

**LOW VISION/BLINDNESS  
GRADUATE CERTIFICATION AND DEGREE PROGRAM  
ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY**

The Low Vision/Blindness Program at WVU is designed to prepare professional educators to work with children and adolescents with low vision and blindness by engaging in current research-based practices related to use of specialized instruction, assistive technology, Braille and orientation and mobility training in the context of elementary and/or secondary school programs. WVU is fully accredited by the North Central Association, while the program is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and meets professional standards of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

The program offers three (3) options:

1. **Certification only** in Visual Impairments Grades PreK-Adult (or equivalent in other states);
2. **Master's Degree plus certification** in Visual Impairments Grades PreK-Adult (or equivalent in other states);
3. **Master's Degree only** in Special Education with area of emphasis in Low Vision/Blindness.

**PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Children and adolescents with low vision and/or blindness have a right to equitable, appropriate, and least restrictive services designed to meet their unique needs in the full spectrum of programming at the preschool, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. These individuals and families should be empowered to make decisions about services and supports required to succeed academically and socially.

**PROGRAM MISSION**

Special educators play a critical role in the education of children and adolescents with low vision or blindness in regular education classrooms as consultants to the classroom instructor or in special education environments. These teachers are trained to conduct assessments, design, implement, and evaluate individualized instructional programs, modify curriculum to include the expanded core curriculum for the blind, modify learning activities and school environments to accommodate specific needs, and collaborate with families and other professionals in promoting educational achievement and other learning outcomes. The program's goals are (a) to prepare highly qualified master-clinical special education teachers and (b) to provide professional development opportunities for professionals in other disciplines involved with students with low vision or blindness.

**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

This program leads to initial certification or additional endorsement in Visual Impairments in West Virginia, which includes children, adolescents and adults with various conditions and levels of severity in Grades PreK-Adult (or the equivalent in other states).

**For a program application or more information:**

WVU Department of Special Education  
509 Allen Hall, P. O. Box 6122  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6122  
(304) 293-7143 or [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu)  
<http://specialed.wvu.edu>

**THIS PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE ACROSS THE U.S. AND IN INTERNATIONAL LOCATIONS**

## PROGRAM CONTENT: LOW VISION/BLINDNESS

### *Core Courses*

- SPED 600 Instructional/Assistive Technology**  
Instructional and assistive technology for individuals with more significant disabilities
- SPED 603 Classroom Behavior Management for Special Needs**  
Evidence-based strategies for classroom and behavior management for individuals and groups
- SPED 663 Collaborative-Consultative Inclusion Strategies**  
Skills and strategies for collaboration and/or consultation within an inclusive school environment

### *Specialization Courses*

- SPED 630 Introduction to Low Vision/Blindness**  
Overview of low vision and blindness; causes, characteristics and educational programs; clinical evaluation of vision loss and functional assessment of vision
- SPED 631 Introduction to Braille (prerequisite to SPED 632 and SPED 633)**  
Fundamental skills for reading and writing Braille
- SPED 632 Braille Reading and Literacy Development**  
Methods and materials for teaching students with low vision/blindness to use Braille to develop reading and literacy skills
- SPED 633 Nemeth Code and Mathematics Development**  
Methods and materials for teaching students with low vision/blindness to use Nemeth code to Develop computation and problem solving skills
- SPED 635 Teaching Students with Vision Impairments**  
Strategies and assistive devices for teaching academic and functional skills.
- SPED 636 Teaching Students with Vision/Multiple Impairments**  
Strategies and assistive devices for teaching academic and functional skills.
- SPED 637 Basic Orientation and Mobility Skills**  
Fundamental skills and assistive devices for orientation and mobility.
- SPED 639 Culminating Practicum: Low Vision/Blindness (LVB)**  
Clinical experience with students with vision impairments/blindness in public schools.

