The Department of Blindness and Low Vision Studies at Western Michigan University has been preparing vision professionals since 1961. That experience goes to work for individuals choosing to pursue graduate degrees that prepare students for a rewarding profession through which highly trained, caring individuals teach people to travel safely, efficiently and independently in their environment.

The **Master of Arts in Blindness and Low Vision Studies** (M.A.) is designed to develop students into orientation and mobility specialists. This 39-credit hour program, which includes a practicum and an internship, can be completed by full-time students in one calendar year (fall, spring, summer I and summer II). A distance education program for professionals with significant experience in the field of blindness and low vision is also available.

Students graduating from the program are trained to meet the requirements for successful completion of the national certification examination by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals in orientation and mobility.

Also available is the **Master of Arts in Blindness and Low Vision Studies Accelerated Graduate Degree Program** (M.A.), which allows students in the Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary health services program to accumulate as much as 12 credits toward the completion of a master’s degree in blindness and low vision studies while still enrolled as an undergraduate student in the interdisciplinary health services program. Students pay undergraduate tuition rates for these courses.

### Points of Pride
- Considered a premiere, world-class curriculum as the oldest and largest academic program that is consistently rated among the best in the nation.
- The program includes a practicum and an internship.
- Full-time students who attend on campus may complete the program in one calendar year - fall, spring, summer I and summer II.
- Successful students earn national certification through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) in orientation and mobility.
Orientation and Mobility

Teaching, Research and Program Focus Areas
Faculty have a strong knowledge base and are highly involved in research in a variety of areas. They frequently collaborate with colleagues as they work to advance the field and assist those with blindness and low vision to live fulfilling, independent lives.

Key areas of expertise include: long cane design and biomechanics, how hybrid and quieter vehicles affect the mobility of pedestrians with visual impairments, challenges in crossing streets at roundabout intersections and other crosswalks without stop signs or signals, the design and operation of accessible pedestrian signals at complex signalized intersections and GPS use.

Industry Highlights
O&M specialists are in high demand throughout the United States. Given the shortage of O&M specialists, graduates willing to relocate are virtually assured of employment in the field. Graduates meet the requirements to take the national certification examination ACVREP and are highly sought after by employers nationwide.

Funding
Some type of financial support is often available. As support levels vary, prospective students should contact program advisors to verify the support available under specific circumstances. A limited number of graduate assistantships are available. The deadline for funding consideration is March 1, 2018.

Admission
Domestic
Fall 2018: April 1, 2018
Spring 2019: Sept. 1, 2018

International
Fall 2018: April 1, 2018
Spring 2019: Aug. 1, 2018

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Western Michigan University est. 1903
Offering over 100 world class advanced degree programs and holding Carnegie Foundation classification as a higher research doctoral university, the institution has consistently appeared in the U.S. News & World Report as one of America’s best national universities. Graduate students make up 21 percent of the total student body and have been awarded nearly $52 million in financial assistance. WMU enjoys a rich 60+ year history of graduate education.

Kalamazoo, Michigan
The community offers a vibrant cultural atmosphere mixed with a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The city of Kalamazoo is located midway between Detroit and Chicago and is in close proximity to the shoreline of Lake Michigan.