



# Fact Sheet

SCHOOL FOR GLOBAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Graduate Certificate in Vision Studies

### CORTICAL/CEREBRAL VISION IMPAIRMENT

*...A graduate certificate for those who want to develop their skills and knowledge with an inclusive training that considers all research, perspectives and approaches so that they can effectively and clearly respond to the needs of students with CVI*

#### The Program

The University of Massachusetts Boston offers a CVI graduate certificate for individuals who are interested in adding inclusive knowledge and skills about Cortical/Cerebral Vision Impairment (CVI) to their vision credentials. Priority for the certificate is given to those already holding a license as a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairment, Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Vision Rehabilitation Therapist. The CVI certificate is offered by the Vision Studies program at the UMass Boston School for Global Inclusion and Social Development and the Northeast Resource Center for Vision Education (NERCVE). This is a fully online program but does include required integrated field experience hours.

More than half of TVI and O&M specialists' caseloads now include students with a diagnosis of Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI). These brain-based visual impairments present quite differently than ocular based visual impairments and additional training specific to this type of visual impairment is critical to effectively assess and provide services to students with

this diagnosis. New work and research are being done to look at the neurophysiology of CVI and how it impacts learning.

It is important for professionals in the vision impairment community to be provided with an inclusive training that considers all research, perspectives and approaches so that they can effectively and clearly respond to the needs of students with CVI, their families and school districts. UMass Boston's Vision Studies program is collaborating with Perkins to share resources and to offer quality courses that lead to a graduate certificate in CVI skills, knowledge and proficiency.

Fully Online Courses for Certificate in Cortical/Cerebral Vision Impairment		
Program of Study	Courses	Credits
VISN 648	Cortical/Cerebral Vision Impairment	3
VISN 651	Vision and the Brain	3
VISN 652	CVI Assessment	3
VISN 653	CVI Promising Practices	3
VISN 654	CVI Consultation and Collaboration	3

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**  
**Applicants are accepted into the program one time a year for the fall semester. Fall application deadline is June 1st.**

## Course Descriptions

### **VISN 648: Cortical/Cerebral Vision Impairment**

This course provides an in-depth study of CVI and resources available for assessment and instructional strategies. Participants will further examine and explore the unique educational needs of children with CVI and the skills related to teaching these children in a full array of educational settings; Pre-K through grade 12. Topics include teaching strategies in the core and expanded core curriculums, such as: literacy, career-vocational skills, visual efficiency and compensatory auditory strategies. Instruction will also address material modifications and accommodations.

### **VISN 651: Vision and the Brain**

Students will learn about the neuroanatomy associated with visual processing, brain development in the context of vision, as well as understand how and where various aspects of functional vision are processed in the brain and how early developmental brain damage may impact these processes. Specifically, concepts including motion processing, visual attention, object and face processing, visuomotor integration, and agnosias will be covered. Students will also learn about the principles that govern neuroplasticity and vulnerability; learn what makes a good study and a scientifically valid and reliable assessment; and also understand why a common language between educators, clinicians, and parents is imperative for serving children with CVI.

### **VISN 652: CVI Assessment**

Students will learn how traditional ocular functional vision assessments do not accurately and completely assess the visual processing and visual recognition difficulties of the child with brain based visual impairment. Students will understand concepts including the limitations of clinical vision functional testing and the need for functional vision testing by licensed TVIs, O&M specialist and Vision Rehabilitation professionals. Students will show ability to interpret ophthalmology, low vision and neurology reports. Students will learn to effectively perform CVI functional vision assessments and Learning Media Assessments with the consideration that neuroplasticity can lead to visual improvements and that each child needs a unique consideration of all skills and abilities. Assessment of compensatory skill use is also essential to understand the total child.

### **VISN 653: CVI Promising Practices**

Students will learn current promising practices in teaching learners with CVI including how to apply the assessment results to report writing, IEP development, ECC application, materials creation, environmental adaptations, social support creation, behavior strategies, service delivery decisions, and literacy based on each student's unique profiles.

### **VISN 654: Consultation and Collaboration**

Students will learn the knowledge and skills necessary for collaborative consultation and technical assistance to parents, school-based teams and

medical professionals of learners with a diagnosis of CVI. Collaboration strategies for effective information sharing with parents, teams and medical professional will be reviewed and applied. There will be 13 modules (1 per week) divided up into 5 main sections. Each module will be comprised of series of short online lectures, required readings, and assignments. Specific details are in the Course Overview section. For each module/week, you will have required discussion posts and assignments.

For more information about the CVI program, visit [nercve.org](http://nercve.org).

The Northeast Resource Center for Vision Education (NERCVE) is an established center within the Institute for Community Inclusion and is academically affiliated with the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development at UMass Boston.

NERCVE is dedicated to improving the education and rehabilitation of children and adults with visual impairments through regionally accessible professional educator training, technology, and research.



## The Application Process

Apply to the UMass Boston CVI graduate certificate by completing the standard graduate application provided in the Graduate Studies Bulletin or at UMass Boston ([umb.edu/admissions/grad](http://umb.edu/admissions/grad)), where you can print out an application or apply online with a credit card. Specify that you are applying to the CVI Certificate.

Applicants are accepted into the program one time a year for the fall semester.

As part of the application process for the university, you are also required to:

- Obtain three letters of recommendation, using the forms provided by the Office of Graduate Admissions. Emphasis should be placed on academic and professional references.
- Complete all testing required by the university. If you do not have a master's degree, you will be required to take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Miller Analogy Test (MAT), or the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) Communication & Literacy.
- Submit an official transcript from each institution attended; a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 is required for admissions to a master's degree program.
- Complete your statement of interest and intent by submitting a two-part essay where you will:
  1. Explain your reasons for wishing to pursue graduate studies (approximately 300 words).
  2. Indicate your specific interest and discuss the type of work you would like to do in your intended field (at least 1,200 words).

Please note that this statement will be reviewed for both your overall message and your ability to write at the graduate level. Proofread your writing carefully; it is ranked according to its clarity, grammar, and syntax.

## ABOUT UMASS BOSTON

With a growing reputation for innovative research addressing complex urban issues, the University of Massachusetts Boston, metropolitan Boston's only public university, offers its diverse student population both an intimate learning environment and the rich experience of a great American city. UMass Boston's ten colleges and graduate schools serve nearly 16,000 students while engaging local, national, and international constituents through academic programs, research centers, and public service activities. To learn more about UMass Boston, visit [UMB.edu](http://UMB.edu).