### *Courses Required for Degree Only*

- SPED 675 Research to Practice**  
Current research in special education and its applications to professional practice
- SPED 680 Culminating Project**  
Independent planning, implementation and evaluation of project applying theory to practice

### **Praxis Content Tests Required for Admission to Culminating Practicum**

Principles of Learning & Teaching K-6 (0522 Or 0622) or 5-9 (0523 Or 0623) or 7-12 (0524 or 0624) if NO prior certification

Special Education: Teaching Students with Visual Impairments (0281)

**THIS PROGRAM QUALIFIES AS AN ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

**PROGRAM OPTIONS: LOW VISION/BLINDNESS**

***Certification Only***

SPED 600	Instructional/Assistive Technology	3 cr.
SPED 603	Classroom/Behavior Management for Special Needs	3 cr.
SPED 663	Collaborative-Consultative Inclusion Strategies	3 cr.
SPED 630	Introduction to Low Vision/Blindness	3 cr.
SPED 631	Introduction to Braille (prerequisite to SPED 632 and SPED 633)	3 cr.
SPED 632	Braille Reading and Literacy Development	3 cr.
SPED 633	Braille Reading and Mathematics Development	3 cr.
SPED 635	Teaching Students with Vision Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 636	Teaching Students with Vision/Multiple Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 637	Basic Orientation and Mobility Skills	3 cr.
SPED 639	Culminating Practicum: Low Vision/Blindness (LVB)	<u>3-6 cr.*</u>
	Total	33-36 cr.

***Master's Degree plus Certification#***

SPED 600	Instructional/Assistive Technology	3 cr.
SPED 603	Classroom/Behavior Management for Special Needs	3 cr.
SPED 663	Collaborative-Consultative Inclusion Strategies	3 cr.
SPED 630	Introduction to Low Vision/Blindness	3 cr.
SPED 631	Introduction to Braille (prerequisite for 632 and 633)	3 cr.
SPED 632	Braille Reading and Literacy Development	3 cr.
SPED 633	Braille Reading and Mathematics Development	3 cr.
SPED 635	Teaching Students with Vision Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 636	Teaching Students with Vision/Multiple Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 637	Basic Orientation and Mobility Skills	3 cr.
SPED 639	Culminating Practicum: Low Vision/Blindness (LVB)	3-6 cr.*
Approved Electives (in areas related to LBV program and approved by advisor)		<u>3 cr.</u>
	Total	36 cr.

***Master's Degree Only***

SPED 500	Legal/Educational Foundations: Special Education	3 cr.
SPED 600	Instructional/Assistive Technology	3 cr.
SPED 601	Academic Interventions for Special Needs	3 cr.
SPED 603	Classroom/Behavior Management for Special Needs	3 cr.
SPED 663	Collaborative-Consultative Inclusion Strategies	3 cr.
SPED 630	Introduction to Low Vision/Blindness	3 cr.
SPED 635	Teaching Students with Vision Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 636	Teaching Students with Vision/Multiple Impairments	3 cr.
SPED 675	Research to Practice: Special Education	3 cr.
SPED 680	Culminating Project	3 cr.
Approved Electives (in areas related to LBV program and approved by advisor)		<u>6 cr.</u>
	Total	36 cr.

\*Individuals who completed a prior 6 credit practicum in a graduate special education program at WVU within a five (5) year period may be permitted to enroll in additional practica for 3 credits although they will be expected to meet the same requirements.

**ALL PROGRAMS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WHEN CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS CHANGE**

**Program Delivery Cycle\*\*: Two (2)+ Year Cycle\***

<i>Semester</i>	<i>Common Course</i>	<i>Specialization Course</i>	<i>Capstone</i>
Year 1 Fall	SPED 603 or 663	SPED 630	SPED 639
Year 1 Spring		SPED 635	SPED 639
Year 1 Summer	SPED 600	SPED 631	
Year 2 Fall	SPED 603 or 663	SPED 632	SPED 639
Year 2 Spring		SPED 637, 636	SPED 639
Year 2 Summer	SPED 600	SPED 633	SPED 675 + 680

\*\*This is a tentative schedule only; students should check the schedule of courses each semester for actual offerings.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

REGULAR admission is granted ONLY WHEN ALL these criteria are met:

### *Requirements for ALL graduate programs:*

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA\* of 3.00 out of 4.0;
- passing scores on a nationally standardized test of academic ability within a 10 year period: 850 (old) OR 180 (new) on the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) OR 400 on the Miller Analogies Test (MAT) OR passing scores on the Praxis PPST (see below) OR a Master's degree in education or a closely related area from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA of 3.25;
- Recommendation for Graduate Study (see Program Application Form) completed by a previous course instructor;
- Permission for Field/Clinical Experiences (see Program Application Form) completed by a school administrator.

NOTE: SCHOOL SYSTEMS MAY REQUIRE CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND FORMAL BOARD APPROVAL PRIOR TO PLACEMENT.

