AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, CERTIFICATE IN (POST-BACCALAUREATE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE)

Note: Admission to this program is temporarily suspended.

Program goal
The post-baccalaureate graduate Certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorder is designed to prepare personnel to support individuals with autism spectrum disorder in the educational setting from early intervention through adult services. The purpose of the certificate is to provide the wide range of competencies necessary for the provision of effective educational programming. The course sequence enables personnel to develop comprehensive knowledge and experience in assessment, teaching strategies and curriculum development. The certificate is geared toward teachers, potential teachers and related service personnel. However, it is available to all professionals working in the human service setting who wish to gain expertise in this area.

All applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree in any area related to education, social work, psychology or human services. Participants are required to earn 12 graduate credit hours as outlined below. Upon successful completion of the certificate program, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the primary and secondary characteristics of ASD and the impact on communication, socialization, sensory responses, patterns of behavior and learning style throughout the lifespan.
2. Understand the concerns of families individuals with ASD and describe strategies and provide resources to help address these concerns.
3. Understand and apply theories and research that form the basis of curriculum development and instructional practice.
4. Assess student ability and develop individualized programs that use evidence-based practice to support and enhance learning across environments and across areas of development and need.
5. Describe the behavior of individuals with ASD in terms of its function and identify how to provide positive behavioral support in order to replace existing problem behavior or prevent the development of new problem behaviors.
6. Provide environmental supports, structure and technology adaptations to provide optimal learning and independence for individuals with ASD across environments.

The four autism spectrum disorder courses can also be completed by students who do not wish to earn the post-baccalaureate certificate. In this case, admission to the VCU Graduate School is not required. Individual student needs and preferences determine the best way for the student to proceed.

Student learning outcomes
1. Participants understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with ASD. Participants understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation and program evaluation.
2. Participants understand the characteristics of those with ASD and the educational implications. This includes an understanding of:
   a. Primary and secondary characteristics of individuals with developmental disabilities/autism spectrum disorder
   b. Medical aspects and implications for learning for individuals with developmental disabilities/autism spectrum disorders
   c. Co-existing conditions and ranges that exist at a higher rate than in the general population
   d. Different ways of learning and the impact of academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests and values on instruction
3. Participants demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based practices selecting, adapting and using instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the individual with ASD. Participants demonstrate knowledge of evidence-based practices designed to target communication, social, behavior, sensory and academic needs.
4. Participants understand how to develop and implement comprehensive, longitudinal individualized programs in collaboration with team members. Participants demonstrate knowledge of instructional and assistive technology that can be integrated into the educational program. Participants understand how to plan systematic instruction based on learner characteristics, interests and ongoing assessment use.
5. Participants demonstrate knowledge of the components of assessment for individuals with developmental disabilities/autism spectrum disorder including both formal and informal assessments. Participants understand the need to assess individual strengths, skills and learning styles.
6. Participants understand the importance of collaboration with school personnel and families and demonstrate knowledge of related skills. Participants understand how to communicate effectively with families of individuals with ASD. Participants understand the value of observing, evaluating and providing feedback to paraprofessionals who work under their supervision.

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 (http://www.graduate.vcu.edu) 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. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regcs)

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. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regcs/grad/candidacy)

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. (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regcs/grad/graduation-info)

Note: Admission to this program is temporarily suspended.

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Mar 15</td>
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In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission:

1. Bachelor's degree in an appropriate discipline including education, social work, psychology or human services
2. Three letters of recommendation addressing the student's potential for graduate study in education
3. Student's written statement concerning career interests
4. Transcripts of all previous college work

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Degree requirements
In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regcs/grad/graduation-info), students are required to complete course work in core and elective courses.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students are required to complete a minimum of 12 graduate credit hours.
2. Grade requirements: Receipt of a grade of C or below in two courses constitutes automatic dismissal from the program. Courses with a grade below C cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Curriculum requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEDP 532</td>
<td>Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEDP 634</td>
<td>Assessment, Curriculum and Teaching Methods for Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEDP 635</td>
<td>Supporting Behavior and Social Skills for Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEDP 638</td>
<td>Instructional Design and Field Experience for Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total Hours 12

Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 12

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