AGING STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (POST-BACCALAUREATE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE)

Program goal
The Department of Gerontology serves the people of the commonwealth of Virginia and the nation by providing educational programs related to understanding of aging and promoting successful aging. The department encourages education through discovery of new knowledge, interdisciplinary interaction, professional behavior and service to the aging network. The department’s primary focus is to prepare individuals for positions in the network of aging services. These gerontologists are educated to serve as supporters of optimal aging for older persons and families and caregivers. The certificate program provides quality education to those who are already working with older adults and wish to enhance their services with formal academic training in gerontology or individuals with training in other professions.

The program’s goal is to ensure that graduates will be able to demonstrate the ability to apply core gerontological concepts according to Association for Gerontology in Higher Education Core Concepts.

Student learning outcomes
1. Students will understand the biological, psychological and sociological underpinnings of aging in U.S. society.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of methods and techniques to assist older persons and their families to achieve a successful response to aging.
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to combine their knowledge of gerontology with experience in the aging network and with knowledge of their core professional discipline so as to contribute to the successful delivery of services in the aging network.
4. Students will develop understanding of and will engage in interdisciplinary approaches to issues and problems of aging.
5. Students enrolled in a dual program will engage in interdisciplinary practice in their core disciplines with special emphasis on gerontology.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs
The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students.

Degree candidacy requirements
A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.

Graduation requirements
As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements.

Opportunities for combined study
The Department of Gerontology, in cooperation with other programs at the university, provides students interested in working with elders or in gerontological settings with the opportunity to complete the Certificate in Aging Studies while also completing requirements for other degree programs, including the Master of Science in Occupational Therapy, Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling, Master of Social Work and Doctor of Pharmacy. Students must apply separately to the participating programs and must meet all admission and degree requirements for both programs. In some cases, and with the approval of the advisers of both programs, course work in one program may be approved to satisfy a course requirement in another program.

Other information
The program’s student handbook is available on the student Blackboard site.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://wwwgraduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements
| Degree: Certificate | Semester(s) of entry: All semesters | Deadline dates: None | Test requirements: None |

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 (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements).

**Degree requirements**

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info), students in the Certificate in Aging Studies program must complete 21 credit hours of work, including 15 credit hours of core courses and six elective credit hours.

1. Students will complete courses in the biology of aging, psychology of aging, social gerontology and research methods form the basic core of the certificate program.

2. Following the completion of these gerontology courses, students may choose two elective gerontology courses after consultation with their faculty advisers. Advisers counsel students as to the courses that would best suit their educational training needs. Students may choose from aging and human values; topical seminars; independent studies; problems, issues and trends in gerontology; recreation, leisure and aging; and other elective courses.

3. In addition to the completion of these prescribed courses, each candidate for a Certificate of Aging Studies is required to satisfactorily complete a project in gerontology on a subject approved by the faculty. This project may be a comprehensive literature review, a research project or a training or demonstration project. Students register for a three-credit hour course in independent studies (GRTY 692) for this project.

**Curriculum requirements**

**Required courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 601</td>
<td>Biological and Physiological Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRTY/PSYC 602</td>
<td>Psychology of Aging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 603</td>
<td>Social Gerontology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 605</td>
<td>Social Science Research Methods Applied to Gerontology</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRTY 692</td>
<td>Independent Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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**Elective courses**

Select two of the following: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 604</td>
<td>Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 606</td>
<td>Aging and Human Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 615</td>
<td>Aging and Mental Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 616</td>
<td>Geriatric Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRTY 691</td>
<td>Topical Seminar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other electives approved by adviser

Total Hours 21

**Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 21**

Graduate program director
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Program website: sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology (http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/gerontology)