### *ADDITIONAL special requirements for ALL certification or certification plus degree programs only:*

- passing scores on the Praxis Preprofessional Skills Tests (PPST) within a 10 year period -- 174 on 0710, 172 on 0720, 172 on 0730; if GRE or MAT scores are provided as national test scores (see above); PPST may be WAIVED IF evidence is provided of prior certification in some area of education OR a Master's degree from an accredited institution OR a composite score of 25 (26 if enhanced) on the American College Test (ACT) OR a score of 1035 (1125 if recentered) on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)) OR SAT combined Critical Reading and Math scores of 1170.

NOTE: OTHER TESTS MAY BE SUBSTITUTED IF DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED SHOWS CONTENT SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT TO PPST.

### *ADDITIONAL special requirements ALSO NEEDED for certification or certification plus degree programs for grades K-6 only:*

- prior certification in early childhood education (K-4) or elementary education (K-6 or K-8) (required for K-6 option only);
- prior certification in early childhood education (K-4) or elementary education (K-6) or secondary education (5-9,7-15, 5-Adult) in biology, chemistry, English, general science, mathematics, physics, reading education/specialist, social studies (required for Gifted Education K-12 only).

### *OTHER special requirements for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS only:*

- TOEFL score: 550 or higher (paper); 215 or higher (computer); 80 or higher (Internet) (non-native English speakers ONLY) OR IELTS score: 6.5 or higher; the English language testing requirement will NOT be waived even for individuals enrolled in the WVU Intensive English Program;
- personal interview (by phone or in person) to verify proficiency in English (non-native English speakers ONLY).

NOTE: U.S. VISA CAN NOT BE ISSUED FOR ONLINE PROGRAMS BUT STUDENTS CAN ENROLL AS RESIDENTS IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES.

PROVISIONAL admission\*\* MAY be considered under SOME circumstances IF ALL other criteria are met: AND the conditions\*\*\* for provisional admission are met as outlined in the admission letter:

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution with minimum GPA\* of 2.75+ out of 4.0 (contingent upon maintaining GPA of 3.0 and grades of A or B within the first 9 hours or within 2 semesters, whichever comes first); OR

NOTE: UNDERGRADUATE COURSES ONLY ARE COUNTED IN CALCULATING THE GPA. APPLICANTS WITH GPAs MAY BE ABLE TO RAISE THEIR UNDERGRADUATE GPA BY TAKING ADDITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE COURSES BEFORE APPLYING.

Applications submitted before the due date with all supporting documentation are eligible for EARLY ADMISSION. Applications that are incomplete will be rejected. Applicants who meet all regular admission criteria will be admitted automatically to the program. Applicants who meet criteria for provisional admission are ONLY considered IF additional openings remain at that point. Under NO circumstances will ANY admission requirement be waived.

NO STUDENT WILL BE SIMULTANEOUSLY ADMITTED TO MORE THAN ONE (1) PROGRAM WITHIN SPECIAL EDUCATION OR TO BOTH SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ANOTHER PROGRAM AT WVU.

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ALREADY EARNED A GRADUATE DEGREE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AT WVU CAN NOT BE ADMITTED TO THE DEGREE PROGRAM AGAIN BUT MAY BE ADMITTED TO A CERTIFICATION ONLY PROGRAM TO OBTAIN AN ADDITIONAL ENDORSEMENT.

The WVU Application for Graduate Admission can be submitted online or as a print document available at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/grad.html>.

The Department of Special Education Program Application Form can be obtained at [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu).

For assistance in completing applications, please contact [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-293-7143.

## APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

- Applications for admission beginning **FALL** semester:
- Applications for admission beginning **SPRING** semester:
- Applications for admission beginning **SUMMER** semester:

**DUE AUGUST 1**  
**DUE JANUARY 1**  
**DUE MAY 1**

## **LATE ADMISSION**

Individuals who fail to apply by the application dates above may be admitted with non-degree status in the WVU College of Human Resources and Education up to the first week of the semester. Once admitted, the student may send an email to the Chair of the Department of Special Education requesting permission to enroll in up to six (6) credits of required courses in the desired program by special waiver. If space is available in these courses, the Chair MAY grant approval. If enrollment is approved, the student must request a transfer to the special education program, submit a program application form by the next application deadline, and be admitted to the program in order to enroll in ANY additional courses in THIS department.

