



NextSense Institute
Master of Disability Studies

2023 Student Handbook

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This document has been optimised for electronic review. Content includes active hyperlinks.

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MACQUARIE
University



Director's Welcome Message

On behalf of NextSense Institute and Macquarie University I am delighted to welcome you as a student of both NextSense Institute and the University. I encourage you to explore this handbook and our website to find out more about NextSense Institute and its many strengths, including our:

- outstanding faculty and staff;
- innovative research that supports the role of the Institute as a leader in the field of education (both initial and continuing) for a wide range of professionals who work with children and adults with sensory disabilities; and
- strong partnerships with educational and other service providers that provide developmental, educational, therapeutic, and other support services for children and adults who have sensory disabilities.

At NextSense Institute we take great pride in producing well-prepared professionals who are ready to join national and international efforts in addressing the needs of children and adults with hearing and/or vision loss. Since we commenced our programs in 1994, students at NextSense Institute have come from every state in Australia and more than 13 other countries. Graduates of our programs can be found working in all those locations, and many more.

In partnership with Macquarie University, NextSense Institute is committed to continuous improvement and review in its provision of evidence-based learning opportunities for teachers and allied professionals serving people with a sensory disability, research in this same area, and professionally related community service. Our philosophy is that all individuals with disabilities have the right to access high quality evidence-based services to meet their educational, developmental, and related support needs.

Once again, I invite you to explore this handbook and our website to learn about the exceptional work occurring in the Institute and the broad range of learning opportunities that are available to you—whether that be as a graduate student, or as a participant in our Continuing Professional Education program. We are always happy to share information about what we do, and I invite you to visit us at any time, virtually or in person.

I wish you every success in pursuing your educational ambitions,

Professor Greg Leigh, AO, PhD, FACE

Director, NextSense Institute

NextSense Institute

NextSense Institute is Australia's preeminent centre for research and professional studies in the field of education and related service delivery for children with sensory disabilities. The Centre is administered by NextSense and is operated in affiliation with Macquarie University.

Situated in the grounds of the national headquarters of NextSense in North Rocks (NSW), among several schools and educational services, NextSense Institute offers students a unique opportunity for observation and practical experience.

All degrees offered at NextSense Institute are awards of Macquarie University. Students enrol through the University and must meet the University's criteria for admission and progression.

NextSense is a not-for-profit that provides dedicated, innovative, and customised services aimed at breaking down barriers for children, adults, and families of people with hearing or vision loss.

Macquarie University is a public research university based in Sydney, in the suburb of Macquarie Park. Founded in 1964, it was the third university to be established in the metropolitan area of Sydney and was named after Governor Lachlan Macquarie. Uniquely located in the heart of Australia's largest high-tech precinct, Macquarie brings together 40,000 students and 2000 staff on a campus that spans 126 hectares.

In collaboration with Macquarie University, NextSense Institute is committed to continuous improvement and review in its provision of evidence-based learning opportunities for teachers and allied health practitioners serving people with a sensory disability, research in this same area, and professionally related community service.

NextSense Institute's philosophy is that all individuals with disabilities have a right of access to appropriate and high-quality evidence-based education and allied health services.

Contact Information

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Dr Sue Silveira, Course Director
Phone: 0477 202 129



Tanya Kysa, Graduate Studies Coordinator
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Alison Hawkins-Bond, Professional Experience Coordinator
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Andrew Spencer, Manager, Library and Information Services
Email: institute.library@nextsense.org.au

Academic Studies

NextSense Institute provides a range of postgraduate educational award options for professionals engaged, or seeking to engage, in serving people with a sensory disability. In particular, the Institute offers the Macquarie University award of Master of Disability Studies (MDisabilityStud).

Continuing Professional Education

In addition to university courses, NextSense Institute is committed to delivering high-quality continuing professional education — in-person and remotely — to meet the professional learning needs of educators, therapists, health professionals and families. Information about current CPE courses on offer is available on the [NextSense website](#).

The AG Bell Academy of Listening and Spoken Language has accredited SPED8931, 8933 and 8935 for 20 Continuing Education Units per course. Should you wish to pursue certification as a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist Auditory Verbal Therapist or Educator after you complete your degree, these CEUs will assist you to achieve the majority of the 70 CEUs you require.

If you would like to learn more about this, please contact [Trudy Smith](#) or go to the [AG Bell website](#).

