Graduate Certificate in Gerontology

Student Handbook

Revised 2/2016

http://ehs.siu.edu/gerontology/
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To all new students:

Welcome to the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale!

This handbook has been developed to provide you with information you may find useful as you proceed through the program. It has been designed to be used in conjunction with the SIUC Catalogs. The SIUC Catalog provides information of concern to all undergraduate or graduate students; this handbook provides information specific to the Certificate program in Gerontology.

Another important source of information is your academic advisor. The advisor for Gerontology Certificate is Dr. Juliane P. Wallace. She can be reached at 618-453-3124 or by email at siucgerontology@siu.edu. Her office is located in Davies Hall Room 119. Your advisor is available to help you plan your program of study so that it meets the Certificate requirements. You should meet with your advisor every semester.

The Gerontology Advisory Board is committed to helping students succeed. Although the ultimate responsibility for success is yours, we are ready to assist you in any way we can. Please feel free to contact any board member with questions or concerns.

Once again, welcome and good luck on your new adventure!

Sincerely,

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Advisory Board
Contact Information
CONTACT INFORMATION

Main Office: College of Education and Human Services
Wham 115, MC 4624
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Carbondale, IL 62901-4612

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Fax: 618-453-1646
Website: http://ehs.siu.edu/gerontology/

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About the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology
ABOUT THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN GERONTOLOGY

The Certificate in Gerontology program provides a wonderful opportunity to gain interdisciplinary training needed to provide holistic, seamless services to older adults. Practitioners, educators, researchers, and other individuals with interest in providing services for older adults gain age-specific knowledge and competencies, as well as hands on experience working in the aging network. Through comprehensive studies provided by Gerontology experts, students maximize their opportunities to incorporate a complete understanding of the continuum of care and support services available to better serve older adults and their families.

This program is interdisciplinary utilizing personnel and coursework from the Departments of Kinesiology, Health Education and Recreation, Curriculum and Instruction, the School of Social Work and the Rehabilitation Institute. This interdisciplinary certificate provides a welcome opportunity for current and future SIUC students to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and challenges of serving and working with older adults who represent an increasingly larger percentage of our population.

The Certificate in Gerontology is open to post bachelor level students who are interested in the area of Gerontology. It is designed to provide knowledge, skills, and specialized training in programs and services for older persons.

The Certificate includes core courses on aging in the following areas: social work, rehabilitation, health, exercise, and education. Courses within the certification program will include, but are not limited to: policy and program issues, psychosocial issues, and health and fitness issues. The coursework also includes a practicum in an agency suitable to the individual’s interest. Students must complete 18 semester hours of study, including a minimum of three hours of practicum, to earn the Certificate.

Why Gerontology? - Aging Demographics

The aging of America represents a rapid increase in the percentage of older adults living in our society. In the year 2000 adults 65 years of age and older comprised approximately 35 million people or about one in every eight Americans (approximately 13% of the United States population).

The older population will surge in numbers between the years 2010 and 2030, when many in the “baby boom” generation will reach 65-years old. By the year 2030, there will be approximately 70 million older adults, or more than twice the number of older adults as in 2000 (Census Bureau, 2001).

In increasing numbers older adults are participating in all aspects of our society. Therefore, the Certificate in Gerontology program is broad-based and has a holistic approach. The program is designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of a wide array of interdisciplinary professionals preparing to meet the needs of our aging society.
General Description & Program Goals
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN GERONTOLOGY

Mission Statement

The mission of Southern Illinois University’s Gerontology Program is to provide instruction, promote interdisciplinary research, and offer services that advance an understanding of gerontology. The program seeks to attract and educate students who will become leaders in both academic and applied settings in order to improve the quality of life for older individuals and their families in Illinois, the United States, and the world.

The Gerontology Program facilitates interdisciplinary research in aging and fosters a strong connection with community partners in Southern Illinois to ensure that aging-related knowledge is disseminated throughout Southern Illinois communities.

General Description

The Graduate Certificate in Gerontology is open to post bachelor level students who are interested in the area of gerontology. It is designed to provide knowledge, skills, and specialized training in programs and services for older persons. The certificate includes core courses on aging in the following areas: social work, rehabilitation, health, exercise and education. Courses within the certification program will include, but not be limited to: policy and program issues, psychosocial issues and health and fitness issues. The coursework also includes a practicum in an agency suitable to the individual’s interest OR research project.

Program Goals

1. To provide a broad based understanding of aging and aging related issues in today’s society.
2. To enhance the development of skills needed to work effectively with the older population
3. To promote the delivery of services within an integrated team concept.
4. To enhance the marketability of students who desire to work with the older population.
5. To promote research designed to enhance the understanding of issues related to aging.
Application Process
APPLYING TO THE PROGRAM

Eligibility and Admission

Anyone who has been accepted into SIUC’s Graduate School is eligible to apply. The application process includes completion of an application form, submission of two reference forms and an official transcript verifying completion of a bachelor’s degree.

