaptation, and preparation of instructional materials: print, Braille, and auditory. Evaluation of learning environments and alternative forms of service delivery.

### SPED 751 Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Selection, adaptation, and preparation of instructional materials and design of learning environments. Disability specific academic skills and accessing specialized resources.

Adaptation of regular education curriculum for learners with visual impairments.

### SPED 752 Issues in Visual Impairments (3 units)

Psychosocial and vocational implications of visual impairment. Instructional methods and strategies for transition. Local, state, and national legislation.

### SPED 753 Living Skills Assessment & Instruction for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Methods and instructional strategies for teaching specialized functional skills to individuals with visual impairments. Design and implement functional and age appropriate programs for learners of different cognitive abilities.

### SPED 754 Basic Communication Skills for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Mastery of literary Braille. Assessment and teaching of Braille reading and writing. Computer generated translations and electronic note takers. Equipment and methods of producing Braille materials. Braille production including Braille slate and stylus.

### SPED 757 Visual Impairment: Special Populations (3 units)

Impact of visual impairment on growth and development of learners age birth-22 years. Transdisciplinary approach to serving learners who have multiple impairments.

### SPED 758 Advanced Communication Skills for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Advanced formats of Braille codes: literary, mathematical, computer, foreign language, and music. Use of slate and stylus.

### SPED 655 Basic Orientation & Mobility for Learners with Visual Impairments (3 units)

Development of spatial and environmental concepts and sensorimotor skills in young learners with visual impairment. Application of orientation and mobility related concepts to travel in home, school, and community environments.

## Student Teaching Experience and Clinical Fieldwork (12-15 units)

### SPED 701 Education Specialist Intern Teacher Support Seminar-required only for intern teachers (3 units)

Seminar to support Education Specialist candidates holding Intern Credentials who have been hired by a school district, non-public school, or county office of education to teach young children and/or students with disabilities. May be repeated for up to 15 units.

### SPED 702 Educational Support Seminar CalTPA

Seminar to support and prepare Education Specialist candidates who are taking the Cycle 1 (Math) and Cycle 2 (Literacy) portions of the California Teacher Preparation Assessments.

### SPED 723 Student Teaching Seminar: Visual Impairment (3 units)

Seminar for student teachers in moderate/severe, visual impairment, and deaf/hard of hearing credential programs. Review planning, guiding, and evaluating experiences during student teaching experience. Includes development of a preliminary induction plan.

### SPED 730 Student Teaching: Visual Impairment (9 units)

Student teaching field experience in a special education setting.

### COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS

Requests to substitute relevant courses previously taken at other institutions are handled on an individual basis and require approval of the advisor.

#### Instructions for obtaining course substitution approval from SFSU's Department of Special Education for courses taken at another university to meet the credential or Masters requirements.

* Check with your faculty advisor to determine which SFSU courses are required for your program.
* If you are planning to take a course at another university to meet an SFSU course requirement, it is strongly suggested that you have that course pre-­‐approved by the appropriate person before taking it.
* Your faculty advisor can approve courses taken in your disability-­‐specific area (e.g., VI). To do this, provide your advisor with a copy of your transcript with the completed course and a course description from the course syllabus or university bulletin. Your advisor can also pre-­‐approve courses in your disability-­‐specific area. Provide your advisor with a course description pre-­‐approval. Full approval will be given with the provision of a transcript showing successful course completion.
* Generic special education courses or elementary education courses required for the credential or Masters degree in Special Education must be approved or pre-­‐approved by the Department Chair of Special Education & Communication Disorders (for SPED and CD classes) or Elementary Education (for Elementary Education -­‐EED-­‐ classes). To obtain this, follow the instructions on the Petition for Course Substitution form available from the Department of Special Education [Forms and Waivers](https://sped.sfsu.edu/content/forms-0) page. This request requires a letter addressed to the Chairperson, Department of Special Education with the following information:
  1. The name and course number of the SFSU course under consideration,
  2. The name and course number of the course to be substituted from another university,
  3. The year and semester the substituted course was taken if applicable (This is not necessary for pre-­‐approval.),
  4. A description of the course to be substituted from the course syllabus or university bulletin,
  5. A copy of your transcript showing successful course completion (This is not required for pre-­‐approval but is required for final approval.),
  6. Your name, credential program area, mailing address, phone number, and e-­‐mail address,
  7. Your disability specific area of study (e.g. Visual Impairments).
  8. IMPORTANT: Send a copy of this letter to your faculty advisor as well.