## **INTENT TO ENROLL FOR EMERGENCY PERMITS**

Individuals who have been offered a special education teaching position but cannot be admitted because the deadline is past may need to document their intent to enroll in an approved preparation program to be eligible for an emergency permit or out-of-field authorization. WVU may provide this documentation ONLY AFTER the individual has submitted the WVU Application for Graduate Studies and paid the admission fee. For assistance with this process, students should contact the Certification Officer in the College's Center for Student Advising and Records at [http://hre-advising.wvu.edu/home/advising\\_staff](http://hre-advising.wvu.edu/home/advising_staff) or 304-293-3983.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Students enrolled in campus-based courses pay on-campus tuition and fees at a rate based on their status as a West Virginia resident or non-resident at the time of admission. ALL students enrolled in ELIGIBLE online programs pay off-campus tuition and fees at the RESIDENT rate regardless of residency status in all program courses (section 7D) and practica (section 7D) through an agreement with the Southern Regional Education Board's Electronic Campus. Information on tuition and fees is available at the WVU website at <http://elearn.wvu.edu/Registration/tuitionFees.html>

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **Federal Financial Aid**

Federal financial aid is typically NOT available for students in non-degree programs, even when they are seeking teaching certification and is ONLY available to students in degree programs that are leading to certification. Required courses or additional endorsements needed to keep a teaching position do NOT satisfy eligibility requirements for financial aid. Students who are approved for financial aid must take a minimum of 4 credits per semester which may mean taking 2 courses for 6 credits since 1 credit courses are not available. Courses are ONLY eligible for financial aid if they are required courses or approved electives NEEDED to satisfy degree program credits so students can NOT enroll in other courses simply to get financial aid. The department will NOT approve independent study credits for the purposes of meeting the minimum credit requirements for financial aid. Students who receive financial aid must complete ALL program requirements within a specific time period (no more than 150% of typical time to complete the program) AND maintain minimal academic status in the program with a minimum GPA of 2.5. Information about financial aid options may be obtained from the WVU Financial Aid Office at <http://www.finaid.wvu.edu>.

### **TEACH Grants**

The federally funded TEACH Grant Program provides aid to graduate students seeking to become certified in high shortage areas, which many include any area of special education, and willing to work in a high need school. Information is available at [http://finaid.wvu.edu/types\\_of\\_aid/grant\\_aid/teach\\_grant](http://finaid.wvu.edu/types_of_aid/grant_aid/teach_grant).

### **Special Education Projects with Tuition/Fee Reimbursement**

In some years, the special education programs have federally funded projects to reimburse tuition/fees for individuals pursuing certification in special education. Information about projects currently available in specific certification programs can be obtained by contacting [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu).

## **APPLYING COURSES FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

Students who wish to ask about transfer graduate degree credits from another institution PRIOR TO APPLYING FOR ADMISSION should review the information about waivers and transfers available below and send the required information to the Chair of the Department of Special Education for review.

## **ENROLLMENT IN COURSES**

Upon admission, students will be assigned a major code and an area of emphasis code specific to the area of specialization in special education of the program to which s/he was admitted. The codes permit students to register for courses restricted to program majors, to confirm completion of requirements for permits, endorsements, or certifications, and to have the program(s) recorded on the diploma. Some programs are offered on a one-year cycle and other programs are offered on a two-year cycle; students should consult the tentative program schedule, the official WVU schedule of courses, and their academic advisor to plan how they will complete all requirements. MOST courses (EXCEPT capstone courses such as culminating practicum and culminating project) are designed to require NO prerequisites so students may enroll at any point in the cycle. Students may register themselves for courses using the online registration system. Requests to complete ANY required course via independent study will NOT be approved. WVU recommends that students who hold full time employment should enroll in no more than 6 credits per semester. Graduate students are not permitted to enroll in more than 15 credits per semester.

## **FAILURE TO ENROLL**

Students who do NOT enroll in coursework during the effective term of their admission will automatically be converted to INACTIVE status and will be required to RE-APPLY to the university and program. Regularly admitted students who find they are unable to enroll in coursework during the effective term of their admission may request that their admission be deferred to a different semester within one (1) calendar year. Requests for deferred admission by provisionally admitted students will NOT be approved. Inactive students who seek re-admission will be required to RE-APPLY to the university and program and meet any additional NEW requirements for admission or completion in effect at that time.

## **ACCESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The WVU Office of Disability Services must determine each student's eligibility for services and identify specific accommodations that instructors must provide. Students should review the information at [http://socialjustice.wvu.edu/office\\_of\\_disability\\_services](http://socialjustice.wvu.edu/office_of_disability_services) and CONTACT OSD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER ADMISSION to determine whether they are eligible and what accommodations will be provided. Participation in online courses may involve instructors adapting materials or requirements but may also require students to purchase special equipment or software to access technology formats.

