

**Course Handbook**

**(Pre-enrolment Information)**

**10311NAT Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility**

**Vision Australia**

ABN 67 108 391 831

ACN 108 391 831

**Vision Australia Registered Training Organisation (RTO)**

RTO Number 21853

rto@visionaustralia.org

<http://www.visionaustralia.org/rto>

**Victoria**

17 Barrett Street

Kensington VIC 3031

**Course Information**

Michelle Sharples

Course Coordinator

T 03 9381 6425

E O&Mcourse@visionaustralia.org

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# INTRODUCTION

This Course Handbook should be read in conjunction with the course flyer and the RTO Student Handbook which are available at [www.visionaustralia.org/oandmcourse](http://www.visionaustralia.org/oandmcourse).

10311NAT Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility is designed to develop knowledge and skills so graduates can gain employment in the role of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists. O&M Specialists work with a range of clients across all age groups who are blind or have low vision to achieve their mobility goals through developing skills and abilities for safe and independent travel.

O&M Specialists work with clients in a broad range of environments. The O&M role may involve a significant amount of walking, as well as public transport travel and working in public areas, both indoors and outdoors. This necessitates a degree of physical fitness and a willingness to work outside in a range of weather conditions. The Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility aims to realistically reflect the work experiences and environments you will encounter when employed as an O&M Specialist. Consequently, there is a strong practical focus encompassing simulated fieldwork sessions and work placements.

# DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT

## Course Structure

The Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility is delivered face to face on a full-time basis, over a period of 20 months. This requires attendance 3 days a week, Tuesday to Thursday 9am till 5pm. Some variation to attendance days may be required during Work Placements 3 & 4 depending upon client availability. The course is comprised of 7 accredited units of competency, each of which must be successfully completed in order to obtain the Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility qualification.

There are three components to course delivery.

* **Classroom Based Training**

These face to face sessions cover the theory and knowledge underpinning O&M practice.

Location: Vision Australia/Seeing Eye Dogs, 17 Barrett Street, Kensington, Victoria

* **Practical Fieldwork**

These sessions are a critical component of the course delivery. Students generally work with a partner where the emphasis is on teaching the skills and knowledge of O&M to a simulated client. During each session students are required to wear blindfolds or low vision simulators whilst learning to travel in a variety of environments from simple residential areas, crossing roads, using public transport to navigating complex city routes under instruction from their partner. These sessions often take place outdoors and students are expected to work in a range of weather conditions.

Location: Predominantly inner Melbourne

* **Work Placement**

Students undertake 4 supervised work placements during the course. These placements provide valuable opportunities for students to observe industry and professional practice and to develop their own O&M skills and knowledge in a workplace setting.

Work placements are organised by the Course Coordinator. Each student is assigned a work place supervisor who is an experienced O&M Specialist or for the dog guide component, a Dog Guide Instructor. Students attend their assigned workplace in accordance with the respective office hours and some flexibility in start and finish times may be necessary. Required attendance during Work Placements 3 and 4 will vary in accordance with client availability.

Location: Predominantly Melbourne metropolitan region but may include regional locations close to Melbourne. Other locations may be negotiated; however travel and living costs will be the student’s own responsibility.

## Units of Competency

**Subject: Fundamentals of O&M**

**Unit 1: OAMASS801A Undertake orientation and mobility assessments**

**Unit 2: OAMDEL802A Prepare to deliver orientation and mobility programs**

**Unit 3: OAMIMP803A Implement orientation and mobility programs**

The first 3 units of the course are delivered together as a holistic subject: Fundamentals of O&M. This approach is designed to realistically reflect the way an O&M Specialist would perform their role in the workplace.

**Classroom Based Training: Theory of O&M**

These sessions examine the underpinning knowledge, principles and theories of O&M instruction for people who are blind or have low vision. The subject provides a theoretical basis around the structure, function and pathology of the visual system. Sessions include understanding the impact of blindness and low vision for all developmental stages and a broad understanding of human anatomy and physiology. The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the role of the O&M Specialist in the rehabilitation system and apply O&M principles to problems encountered when providing habilitation and rehabilitation programs to people who are blind or have low vision. Additional or more complex needs will also be covered, including working with people who have dual sensory loss, brain injury, and physical and intellectual impairments.

**Practicum: Practical Application of O&M Teaching Skills**

These fieldwork sessions are designed to build students’ knowledge and the practical application of O&M techniques such as guiding, independent travel skills, effective use of low vision and long cane use. The sessions emphasise both the technical skills of O&M as well as teaching skills using a client centred approach, including collaborative goal setting, lesson planning, appropriate strategies for instruction, evaluation and reflective practice.