Application Procedure

Required components of the application process:
1) Complete application form online by clicking HERE.
2) Submit an official transcript with verification of degree completion.
3) Submit two completed reference forms. Forms can be found online by clicking HERE.

All application materials should be submitted to:
Juliane P. Wallace, Academic Advisor of the Certificate in Gerontology Program
119 Davies Hall, MC 4310
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Carbondale, IL  62901

Deadline for applying is one month prior to the end of the preceding semester in which you wish to begin the Certificate of Gerontology.

Characteristics of a Successful Applicant

- **Attitude and Personality** --Mannerisms, dispositions, ability to work with people, confidence, acceptance of criticism
- **Reliability and Character** --Dependability, willingness, honesty, moral character
- **Personal** --Reflects a personal example of a healthy and productive lifestyle
- **Work Habits and Industry** --Conscientiousness, follow through, resourcefulness, self-discipline, initiative
- **Emotional Stability** --Reaction to stress, poise, control, inspiring confidence
- **Capacity for Independent Thinking** --Leadership ability, creative thought, curiosity, active learning
- **Judgment and Common Sense** --Ability and foresight in everyday decisions, expression of opinion, maturity
• Communication Skills -- Verbal, non-verbal, and written

Degree Requirements
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN GERONTOLOGY

1. Students desiring a Certificate in Gerontology are required to complete 12 credit hours of Core requirements.

   **Core Requirements**.................................12
   - GRON/HED 440 – 3 hrs – Health Issues in Aging (online, summer only)
   - GRON/KIN 428 – 3 hrs – Physical Activity and Exercise for Older Adults (online, every semester)
   - GRON/SOCW 575 – 3 hrs – Policy and Program Issues in Aging (online, every semester)
   - GRON/REHB 405 – 3 hrs – Behavioral Gerontology (online, every semester)

2. From within the various departments in the College of Education and Human Services and the University of Southern Illinois students may meet requirements for electives from the following courses:

   - GRON/HED 402 – 3 hrs – Death Education
   - GRON/REC 440C – 3 hrs – Therapeutic Recreation for the Aged
   - GRON/REHB 505 or 446 may be used as an elective
   - GRON/SOCW 559 – 3 hrs - Mental Health and Aging

   Other possible electives:
   - PSY 517 – Aging, Memory & Cognition
   - SOC 465 – Sociology of Aging
   - EDUC 550- Seminar in Gerontology

3. Students need six credit hours of a supervised practicum/research in an approved practice or research setting; e.g. intergenerational policy or research setting. A student may choose a 3-hour supervised practicum/research and a 3-hour elective if they have extensive practical experience in the area of gerontology. Students should register for GRON 555 when doing their practicum/research experience.

4. Completion of a portfolio/research project and presentation.

   **Students must maintain a SIU GPA of 3.0 or better in the certificate program.**

   Waiving Requirements: No more than three hours of coursework in approved core courses completed prior to admission to the program may be applied to the certificate requirements. If the course content has been previously taken in a previous program.

**Completion Information**

In order to complete the Certificate program, you must submit a portfolio and deliver a presentation to the Gerontology Advisory Board for review and approval.

You are NOT required to complete the Certificate program in the same time frame as your Master’s degree. The Certificate program may be completed at any time.
Portfolio Guidelines

The following guidelines have been developed for the assembly of portfolios for students attempting completion of the Certificate in Gerontology at SIUC. The following page provides a scoring rubric for this portfolio.

1. Materials should be presented in written format consistent with the guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA) publication standards.

2. The portfolio will be divided into several sections as follows:
   a. Introduction, summary statement of original objectives, and summary statement of student’s evaluation regarding their own progress and meeting of these objectives.
   b. GRON/HED 440
   c. GRON/KIN 428
   d. GRON/REHB 405
   e. GRON/SOCW575
   f. Elective class materials
   g. Practicum experience
   h. Any feedback materials from faculty or agencies.

3. The materials within each section will contain papers, course related materials etc.

4. The introduction and summary will contain the following information (5 pages max):
   a. The original statement of goals identified in student’s application.
   b. An overview of how the student feels these goals were met, and progress/areas of growth as a result of course materials and practicum setting.
   c. Goals identified for practicum and an overview of how closely student feels these were met.
   d. An overall summary statement of how the program has developed skills for the individual in terms of working in the field of Gerontology.

All materials will be assembled in a three ring binder, and reviewed by an ad hoc group of board members, who sit on the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Advisory Board. Students may utilize LIVE TEXT electronic portfolio to store and compile an electronic portfolio.

