

**New Graduate Program (Majors, Sequences, Certificates) Proposal  
Illinois State University - Graduate Curriculum Committee**

**Program Department** Special Education

**Initiator** Melinda Ely

**Phone** 438-8980

**Initiator Department** Special Education

**Coauthor(s)** Yojanna Cuenca-Carlino (ycuenca@ilstu.edu), Stacey Bock (sjbock@ilstu.edu), Tara Kaczorowski (tkaczo@ilstu.edu)

**Title of New Program** Low Vision and Blindness

**Submission Date** Wednesday, September 11, 2019

**Email** msely@ilstu.edu

**Campus Address** 5910 Special Education

**Version** 2 **ID** 91

**Proposed Starting Catalog Year** 2021-2022

**Associated Course Proposal(s):**

New Graduate Course proposal SED 413 titled *Visual Impairments: Etiology and Impact*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 433 titled *Unified English Braille Reading and Writing*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 434 titled *Skills in Daily Living and Orientation and Mobility*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 435 titled *Access Technology for Students with Visual Impairments*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 436 titled *Assessment of Students with Visual Impairments*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 437 titled *Reading and Math Methods for Students who are Blind*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 438 titled *Nemeth Code and Advanced Braille Applications*  
 New Graduate Course proposal SED 439 titled *Embedding the Expanded Core Curriculum*

**1. Proposed Action**

- ✓ New Major
- New Sequence
- New Certificate
- ✓ More than 50% of courses in this program are Distance Education

**Degree Type(s)**

Master of Science

**2. Provide Graduate Catalog copy for new program.**

MAJOR IN Low Vision and Blindness

- 32 total hours are required.
- 3.00 Cumulative GPA is required for retention in this major.
- Required courses (26 hours): SED 413, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439
- Required clinical experience (6 hours): SED 498

Prerequisite - Professional Educator License

**3. Provide a description for the proposed program.**

The proposed online degree program will provide individuals who hold a professional educator license (PEL), with specialized training in low vision and blindness. This training will enable graduates to apply for the special education endorsement in low vision and blindness through the Illinois State Board of Education. The program consists of nine courses that will provide scholars with foundational knowledge about visual impairments (SED 413, 432); specialized content knowledge (i.e. braille and access technology) (SED 433, 435, 438); and specialized methods for assessment and teaching when students do not learn through vision (SED 434, 436, 437, 439). Several courses throughout the program include clinical projects so that scholars can apply concepts as they are being learned. As a final component of the program, scholars will complete an intensive clinical placement in which they will be expected to apply knowledge and skills from all coursework in supervised classroom experiences with students who have visual impairments.

**4. Provide a rationale of proposed program.**

Our state has reached critical shortages in licensed teachers of students with visual impairments. One solution for alleviating this shortage is to provide teachers with an avenue to add the low vision and blindness endorsement to their current teaching license. ISU does not currently have an avenue for teachers to acquire this endorsement without completing a full undergraduate degree specializing in low vision and blindness. The proposed program would allow teachers to complete only those courses that are specific to low vision and blindness at the master's level. Further, providing this program in an online format will enlarge the footprint of our reach in recruitment. In fact, we anticipate this program to be of interest to those outside Illinois. This is of high importance as shortages in teachers of students with visual impairments is a national problem. For example, Wisconsin does not have a teacher training program in low vision and blindness. They have reached out to ISU to investigate methods for training their teachers in this specialty area. The proposed master's program would meet the needs of Wisconsin and are likely to meet the needs of individual in other states as well.

**5. Describe the expected effects of the proposed program on existing campus programs (if applicable).**

The proposed program is specific to low vision and blindness; therefore, it is not likely to impact enrollment in existing programs.

**6. Describe the expected curricular changes required, including new courses. If proposals for new courses that will be or have been submitted, please reference those related proposals here:**

The proposed program consists of eight new courses (SED 413, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439) and two existing courses (SED 432, 498). Of the two existing courses, one (SED 432) is currently being offered only as a full-cost recovery course and is not part of an existing degree or certificate program. The other existing course, (SED 498) is a clinical course that is included in other master's level graduate degree programs in the department of special education. The remaining courses in the proposed program were newly developed specifically for the proposed program. Each course (existing and new) is listed below. The courses will be offered online.

SED 413 Visual Impairment: Etiology and Impact (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 432 Educational Impact of Neurological Visual Impairment in Children (3 hrs) (existing course)

SED 433 Unified English Braille Reading and Writing (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 434 Skills in Daily Living and Orientation and Mobility (2 hrs) (new course)

SED 435 Access Technology for Students with Visual Impairments (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 436 Assessment of Students with Visual Impairments (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 437 Methods in Reading and Math for Students who are Blind (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 438 Advanced Braille and the Nemeth Braille Code (3 hrs) (new course)

SED 439 Embedding the Expanded Core Curriculum: Educational Planning for Students with Visual Impairments (3 hrs) (new course)

**7. Anticipated funding needs and source of funds.**

This program will be a stand-alone fully-online cohort program. The cost will be covered through the full-cost recovery model. Existing tenure track faculty will teach the courses as part of their tenure-track load during the 9-month academic year. Non-tenure-track faculty may teach sections of the courses that are a part of the tenure-track load reassignment. For instance, tenure-track faculty have a 3-3 load each semester. If the tenure-track faculty are reassigned to teach in this program, one course of their typical load would be covered by a non-tenure-track faculty. We currently have non-tenure-track faculty teaching in the LVB program at the undergraduate level. If needed, we will hire from our current pool of consistent non-tenure-track faculty.

**8. Yes Does this program count for teacher education?**

The Low Vision and Blindness graduate program leads to a special education endorsement as a teacher of students who are blind or visually impaired. Essential to the program curriculum is the program's conceptual framework which is closely aligned with Illinois State University's commitment to realize the democratic ideal. This is evident in the coursework as scholars are challenged to incorporate ethical and intellectual aspects of teaching and learning into knowledge and skills. Further, course content is aligned to professional standards as outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children's Blind and Visually Impaired Specialty Set.

**9. The following questions must be answered.**

**Yes** Have you confirmed that Milner Library has sufficient resources for the proposed program?

**N.A.** Have letter(s) of concurrence from affected departments/schools been obtained?

*A departments/school is affected if it has a program with significant overlap or if it teaches a required or elective course in the program.*