## ADDITIONAL CREDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS: PRELIMINARY CREDENTIAL

### Assessment Requirement

All teacher candidates are required to pass both cycle 1 (Math) and cycle 2 (Literacy) of the California Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) prior to applying for the Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment Credential. These are portfolio-based assessments that require candidates to collect evidence of their effective teaching practices in the required subject areas. Students who have registered to submit the TPA are encouraged to register for at least one hour of assessment support through SPED 702 during the semester in which they plan to complete the cycle 1 or cycle 2 assessment.

### US Constitution Course

A U.S. Constitution course is required prior to student teaching. Contact the Credentials Office, Burk Hall 244 (phone 415 338-­‐1940) for assistance in reviewing your records and for information about class options.

### Current CPR certificate

This must be valid at the time the candidate applies for the Preliminary Credential. For more information, see the Department of Special Education website.

**These requirements must be met for entry into the Preliminary Credential Program and are required for award of the Preliminary Credential:**

### Basic Skills Requirement

Any student applying to the VI Program and planning to teach in the state of California must show competency in Basic Skills. The can be accomplished through one of the following:

* Undergraduate Degree (BA)
* CBEST (California Basic Skills Examination) Submit a photocopy of the results. [Register online](https://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/TestView.aspx?f=HTML_FRAG/CA_CBEST_TestPage.html).
* Out-of-State Basic Skills Exam. Submit a photocopy of the results. Not all states’ Basic Skills Exams have been approved by the CTC. Contact the Teacher Preparation Center to find out if the test you took is approved. For more information on specific tests, use CTC’s [Out-of State Basic Skills Exam Guide](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/basic-skills-requirement-(cl-667)/out-of-state-basic-skills-exams-chart) or contact the appropriate Department of Education for the state in which you want to take the test.
* CSET: Multiple Subjects + Writing Skills. All three sections of the Multiple Subject CSET exam must be passed as well as the CSET Writing Skills test. Submit a photocopy of the results. [Register online](https://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_AboutCSET.html)
* CSU EAP Placement Tests (Early Assessment Program). These are usually taken in the spring of your 11th grade year. Results must state College Ready OR Exempt. This test is given to California high school students only. Submit a photocopy of the results.
* CSU ELM/EPT (Entry Level Math/English Placement Test). These tests are taken by incoming CSU freshmen. ELM passing results: 50 (550 prior to March 2003) EPT passing results – 151. Submit a photocopy of the results or a printout from MySFSU or similar CSU student system. Results must show a score.

### Subject Matter Competence Requirement

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires that Education Specialist candidates prove they possess a body of appropriate knowledge that reflects the California State Standards. There are two ways candidates can prove their competency:

1) Take the appropriate state test, or 2) Complete appropriate subject matter coursework. Visit the [CTC website](https://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_Tests.html) for more information on required assessments

### Certificate of Clearance (COC): Fingerprint Clearance via Live Scan and Commission on Teacher Credentialing online application.

In accordance with California state law and Education code, all teaching credential applicants must go through a background check. All applicants must apply for a Certificate of Clearance with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) OR submit proof of prior completion of the clearance. **Acceptable documentation in lieu of a Certificate of Clearance:** valid credentials or permits issued by the CTC, including substitute, pre-intern, clear or preliminary, or Child Development permits. District or other job-related clearance is not acceptable. Submit a photocopy of the document or a printout from the [Certificate of Clearance](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/certificate-of-clearance-(cl-900)) page on the CTC website.

