



**Updated May 2024**

## **WCBVI Short Course FAQ**

The Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) Short Course team has received several questions regarding Short Courses. To address these questions, an FAQ was developed.

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## **What is a Short Course?**

In order to promote, facilitate, and provide appropriate education opportunities for all Wisconsin children who are blind or visually impaired and receiving IEP services, regardless of their education placement, Outreach staff offers courses of variable length designed and tailored to a child's specific [Expanded Core Curriculum \(ECC\)](#) needs.

According to the American Foundation for the Blind, "The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique disability-specific needs. Students who are blind or have low vision need the Expanded Core Curriculum in addition to the core academic curriculum of general education. The ECC should be used as a framework for assessing students, planning individual goals, and providing instruction." These areas include the following: compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes, orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, use of assistive technology, sensory efficiency skills, and self-determination.

## *What is a Group Short Course?*

A Group Short Course occurs via one of the two channels:

- A Student is signed up for pre-planned Short Course, such as a "Winter Weekend." These pre-planned Short Courses are on scheduled dates throughout the school year. Some might be broken up into several sessions, meeting virtually, some might be a weekend long and held in person in Janesville, or in various locations in Wisconsin.
- A program is selected from our menu of preplanned Short Courses, which are available to be hosted anywhere in the state of Wisconsin or virtually. We prefer to provide these programs for small groups of students, as that is how they have been designed, but we will absolutely adapt the program to work for only one student if desired. If hosted somewhere other than the Wisconsin Center for the Blind campus or virtually, Group Short Courses will be held on weekends or a maximum of three days during the week.

## *What is an Individual Short Course?*

- An Individual Short Course is when a student receives direct instruction from a Short Course Instructor in one of more areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum at the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired, or virtually depending on the student's needs. Instruction is driven by current ECC goals in the student's IEP. IEP teams contemplating a virtual should consider the following before referring a student:
  - Will the student need the additional support of an adult to access the instruction?
  - Will the student have success working with a new instructor for a short period of time?
  - Can the IEP goal be addressed safely and effectively through virtual instruction?
  - Will the student need to learn new skills to access virtual learning through Microsoft Teams?

*Why would the IEP team consider an Individual Short Course?*

An IEP team may consider a Short Course for a student that needs intensive instruction for a short period of time in the Expanded Core Curriculum.

An IEP team may not consider a Short Course as a way of providing Compensatory or Additional Services Special Education minutes, as we are not IEP team members and cannot provide specially designed instructional minutes. Additionally, Short Courses are not held over the summer months. WCBVI offers a variety of non-IEP driven programming over the summer months for students who are blind or visually impaired. Examples of intensive need include, but are not limited to the following scenarios:

- A student recently began using a new piece of assistive technology and needs extra instruction on how to efficiently use it.
- A student recently lost their vision and needs a jump start on learning braille and orientation and mobility skills.
- A student will be participating in work experience in their home community and will need to take the bus, but the student does not yet have the general skills needed for bus travel. The student would

benefit from several Center based lessons over the course of several days in Janesville to give them a foundation of basic travel skills.

- A student will be participating in a home economics course and needs intensive instruction in Independent Living Skills, so they are able to participate at the same time as their peers.

We will work with your team to determine programming times. For virtual Short Courses, optimal times to consider may be during a study hall or during a class that a student has a strong grasp on the content and missing some of the session would not negatively impact the student's education. When a student attends any Short Course programming, teams must consider potential positive and negative implications of missing school to participate.

IEP teams contemplating an Individual Virtual Short Course should consider the following before referring a student for **virtual programming**:

- Will the student need the additional support of an adult from their LEA to access the instruction?
- Will the student have success working with a new instructor for a short period of time?
- Can the IEP goal be addressed safely and effectively through virtual instruction?
- Will the student need to learn new skills to access virtual learning?
- Can my student achieve the desired outcome and goal in ten instructional hours or less?

*Can an Individual Short Course serve as a trial placement for attending the Wisconsin School for the Blind and Visually Impaired?*

No. The purpose of Individual Short Courses is not for determining whether WSBVI is a good fit for a student's educational placement.

