

7 May 2021

TO: Faculty Senate

FROM: Paul Loikith, Chair, Graduate Council

RE: Graduate Certificate in Orientation and Mobility
for Children, Youth, and Adults

The following proposal has been approved by the Graduate Council and is recommended for approval by the Faculty Senate.

You may read the full text of the program proposal, as well as Faculty Budget Committee comments, at the [Online Curriculum Management System \(OCMS\) Curriculum Dashboard](#).

PROPOSAL SUMMARY FOR College of Education

Graduate Certificate in Orientation and Mobility for Children, Youth, and Adults

Certificate Type

Graduate certificate: Admission to graduate status required

Effective Term

Fall 2021

Overview of the Program

The Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Graduate Certificate provides learners with the knowledge and skill competencies recognized by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) and the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AERBVI) to promote the safe and efficient travel skills of individuals who are blind, visually impaired or deafblind. O&M Specialists provide individualized assessment, and instruction to individuals with visual impairment based upon an individual's needs, strengths, preferences and goals within settings that are important to the individual with visual impairment.

Nationwide, there is a critical shortage of orientation and mobility specialists. O&M specialists educate students with visual impairments, including those with deafblindness. The need for evidence-based instruction for individuals with visual impairments in all geographic areas is great. It is a particular need in rural and remote communities where there are too few O&M Specialists. Providing quality O&M services to people, regardless of geography, is a matter of equity. In fact, O&M is recognized in special education and rehabilitation laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act (RA) of 1973. O&M skills have been associated with higher rates of education, employment and quality of life. O&M specialists teach people how to travel safely, efficiently, and with purpose in a variety of environments. The O&M program is an extension of the Visually Impaired Learner (VIL) teacher licensure program and may be added to Special Education Master's Program. VIL has been preparing teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs) since 1964.

Evidence of Need

PSU's O&M program was born with the support of an Office of Special Education award to address the need for O&M services in an underserved region. Certified Orientation and Mobility Educators in Training (Project COMET) Award #H325K160149, which has a total award amount of \$1,248,872 million, is designated to recruit, train, and retain 38 pre service orientation and mobility instructors over a five year period (ending in 2021), with priority for scholarships to students from OR, WA, ID, MT, AK and HI. This grant was awarded to PSU because of a demonstrated regional need that projected the number of students with visual impairments and deafblindness in the region; the estimated number of personnel serving those students; and the projected number of retirements that are projected for the region. A map with the projected personnel needs by state is available in the full proposal.

Sixty-five percent of the COMET budget is allocated to student tuition. Dr. Amy Parker and Dr. Holly Lawson were appointed in a tenure-track faculty line to help ensure the fulfillment of this award. In addition to developing an O&M program that fully aligns with AERBVI and ACVREP standards, the focus of the COMET grant is to develop and launch a program that prepares O&M candidates in three specialty areas of focus:

- ethical distance-based mentoring and consultation
- culturally and family responsive services
- serving students with additional disabilities, including deafblindness

The larger purpose of the grant is to help establish a preparation program in O&M that will meet regional needs through partnerships with agencies, schools, and mentors to engage with PSU in growing and sustaining the field. The program is currently serving grant funded and non-grant funded students.

Needs data was gathered from our regional state partners to determine the need for personnel in educational settings.

State	APH Registry Data (2017)	Estimates of students with VI as reported by PNWCVE advisory board member	NCDB Deaf-blind Child Count (2016)	TSVIs & O&Ms reported by PNWCVE advisory board member	Current Vacancies	Projected retirements in 3-5 years reported by PNWCVE advisory board member
Alaska	136	201	22	TSVI - 16 O&M - 4 Dual - 4	TSVI - 2	TSVI - 2 Dual - 2 O&M - 1
Hawaii	259	270	73	TSVI - 19 O&M - 13	Dual - 2	Dual - 3
Idaho	264	473	69	TSVI - 20 Dual - 3 O&M - 7	TSVI - 1	TSVI - 3 Dual - 3 O&M - 3 (9)

Montana	244	414	56	TSVI - 8 Dual - 5 O&M - 8	TSVI - 1	TSVI - 2 Dual - 2 O&M - 1 (5)
Oregon	630	820	89	TSVI - 40 Dual - 25 O&M - 2	TSVI - 1 O&M - 1	TSVI - 5 O&M - 4 (9)
Washington	1220	1904	269	TSVI - 100 O&M - 3	TSVI - 2	TSVI - 10 O&M - 5 (15)
Totals	2,753	4,290	578	277	10	46

* Dual Certified and teaches as both a TSVI & O&M

Total need = 56

Course of Study

Orientation and Mobility Graduate Certificate is a 34-credit program that is designed to be stackable with the Special Education Master's Degree.

Requirements

Course	Name	Credit Hours
SpEd 540	Foundations of Education for the Visually Impaired Learner	3
SpEd 541	Implications of Vision Problems of Children/Youth	3
SpEd 545	Introduction to Orientation and Mobility and Independent Living Skills	3
SpEd 549	Orientation and Mobility Methods	3
SpEd 550	Orientation and Mobility Assessment and Instruction - Children	3
SpEd 551	Orientation and Mobility Assessment and Instruction - Adults	3
SpEd 552	Orientation and Mobility Advanced Techniques	4
SpEd 554	STE I Orientation and Mobility Practicum*	3
SpEd 554	STE II Orientation and Mobility Practicum*	3
SpEd 554	STE III Orientation and Mobility Practicum*	3
SpEd 554	STE IV Orientation and Mobility Practicum*	3

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS: 34

Students complete 12 credits of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) practicum which is equal to 400 hours of clinical O&M experience that align with [ACVREP requirements](#). O&M practicum credits are variable and may be taken in 3-12 credit increments across multiple terms depending upon the practicum placement hours and the availability of a supervising Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). The O&M Program Coordinator works with students to arrange practicum placements based on geography, student interests, and availability of clinical partners within educational, rehabilitation and community settings. Students are eligible to sit for the national certifying exam for Orientation and Mobility Specialists within 6 months of completing of coursework. A person may be certified after

passing the national exam, submitting documentation of coursework completion, and with a signed documentation from the Program Coordinator.