

HEALTH RELATED SCIENCES, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.)/AGING STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (GRADUATE CERTIFICATE) [DUAL DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE]

Advanced study in health related sciences and aging studies is available through a dual degree and certificate program sponsored by the College of Health Professions.

The program allows students to earn a Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences and a Certificate in Aging Studies with a minimum of 63 credits rather than the 66 credits necessary if the two plans of study were pursued separately. This efficiency lowers the overall cost of tuition while also reducing time to earning both degrees.

Program goals

The objectives of this dual degree and certificate program are to:

- Prepare graduates to address the complex needs of a diverse aging population using holistic knowledge of the biopsychosocial aging process
- Provide graduates with an understanding of empirically and theoretically based components contributing to optimal aging using evidence-based, best-practice approaches
- Provide students with the ability to understand and conduct research in health related sciences with a focus on the older adult population
- Provide students with the ability to analyze alternatives and develop responses in their disciplines to improve health care experiences for older people
- Provide students with the ability to examine current issues and future changes in gerontology from an interdisciplinary perspective

Among the many benefits offered by participation in the dual degree and certificate program is the following:

- Prepares students for a variety of health-related interdisciplinary positions specifically working with or on behalf of older adults and their family members. These positions represent a variety of settings including private, public or academic organizations and institutions.

The diplomas for this dual degree and certificate program may be awarded simultaneously. However, students must complete a separate graduation check out for each program.

Student learning outcomes

See the individual program pages for student learning outcomes.

Other information

Advising

The student is assigned an adviser from each program to develop a plan of study. Advisers from each program will provide guidance on course requirements for their respective programs.

Students in the Ph.D. program will be assigned an adviser who has the content knowledge to support mentoring the student through the dissertation process. The student could be mentored by faculty in any of the College of Health Professions departments. As a result, the Ph.D. adviser could be from outside of gerontology or within gerontology.

Admission requirements

The Certificate in Aging Studies program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent and who have met all **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**.

The admission requirements for the Ph.D. in Health Related Sciences (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/health-related-sciences-phd/#admissionrequirements>) can be found on the program page.

Application procedure

Students can apply to both programs during the same time period (but they require separate applications). Students may also apply to the certificate program any time following acceptance into the Ph.D. program.

Students may contact VCU Graduate Admissions to have their transcripts and letters of recommendation from the Ph.D. application attached to their certificate application. A new personal statement is required.

Dual degree and certificate requirements

As standalone programs, the Ph.D. comprises 51 credits while the certificate requires 15 credits. The dual degree and certificate program allows students to share three credits, therefore decreasing total credits to completion from 66 to 63.

Based on the equivalent knowledge acquired by successfully completing ALHP 708 in the Ph.D. program, GRTY 606 is satisfied in the certificate curriculum.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Ph.D. requirements		
• Interdisciplinary courses		
ALHP 701	Health Services Delivery Systems	3
ALHP 702	Finance and Economic Theory for Health Care	3
ALHP 708	Health Science Ethics (satisfies GRTY 606 in certificate)	3
ALHP 712	Instructional Design and Evaluation for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 716	Grant Writing for Health Science Research	3
ALHP 718	Health Informatics	3
• Research methods		
ALHP 760	Descriptive and Univariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 761	Health Science Research Design I	3
ALHP 762	Multivariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 763	Health Science Research Design II	3

• Independent study		
ALHP 781	Doctoral Seminar	3
ALHP 792	Independent Study (three credit hours required)	1-4
ALHP 793	Research Practicum	3
• Dissertation		
ALHP 890	Dissertation Seminar	3
ALHP 899	Dissertation Research	9
Certificate requirements		
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging	3
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
GRTY 606	Aging and Human Values (satisfied by Ph.D. requirement ALHP 708)	3
Restricted elective		3
Select from:		
GRTY 604	Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology	
GRTY 615	Aging and Mental Disorders	
GRTY 638	Long-term Care Administration	
GRTY 691	Topical Seminar	
GRTY 692	Independent Studies	
Total Hours		63

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree and certificate program is 63.

Sample plan of study

Year one

Fall semester		Hours
ALHP 701	Health Services Delivery Systems	3
ALHP 712	Instructional Design and Evaluation for Health Sciences	3
ALHP 760	Descriptive and Univariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
GRTY 601	Biological and Physiological Aging	3
Term Hours:		12

Spring semester

ALHP 702	Finance and Economic Theory for Health Care	3
ALHP 761	Health Science Research Design I	3
ALHP 762	Multivariate Statistical Methods for Health Sciences	3
GRTY 602	Psychology of Aging	3
Term Hours:		12

Year two

Fall semester

ALHP 718	Health Informatics	3
ALHP 763	Health Science Research Design II	3
ALHP 781	Doctoral Seminar	3
GRTY 603	Social Gerontology	3
Methods comprehensive exam		

Term Hours: 12

Spring semester

ALHP 708	Health Science Ethics (satisfies GRTY 606)	3
ALHP 716	Grant Writing for Health Science Research	3
ALHP 890	Dissertation Seminar	3
Restricted GRTY elective		3
Term Hours:		12

Year three

Fall semester

ALHP 792	Independent Study	3
ALHP 793	Research Practicum	3
ALHP 899	Dissertation Research (minimum of nine credits required for Ph.D.)	1-9
Term Hours:		9

Spring semester

ALHP 899	Dissertation Research	1-9
Term Hours:		3

Year four

Fall semester

ALHP 899	Dissertation Research	1-9
Term Hours:		3

Spring semester

ALHP 899	Dissertation Research (if needed to complete minimum requirement)	1-9
Term Hours:		0
Total Hours:		63

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree and certificate program is 63.

Contact

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