Research and Publication

NextSense Institute conducts research on a wide range of topics related to (re)habilitation and education of people with a sensory disability. Research infrastructure at the NextSense Institute includes a highly specialised modern library, which provides access to print and online resources, as well as access to all facilities at NextSense and Macquarie University. In addition, NextSense Institute's Ross Field Building houses purpose-built research suites for use by academics and higher degree research students.

Research projects fall into three broad categories:

1. Projects conducted by members of the academic staff (either individually or in collaboration with other researchers). Projects may be supported by existing research infrastructure as part of the NextSense commitment to the conduct of research in sensory disabilities. Alternatively, research may be funded through the University's internal grants schemes or through one of several external grant schemes (e.g. the Australian Research Council). Students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the current research projects and research interests of staff within the Institute. This will be of particular importance for students seeking to continue studies in a higher degree by research.

2. Projects conducted by staff or research associates with philanthropic support from one of several sources including endowments, such as Japan-Australia Friendship Fund (JAFF).
3. Projects conducted by students undertaking research as part of their degree studies. These projects may be supported (to varying degrees) by existing research infrastructure.

NextSense Institute Postgraduate Programs

NextSense Institute offers a range of postgraduate programs including Master of Disability Studies (MDisabilityStud), Master of Research (MRes), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). All are awards of Macquarie University.

Studies in the Master of Disability Studies offer the opportunity to specialise in one of three areas - deaf/hard of hearing (DHH), blindness/low vision (BLV), or sensory disability (SD) - within a contemporary disability context. The program is available fully online asynchronously for part-time or full-time study. Table 1 on page 10 lists the units available to study through the Master of Disability Studies.

Master of Disability Studies

The Master of Disability Studies (MDisabilityStud) is a one year full-time (or equivalent part-time) degree program designed to meet the needs of a range of candidates including: qualified teachers who wish to obtain a qualification to teach students who have either hearing or vision loss; teachers already working in the sensory disability field who wish to upgrade their skills and qualifications; and a wide range of professionals seeking to complete studies in disability specifically in hearing or vision loss.

Education: Blindness/Low Vision Specialisation

Completion of the Master of Disability Studies (Education: Blindness/Low Vision specialisation), in addition to annual professional learning, will see graduates eligible for membership under the South Pacific Educators of Vision Impaired (SPEVI) category 'Qualified Specialist Teacher (VI) plus Professional Learning'. Members of SPEVI in this category may apply to be service providers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Refer to the 'Recommended Study Patterns' at: [Education: Blindness/Low Vision](#)

Education: Deaf/Hard of Hearing Specialisation

Completion of the Master of Disability Studies (Education: Deaf/Hard of Hearing specialisation) will see graduates eligible for full membership of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf (NAATD). Members of NAATD in this category may apply to be service providers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Completion of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing specialisation provides the skills and knowledge to work in a range of educational roles inclusive of itinerant/advisory visiting teacher and regular school positions (consistent with the Graduate Statements in the Teacher of the Deaf Elaborations to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers [APST]).

Acquisition of the skills and knowledge that are needed to work in more specialised areas such as sign bilingual education or Auditory Verbal Practice will require

additional professional development in those contexts (consistent with Statements for additional stages of the Teacher of the Deaf Elaborations to the APST). Refer to the 'Recommended Study Patterns' at: [Education: Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#).

Sensory Disability Specialisation

Completion of the Sensory Disability specialisation will provide graduates with advanced knowledge in both hearing and vision loss within contemporary studies in disability, preparing students for roles that support the needs of children and adults with hearing and/or vision loss.

It is suitable for a range of allied health and other professionals (such as youth, community and social workers, disability support workers/carers, and managers in disability organisations) who are seeking to complete studies in disability and specifically in hearing loss and blindness/low vision. Refer to the 'Recommended Study Patterns' at: [Sensory Disability](#).

Please note: The Sensory Disability specialisation will **not** qualify you as a specialist teacher.

Application for admission to the course

All NextSense Institute/Macquarie University students apply for admission online via the [Macquarie University website](#).

All prospective students are encouraged to consult with NextSense Institute staff to obtain unit selection and general advice before submitting their application.