### APPLYING FOR THE PRELIMINARY CREDENTIAL

Once student teaching and all Preliminary requirements are completed, the student can apply for a level I or Preliminary Credential, issued for 5 years. It is the student's responsibility to meet all credential requirements/prerequisites and deadlines as well as to arrange for submission of all forms for advisor's signature no later than one week in advance of posted deadlines. Deadlines for the current school year are posted on the Department of Special Education website and on the Graduate College of Education website,

Candidates must formally apply for their credential through their designated Credential Analyst at SFSU.

### CLEAR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION SPECIALIST CREDENTIAL

All educators in California must upgrade their teaching credential to the level II or Clear status within 5 years of receiving their level I or Preliminary Credential. After receiving the Preliminary Credential through San Francisco state, individuals must make a plan with their district of hire to fulfill the requirements for a Clear Credential. Information on upgrading to a Clear Credential can be found on the [CTC website](https://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/clear-credential).

# STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

## Ethical Principles

### Confidentiality and Identity First Language

* Participants in this program must be committed to a code of professional ethics by ensuring confidentiality is protected for all individuals with disabilities and their families. To ensure privacy and respect for these individuals, students are asked to use pseudonyms in reference to all real persons and places in written materials (in paper and digital form) and/or to use only first names in class discussions and presentations.
* Students will limit discussions of students, teachers, and schools to members of the VI program (i.e., discussions should not occur within earshot of the public in places such as elevators, hallways, etc.).
* Students are responsible for obtaining appropriate permission from schools/programs and/or families to share photographs and videos of individuals in class. The same practices apply to ensuring the confidentiality of all guest speakers.
* When speaking or writing about persons with disabilities, students are generally expected to use identity first language that reflects both the diversity and the social and cultural connections that exist within the disability community. (e.g. blind and visually impaired students, DeafBlind children) unless specific individuals or communities express a preference for use of person first language.

### Classroom Community and Respect for Others

* “The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live. Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.” (Cited from Course Syllabus Self-Checklist, Department of Counseling and Special Education, CSU, FrVIo)
* Students and faculty will maintain a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.
* Students and faculty will treat young students, their families and teachers with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with other members of the faculty and educational team.
* Students and faculty will interact with all members of the program, including young students, families, and classroom teachers in a considerate and cooperative manner.
* Students will judge colleagues fairly and attempt to resolve conflicts in a manner that respects the dignity of every person involved. (Adapted from Student Handbook, Department of Physical Therapy, SFSU)

### Academic Integrity

* Students are responsible for maintaining appropriate academic conduct according to University policies. Students judged to engage in dishonest practices, including cheating and plagiarism, may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or in the

course as well as may be subject to disciplinary action as provided in Title 5, California Code of Regulations. Any student may be expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or given a lesser sanction for discipline problems.

* “Cheating is defined as the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one’s grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Typically, such acts occur in relation to examinations. However, it is the intent of this definition that the term ‘cheating’ not be limited to examination situations only, but that it include any and all actions by a student that are intended to gain an unearned academic advantage by fraudulent or deceptive means.”
* Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. To avoid plagiarism, students must be careful to give credit every time they summarize, paraphrase or quote another’s work. When information or ideas are obtained from an outside source, that source must be cited. Direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks with the source immediately cited. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an “F” grade. **This includes any work that has been determined to have been created by an AI program or software.** All instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Dean of the College, and to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action. (Cited/adapted from SFSU Humanities website) If you would like to review the university’s policy on plagiarism, please refer to [http://conduct.sfsu.edu/plagarism.](http://conduct.sfsu.edu/plagarism)
* *A special note about plagiarism and Teachers:* Teachers frequently share materials with each other and adapt commercially published materials for their particular teaching contexts. It may be quite appropriate, therefore, for you to use materials that you downloaded from the Internet or obtained from a mentor teacher, faculty member, or peer, particularly for student handouts and/or lesson plans. Nonetheless, you are *always* expected to cite these sources, including internet sites, on any material that you do not create on your own. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the course and appropriate disciplinary action. (Cited from Ferri (2011) SPE 412 Course Syllabus, Syracuse University)