Practicum sessions take place most afternoons during delivery of this subject. During these sessions students take turns wearing blindfolds or low vision simulators which must not be removed until their partner, the student instructor, has concluded the teaching session.

**Work Placement**

Two work placements occur as part of this subject.

* **Work Placement 1 (Year 1): 18 days (1 – 3 days a week)**

This placement commences with observation of how a specific blindness/low vision organisation operates and the role O&M plays in rehabilitation. Students begin to manage a small O&M case load under supervision from their work place supervisor. As part of this placement students are required to conduct initial O&M assessments, and work collaboratively with clients to plan, deliver and manage O&M training programs to meet the client’s personal mobility goals.

* **Work Placement 2 (Year 2): 30 days (3 day a week block placement)**

This placement is designed to consolidate the skills and knowledge gained during the first 5 units of the course. Students take on a case load of approximately four clients and work with minimal supervision. Students are required to undertake all aspects of a typical O&M case load including initial O&M assessments, manage client centred O&Mtraining programs, complete any reporting requirements and work with other service providers as required. Additional tasks may include conducting community awareness sessions and information workshops, and participating in case review meetings.

**Unit 4: OAMENV804A Conduct environmental access appraisals in orientation and mobility contexts**

**Classroom Based Training**

These sessions cover the underpinning knowledge required to undertake environmental appraisals in an O&M context of a range of built environments. This includes preparing reports with recommendations to enable organisations to meet legislative requirements and access standards so people who are blind or have low vision can safely access the environment. This involves examining relevant existing legislation, standards and regulations, and their impact on access from an O&M perspective.

**Practical Application of Skills**

Fieldwork sessions are undertaken to practice applying skills and knowledge required to prepare and conduct O&M access appraisals in a range of environments, such as public buildings, public transport infrastructure, streetscapes and retail spaces.

**Work Placement 2 (Year 2): 30 days (3 day a week block placement)**

Work placement for this unit is embedded within Work Placement 2 (see page 6). During placement students prepare and undertake a supervised O&M access appraisal of an educational facility in accordance with the organisational procedures of the workplace and submit a written report.

**Unit 5: OAMRES805A Research and implement new practices in orientation and mobility**

**Classroom Based Training**

These sessions cover the underpinning knowledge required to effectively research and identify new, innovative or alternative approaches to assistive technologies that might be relevant to clients and complement O&M practice. Students learn how to access relevant information sources, and to evaluate and review current and emerging technologies for their application to O&M and viability for clients.

**Practical Application of Skills**

Fieldwork sessions are undertaken to practice the skills of preparing, conducting and reviewing the implementation of new practices and assistive technologies during O&M training programs. This may include exploring, experimenting and evaluating a range of existing and new practices and technologies in O&M, such as electronic orientation aids, smart phones, tablets and ultrasonic devices.

**Work Placement 2 (Year 2): 30 days (3 day a week block placement)**

Work placement for this unit is embedded within Work Placement 2 (see page 6). Students work with a client utilising a new practice in orientation and mobility.

**Unit 6: OAMDOG806A Work with dog guide users to achieve specific orientation objectives**

**Classroom Based Training**

These sessions cover the underpinning knowledge required to understand the specific orientation needs of dog guide users and the adaptation of O&M techniques to provide orientation to dog guide teams in a range of environments. Sessions cover the basics of dog guide training and mobility, including terminology, commands, behaviours, orientation processes and techniques.

**Practical Application of Skills**

Fieldwork sessions are undertaken as part of delivery of this unit to learn to effectively work with dog guide teams and apply orientation techniques to assist clients to achieve their orientation objectives in a range of environments. Students learn to apply their knowledge and skills to plan, conduct, evaluate and manage training programs for clients using dog guides.

**Work Placement 3 (Year 2): 40 hours**

This placement is undertaken after the theory and practical sessions are complete. It is undertaken at a dog guide facility under the supervision of an experienced Dog Guide Instructor. Students prepare, deliver, evaluate and manage an orientation program with a dog guide user. Work placement days and timing will be dependent upon client availability and negotiated with students and work placement supervisors.

**Unit 7: OAMCHI807A Conduct developmental orientation and mobility for early childhood clients**

**Classroom Based Training**

These sessions cover the underpinning knowledge required to conduct O&M assessments, and design and implement O&M training programs to meet the particular needs of early childhood clients who are blind or have low vision. Sessions cover early childhood development, including sensory, motor and cognitive development and the impact of blindness and low vision. Students gain an understanding of key learning and developmental theories, models of service delivery, frameworks and legislation relevant to early childhood. Students demonstrate knowledge of the key principles of working with early childhood clients as they learn and practice the skills of O&M.