## **ACCESS TO SCHOOL PLACEMENTS FOR FIELD AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES**

ALL programs require many field experiences and certification programs also require an extensive clinical experience at the end of the program. ALL field and clinical experiences MUST be completed in a PUBLIC SCHOOL setting staffed by a certified teacher in the area of specialization and at the grade level specified by the course instructor (for field experiences) or the certification program (for culminating practicum). School systems usually require students to submit a NEGATIVE TB TEST as well as a CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK before allowing access to schools and contact with children. WVU does NOT conduct these checks for students and WVU faculty and staff should NOT be given any information about the results of these checks. Instead, students should follow whatever procedure the school requires or review the information available at [http://hre.wvu.edu/background\\_check\\_information](http://hre.wvu.edu/background_check_information). Students must submit the Permission for Field Experiences Form signed by a school system administrator as part of the Program Application Form.

## **ACCESS TO ONLINE COURSES**

ALL courses in the program are delivered via ONLINE distance education, using a combination of desktop conferencing (LIVE IN REAL TIME at specified dates/times) sessions and web formats (on demand with established due dates) on alternate weeks throughout each academic semester. All courses are offered online using the WVU eCampus learning management system, with live class sessions conducted in the Wimba Classroom virtual classroom program. All class sessions and web activities are conducted in English. Students are responsible for ensuring they have an adequate Internet connection as well as all necessary computer hardware and software. Students are required to PURCHASE AND USE A MICROPHONE AND HEADSET to talk to instructors and other students during live online class sessions. More information about preparing the computer to access online courses is included at the end of this brochure.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR TEACHING CERTIFICATION**

Certification only or certification plus degree program options lead to initial certification or additional endorsement in a specific area of specialization in special education in West Virginia. Individuals who hold NO certification earn an initial teaching certificate; those who are ALREADY certified earn an additional endorsement. Some programs also lead to other professional qualifications needed to work in early intervention or in adult services. BEFORE submitting an application for admission, prospective students in OTHER STATES OR IN INTERNATIONAL AREAS should consult with local and state agencies about certification requirements to determine whether the WVU program will satisfy those requirements, what certification tests may be required, and what other requirements they may need to meet.

## **PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS**

Many courses include a performance assessment that is required to document proficiency in state and national standards. The performance assessment is typically conducted in conjunction with the field experience associated with the course and is graded by a special rubric. Students must earn 80% or better and a rating of Meets or Exceeds Standard on the required performance assessment in EACH course and across ALL courses or they may be DISMISSED from the program.

## **FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Many courses have an ASSOCIATED FIELD EXPERIENCE, requiring students to conduct activities with individuals with exceptionalities their families, programs, or professionals IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS UNDER SUPERVISION of a certified teacher. In each course, students complete a series of assignments applying theory to practice with an individual with a specific exceptionality, their family, or professionals in given disciplines in a program AT A SPECIFIC GRADE LEVEL AND FOR SPECIFIED CONTACT HOURS (ranging from 5 to 40 hours for a given course). Students who cannot complete these assignments in their own job setting must locate schools/individuals/families and schools as needed to complete all required activities.

Schools often require formal approval by the school board prior to classroom placement, so students should CONTACT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to make the necessary arrangements. Failure to do so in a timely manner could result in inability to complete an assignment and a lower grade for the course. Students who do NOT submit documentation of MINIMUM contact hours and REQUIRED activities SIGNED BY A CERTIFIED TEACHER may be assigned a grade of FAIL for the course.

## **PRAXIS CONTENT TESTS**

Students in teacher education programs in West Virginia MUST take Praxis Content Tests in a specific area of specialization prescribed by this state and/or program for program completion even if their own state does not require them or requires a different set of tests. Required tests and passing scores are listed on the Student Program Plan and the FULL SCORE REPORT documenting passing scores on ALL TESTS AND SUBTESTS must be submitted with the practicum application.

## **CLINICAL EXPERIENCES**

Students in ALL certification program options are required to complete a culminating practicum experience for a MINIMUM OF 16 WEEKS FULL DAY PLACEMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOL(S) at the end of the program to meet state and national standards. Students currently employed in a PUBLIC SCHOOL engaged in direct instruction of 3 STUDENTS ON IEPs in the SAME area of specialization and at the SAME grade levels of the program in which they are enrolled may complete practicum in their own work setting (on-the-job). Those NOT so employed must take a leave of absence from other employment and locate a placement with a master teacher in their local community that meets practicum requirements (full-time). Students must have completed ALL required courses and passes ALL required Praxis Content Tests to be eligible for practicum. Practicum experiences are offered ONLY during Fall and Spring; they are NOT available during Summer sessions. Applications are due one (1) semester in advance.