## Professional Behavior

Students enrolled in the Visual Impairments Program understand and accept the importance of professional behavior; ethical standards; honesty; commitment to learning; good interpersonal communication skills; respect for classmates, faculty, classroom teachers and guest speakers; effective use of time and resources; constructive integration of feedback; problem solving; critical thinking; and stress management. These professional behaviors will be emphasized and expected of all students throughout their graduate studies in the SFSU classroom and local schools. (Adapted from Student Handbook, Physical Therapy Program, SFSU)

Students must meet expectations at the given state of their program in the following dispositional areas:

* + Demonstrates commitment to understanding diversity
  + Demonstrates commitment to enacting the belief that all children can learn and commitment to ensuring their success
  + Demonstrates commitment to engaging in personal and professional behaviors that promote self-growth
  + Demonstrates commitment to developing interpersonal behaviors that promote and foster collaboration
  + Demonstrates professional conduct and ethical behavior suitable to the profession
  + General professional conduct expected of students include:
    - Demonstrates a receptive attitude towards suggestions, feedback and constructive criticism.
    - Uses suggestions to make appropriate changes in performance and/or behavior.
    - Uses discretion when discussing confidential information.
    - Demonstrates flexibility in accommodating to unforeseen conditions or circumstances.
    - Offers assistance to others when appropriate.
    - Conveys appropriate self-confidence through verbal and nonverbal behavior.
    - Recognizes own limitations by asking for guidance and assistance when needed.
    - Demonstrates initiative to increase skills and knowledge by using appropriate resources.
    - Manages personal affairs in a manner that does not interfere with professional responsibilities.
    - Uses appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills with others.
    - Demonstrates respect, courtesy, and consideration for the rights and dignity of others.
    - Maintains a professional appearance and demeanor.
    - Manages and prioritizes tasks to meet responsibilities.
    - Accepts responsibility for personal mistakes and does not blame others or continually offer excuses. (Cited from Student Handbook, Physical Therapy Program, SFSU)

If the student fails to meet expectations and demonstrates only minimal accomplishment in a given dispositional/behavioral area (as indicated by University and School District classroom observations), substantial further work is needed and must be communicated to the Program Coordinator. If a student displays any unprofessional behaviors, they will be at risk of dismissal from the program, independent from grades. The achievement of professionalism is as important as maintaining high academic performance.

### After Receiving a Grade

1. If candidates do not agree with a grade received on an assignment, the grade will not be discussed with the instructor after class or during break. Instead, an appointment can be

made during the instructors’ advising hours. The instructor will review the assignment guidelines, discuss the rationale for the grade received, and offer suggestions for revising the assignment if the grade is a B- or lower. The meeting will not extend beyond 20 minutes.

1. Candidates will have one week beyond the meeting day to submit a revised assignment. Only one revision will be accepted.
2. The final grade will represent an average of the original and revised grades. The grade for the revised assignment should be a B- or above.
3. Students who miss one or more lab days or who do not submit a major assignment may be assigned an incomplete grade for the course at the discretion of the professor. Students who receive an incomplete grade in a course will have one year to attend the missed lab day or submit the required assignment per university policy.

### Behavioral Parameters for Interacting with Cooperating Teachers, School Staff, and University Supervisors

#### Cooperating Teachers

1. Candidates will not contact cooperating teachers via email or phone (unless requested by the cooperating teacher) to discuss course assignments and fieldwork expectations. Note: Exceptions to this include initial scheduling arrangements and to report absences from the fieldwork site.
2. Candidates will be on the school site only during scheduled hours established by the cooperating teacher.
3. Candidates will contact their university supervisor if a disagreement arises with their cooperating teacher.