**Work Placement 4 (Year 2): 140 hours**

This placement is undertaken after the theory sessions are complete. Students will be assigned a work placement supervisor who is an O&M Specialist experienced in working with early childhood clients. During this placement students will have the opportunity to observe a range of programs delivered to early childhood clients who are blind or have low vision and their families. In addition students are required to plan, deliver and evaluate a small number of developmental O&M programs for early childhood clients with permission from the client’s family and under direct supervision from their O&M work placement supervisor. Work placement days and timing will be dependent upon client availability and negotiated with students and work placement supervisors.

## Unit Descriptors and Elements

**Unit 1: OAMASS801A Undertake orientation and mobility assessments**

This unit covers the knowledge and skills required to assess the functional orientation and mobility needs of clients who are blind or have low vision. Information gained through the assessment process is used to develop orientation and mobility strategies which meet the client’s individual needs.

**Element 1:** Gather information

**Element 2:** Undertake initial interview

**Element 3:** Assess the O&M needs of the client

**Element 4:** Develop specialised O&M strategies to meet specific needs of the client

**Unit 2: OAMDEL802A Prepare to deliver orientation and mobility programs**

This unit describes the outcomes required to apply advanced knowledge and skills to design, resource and develop orientation and mobility training programs for a variety of clients in a range of contexts.

**Element 1:** Analyse the specialised O&M needs of the client

**Element 2:** Assess readiness of clients to acquire and perform the specialised skills

**Element 3:** Design a specialised training program

**Element 4:** Resource a specialised training program

**Unit 3: OAMIMP803A Implement orientation and mobility programs**

This unit describes the outcomes required to conduct, revise and evaluate orientation and mobility training programs to meet the individualised needs of clients who are blind or have low vision.

**Element 1:** Use specialised teaching methods and instructional styles to meet the needs of clients in a range of contexts

**Element 2:** Conduct training programs to teach or develop the specialised orientation and mobility knowledge and skills required by clients

**Element 3:** Review and adapt the teaching of the skill in response to feedback

**Element 4:** Evaluate training program directions and outcomes

**Element 5:** Plan and participate in a training program review meeting

**Unit 4: OAMENV804A Conduct environmental access appraisals in orientation and mobility contexts**

This unit covers the knowledge and skills to conduct an environmental appraisal of a range of built and pedestrian environments and prepare a report with recommendations to enable an organisation to meet legislative and organisational requirements to allow people who are blind or have low vision to safely access the environment.

**Element 1:** Respond to enquiry for environmental access appraisal

**Element 2:** Prepare for environmental access appraisal

**Element 3:** Conduct environmental access appraisal

**Element 4:** Report environmental access appraisal results

**Unit 5: OAMRES805A Research and implement new practices in orientation and mobility**

This unit covers the knowledge and skills to research new mobility aids and assistive technologies and their implementation to meet the needs of clients who are blind or have low vision.

**Element 1:** Review effectiveness of current assistive technologies

**Element 2:** Research advances in assistive technologies

**Element 3:** Assess the potential for use of new technologies with clients

**Element 4:** Integrate assistive technologies into orientation and mobility practices

**Element 5:** Evaluate the use of assistive technologies

**Unit 6: OAMDOG806A Work with dog guide users to achieve specific orientation objectives**

This unit covers the knowledge and skills to apply orientation and mobility techniques to work with dog guide users to develop and manage an individualised training program around the orientation needs of the client.

**Element 1:** Undertake assessment

**Element 2:** Plan an individualised training program to develop orientation knowledge and skills for a client using a dog guide

**Element 3:** Teach and develop orientation knowledge and skills for a client using a dog guide

**Element 4:** Manage training program directions and outcomes

**Unit 7: OAMCHI807A Conduct developmental orientation and mobility for early childhood clients**

This unit covers the knowledge and skills to design and implement a training program in orientation and mobility to meet the particular needs of early childhood clients who are blind or have low vision.

**Element 1:** Undertake initial assessment

**Element 2:** Plan an individualised training program to develop orientation and mobility knowledge and skills for early childhood clients

**Element 3:** Teach and develop specialised orientation and mobility knowledge and skills to early childhood clients

**Element 4:** Manage training program directions and outcomes

## Assessment

Upon completion of a unit of competency, students are assessed as Competent (C) or Not Yet Competent (NYC). In order to successfully attain the Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility, a student must be deemed competent for all 7 units.