Dr Sue Silveira Course Director

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Tanya Kysa Graduate Studies Coordinator

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Email: student.enquiries@nextsense.org.au

Entry requirements

- AQF Level 7 qualification (Bachelor degree), or
- a recognised equivalent in a related field (education, psychology, speech and hearing, special education, disability studies, health sciences, allied health, or a related discipline), **and**
- a minimum of two years (full-time equivalent) work experience relevant to the chosen specialisation.

This degree is not an alternative to a pre-service postgraduate qualification in teaching (e.g. Diploma of Education or Master of Teaching) and will not qualify a graduate to be accredited with the NSW Institute of Teachers (or equivalent teacher accreditation bodies in other states) if you are not already qualified for such accreditation.

Students with Disabilities

It is the policy of both the NextSense Institute and the University to respond to individual student needs to the greatest extent possible. Consistent with this policy, NextSense Institute and the University welcome applications from students with disabilities and/or those who may require special assistance to successfully complete their course.

Students with access support requirements are encouraged to consider **two forms** of registration:

1. Registration with Macquarie University Campus Wellbeing: [Accessibility Service](#) to ensure that adjustments to assessment tasks are explored and then in place, **prior to the start of the session**. This is managed solely by Macquarie University Campus Wellbeing and you **must** register for suitable adjustments to assessment tasks to occur.

AND

2. Registration with the NextSense Institute for access support such as sign language interpreters, captioning, and materials in alternative formats. This is managed solely by the NextSense Institute and without registration, suitable access will not occur.

Registration is only required **once**, with the exception of temporary conditions which may require a form to be submitted each Session.

If you require NextSense access support such as Auslan interpreters, captioning, and materials in alternative formats, please complete the **Confidential Registration for Access Services Form**. NextSense Institute Access Services will not be approved and provided if you do not submit this form.

Braille and Auslan hurdle requirements (in brief)

To meet the Master of Disability Studies requirements, students must achieve a minimum level of proficiency in either Braille (for the Education: Blindness/Low Vision specialisation and Sensory Disability specialisation) or Auslan (for the Education: Deaf/Hard of Hearing specialisation and Sensory Disability specialisation). Students **must** complete Auslan/Braille hurdles **prior to enrolling in their professional experience unit SPED8910 or SPED8909**. Please read "[Hurdle Requirements \(Mandatory\)](#)" for more detailed information.

Professional Experience requirements (in brief)

Prospective students who wish to seek employment as a teacher of the deaf or teacher of students who are blind or have low vision will need to complete a professional experience unit. Each State Teacher Registration Board has specific professional experience requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that they meet the requirement for the state in which they seek registration as a teacher of the deaf or teacher of students who are blind or have low vision.

When planning for enrolment in the professional experience unit, students should be aware of the following:

- **Planning should begin at least one session prior to the session of enrolment**
- Observing study patterns relevant to the specialisation to ensure pre-requisites and hurdles are met
- The need to apply for a special waiver as part of enrolling
- The need to negotiate supervision at the professional experience location

Unit Fees

Units undertaken for university credit carry the enrolment fee applicable to either Commonwealth supported or full-fee places at postgraduate level. Students should consult the [University website](#) for **estimated** fees. Should exact fees be required please contact [Macquarie University](#) directly.

Scholarships

Students of the Master of Disability Studies are the recipients of a variety of scholarships and study support schemes. This includes scholarships offered by the NSW, VIC and SA Departments of Education for current teachers looking to retrain as specialist teachers; and Macquarie University scholarships for postgraduate students that meet set eligibility criteria.

NextSense and Macquarie University will support students to meet any special requirements of scholarships, so long as these requirements do not conflict with university requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of scholarship and university requirements and to seek advice on how to meet both.

For information on available scholarships, please contact student.enquiries@nextsense.org.au

Table 1: NextSense Institute - Unit availability/Timetable

Most units are offered online and do not require attendance on-campus. The exceptions are Professional Experience units, SPED8909 and SPED8910.

For successful completion of your course, access to a computer and the Internet is essential.