#### School Staff and Parents

1. Candidates will maintain positive, respectful interactions with all school staff and will follow school site professional expectations.
2. Candidates will not engage in behaviors that interrupt classroom routines, operations, or organization.
3. Candidates will not engage general education teachers related to course assignments and fieldwork expectations without involving the master teacher.
4. Candidates will not engage parents in discussions related to course assignments without involving the master teacher.

#### University Supervisors

1. Candidates will not expect university supervisors to respond to their email messages that exceed a reasonable number of contacts per assignment.
2. Candidates will not expect direct contact with the university supervisor beyond the scheduled number of supervisory visits

### Probation

If a student fails to meet professional behavior expectations:

* + The Program Coordinator will review the situation;
  + The Program Coordinator will schedule a meeting with relevant faculty and fieldwork personnel;
  + During the meeting, the behavioral concerns will be discussed and an action plan will be developed to modify targeted unprofessional behaviors and demonstrate honest, sensitive, and professional behaviors typical of a teacher. Immediate and substantial changes in behavior are expected following the meeting.
  + If targeted unprofessional behaviors are demonstrated during probation (active until the student graduates), declassification procedures will be enacted.

## Declassification Policy and Procedures: Graduate College of Education

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### Declassification Policy and Procedures

A student may be declassified (disenrolled) from a graduate degree program for a range of reasons even if the GPA is above a 3.0. Reasons for declassification may include, but are not restricted to: unprofessional conduct, behavioral issues that interfere with the learning of others, failure to make progress toward the degree as set forth by the University and program policies, failure to meet grade requirements to maintain good standing in the program and/or University, and/or the department/program faculty determine that the student is incapable of completing degree requirements at the level expected of a graduate student in the discipline.

* + Failure to make progress toward the degree as set forth by the University and program policies (e.g., not taking courses related to the degree, not meeting program requirements to take a required number of courses each year, repeated “I” or “W” requests);
  + Failure to meet expectations for discipline-required culminating experience with little improvement after multiple attempts or drafts;
  + Failure to meet grade requirements to maintain good standing in the program and/or University;
  + Plagiarism or academic dishonesty identified (cases are referred to Student Conduct Office).

The declassification request must be initiated by the major department with support from the department/program chair and college dean or designee. Requests are submitted to the dean of Graduate Studies for final action and official notification to the student and the Registrar’s Office. Declassified students will not be permitted to enroll through regular University or Open University in any undergraduate or graduate courses in the program or degree from which they were declassified. Unless declassification was related to conduct issues that interfere with campus interactions, declassified students are eligible to apply to a new program through [CAL STATE APPLY,](https://www2.calstate.edu/apply) pay the application fee, and be accepted as a student by the department/program.

## Process to Support Students At-Risk of Failing to Meet Coursework or Fieldwork Competencies

Systematic mentoring procedures for credential candidates at risk of failing coursework or fieldwork competencies will be implemented through a partnership between program faculty, fieldwork supervisors, and master teachers--with coordination with the SFSU Disability Programs Resource Center (DPRC) when relevant. The structure for the mentoring activities will be the following:

* The Program Coordinator will identify with program faculty and cooperating teachers the candidates who are “at risk” of failing because of their poor performance on course assignments and/or in their fieldwork placements (efforts will be made to identify the students “at risk” during the first semester that they are enrolled in the coursework and fieldwork in the Visual Impairments program);
* The Program Coordinator will develop with program faculty and cooperating teachers a list of areas that must be addressed and an Individual Action Plan that includes needed supports and completion dates;
* The Program Coordinator will meet with the candidate, the Department Chair, program faculty, the cooperating teacher, and DPRC staff (if relevant) to review the Individual Action Plan and completion dates with the candidate; and
* Program faculty, Cooperating Teachers, and DPRC staff (if relevant) will continue to provide mentoring and supports (including the supports included on the action plan) until the concerns are resolved.
* If the candidate continues to fail to meet coursework or fieldwork competencies, they will not receive a passing grade for those courses