The subject Fundamentals of O&M which comprises the unit cluster of: OAMASS801A Undertake orientation and mobility assessments, OAMDEL802A Prepare to deliver orientation and mobility programs, and OAMIMP803A Implement orientation and mobility programs, for delivery is also assessed holistically. This approach is designed to realistically reflect the way an O&M Specialist would perform their role in the workplace. For the remaining Units 4 - 7, assessment is specific to the individual unit of competency.

A range of assessment methods are used including case studies, observation of practical tasks, written reports, oral presentations, role plays and third party reports from workplace supervisors. Assessment is conducted in the classroom, in the field (in a variety of environments) and in the workplace. In some instances, a simulated environment is used. Some assessment tasks are undertaken with actual clients who are blind or have low vision and who may also have other disabilities. Where assessment involves observation in the workplace, there may be several people present including the client, the client’s family member or representative, the workplace supervisor and a qualified Assessor.

Students must submit only their own work and include appropriate referencing as relevant (refer to the sections titled *Cheating and Plagiarism* and *Referencing* in the RTO Student Handbook). Consideration of special circumstances, requests for reassessment and assessment appeals are available to students via the process provided in the RTO Student Handbook (refer to the sections titled *Assessment* and *Complaints and Appeals*).

# STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

## Blindfolds and Low Vision Simulators

All students are required to wear blindfolds and low vision simulators as a vital component to the practical elements of this course. This provides students with an opportunity to experience mobility with limited vision so they can fully appreciate the challenges encountered by travellers who are blind or have low vision. This also provides the student withgreater insight as to why O&M techniques are demonstrated in a particular way, and reinforces the importance of developing effective communication and teaching strategies when in the role of teacher. Blindfolds and low vision simulators must not be removed by students whilst undertaking the practical sessions,that is, notuntil instructed by their partner when the training session is complete.

## Travel

Students are required to travel independently to, from and during practical fieldwork and work placement locations. A significant proportion of this travel is undertaken on public transport. Travel arrangement and associated costs are the responsibility of the student. However costs associated with client service delivery during work placements at Vision Australia will be covered.

## Dress Code

Due to the nature of the practical fieldwork sessions and work placement, students are required to work outdoors in a range of weather conditions. This requires suitable dress including appropriate shoes, and wearing sunscreen, sun hat and raincoat as needed. Dress should meet OHS requirements.

Much of the work is conducted in environments where there is a high level of curiosity and public interest, therefore student presentation is always expected to be neat, smart casual. Modesty should be a consideration and your dress should not offend others. Students are likely to encounter people from a range of backgrounds, cultures and ages.

## Behaviour During Work Placement

Your work placement host organisation may be a prospective employer, so students should behave with this in mind. Students are expected to act in accordance with the organisation’s policies, procedures and code of conduct. You are requested to dress in accordance with the culture of the workplace (usually neat, smart casual) remembering you will often be working outdoors.

## Confidentiality

During the course and while on work placement, students will be privy to personal and confidential information relating to clients. The confidentiality of this information must be honoured and privacy of the client respected. Take particular notice of the confidentiality policy. Do not discuss client information with others in front of the client or with any other person who does not have a need to know. Students are required to sign a “**Confidentiality Agreement”** prior to work placements.

* Always act in the best interest of the client you work with.
* Do not discuss client information with students, agency staff or any other people unless they are involved in the case.
* If presenting or discussing information for case studies, do not use any information which may identify the client.
* It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they are aware of specific agency policies regarding confidentiality (found in the agency Policies and Procedures manual).

# RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

## Textbooks

It is **essential** that students purchase the following textbook.

Deverell, L., Taylor, S. & Prentice, J. (2009) Orientation and Mobility Methods. Techniques for Independent Travel. Some copies are available for purchase via the Course Coordinator ($50.00) or through Guide Dogs Victoria.

It is **highly recommended** that students purchase the following textbook.

Blasch, B., Wiener, R. & Welsh, R. (2010) *Foundations of Orientation and Mobility, 3rd Edition.* American Foundation for the Blind.

This book is available for purchase online from the American Foundation for the Blind, including the purchase of individual chapters at: <http://www.afb.org/bookshelf/librarylogin.asp>

Details of additional required reading will be provided during training sessions.

## Information Technology

* Computer
* Smartphone or tablet
* Camera for taking digital photographs
* Printer
* Internet access
* An email account
* Microsoft Office software
* Computer protection software
* Basic computing skills
* If you have a disability, you may need additional accessibility hardware or software

Computer access will be available at Vision Australia offices.