Unit Code	Unit Name	Convenor/ Lecturer	Session	Important Notes
SPED8909	Critical Reflection and Professional Experience for Practitioners in Sensory Disability	Alison Hawkins-Bond	1 & 2	In-person placement Permission to enrol required** Hurdle - Students must show evidence of completion of Auslan/Braille proficiency
SPED8910	Critical Reflection and Professional Experience for Teachers in Sensory Disability	Alison Hawkins-Bond	1 & 2	In-person placement Permission to enrol required** Hurdle - Students must show evidence of completion of Auslan/Braille proficiency
SPED8911	Inclusion and Professional Collaboration in Sensory Disability	Dr Sue Silveira/ Dr Bronwen Scott	2	Online-flexible
SPED8912	Independent Project in Sensory Disability	Dr Sue Silveira	1 & 2	Online-flexible Permission to enrol required**
SPED8913	Research in Sensory Disability	Dr Bronwen Scott	1 & 2	Online-flexible
SPED8914	Perspectives in Disability	Dr Sue Silveira	1	Online-flexible Permission to enrol required**
SPED8921	Orientation and Mobility Fundamentals	Dr Sue Silveira/ Dr Bronwen Scott	1	Online-scheduled - weekday Series of compulsory online sessions held from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm on Monday: 20 & 27 March, 1 & 8 May 2023

Unit Code	Unit Name	Convenor/ Lecturer	Session	Important Notes
SPED8922	Educational Adjustments for Learners with Blindness/Low Vision	Dr Fran Gentle	1	Online-flexible
SPED8923	Literacy for Learners with Blindness/Low Vision	Dr Fran Gentle	2	Online-flexible Hurdle requirement[^] (mandatory): UEB Literacy (Modules 1 and 2) and Mathematics (primary school level). Permission to enrol required**
SPED8925	Technology in Blindness/Low Vision	Dr Fran Gentle	2	Online-flexible
SPED8926	Foundational Studies in Blindness/Low Vision	Dr Sue Silveira	1	Online-flexible
SPED8927	Advanced Studies in Blindness/Low Vision	Dr Sue Silveira	2	Online-flexible Permission to enrol required**
SPED8931	Introduction to Educational Audiology*	Dr Sue Silveira/ Simone Punch	1	Online-flexible
SPED8932	Perception and Production of Speech in Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children*	Dr Sue Silveira/ Marie Fram	2	Online-flexible
SPED8933	Language and Literacy Learning in Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children*	Kate Crowe	1	Online-flexible
SPED8934	Language and Literacy Interventions for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Learners *	Trudy Smith	2	Online-flexible
SPED8935	Social Perspectives on Deafness and Deaf Education*	Dr Maree Madden	1	Online-flexible Hurdle requirement[^] (mandatory): Auslan Basic.

* Endorsed by AG Bell Academy of Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) to offer LSL Continuing Education Units

** Students are required to request permission to enrol, by applying for a special approval (waiver) at: [Applying for Special Approval \(waiver\)](#)

[^] Hurdle component - A hurdle requirement is an activity for which a minimum level of performance or participation is a condition of passing the unit in which it occurs.

Table 2: Units comprising the Master of Disability Studies

To qualify for the award, candidates must complete 80 credit points (8 units) of coursework according to the [structure detailed for the year of admission on the MQU website](#).

Essential units for all specialisations (20cp/2 units):

- SPED8911 Inclusion and Professional Collaboration in Sensory Disability
- SPED8913 Research in Sensory Disability

Essential units per specialisation - complete all 40 credit points (4 units):

Education: Deaf Hard of Hearing Specialisation

- SPED8931 Introduction to Educational Audiology
- SPED8935 Social Perspectives on Deafness and Deaf Education
- SPED8933 Language and Literacy Learning in Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children
- SPED8910 Critical Reflection and Professional Experience for Teachers in Sensory Disability

Education: Blindness/Low Vision Specialisation

- SPED8926 Foundational Studies in Blindness/Low Vision
- SPED8921 Orientation and Mobility Fundamentals
- SPED8922 Educational Adjustments for Learners with Blindness/Low Vision
- SPED8910 Critical Reflection and Professional Experience for Teachers in Sensory Disability

Sensory Disability Specialisation

- SPED8926 Foundational Studies in Blindness/Low Vision
- SPED8935 Social Perspectives on Deafness and Deaf Education
- SPED8914 Perspectives in Disability
- SPED8909 Critical Reflection and Professional Experience for Practitioners in Sensory Disability

Elective choice per specialisation (10cp/1 unit):