# Appendices

## Fieldwork Expectations

### Fieldwork Students

* Students will attend practicum for 12 weeks on their assigned day.
* If students need to miss a day, they will notify their cooperating teacher and supervisor, in advance when possible, and arrange a make-up day.
* Students will complete the weekly activities listed in the SPED 701 and SPED 821 Practicum Week-By-Week Guide and will share them with cooperating teachers and with the Fieldwork Instructor (SPED701)/University Supervisor (SPED821).
* Students will have the opportunity to meet with and discuss and plan for weekly practicum activities and get input or feedback on course assignments with their cooperating teacher. This meeting will be 20 minutes long.
* Students will make copies of completed course assignments and keep them in their practicum folder (paper or digital) for their Cooperating Teacher and supervisor to review as needed.
* Practicum students may also receive orienting, coaching, and modeling by experienced paraeducators or other teachers and service providers at the school site.

### Cooperating Teachers

* Cooperating teachers will schedule time to meet with students each week for 20 minutes to review the assigned weekly practicum activities and upcoming assignments. (Can be before school, after school, during a prep period, during a shared lunch period.)
* Cooperating teachers will orient students to the school and program the first week of practicum, make introductions to relevant staff, and provide summaries of targeted focus students and their supports needs.
* Cooperating teachers work together with students to complete the practicum planning page to identify specific classes, students, and programs, and to develop the weekly schedule the student will follow throughout the fieldwork experience.
* Cooperating teachers will provide opportunities for the student to observe them work with students in a variety of settings. Ideally, there will some time every week when practicum students are working alongside the teacher so they can observe and receive coaching and modeling in best practices (e.g. leading lessons, supporting in general education classes, leading social support groups, providing ability awareness or training presentations, collecting data on student performance, conducting assessments,…
* Cooperating Teachers observe students on a weekly basis and provide some direct feedback on their performance—e.g., they identify strengths, effective practices that are or could be implemented, areas for continued focus. Teachers encourage the student’s self-reflection as well.
* Cooperating Teachers provide opportunities for the student to see other teachers, service providers, and experienced paraeducators implementing best instructional and support practices.
* During weeks of supervision visits in practicum 2, Cooperating Teachers try to meet with the supervisor and practicum student for at least a portion of their post-observation discussion to assist with reviewing upcoming activities and assignments and provide feedback.
* During practicum 1, Cooperating Teachers provide feedback on the midterm and final evaluation proposed by the fieldwork instructor. During practicum 2, cooperating teachers provide written feedback to the fieldwork supervisor for the student’s midterm and fieldwork evaluations.
* Cooperating Teachers schedule a 50-minute management period each week for the student to complete a variety of management activities required of a teacher aside from direct instruction and support of students. If the practicum day is a minimum early release day, then this management time can be scheduled at the end of the day when the students leave. Whenever possible the cooperating teacher will share information about effective case management practices and tools they use.
* Cooperating Teachers provide fieldwork students with a 30-minute lunch break.
* New Cooperating Teachers be offered 10-hours of online training by the university.

## Behavioral Parameters for Interacting with Cooperating Teachers, School Staff, and University Supervisors

### Cooperating Teachers

* 1. Candidates will not contact cooperating teachers via email or phone (unless requested by the master teacher) to discuss course assignments and fieldwork expectations. Note: Exceptions to this include initial scheduling arrangements and to report absences from the fieldwork site.
  2. Candidates will be on the school site only during scheduled hours established by the cooperating teacher.
  3. Candidates will contact their university supervisor if a disagreement arises with their cooperating teacher.

### School Staff and Parents

1. Candidates will maintain positive, respectful interactions with all school staff and will follow school site professional expectations.
2. Candidates will not engage in behaviors that interrupt classroom routines, operations, or organization.
3. Candidates will not engage general education teachers related to course assignments and fieldwork expectations without involving the master teacher.
4. Candidates will not engage parents in discussions related to course assignments without involving the cooperating teacher.

