

Project BLENDS FAQs for MS Communication Sciences Students



What is Project BLENDS?

Project BLENDS: *Building Capacity for Interdisciplinary Collaboration among Alaska-based Related Service Providers* is an interdisciplinary, advanced training program designed to prepare graduates in four related service disciplines to work collaboratively to support infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children with disabilities and their families.

When do I apply to Project BLENDS?

You apply for Project BLENDS in the fall of your second year of the Master's program.

When do I participate in Project BLENDS?

You participate in Project BLENDS during the summer, fall, and spring semesters of your third year. You will plan to graduate in the spring semester of your third year if participating in Project BLENDS.

Are there courses that are recommended to take prior to or during Project BLENDS?

Yes. It is recommended to take the elective CSDI 6111 Communication Disorders in Infants and Toddlers, which you can take during the spring semester of your first, second, or third year. Taking it in your first or second year will give you an advantage in your application to Project BLENDS.

What is the time commitment for Project BLENDS?

In May you will attend a full day orientation meeting. In the summer semester, you complete 15 hours of field-based observation with two supervision meetings, and a 3-credit course (PSY/SWK 620: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health). In the fall and spring semesters, you complete a 1-credit seminar. The seminar is coordinated so that it does not interfere with your required MSW courses.

What are the conference requirements and how are they paid for?

As part of Project BLENDS, you are required to attend the Division for Early Childhood Conference which occurs in September or November of each year, and one day of the Alaska Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Institute which occurs in the spring of each year. The grant covers 100% of costs associated with travel and registration for both conferences.

How and when are the financial supports disbursed?

You will receive a total of \$18,750.00 that is dispersed through both the Office of Financial Aid and the Business Office. Funding to cover the required 5-credits of BLENDS coursework is dispersed through the Office of Financial Aid. The remaining amount is dispersed between August, December, and May through the Business Office which is deposited directly into your linked bank account.

How does my externship align with Project BLENDS?

SLP students participate in Project BLENDS while they are completing their externship. Note that SLP students who participate in BLENDS will need to be enrolled in externship during the spring semester in your third year. As part of Project BLENDS, Project BLENDS scholars work with their program clinical supervisor and the Project BLENDS Director to identify a placement that provides services to infants, toddlers, or preschoolers with disabilities or who are at-risk for disabilities and will fulfill your Master's program requirements for externship. There are no additional required hours for Project BLENDS beyond your externship.

What are examples of clinical placements for CSD students in Project BLENDS?

Programs for Infants and Children (PIC)
Family Outreach Center for Understanding Special Needs (FOCUS)
Anchorage School District Preschool Programs
Outpatient pediatric facilities service clients birth to five
Neurodevelopmental Clinics

Can I participate in Project BLENDS and other student opportunities?

SLP students may also participate in AHEC and LEND, but not during the same year. Please discuss these other advanced training opportunities with your advisor.

What is my commitment after I graduate?

To enroll in Project BLENDS you are required to sign a Service Agreement, as stipulated by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education (OSEP), that indicates you agree to work for an equivalent of 2-years (can include ½ time employment) in a position which services infants, toddlers, or children (birth through age 8) with disabilities for at least 51% of the time or 51% of your caseload. This can also include indirect services (program development, administration, technical assistance, research, policy) in which at least 51% of your time is work related to the training.

For more information, contact the Project Director, Dr. Hattie Harvey – haharvey@alaska.edu or visit the project website, www.uaa.alaska.edu/project-blends