- SPED8914 Perspectives in Disability (Sensory Disability specialisation)
- SPED8923 Literacy for Learners with Blindness/Low Vision (Blindness/Low Vision specialisation)
- SPED8927 Advanced Studies in Blindness/Low Vision (Sensory Disability specialisation)
- SPED8934 Language and Literacy Interventions for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Learners (Deaf/Hard of Hearing specialisation)

PLUS Select one Elective (10cp/1 unit) from:

- SPED8912 Independent Project in Sensory Disability
- SPED8925 Technology in Blindness/Low Vision
- SPED8932 Perception and Production of Speech in Deaf/Hard of Hearing Children

Recommended Study Patterns

Students of all specialisations may complete their studies at a part-time rate (1 or 2 units per session); extended full-time rate (2-3 units per session); or standard full-time rate (4 units per session).

All students are strongly advised to **enrol in the same sequence of units as per the study patterns** outlined below. These study patterns take account of unit availability, pre-requisites, and requirements of professional experience to ensure a smooth journey through your course. **If students modify their unit sequence, they may not meet pre-requisites for future units and unintentionally extend their course.** Please contact the [Graduate Studies Coordinator](#) if you have any questions about your unit choice or enrolment.

Each unit requires approximately 8-10 hours of study per week. Consequently, enrolment in a full-time study load of four units requires a minimum of 36-40 hours per week of study. Students are encouraged to consider paid work, volunteer work, family commitments and known health concerns when determining study load each session. Students employed in full-time paid work are strongly encouraged to enrol in no more than two units per Session. A study planner is available for you to use in [Appendix B](#).

Students of all specialisations may commence studies in either Session One or Session Two. Due to timetabling and pre-requisites, unit selection for students commencing in Session Two is limited. Students commencing in Session Two may select SPED8911 Inclusion and Professional Collaboration as a single unit; or select both SPED8911 and SPED8913 Research in Sensory Disability.

You will find tables below for each specialisation outlining the best recommended study pattern, one for Session 1 start and another for Session 2 start.

Education: Deaf Hard of Hearing Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 1

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	1	SPED8931	SPED8931 SPED8933	SPED8931 SPED8933 SPED8935**	SPED8913 SPED8931 SPED8933 SPED8935**
	2	SPED8932	SPED8932 SPED8934	SPED8911 SPED8932 SPED8934	SPED8910* SPED8911 SPED8932 SPED8934
2	1	SPED8933	SPED8913 SPED8935**	SPED8910* SPED8913	No Data
	2	SPED8934	SPED8910* SPED8911	No Data	No Data
3	1	SPED8935**	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8911	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	1	SPED8910*	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data

Education: Deaf Hard of Hearing Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 2

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	2	SPED8911	SPED8911 SPED8913	Not Available	Not Available
	1	SPED8931	SPED8931 SPED8933	Not Available	Not Available
2	2	SPED8932	SPED8932 SPED8934	Not Available	No Data
	1	SPED8933	SPED8910* SPED8935**	No Data	No Data
3	2	SPED8934	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8935**	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	2	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8910*	No Data	No Data	No Data

* Refer to important pre-requisite information under the SPED8910 unit description, including the hurdle which demonstrates **Auslan proficiency** prior to enrolment. It is essential that prospective students of SPED8910 commence discussions and planning a minimum of **three months prior** to session of enrolment. For more information, please contact the [Professional Experience team](#).

Demonstrated proficiency in **Auslan is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) for SPED8935. Please refer to [Auslan](#) in the General Information section of this handbook.

Education: Blindness/Low Vision Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 1

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	1	SPED8926	SPED8922 SPED8926	SPED8921 SPED8922 SPED8926	SPED8913 SPED8921 SPED8922 SPED8926
	2	SPED8925	SPED8923** SPED8925	SPED8911 SPED8923** SPED8925	SPED8910* SPED8911 SPED8923** SPED8925
2	1	SPED8922	SPED8913 SPED8921	SPED8910* SPED8913	No Data
	2	SPED8923**	SPED8910* SPED8911	No Data	No Data
3	1	SPED8921	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8911	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	1	SPED8910*	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data

Education: Blindness/Low Vision Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 2

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	2	SPED8911	SPED8911 SPED8913	Not Available	Not Available
	1	SPED8926	SPED8922 SPED8926	Not Available	Not Available
2	2	SPED8925	SPED8923** SPED8925	Not Available	No Data
	1	SPED8922	SPED8910* SPED8921	No Data	No Data
3	2	SPED8923**	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8921	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	2	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8910*	No Data	No Data	No Data

* Refer to important pre-requisite information under the SPED8910 unit description, including the hurdle which demonstrates **Braille proficiency** prior to enrolment. It is essential that prospective students of SPED8910 commence discussions and planning a minimum of **three months prior** to session of enrolment. For more information, please contact the [Professional Experience team](#).