**FALL Semester Culminating Practicum:**

**Application due: JUNE 1**

**SPRING Semester Culminating Practicum:**

**Application due: DECEMBER 1**

Current practicum guidelines and an application form may be obtained by contacting [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-293-7143 on February 15 (for Fall semester) or September 15 (for Spring semester).

## **WAIVERS, TRANSFERS, SUBSTITUTIONS OF COURSES**

Students who have completed or who want to enroll in a course at another accredited institution of higher education may request waiver of the course (for certification only) OR transfer of credits to WVU (for degree program) as a substitute for a required course or as elective credits. All waivers, transfers and substitutions must meet WVU and program standards and be approved in writing by the official faculty advisor immediately upon entry to the program (for prior courses) OR before enrolling in the course (for new courses) AND recorded on the WVU transcript WITHIN one (1) semester of approval.

Students may request review by sending the following information to the academic advisor: a copy of the official transcript (unless already on file) showing the title, date and grade PLUS a copy of the full syllabus, a detailed description of the performance assessment(s), and the number of contact hours for any associated field experience for EACH course to be considered. Courses must be judged to be SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT in content, assessment, and contact hours to the WVU course, representative of SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE by a grade of A or B, and document CURRENT EXPERTISE acquired in a degree-eligible course (not professional development credit) within the last five (5) years. Four (4) quarter hours will be considered equivalent to three (3) semester hours. WVU permits transfer of no more than 12 credits from another institution. Courses titled Culminating Practicum and Culminating Project are considered capstone courses in the certification and/or degree programs; these courses may NOT be waived, are NOT eligible for substitution, and may NOT be completed at another institution; they MUST be completed at WVU.

## **TRANSFER TO ANOTHER PROGRAM**

Students who wish to transfer to a different area of specialization in special education or a different program option or another program at WVU should send an email message to the department chair requesting the transfer that clearly identifies both the current program and the transfer program. For a special education program, the chair will confirm that the student is eligible for the new program and issue a new admission letter and copy of the current program plan; for another program, the chair will initiate a transfer request. Students will be required to meet any and all NEW requirements (courses, tests, etc.) at the time of the transfer.

## **RETENTION REQUIREMENTS**

To maintain ACTIVE student status, students must enroll in at least one (1) course during the effective term of admission and also at least one (1) course every two (2) years. Students who fail to enroll within a two (2) year period will be converted to inactive status and will be required to reapply to the university and program and meet any additional new requirements in effect at that time. Students are expected to comply with all academic and conduct policies as outlined in the WVU Graduate Catalog, in the WVU Student Handbook, and on the Department of Special Education website.

Retention in the program and/or graduation is based on SATISFACTORY PROGRESS or maintaining a GPA of 3.0 with a grade of A or B in ALL required courses. A grade of Incomplete will only be approved for emergency situations; all requirements must be completed BEFORE the end of the next academic semester. Students who DO NOT clear the grade of Incomplete by the deadline will be assigned a grade of FAIL by the instructor immediately after the due date.

Students who do NOT earn a grade of A or B in a required course will be required to RE-TAKE THE COURSE to be eligible for the culminating practicum or culminating project.

Students who do NOT maintain a GPA of 3.0 (includes courses with grade of Incomplete) in a given semester MAY be placed on PROBATION and permitted one (1) additional semester to increase the GPA to 3.0.

Students whose GPA is too low to be raised by a probationary period OR who do NOT obtain a GPA of 3.0 after the probationary period will be subject to DISMISSAL from the program.

Students who engage in academic dishonesty will be assigned 0 points for the assignment or exam for the first offense, an F for the course for the second offense, and dismissed from the program for the third offense. Students dismissed from a program will NOT be permitted to re-apply to ANY special education program.



## **CULMINATING PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

Students in ALL DEGREE ONLY program options are required to complete a culminating project at the end of the program to meet program and national standards. This project may be an action research project, a curriculum development project, or another project that shows that the student can apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the program to a problem of professional practice. Culminating project requires enrollment in two (2) courses after all other required courses (SPED 675 and SPED 680) have been completed. These courses are ONLY offered in SUMMER sessions and SPED 675 must be completed in the SAME term as SPED 680 and enrollment in SPED 680 is contingent on completion of SPED 675 with a grade of A or B.