An Individual Short Course is when a student receives direct instruction from a Short Course instructor on one or more areas of Expanded Core Curriculum at the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired or virtually; instruction is driven by goals created by the student's IEP team. The school days during the child's Individual Short Course have narrow focus – the goals the IEP team has determined need intensive instruction. Please note, academic courses are not addressed in these programs.

Additionally, the team has a great deal of flexibility within the day, as they do not follow the bell schedule, aside from the start and end of the day, as well as meals. The Short Course team encourages students to participate in one or two classes, such as PE, so they have a break from the intensive instruction and the opportunity to spend time with other students during the day. Whereas residential placement at WSBVI is determined in conjunction with local education agencies, schools, and parents. Placement at WSBVI, as defined in [DPI Bulletin 11.01](#), determined through a meeting of student's IEP team that includes key staff members from WSBVI, families, and the LEA, WSBVI conducts a 45-day observation/assessment period on campus at the start of a trial placement.

### **How can Short Course team members support IEP Teams?**

*Can Short Course team members attend IEP team meetings?*

Short Course team members can support IEP teams in a variety of ways, from sharing general information on Short Course programming to assisting in the planning of an Individual Short Course. Short Course team members can participate in IEP team meetings as a resource for planning and logistics to ensure the student's programming at WCBVI meets the IEP team's goal for the student but may not attend for purposes of determining areas of student need.

Please see [DPI Bulletin 11.01](#) for more information on WCBVI Outreach Team Member Roles.

*When does an IEP need to be held for Short Course programming (both group and individual)?*

Groups: It is not necessary to hold an IEP, as WCBVI is not providing FAPE, this responsibility lies with the district. If there are student needs that must be met that are outside of the capacity of a TVI or O&M, we will contact the LEA and family directly to discuss these needs further and to explore if we are able to provide those needs. (Example: A student uses a walker and training from a PT is required for staff).

Individual: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction gives guidance that if a student misses more than ten days of school at their LEA, a change of placement should be indicated. This follows the disciplinary rule (manifestation determination) and focuses on the concept of missing more than ten days of school. If an IEP team would like their student to participate in a WCBVI Short Course that is more than ten days, they will need to indicate so on their change of placement from (P2), as well as under special education services (I-4). Additionally, if an IEP team determines the child should attend a Short Course on a regular basis (i.e., the first week of each month for a quarter), this should also be documented in the same places.

If a Short Course program runs less than ten full days, the IEP team can determine how they would like this programming documented, if at all. If a goal is being addressed that is not already in the IEP, this should be added to the IEP. Communication should occur between parents/guardians and the IEP team/school district that their child will be here attending programming; however, in this scenario, FAPE belongs to the school district.

## **Registration and Logistics Questions**

*What is the timeline for submitting paperwork?*

All Short Course paperwork, whether the program is in-person or virtual, must be submitted one month prior to each program. This included parents and guardians updating any previously submitted paperwork.

*What if there is a waiting list for Short Courses?*

If a Short Course is full, we will create a waiting list of students. Families will be notified if a space opens.

*Can Short Courses be held over the summer months?*

Short Courses are not held over the summer months. WCBVI offer a variety of programming over the summer months for students who are blind or visually impaired; our Short Course team members help to staff these programs!

*How do I enroll in a Short Course?*

The first step to enroll in a Short Course is to visit our [website](#) and complete a registration form for a Group Short Course or our interest form for an

Individual Short Course. If you are unsure or have questions before enrolling, please email: [wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us](mailto:wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us), with “Short Courses” in the subject line, along with your question(s). One of our team members will get back to you promptly.

*How do I know what Group Short Courses are being offered this year?*

Information about current offerings may be found on our [website](#) and via the [Weekly Update](#).

*Can a WSBVI student attend Short Courses?*

Yes! To enroll your child in a program, please email the Outreach Inbox ([wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us](mailto:wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us)) to notify a team member of interest. A brief form will be sent to you to complete your child’s registration.

Note: The WCBVI Short Course team cannot guarantee that staffing will be available during the hours outside of the start of the program and the end of the program for WSBVI students. Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting students to and from Short Course programs.

If you have questions or would like more information, please send an email to [wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us](mailto:wcbvi.outreach@wcbvi.k12.wi.us) with the subject line Short Courses.

Resources:

[WCBVI Short Courses](#)

[DPI Wisconsin Bulletin 11.01](#)