# 2016 COURSE DETAILS

## Course Dates

The Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility commences on Tuesday 16 February 2016 and concludes on Thursday 12 October 2017. Term dates and holiday breaks are as follows:

***Year 1: Tuesday 16 February 2016 – Thursday 15 December 2016***

|  | **Term Dates** | **Holiday Breaks** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Term 1 | Tuesday 16 Feb 2016 – Thursday 24 Mar 2016 | Friday 25 Mar 2016 – Monday 4 April 2016 |
| Term 2 | Tuesday 5 April 2016 – Thursday 30 June 2016 | Friday 1 July 2016 – Monday 11 July 2016 |
| Term 3 | Tuesday 12 July 2016 – Thursday 22 Sept 2016 | Friday 23 Sept 2016 – Monday 3 Oct 2016 |
| Term 4 | Tuesday 4 Oct 2016 – Thursday 15 Dec 2016 | Friday 16 Dec 2016 – Monday 30 January 2017 |

***Year 2: Tuesday 31 January 2017 – Thursday 12 October 2017***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Term Dates** | **Holiday Breaks** |
| Term 1 | Tuesday 31 January 2017 – Thursday 18 May 2017 | Friday 19 May 2017 – Monday 29 May 2017 |
| Term 2 | Tuesday 30 May 2017 – Thursday 20 July 2017 | Friday 21 July 2017 – Monday 31 July 2017 |
| Term 3 | Tuesday 1 Aug 2017 – Thursday 12 Oct 2017 | Holiday breaks will vary depending on your arrangements for Work Placement 3 & 4 |

## Fees, Charges and Refunds

The 2016 intake course fee is $13,500.00. Refer to the Fee and Charges Schedule which details when payments are due as well as information regarding charges and refunds.

## Other Costs

Students are responsible for costs of the prescribed text ($50.00), equipment, stationery and information technology. Public transport costs associated with learning activities are also the responsibility of the student (refer to section on Travel).

# PRE-ENROLMENT CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

## Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the acknowledgement of skills and knowledge obtained through formal training (industry and education), work experience and life experience. The RPL process involves the student attending an interview and providing evidence of their prior learning and experience. This is then assessed against the unit of competency for which RPL is being applied.

In order to receive RPL, students must follow the formal process set out in the RTO Student Handbook in the section titled *Recognition of Prior Learning.* Application should be made prior to course commencement. For further information including fees, contact the Course Coordinator.

## Special Needs

If you wish to apply for this course and have special needs or specific requirements, please contact the Course Coordinator prior to enrolment. Specific information assists us to meet your needs and ensure training is accessible for all participants.

## National Police History Check and Victorian Working with Children Check

As work placements are undertaken at Vision Australia and you will have contact with actual clients some of whom will be children, Vision Australia RTO must receive a National Police History Check and Victorian Working with Children Check **prior to confirming your enrolment**. If the result of a check is deemed unsatisfactory to Vision Australia, the individual will be denied a place in the course or their enrolment will be terminated immediately. Vision Australia does not refund any monies to students in relation to costs incurred for checks that are deemed unsatisfactory.

Vision Australia RTO will arrange and cover the cost of your National Police History Check. You will be requested to complete a Fit2Work Consent Form and provide proof of identity (100 point check) at the conclusion of your interview. Further information will be provided when the arrangements for your interview are made. We are unable to accept a previous National Police History Check.

It is the student’s responsibility to arrange and cover any costs associated with obtaining a Victorian Working with Children Check. Your application for a Volunteer Check can be completed online at the Department of Justice Victoria website at: <https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/onlineapplication.doj>, printed and lodged with a passport photograph at an Australia Post outlet. There is no cost for the Volunteer Check aside the cost of the passport photograph.

Refer to the section titled *National Police History Check and Working with Children Check* in the RTO Student Handbook.

# APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

1. Read the information contained in the course flyer, RTO Student Handbook and this Course Handbook. If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator.
2. If you wish to apply for a place in the Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility February 2016 intake, complete and submit the RTO Enrolment Form, certified documents which verify your previous education and O&M Expression of Interest to: Michelle Sharples, Course Coordinator, 17 Barrett Street, Kensington VIC 3031 or by email to O&M@visionaustralia.org. The closing date for applications is **Thursday 5 November 2015**.
3. Applicants who are selected for a first-round interview will be contacted by **Thursday 12 April 2015** to arrange a time. Interviews will be conducted by a panel of 2-3 people during week commencing **Monday16 November 2015**.
4. Successful applicants will be offered a place by **Monday 30 November 2015** subject to the following requirements being satisfied:
* Vision Australia RTO verifying qualifications provided
* your eligibility to study If you are not an Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident
* satisfactory result of the National Police History Check
* satisfactory result of a Victorian Working with Children Check
1. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by **Thursday 3 December 2015**.