Applications are due one (1) semester in advance.

**SPRING Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: OCTOBER 1**

**FALL Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: JUNE 1**

**SUMMER Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: JUNE 1**

Current culminating project guidelines and an application forms may be obtained by contacting [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-293-7143 on February 15 (for Summer semester).

## **PROGRAM COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS**

The MINIMUM time to complete most certification or degree programs in special education is:

-TWO (2) calendar years at the rate of SIX (6) credits per semester (part-time study – recommended for students who are working full time and/or have extensive family responsibilities)

-ONE AND ONE HALF (1.5) calendar years at the rate of NINE (9) credits per semester (full-time study- recommended for students who are not employed and/or have minimal family responsibilities.

The MAXIMUM time to complete required certification courses prior to practicum is TEN (10) years.

The MAXIMUM time to complete a graduate degree program at WVU (including all transferred courses) is EIGHT (8) years.

Students MUST ENROLL in at least one (1) credit DURING the semester in which they plan to graduate to be awarded a graduate degree. Students with grades of Incomplete on the transcript will NOT be approved for graduation. Students are responsible for clearing ALL grades of Incomplete in ANY courses that appear on the WVU transcript in this or any other program PRIOR to applying for graduation, either by earning a letter grade for the course or by asking the instructor or department to assign a grade of Permanent Incomplete.

Students must SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION and pay any applicable fee(s) at the BEGINNING of the semester in which they plan to graduate whether or not they plan to attend the ceremony.

Applications are due early in the semester for which graduation is planned.

**SPRING Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: OCTOBER 1**

**FALL Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: FEBRUARY 1**

**SUMMER Semester Graduation:**

**Application due: JUNE 1**

Current graduation guidelines and an application forms may be obtained by contacting [sped@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:sped@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-293-7143.

## **APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION**

Students must apply for certification in the state in which they plan to teach. Students who do NOT submit the application WITHIN ONE (1) YEAR of completing final program requirements may be required to meet any additional NEW requirements in effect at the time of application.

For assistance in applying for certification, contact the WVU Certification Officer at [mike.sekula@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:mike.sekula@mail.wvu.edu) or 304-293-3637.

## ONLINE TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Program courses and practicum experiences delivered online require basic equipment and skills for operating in the online environment to have a successful learning experience. At a minimum, students need ready access to a personal computer at home or work (or a public library or friend's house), with a web browser, other plug-ins and application software installed on the hard drive.

### Preparing the Computer for Online Instruction

To prepare the computer for online components, students will need the following:

1. a computer that is either a PC with Windows OR an Apple Macintosh with a CURRENT operating system (OS) ; if OS does not meet these specifications, purchase an OS upgrade OR locate another computer to use OR purchase a new computer;
2. the computer's Central Processing Unit (CPU) should have a processing speed of 300 MHz or better with internal memory of 128 MB RAM or higher; if the computer does not meet these specifications, upgrade speed and memory as needed OR locate or purchase a newer computer;
3. speed of connection to the Internet requires at least 56 kbps obtained through a telephone modem; 128 kbps or higher access is recommended for faster and better access during desktop conferences in live class sessions (this can be obtained through a cable modem OR a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) of (or Internet Services Digital Network (ISDN) line or T1 line OR other high speed connection) for high quality sound and images; phone modems with a minimum of 56 kbps access may be used to access other course components; you can confirm ACTUAL connection speed at <http://speedtest.net>.
4. an inexpensive microphone (adequate) or headset (preferable) that can be connected to the computer to record audio assignments and to speak to the instructor and class during audio conferences.

### Configuring the Browser for Online Instruction

To prepare the browser for online components, students will need the following:

1. a recent version of a full-featured web browser (Firefox OR Internet Explorer OR Safari; download and install a free copy or updated version of any browser from each company's website; students are advised to use their preferred browser as the primary browser and also have a second browser available on the desktop for use if access problems occur; confirm the browser is working at <http://www.webct.com/tuneup>;
2. the browser's settings must be set appropriately to access course features: enable Java and JavaScript; disable pop-up blocker; disable spyware software (at least prior to eCampus use); set browser preferences to clear cache at every visit to page and to allow cookies from <https://ecampus.wvu.edu>;
3. the following plug-ins must be installed in the browser's plug-ins folder:
  - a. Adobe Acrobat Reader (most recent version) for text files and library materials
  - b. Apple QuickTime (most recent version) for audio and video files
  - c. Adobe Flash Player (most recent version) for virtual classroom and interactive activities

Free copies of plug-ins are obtained at each company's website; follow ALL directions for downloading and installing the program within the browser's plug-ins folder and NOT just on the computer's desktop.

