

Master Degree opportunity for Orientation & Mobility Specialists

Guide Dogs QLD invites suitably qualified and interested applicants to be considered to undertake a Master of Disability Studies (Sensory Disability) through the RIDBC Renwick Centre, Sydney, a program administered by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) and affiliated with Macquarie University.

This program is the first step toward launching your career as an Orientation & Mobility Specialist with Guide Dogs QLD. Candidates selected for this opportunity who successfully complete the first semester of the Master degree program (full-time) in 2018 and other employment criteria, may be offered employment as an Orientation & Mobility Specialist with Guide Dogs QLD from July 2018. Subsequent semesters of the Master program will be completed part-time by distance education/block release and/or online while employed full-time at Guide Dogs QLD.

This course is financially supported by Guide Dogs QLD. Costs relating to the study of this program with either be met directly by Guide Dogs QLD or reimbursed to the student on successful completion of milestones as outlined in the Student sponsorship deed.

Prior to submitting your application for these opportunities, interested applicants must ensure they meet the entry requirements of the RIDBC Renwick Centre, Macquarie University. Enquiries about this program and the entry requirements are to be made in the first instance to Claire Farrington on (02) 9872 0811 / claire.farrington@ridbc.org.au.

Once academic suitability has been confirmed by the RIDBC Renwick Centre, your application can be forwarded via email to: p.rasmussen@guidedogsqld.com.au quoting the Master Degree Sponsorship opportunity. There are strict requirements for applications including:

- Your current CV inclusive of how you meet the essential criteria for sponsorship; and
- A written response to the following question (between 250-300 words): *“Why are you applying for this opportunity?”*

Where you do not meet these application requirements your application will be rejected.

For further information about this opportunity please contact Paul Rasmussen on 07 35009051.

INFORMATION PACK:

A CAREER AS AN ORIENTATION & MOBILITY SPECIALIST

Our Principles

Guide Dogs QLD exists to enhance the dignity and quality of life of people who are vision impaired by assisting in their achievement of independence through access and mobility.

We believe that people who are vision impaired have equal rights with all other people. We believe that all people have the right of respect for their human dignity.

What We Do

We provide, among other things:

- low vision assessment and training
- assessment and training in Orientation and Mobility
- compensatory training to people affected by stroke or other brain trauma
- mobility aids including long canes, electronic aids, and Guide Dogs
- advocacy and community education on the needs and rights of people with disabilities

Locations

Guide Dogs Queensland head office is in Bald Hills on the north side of Brisbane. The majority of its services are managed or delivered from this location. Guide Dogs QLD also has offices and staff in a range of regional areas across QLD.

Costs to Clients

Guide Dogs QLD services are provided through the NDIS or free of charge to clients. As a not-for-profit organisation, Guide Dogs QLD derives most of its financial support through the generosity of the people of Queensland. Guide Dogs QLD receives minimal funding from the State or Federal Governments at this time.

Applicants

Guide Dogs QLD is seeking to sponsor a number of university graduates to undertake a Master of Disability Studies (Sensory Disability) at the RIDBC Renwick Centre, Macquarie University (face-to-face training will be completed at the Renwick Centre). This specially designed program uses the current structure of Macquarie University's Master degree, with some important modifications to meet the requirements of Guide Dogs QLD as the major employer of those who graduate from it.

The course requires completion of an approved sequence of 32 credit points. The program is offered in two parts. The first three or four courses are undertaken over one semester of full-time study, commencing in first semester 2018. Each course is worth 4 credit points. The remaining four or five courses are completed within the following twelve to eighteen months, on a part-time basis while working for Guide Dogs QLD.

Upon successful completion of the intensive section of the program and demonstration of suitability to undertake the Practicum, sponsored candidates commence employment with Guide Dogs QLD in July 2018. Sponsored candidates will then be required to complete the remaining courses in the following eighteen months, outside of work time. Guide Dogs QLD will meet all course fees for sponsored students, in accordance with the details outlined in the Student sponsorship deed.

Enquiries about the Master program, including entry criteria, program content and on-campus accommodation should be directed to Claire Farrington, Executive Officer, Graduate Studies RIDBC Renwick Centre on (02) 9872 0811.

How Do I Apply For Sponsorship?

Applicants for sponsorship need to:

1. Meet the entry criteria of Macquarie University. You need to liaise directly with the RIDBC Renwick Centre. Telephone Claire Farrington on (02) 9872 0811.
2. Apply to Guide Dogs QLD for Master Degree Sponsorship via p.rasmussen@guidedogsqld.com.au and submit an application in accordance to the strict application requirements:
 - Your current CV inclusive of how you meet the essential criteria for sponsorship; and
 - A written response to the following question (between 250-300 words): *“Why are you applying for this opportunity?”*

What Happens Next?

Once applications are closed, all applications will be considered and a short-list of candidates invited to attend an interview and other selection processes. Selected candidates for Master Degree Sponsorship will be offered a Deed of Sponsorship (an agreement).

The RIDBC Renwick Centre academic year commences on Monday 19th February, 2018 and selected candidates must complete enrolment no later than December 2017. The University enrolment procedure is independent of your application for sponsorship with Guide Dogs QLD. If you are successful in your application for sponsorship, the enrolment with the university also requires you to provide the following:

1. Details of your work experience;
2. Certified copies of transcripts and awards of all study completed at tertiary institutions; and
3. Proof of Identity.

The Role of an Orientation & Mobility Specialist

Specialists spend most of their time assessing, planning for and, training people with vision impairment. This is done on a one-to-one basis to develop the client's ability and confidence to move around environments safely. An Orientation & Mobility Specialist must enjoy working with a cross section of the community including people of all ages and backgrounds. Orientation & Mobility programs can take place anywhere a person needs to travel on a regular basis which might include taking public transport, travelling to recreation activities, work, school, university, or to shopping centres. Each program is designed to meet the needs of the individual. A significant portion of the time working in the job is spent away from the office.

A mature approach and excellent spoken and written communication skills are essential. Above all, applicants must be sensitive and responsive to the needs and preferences of the service user. Applicants must be able to work autonomously as well as within a team environment. Further, applicants need to have good planning skills and be able to work to deadlines.

The work of a Specialist can involve extensive suburban or rural travel (driving) and may involve time away from home on occasion.

All applicants must have an undergraduate degree in a relevant profession from a recognised University (e.g., OT or other allied health, education, disability, psychology). Proficiency in the use of PC and laptop computers, standard desktop software, and mobile devices is required.

Essential Criteria for Sponsorship:

- Confirmation from the RIDBC Renwick Centre that you meet the entry requirements for the Master of Disability Studies (Sensory Disability);
- Completion of a relevant tertiary degree;
- Prior employment experience in education, disability, psychology, occupational therapy, or allied health.
- Possess a current C Class drivers licence with a good driving history;
- Obtain a satisfactory National Police Check and a Working With Children Check clearance (once directed to obtain these – undergoing background screening is essential for successful applicants); and
- Ability to manage the physical demands and inherent requirements of the Orientation & Mobility Specialist job.