

HEALTH BEHAVIOR COACHING, CERTIFICATE IN (POST- BACCALAUREATE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE)

Program goal

The Post-baccalaureate Graduate Certificate in Health Behavior Coaching prepares professionals to serve a critical role on the interdisciplinary health care delivery team, particularly in the emerging preventive health care model in the U.S. This emerging model is prompted in large part by increased health promotion and chronic disease prevention/management efforts emphasizing improving access to preventive services, improving health outcomes, developing and training preventive care health professionals, reducing health disparities, and helping to control health care spending.

Health behavior coaches support, motivate and empower clients/patients to adopt healthy lifestyles, lower health risks by changing negative behaviors, better self-manage their health, and prevent or control acute and chronic health conditions. In addition, health behavior coaches teach clients/patients how to navigate the complex health care system in order to meet their diverse health care needs. This program will prepare students for an innovative, cutting-edge, STEM-H profession that has emerged in response to the need for more time- and labor-intensive encounters to empower clients/patients to be active and responsible participants in their health outcomes.

The certificate program is designed for professionals from diverse backgrounds ranging from clinical professionals (e.g., physicians, physician assistants, nurses, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, occupational therapists, exercise physiologists, sports medicine practitioners, pharmacists, counselors, psychotherapists, etc.) to health promotion professionals (e.g., health educators, registered dietitians, personal trainers, fitness trainers, athletic trainers, diabetes educators, recreational therapists, etc.). The goal of the program is to develop and enhance professional competencies and skills that facilitate a client/patient-centered and a client/patient-driven approach whereby clients/patients determine their own personal health goals and action plans to achieve those goals versus the traditional practitioner/professional-centered approach. In addition, through the coach's utilization of active learning and self-discovery strategies, client/patient accountability is fostered. The program trains professionals in evidence-based motivational techniques, behavior-change theory and processes, knowledge in healthy lifestyle practices, and communication strategies that assist clients/patients in developing inner resources and intrinsic motivation for adopting and sustaining lifestyle changes to improve health and overall well-being. Successful completion of the program requires a minimum of 21 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate level. The course work consists of 17 core credit hours plus four credit hours in a selected focus area.

The program is committed to providing didactic and experiential learning opportunities that may prepare students for credentialing as a certified health education specialist, as administered by the National Commission for Health Education Credentialing Inc.

Student learning outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the roles, responsibilities and scope of practice of health behavior coaches in the context of the U.S. health care delivery system.
2. Students will commit to practicing in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
3. Students will demonstrate skills and competencies in partnering with clients/patients to develop client-centered and client-driven health outcomes goals and a feasible plan to accomplish their goals.
4. Students will demonstrate skills and competencies in facilitating client/patient lifestyle changes and empowering them to sustain healthy behaviors to improve health status, health outcomes and overall well-being.
5. Students will demonstrate their commitment to engage in continuing education to become more proficient in their practice and to ensure that their practice-related knowledge and skills remain current.

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-regs/>)

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-regs/grad/graduation-info/>)

Apply online today. (<https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/>)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
Certificate	Fall	Mar 15	

In addition, admission to the program requires that students:

- Have earned an undergraduate degree in a health science, social science, behavioral science or other health-related discipline from an accredited college or university
- Possess a minimum of one year of health-related work experience
- Have completed a minimum of four total prerequisite course credits in medical terminology and personal health

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/grad/graduation-info/>), students are required to complete course work and to meet grade requirements.

1. Credit hour requirements: Students in the post-baccalaureate graduate certificate program in health behavior coaching are required to earn a minimum of 21 graduate credit hours beyond the baccalaureate level. The course work consists of 17 core credit hours plus four credit hours in a selected focus area.
2. Grade requirements: Receiving a C or below in two courses constitutes an automatic dismissal from the program. Courses with a grade below C cannot be used to satisfy degree requirements.

Curriculum requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Required courses		
HEMS 640	Health Care Organization and Delivery in the U.S.	3
HEMS 641	Human Disease Prevention, Prevalence and Lifestyle Risk Factors	3
HEMS 642	Theoretical Foundations of Health Behavior Change	3
HEMS 643	Fundamentals of Motivational Interviewing	1
HEMS 644	Advanced Motivational Interviewing	1
HEMS 647	Concepts and Applications in Chronic Disease Self-management	3
HEMS 695	Externship	3
Specified elective courses		
Select one pair of courses based on focus area.		4
HEMS 645 & HEMS 648	Application of Motivational Interviewing in Clinical Settings and Health Behavior Change Counseling Techniques for Clinical Interventions (clinical focus)	
HEMS 646 & HEMS 649	Application of Motivational Interviewing in Group and Community Settings and Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Group/Community Health Behavior Change Interventions (group/community focus)	
Total Hours		21

The minimum total of graduate credit hours required for this certificate is 21.

Contact

Joann Richardson, Ph.D.
Associate professor and program director
jtrichar@vcu.edu
(804) 828-1948

Program website: [khs.vcu.edu \(http://www.khs.vcu.edu\)](http://www.khs.vcu.edu)