** Demonstrated proficiency in **Unified English Braille (UEB)** literacy and braille mathematics at a primary school level is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) for SPED8923. Please refer to [Braille](#) in the General Information section of this handbook.

Sensory Disability Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 1

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	1	SPED8926	SPED8926 SPED8935*	SPED8914 SPED8926 SPED8935*	SPED8913 SPED8914 SPED8926 SPED8935*
	2	SPED8923** or SPED8927	(SPED8923** or SPED8927) and SPED8911	(SPED8923** or SPED8927) and (SPED8912 or SPED8925) and SPED8911	(SPED8923** or SPED8927) and (SPED8912 or SPED8925) and SPED8909^ and SPED8911
2	1	SPED8935*	SPED8914 SPED8913	SPED8913 SPED8909^	No Data
	2	SPED8911	(SPED8912 or SPED8925) and SPED8909^	No Data	No Data
3	1	SPED8914	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8912 or SPED8925	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	1	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data
	2	SPED8909^	No Data	No Data	No Data

Sensory Disability Specialisation – commencing in SESSION 2

Year	Session	1 unit per Session	2 units per Session	Full-time (extended)	Full-time (one year)
1	2	SPED8911	SPED8911 SPED8913	Not Available	Not Available
	1	SPED8926	(SPED8914 or SPED8935*) and SPED8926	Not Available	Not Available
2	2	SPED8923** or SPED8927	(SPED8923** or SPED8925) and SPED8909^	Not Available	No Data
	1	SPED8935*	(SPED8912 or SPED8927) and (SPED8914 or SPED8935*)	No Data	No Data
3	2	SPED8912 or SPED8925	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8914	No Data	No Data	No Data
4	2	SPED8909^	No Data	No Data	No Data
	1	SPED8913	No Data	No Data	No Data

* Demonstrated proficiency in **Auslan** is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) for SPED8935. Please refer to [Auslan](#) in the General Information section of this handbook.

** Demonstrated proficiency in **Unified English Braille (UEB)** literacy and braille mathematics at a primary school level is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) for SPED8923. Please refer to [Braille](#) in the General Information section of this handbook

^ Refer to important pre-requisite information under the SPED8909 unit description including the hurdle which demonstrates **Auslan and Braille proficiency** prior to enrolment. It is essential that prospective students of SPED8909 commence discussions and planning a minimum of **three months prior** to session of enrolment. For more information, please contact the [Professional Experience team](#).

General Course Information

Significant Cultural and Religious Dates

If there are any significant cultural or religious dates that students would like the NextSense Institute staff to be aware of, please contact the Graduate Studies Coordinator at student.enquiries@nextsense.org.au. Students will need to provide details and exact dates prior to the start of Session (where possible) to allow staff to make any adjustments if required.

Online Conference and Practicum Attendance

Students **must attend** mandatory online sessions and professional experience for their units. Students should be punctual, follow accepted etiquette for use of mobile phones and conduct whilst in Zoom sessions, and act in a manner appropriate to postgraduate level study.

Hurdle Requirements (Mandatory):

A hurdle requirement is a Macquarie University endorsed activity for which a minimum level of performance or participation is a condition of passing the unit in which it occurs.

For the Master of Disability Studies, hurdles are applied for each of the specialisations – please read more below. **It is also mandatory for students to demonstrate that hurdles have been met prior to enrolling in their professional experience unit, either SPED8909 or SPED8910.**

