



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

New Specialization

Use this form to propose a new specialization within an existing degree program. Specializations provide students with an alternative to the primary format of the major or it may be one of several tracks within a broad major. Specializations contain courses within the discipline(s) of the existing program. Specializations appear in the institutional catalog and on the transcript. Majors that offer specializations typically have one-third to two-thirds of the credits in common with the remaining course work fulfilling the requirements of the specialization(s) offered. The Board of Regents, Executive Director, and/or their designees may request additional information about the proposal. After the university President approves the proposal, submit a signed copy to the Executive Director through the system Chief Academic Officer. Only post the New Specialization Form to the university website for review by other universities after approval by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

UNIVERSITY:	NSU
TITLE OF PROPOSED SPECIALIZATION:	Visual Impairments
NAME OF DEGREE PROGRAM IN WHICH SPECIALIZATION IS OFFERED:	M.S. Ed. in Special Education
INTENDED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:	8/17/2020
PROPOSED CIP CODE:	131009 (Education/Teaching of Individuals with Vision Impairments including Blindness)
UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT:	Teacher Education
UNIVERSITY DIVISION:	Millicent Atkins School of Education

Please check this box to confirm that:

- The individual preparing this request has read [AAC Guideline 2.6](#), which pertains to new specialization requests, and that this request meets the requirements outlined in the guidelines.
- This request will not be posted to the university website for review of the Academic Affairs Committee until it is approved by the Executive Director and Chief Academic Officer.

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

Michael Wenous

 Institutional Approval Signature
 President or Chief Academic Officer of the University

4/28/2020

 Date

Note: In the responses below, references to external sources, including data sources, should be documented with a footnote (including web addresses where applicable).

1. Level of the Specialization (place an “X” in the appropriate box):

Baccalaureate Master’s Doctoral

2. What is the nature/purpose of the proposed specialization? Please include a brief (1-2 sentence) description of the academic field in this specialization.

The Master of Science in Special Education with a Specialization in Visual Impairments will prepare special education teachers to work with students who have visual impairments. Once established with a steady stream of graduate students and a dedicated faculty member, the Northern State University Millicent Atkins School of Education will seek the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) accreditation for our program that specializes in teaching students with visual impairments.

3. Provide a justification for the specialization, including the potential benefits to students and potential workforce demand for those who graduate with the credential. For workforce related information, please provide data and examples. Data may include, but are not limited to the South Dakota Department of Labor, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Regental system dashboards, etc. Please cite any sources in a footnote.

Northern State University and the South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI) have a long history of collaboration. Northern State University’s Educational Impact Campaign raised more than \$12 million to construct a brand-new school and residential home for the SDSBVI. The superintendent of the SDSBVI and the president of Northern State University fully support establishing a graduate program in teaching students with visual impairments and seek to strengthen the existing collaboration between the two institutions to advance research in teaching students with visual impairments.

A critical shortage of special education teachers creates a workforce need nationwide and specifically in South Dakota. The United States Department of Education has identified special education as an area of teacher shortage in South Dakota for over a decade. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the United States Department of Education calls the shortage of special education teachers nationwide “chronic” and “notes that teacher shortages in special education have existed for 20 years with no solution in sight” (Marshall, Karvonen, Yell, Lowry, Dragow, and Seaman 2013, p. 127). The proposed program fulfills a workforce need.

An even more critical shortage of special education teachers with a specialization in visual impairments threatens the education of students with visual impairments. School districts face a severe shortage in personnel in the field of visual impairments, and the shortage may actually be more severe than numbers report “because some school districts with students needing services know that they simply will not be able to find the appropriate specialists and so do not even list such positions as unfilled” (Friend, 2018, p. 381).

The Master of Science in Special Education with a Specialization in Visual Impairments specialization will draw students from across the nation due to a limited number of programs available nationwide. This program offers an embedded classroom for the practicum at the new state-of-the-art South Dakota School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SDSBVI).

References:

Marshall, Kathleen J; Karvonen, Meagan; Yell, Mitchell L; Lowrey, Alisa; Drasgow, Erik; Seaman, Michael A. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, December 2013, Vol.24(3), pp.127-136.

Friend, M. (2018). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals*. (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

4. List the proposed curriculum for the specialization (including the requirements for completing the major – *highlight courses in the specialization*):

Prefix	Number	Course Title <i>(add or delete rows as needed)</i>	Credit Hours	New (yes, no)
SPED	704	Inclusive Education	3	No
EDAD	720	Special Education Law for School Administrators	3	No
SPED	731	Educating Students with Learning Disabilities	3	Yes
SPED	741	Educating Students with Behavior Disorders	3	Yes
SPED	521	Orientation and Mobility	3	No
SPED	523	Teaching Students with Visual Impairments	2	No
SPED	524	Classroom Modifications and Assistive Technology	2	No
SPED	525	Anatomy and Function of the Eye	3	No
SPED	534	Braille I	2	No
SPED	536	Braille II	2	No
SPED	795	Practicum	4	Yes
				Choose an item.

Total number of hours required for completion of specialization
 Total number of hours required for completion of major
 Total number of hours required for completion of degree

18
12
30

5. Delivery Location

Note: The accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) require Board approval for a university to offer programs off-campus and through distance delivery.

A. Complete the following charts to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver the entire program on campus, at any off-campus location (e.g., UC Sioux Falls, Capital University Center, Black Hills State University-Rapid City, etc.) or deliver the entire specialization through distance technology (e.g., as an on-line program)?

	Yes/No	Intended Start Date
On campus	Yes	Fall 2020

	Yes/No	If Yes, list location(s)	Intended Start Date
Off campus	No		Choose an item. Choose an item.

	Yes/No	<i>If Yes, identify delivery methods</i> <i>Delivery methods are defined in AAC Guideline 5.5.</i>	<i>Intended Start Date</i>
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	Online	Fall 2020

B. Complete the following chart to indicate if the university seeks authorization to deliver more than 50% but less than 100% of the specialization through distance learning (e.g., as an on-line program)? This question responds to HLC definitions for distance delivery.

	Yes/No	<i>If Yes, identify delivery methods</i>	<i>Intended Start Date</i>
Distance Delivery (online/other distance delivery methods)	Yes	Online during the academic year and in person in the summer	Fall 2020