### Installing Software Needed for Learning Activities/Assignments

Each student will need a current version of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) 2000 or later.

A variety of tutorials on how to use WVU's online learning management system are available at <https://ecampus.wvu.edu> by selecting the tab for Student. Assistance in meeting technology requirements can be obtained by contacting the WVU Help Desk at 877-327-9260x1 (distance) or 293-4444x1 (campus) or [oithelp@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:oithelp@mail.wvu.edu).

## LIVE CLASS SESSION TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Most courses in this program require participation in some live online class sessions for real-time interaction with instructor and fellow students. All live class sessions are offered through Wimba Classroom, a desktop conferencing program that features one-way video (of the instructor) and two-way audio (instructor and learners) to permit interactions in real time. Class sessions will be transmitted via a link embedded in the course on the WVU eCampus server, usually between the hours of 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm Eastern Time (ET) or other times as indicated in the WVU schedule or planned by the instructor and usually on alternate weeks throughout the semester. Each live class session is recorded and archived and available throughout the semester.

### ***Online Conferencing for Students in Real Time***

ALL students will be expected to participate in live class sessions delivered via desktop conferencing at home or at work UNLESS their location is more than 3 time zones from ET. Each student must have at least 56 kbps Internet access via telephone modem (adequate quality); 128 kbps or better is preferred via Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or cable/satellite television modem (all good quality) or a T1 Ethernet connection (best quality). Individuals who live in remote rural areas where bandwidth is LOWER THAN 56 kbps may need to find another site to view and participate in the class sessions. Although no special software is needed, each student MUST have an EXTERNAL microphone (acceptable) that can be connected to the computer for voice input OR a headset with microphone and ear piece (preferred) to provide better sound quality for speaker and listener. This will be used ONLY during desktop conferencing activities and/or to record audio assignments. Students must also adjust both internal and external volume controls on the computer to appropriate levels.

### ***Archived Conferences Available for All Class Sessions***

Students outside continental North America participate by viewing archived class sessions. ALL archives will be available for review by ANY student at ANY time throughout the semester.

### ***Live Conferences for Individual Consultations and Group Collaborative Activities***

Students also may be expected to participate in live interactive conferences with a faculty member or in small groups (see information above about Wimba Classroom).

### **Preparing for Live Class Sessions**

Students should confirm the microphone is enabled by checking System Control (PC) or System Preferences (Mac). Then they should confirm the computer is ready to use the Live Classroom desktop conferencing program by completing ALL steps of the Setup Wizard at <http://umn.horizonwimba.com/umn/wizard>.

### **Obtaining Assistance with Technology Needed to Access Desktop Conferences**

Assistance in preparing for desktop conferencing can be obtained by contacting the WVU Help Desk at 877-327-9260x1 (distance) or 293-4444x1 (campus).

## ACCESSING WVU ONLINE COURSES

### **MIX Account**

Mountaineer Information Express (MIX) is a web portal for accessing services at WVU. Students access their MIX account at: <http://mix.wvu.edu> using the 7-digit student identification number (SID) provided in their admission letter and the 6-digit default password for all accounts: two digits for the day of the person's birthdate and the last four digits of the SID (Ex: If birthdate is 05/03/1974 and SID is 700456789, then password is 036789). Once logged in to MIX, students can locate their WVU email address and user ID by selecting the STAR tab, then selecting the link for Personal Information and View Address(es), Phone(s)... The WVU email address is displayed in the upper right-hand corner of the email window. The user ID is the letters and numbers that appear BEFORE the @ sign (Ex: If email address is [abaker@mix.wvu.edu](mailto:abaker@mix.wvu.edu) then user name is abaker; if email address is [dmartin6@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:dmartin6@mail.wvu.edu), then user ID is dmartin6). This user ID and password is also used to log into WVU eCampus. Students who experience problems accessing MIX or eCampus should contact the WVU Help Desk at 877-327-9260x1 (distance) or 293-4444x1 (campus) or [oithelp@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:oithelp@mail.wvu.edu). Programs and instructors dissemination information through the MIX account, so students should activate their account and consult it regularly.