- For the **‘Education: Deaf/Hard of Hearing’** specialisation: SPED8935 - a hurdle that requires students to demonstrate competency in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) level 1 and 2 prior to the end of Session is applied. **It will not be possible to pass SPED8935 if this hurdle is not met and students will not be able to enrol in their placement unit – SPED8910.**
- For the **‘Education: Blindness/Low Vision’** specialisation: SPED8923 – a hurdle that requires students to demonstrate competency in Braille literacy (Unified English Braille or UEB) and braille mathematics (primary school level) is applied. **It will not be possible to pass SPED8923 if this hurdle is not met and students will not be able to enrol in their placement unit – SPED8910.**
- For the **‘Sensory Disability’** specialisation: SPED8935 - a hurdle that requires students to demonstrate competency in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) level 1 prior to the end of Session is applied. If students also elect to enrol in SPED8923, a hurdle that requires students to demonstrate competency in Braille literacy (Unified English Braille or UEB) and braille mathematics (primary school level) is applied. **It will not be possible to pass SPED8935 or SPED8923 if these hurdles are not met and students will not be able to enrol in their placement unit – SPED8909.**

Specialisation	Hurdle Unit	Mandatory Hurdle requirement	Complete hurdle requirement by	Professional Experience unit requiring hurdle
DHH	SPED8935	Auslan hurdle – level 1 & 2 completed	Week 13	SPED8910
BLV	SPED8923	UEB hurdle	End of week 1	SPED8910
SD	SPED8923	UEB hurdle	End of week 1	SPED8909
SD	SPED8935	Auslan hurdle – level 1 completed	Week 13	SPED8909

It is strongly recommended that students plan to complete their relevant hurdles - competency in Auslan or UEB - as soon as they are admitted into the Master of Disability Studies, well ahead of enrolling into the specific hurdle unit (SPED8935 or SPED8923). This is because it can take a number of weeks to finish the Auslan or UEB hurdle and needs to be completed before enrolling into either SPED8923 or 8935.

Auslan

Demonstrated proficiency in Auslan Basic is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) to complete SPED8935 and mandatory for enrolment in the professional experience unit SPED8910. **It will not be possible to pass SPED8935 if this hurdle is not met.**

For students enrolled in SPED8935, a basic level of competency in Auslan (levels 1 & 2) **must be demonstrated by the end of Session**. Auslan Basic is described as a minimal level of fluency required for participation in deaf education settings or basic conversational fluency with deaf colleagues and families. Hurdle requirements can be completed at any time, and it is strongly recommended that students complete them **prior to enrolment in SPED8935**. Auslan courses typically take 14 hours to complete level 1 and 16 hours (spread over 8 weeks) for level 2.

For further information, please refer to the **Auslan Basic FAQs** sent out with your **'Read & Act' email**. If you need a copy of the FAQs, please email the [Graduate Studies Coordinator](#).

Braille

Demonstrated proficiency in **Unified English braille (UEB)** Literacy and Braille Mathematics (primary school level) is a hurdle requirement (mandatory) for SPED8923 and mandatory for enrolment in the professional experience unit SPED8910. **It will not be possible to pass SPED8923 if this hurdle is not met.**

You must complete courses in UEB Literacy and Mathematics (primary school level) and **submit evidence of completion by the end of week one**. You are encouraged to commence the required braille literacy and mathematics (primary school level) training approximately **four months prior** to enrolling in SPED8923.

Modules 1 and 2 of UEB Literacy, and UEB Introductory Mathematics are offered by NextSense Institute. Details of these courses can be found at: <https://uebonline.org/> You will need to create an account and password and have access to a laptop/PC and internet connection. **Please note:** these courses cannot be completed on a mobile phone or tablet.

Once you complete each UEB online module, ensure that you purchase and download the relevant UEB completion certificate from the link on your UEB online dashboard. Then email the completion certificates to the Unit Convenor via the **Dialogue** section in the SPED8923 iLearn site before the end of week one of Session.

You are also welcome to complete equivalent UEB Literacy and Braille Mathematics (primary school level) completion certificates with other relevant agencies.

NextSense Institute Staff

Academic Staff and Research Interests

Professor Greg Leigh, AO, PhD (*Monash*), MSc (*Washington*), BEd(*Griffith*), FACE

- Newborn hearing screening - implementation and standards for delivery
- Outcomes of intervention
- Communications access by deaf and hard of hearing children and adults (captions and related media accessibility)
- Children's reception and use of simultaneous communication
- Literacy development in deaf children and adults

Professor Teresa Ching, PhD (*London*), MPhil (*Hong Kong*), BA (*Hong Kong*)

- Efficacy of early detection and intervention for hearing loss in children
- Speech, language, and literacy outcomes in children using hearing aids or cochlear implants
- Psychosocial development and health-related quality of life in children who use hearing aids or cochlear implants
- Educational attainment of children who are deaf/hard of hearing
- Impact and management needs of children with unilateral hearing loss or mild bilateral hearing loss
- Hearing aids and cochlear implants for children and adults