### University Supervisors

1. Candidates will not expect university supervisors to respond to their email messages that exceed a reasonable number of contacts per assignment.
2. Candidates will not expect direct contact with the university supervisor beyond the scheduled number of supervisory visits.
3. Candidates will only be allowed to reschedule practicum visit due illness (doctor’s note needed). The University supervisor needs to be notified at least 24 hours in advance (if possible).

## Student Teaching Expectations

### Students Completing Traditional Student Teaching Placement

* + Four hundred (400) student teaching hours must be completed. These hours are scheduled during student instructional time (exception: hours participating in IEP meetings and staff trainings outside student instructional hours).
  + Students who work as intern teachers in a public school, will be able to complete their student teaching at their own site, if it meets the VI program’s *program evaluation criteria* prior to the student teaching semester.
  + Students record their time for each day of student teaching in their student teaching log, which must be initialized by the cooperating teacher and turned into supervisor at the completion of student teaching.
  + Student teachers receive two 50-minute prep periods per week of student teaching.
  + The student teacher meets with the cooperating teacher for either three 20 minute **or**

two 30-minute meetings per week that fit into the cooperating teacher’s schedule.

* + The student teacher must successfully complete all assignments for student teaching seminar and, at a minimum, the activities listed on the Solo Week activities chart. The solo week activities can be completed during two specific weeks during the student teaching period, or different activities can be completed during separate weeks throughout the student teaching period. Solo week activities can be substituted only with approval by both the cooperating teacher and supervisor.
  + Candidates will only be allowed to reschedule practicum visit due illness (doctor’s note needed). The University supervisor needs to be notified at least 24 hours in advance (if possible).

### Student Teachers Working as Paraeducators While Completing Student Teaching

* + Student teachers working as paraeducators complete their 400 student teaching hours within their paid hours of employment. No additional hours are required.
  + Student teachers cannot be employed in a one-to-one paraprofessional position (assigned to a single student) during the semester of student teaching because they would not be able to demonstrate the range of teacher competencies being evaluated (e.g., working effectively with students who present a variety of learning and behavioral profiles; supervising instructional staff; assuming the role of teacher for the required period).
  + The student teacher meets with the Cooperating Teacher for either three 20-minute or two 30-minute meetings per week that fit into the master teacher’s schedule.

These meetings are scheduled for before or after school hours so that they do not interfere with employment hours.

* + The student teacher receives two 50-minute prep periods per week of student teaching.
  + The student teacher must successfully complete all assignments for student teaching seminar and, at a minimum, the activities listed on the Solo Week activities chart. Solo week activities can be completed during two specific weeks during the student teaching period, or different activities can be completed during separate weeks throughout the student teaching period. Solo week activities can be substituted only with approval by both the cooperating teacher and supervisor.
  + Candidates will only be allowed to reschedule practicum visit due illness (doctor’s note needed). The University supervisor needs to be notified at least 24 hours in advance (if possible).

### Cooperating Teachers

* + Together with the student, cooperating teachers develop a weekly student teaching schedule for the student and determine how many weeks it will take to complete the required 400 hours. The schedule is shared with the student teacher’s supervisor.
  + Cooperating teachers meet with student teachers for either three 20-minute or two 30-minute meetings per week that fit into the cooperating teacher’s schedule.
  + Initially during the first couple weeks of student teaching, Cooperating Teachers provide opportunities for the student teacher to observe them work with students in a variety of settings (e.g. leading lessons, supporting in general education classes, leading social support groups, providing community-based or vocational instruction, providing ability awareness or training presentations, conducting assessments, etc.).
  + Cooperating Teachers observe the student on a regular basis and provide some direct feedback on their performance—e.g., they identify strengths, effective practices that are or could be implemented, and areas for continued focus. Cooperating teachers encourage the student’s self-reflection as well.
  + If possible, cooperating teachers meet with the supervisor and practicum student for at least a portion of their post-observation discussion to assist with reviewing upcoming activities and assignments and provide feedback.
  + Cooperating teachers provide written feedback to the supervisor for the student’s

fieldwork evaluations.