

Gerontology

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Certificate (2 semesters)

Career Cluster: Health Science

At A Glance

Worldwide, populations are aging and people are living longer. People over the age of 65, especially those over the age of 80, are among the fastest growing in industrialized nations. For those born in the United States in 1900, almost half died before they were 50 years old. Those individuals born today can expect to live to be age 75 and older. In 1900, about one in 25 Americans were over the age of 65; today one in 8 is over 65. The age group growing the fastest today is the people aged 85 and over. In the 21st century, one in five Americans will be over 65.

Since seniors are the fastest-growing group of consumers of healthcare services, these growth trends will result in a demand for professionals with knowledge and expertise in the field of gerontology. Expanded career opportunities are forecast requiring a work force with education and training in gerontology.

From 2006 through 2016, Health Care and Social Assistance will continue to provide new career opportunities due to the aging of the population and an increase in social programs. Industries that are expected to experience the greatest gains are associated with elderly care, such as home health care services, other residential care facilities, and community care facilities for the elderly. These three industries are projected to provide over 10,500 new jobs over the ten-year period. Seven of the 20 fastest growing industries are expected to occur in health care and social assistance over the period.

Who Should Take This Program?

Social workers, registered nurses, occupational therapists, case managers, rehabilitation counselors, psychologists, physical therapists, emergency workers, medical assistants, recreational therapists, family caregivers, and certified nursing assistants.

Program Description

The Gerontology Certificate program prepares social service and health care professionals, as well as students, with specialized knowledge of the aging process and geriatric issues that will help them better serve older adults. Adding the gerontology certificate to existing work and educational experience is likely to enhance an individual's career advancement opportunities and options. The program provides a background of basic knowledge in gerontology, and prepares certificate option students in professional skill areas such as counseling, recreation, social work, nursing, and administration. The certificate consists of 15 semester hours. Students should complete the Gerontology Certificate Program in two semesters.

The program includes a wide variety of courses that provide students with state-of-the-art knowledge about aging and teaches students how to implement that knowledge in practice. Completion of the program will develop and/or enhance existing proficiencies, knowledge, develop specific skills to address the complex needs of older adults in a variety of areas,

including: enhance employment marketability, create a network for sharing of expertise, develop and build skills and competencies, develop an interdisciplinary perspective on aging, fulfill continuing education requirements for professionals, serve as advocates for older adults and their families, manage services and programs that promote the health and independence of older persons, educate others about gerontology health care, serve as a leader in developing and implementing multidisciplinary health care and social service teams, assist caregivers and provide direct care to older persons, and provide counseling assistance for end-of life issues.

Procedures and Requirements for Admission

Minimum admissions standards for the Human Services Gerontology Certificate program are as follows:

Applicants Must:

1. Meet all general admission requirements of WSCC
2. Students must be in good standing with the college
3. Submit an application to the Human Services/Gerontology Certificate Program Director, declaring the Gerontology Certificate Program in Human Services as their major. Applications cannot be faxed and must be submitted in person or via mail. Applications for fall entry must be received by June 1. Applicants received after June 1 will be considered on a space-available basis. Applications for spring entry must be received by October 15. Applications received after October 15 will be considered on a space-available basis. The admissions packet should include the following items:
 - a. Application for the program
 - b. Official college transcripts
 - c. Professional Resume
 - d. A typed letter essay (maximum of 500 words) stating why student should be accepted into the certificate program, their experience or interest with the aging population, and how they anticipate the certificate will assist them professionally
 - e. Signed Consent for Drug Testing-The drug policy can be found at the college's website (www.wallacestate.edu/drugs/index.html)
 - f. Signed Acknowledgement of Receipt of Background Screening Policy- (http://www.wallacestate.edu/fileadmin/user_upload/WallaceState/documents/Health/Background_Check_Form.pdf)
4. Applicants must have earned a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale on all high school, GED, and college work previously attempted. Applicants who already have a Master's Degree in a health-related field from an accredited college are exempt from the 2.5 requirement. Official transcripts from all previous schools attended must be provided to the college.

Note: It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that the application is complete and all information is on file. Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will result in the applicant not being considered for admission.

SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

1. The Gerontology Program accepts new students for fall and spring semesters.
2. Students are selected on the basis of application date and completion of admission requirements. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee acceptance into the program.
3. Program applications will be reviewed for completion of program admission requirements. Students accepted into the Gerontology Certificate Program will be notified in writing by the Human Services Program Director. The notification will be mailed to the student at the

address on the application. Students who are not accepted will also receive written notification. Program acceptance or rejection will not be given over the phone.

4. Following admittance into the program, each student must respond, in writing, confirming his/her intent to enroll, within 14 days after the postmarked date of their acceptance letter. A student who fails to respond will forfeit his/her slot
5. During the first week of fall semester, students admitted into the program may be required to attend a program orientation on campus.

Program Expectations

Students admitted into the Human Services program are expected to comply with the Health Science Program Regulations and Expectations as published in the Programs of Study section of the Wallace State College Catalog.

Progression

1. Students must achieve a minimum grade of "C" in all courses. Students who earn a grade of "D" or "F" will be required to repeat the course.
2. Maintain moral and legal standards that determine acceptable behaviors of social workers, psychologists, and counselors. The Human Services faculty reserves the right to determine behaviors that are inappropriate or may cause harm. The Human Services Department reserves the right to permanently dismiss from the program any student who does not conduct themselves in a professional manner.
3. Pass all required background screenings and drug screenings.
4. Students who withdraw from, or are dismissed from the program must reapply prior to re-entering the program.
5. Students may apply for re-entry into the program only once.
6. Students must have access to technology compatible to the technology utilized and required by Wallace State Community College and the Distance Learning Education Department.
7. Students must be proficient in email, Microsoft Office, and other basic computer skills.
8. Wallace State Community College and the Human Services instructors are not responsible nor held accountable for a student's lack of computer access, technology, and computer skill deficiencies.
9. Students who pass all required courses are required to complete a graduation application. Certificates are not awarded until the student files for graduation and meets all certificate requirements. All graduation fees are the responsibility of the student.

Career Path

Possible careers and training with the elderly will include:

- Providing direct care to older persons in hospitals, clinics, adult day care programs, nursing homes, and home care

- Counseling the elderly and their families about issues of caregiving, mental health, death, estate planning, long-term care finances, housing, and medication compliance
- Planning, developing, administering, and implementing programs such as retirement communities, community agencies, health promotion, and therapeutic recreation
- Conducting research on the aging process
- Advocating for legislation for the elderly
- Teaching community classes about the aging process
- Designing age-appropriate products to meet the special needs of older consumers
- Geriatric care management

Typical Workplace

- Long-term care facilities
- Social service agencies

- Insurance companies
- Government agencies
- Home health agencies
- Assisted-care facilities
- Law firms
- Hospitals

Median annual earnings of social and human service assistants were \$27,280 in May 2008, with the top 10 percent earning more than \$43,510. (Source: U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Required Courses

HUS 240 Introduction to Aging	3
HUS 241 Mental Health Work with the Elderly	3
HUS 242 Maintaining Health and Wellness in Later Life	3
HUS 243 Ethical, Legal, and Medical Issues in Aging	3
HUS 244 Special Topics in Geriatrics	<u>3</u>
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