Dr Frances Gentle, AO, PhD (*Newcastle*), MSpecEd(Hons) (*Newcastle*), BADip Ed(*Macquarie*), BEd(Special Education) (*New England*)

- Development of disability services in the South Pacific region
- Contemporary issues associated with educational standards and pedagogy
- Braille literacy and numeracy development
- Curriculum and expanded core curriculum provision for students with blindness/low vision

Professor Philip Newall, MSc(*Surrey*), MSc(*Salford*), BA(Hons)(*Keele*)

- Amplification for people who are deaf/hard of hearing
- Epidemiology of hearing loss
- Audiology in developing countries

Dr Sue Silveira, PhD (*Newcastle*), MHIthSci(Ed)(*Sydney*), GradDipHIthSci(Ed) (*Cumberland*), DipAppSc(Orthoptics)

- Prevention of eye injury in children
- Early detection and prevention of blindness/low vision in children
- Determination of levels of blindness/low vision in Australian children

Alison Hawkins-Bond, MRes (*Macquarie*), PGradDip(Special Ed-HI) (*Birmingham*), BEd(Hons)(*London*)

- Development of critical thinking skills to reflect on prior knowledge and practice
- Implementation of best practice principles in early childhood intervention
- Change management

Trudy Smith, MEd(*Deakin*), BSpecEd(*Griffith*), LSLSCert AVT

- Professional Standards for Teachers of the Deaf
- Identity and Professionalism of Teachers of the Deaf
- Professional learning and development
- Family Centred Early Intervention

Adjunct Academic Staff

Marie Fram, MEd(*Melbourne*), GradDipSpEd (Hearing Impairment)(*Deakin*), GradDipCurriculum(*Melbourne*), GradDipDeaf Studies(*La Trobe*), GradCertDeaf Studies(*La Trobe*), BEd(*Deakin*), DipTeach (*ACU*), DipInterpreting(Auslan) (*RMIT*)

- Speech production
- Speech perception

Maree Madden, PhD (*Griffith*), MPhil (*Griffith*), BEd (*BCAE*), Dip T (Primary & Special Schools) (*MGCAE*)

Simone Punch, MHM(*UNSW*), PG Dip Aud(*UQ*), BA(*UQ*)

- Infant hearing aid fitting and evaluation
- The use of Cortical auditory Evoked Potentials (CAEPs) for audiological evaluation of children with hearing loss and auditory neuropathy spectrum disorder
- Educational audiology

- Psychosocial development and support for deaf and hard of hearing teens and young adults
- Policy and protocols for paediatric hearing aid fitting and evaluation
- Clinical leadership and service quality management

Dr Bronwen Scott, EdD(*Sydney*), MEd(SpecEd)(*Charles Sturt*), GradDipO&M (*Lincoln Institute*), BPsych(*UWA*)

- Orientation and Mobility (O&M) across the life span
- Early childhood intervention for children who are blind/low vision
- Cerebral vision impairment (CVI)
- Editor, Journal of the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (JSPEVI)

Professional Staff

Graduate Studies Coordinator

Tanya Kysa, MA (*Macquarie*), BA (*Macquarie*)

- Macquarie University policies and procedures
- Student administration support
- Course administration
- Data maintenance and analysis

Manager, Library and Information Services

Andrew Spencer, GradDipAppSc(LIM)(*Charles Sturt*), BTech(EnvGeo)(*Macquarie*), AALIA(CP)

- Referencing software support
- Literature searching
- Evidence based practice

Institute Administration Officer

Celise Morrison

- Professional Experience team support
- Administrative support for NextSense Institute

Appendix A: Important Links

[Macquarie University](#)

[Master of Disability Studies \(MQU Course Handbook\)](#)

[NextSense](#)

[NextSense Institute](#)

[NextSense Institute Postgraduate Study](#)

[National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf](#)

[South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment](#)

[Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership \(Teacher registration authorities\)](#)

Appendix B: Plan your studies worksheet

2023 Session 1	2023 Session 2

2024 Session 1	2024 Session 2

2025 Session 1	2025 Session 2

2026 Session 1	2026 Session 2

2027 Session 1	2027 Session 2