All required gerontology courses must be completed before you begin your internship unless special arrangements have been made with the coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology program.
## Certificate in Gerontology – Scoring Rubric for Portfolio

Name of Student: ______________________________________________________________

Major area of concentration: __________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Possible</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Consistent with American Psychological Association (APA) publication standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Introduction, summary statement of original objectives (listed on application), and summary statement of student’s evaluation regarding their own progress and meeting these objectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3. GRON/HED 440</td>
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<td>4. GRON/KIN 428</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>5. GRON/REHB 446 or GRON/REHB 405</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6. GRON/SOCW 575</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7. Elective class materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Practicum experience (This can include a copy of the contract signed, and summary materials from evaluation. It can also include any products developed while at the Practicum sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Any feedback materials from faculty or agencies. (Note: The materials within each section will contain assignments, course related materials etc. It can also include a copy of the syllabus.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10. An introduction and summary reflection written by the student. It should contain the following information 5 pages max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. The original statement of goals identified in student’s application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>b. An overview of how the student feels these goals were met, and progress/areas of growth as a result of course materials and practicum setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Goals identified for practicum and an overview of how closely student feels these were met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>d. An overall summary statement of how the program has developed skills for the individual in terms of working in the field of Gerontology.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

100   TOTAL

Full point value if clear evidence that the item has been met.
0 point value if there is no evidence that the item has been met.

**Be sure to check with your advisor to make sure you have met all certificate requirements.**
Practicum
or
Research Experience
PRACTICUM/RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Why do a practicum?

Practicum/research experiences are an integral part of the total educational experience of the Certificate of Gerontology program. Through this experience, you will deepen your understanding of human behavior and enhance your skills for working with older adults.

Do I get credit for the practicum?

Your practicum/research experience is worth 3 to 6 credit hours and is required for certificate completion. You will register for GRON 555 to record the practicum/research experience.

What is the time commitment?

Generally, to earn 3 credit hours, 150 hours of work (contact hours) at the internship/research site is required; 300 hours are needed to earn 6 credit hours. This time is spread over the 15 weeks of the semester, excluding the finals week. That translates into working 10-20 hours per week, depending upon number of credit hours (3-6) taken.

Are there any special requirements to enroll in the practicum/research experience?

To enroll for the internship, students must have:
1) Been admitted to the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology;
2) Completed all required Gerontology courses;
3) A 2.75 overall GPA, and;
4) A 2.5 GPA in their major coursework.

Please note that some electives may be required depending on the type of internship you desire.

Do I have to find my own practicum/research experience site?

Not necessarily. Assistance is available from the Certificate in Gerontology Coordinator.

What if I don’t know where I might want to do my internship?

You may not know where you would like to complete your internship when you begin the program. Don’t worry about it yet. After you have taken some of the classes and have made visits to various community agencies, you will probably begin to have an idea of what you would like to do on an internship.

Will I be able to do my internship at an agency in my hometown?

That depends on where you live. (We provide supervision of all the internships our students complete).
Practicum Guidelines

A Practicum/Research Experience Agreement must be submitted PRIOR to reporting to the agency. This can be found online HERE.

At the outset of the Practicum, a field learning plan will be established. This will include an “individualized learning plan” containing objectives to be accomplished. The areas from which goals will be established include:

1. Orientation to agency’s mission, target clients, organization, funding sources, policies, management and administration.

2. Planning and intervention strategies consistent with the student’s area of expertise.

3. Orientation to the worker’s role within the agency, specific to Gerontology.

4. Evaluation strategy to evaluate the impact of program intervention and/or policy initiatives undertaken within the practicum.

A practicum may be supervised by a faculty within a different department than the student’s major department. If this is the case, the initial paperwork must be approved within the student’s home department and copies of all materials related to the contract must be kept within the student’s file within the advisement office.

1. How do we differentiate hours from a practicum within one’s program and the Certificate?

2. Practicums will consist of either three credit hours (150 contact hours) or 6 credit hours (300 contact hours).

3. Students may be involved in locating their practicum site. Generally, some negotiations should occur between the faculty member and student to find a site that will meet the student’s interests and learning goals.

4. Practicum experiences can be offered each semester. If the appropriate call number for a practicum does not exist, students can register for an Independent Study with the appropriate number of credit hours.

These areas will be developed through a written plan and monitored by a field liaison person who has been assigned by the Certificate in Gerontology Advisory Board.

It is expected that the liaison visit the practicum site at least three times during the course of the practicum. These include but are not limited to: prior to commencement, at the midpoint of the practicum and when nearing completion.
Earn Credit for Previous Work

You may be eligible to receive 3* hours of course credit for previous work experience in the field of gerontology if you meet the criteria outlined below. These credit hours are elective hours and may not be substituted for required gerontology courses.

1. You must have a minimum of 150 hours of direct experience with older adults in a paid or unpaid capacity. The job duties must relate directly to the provision of direct service to older adults. Family experience, while valuable, is not recognized as independent work experience.

2. You must provide verification of the experience in the form of a letter from the supervisor of the experience. The letter must document the number of hours of experience you had and list the job duties you performed. Care should be taken to ensure that the letter describes how the duties relate to people with disabilities or disability issues. The letter should be written on letterhead from the agency where the work was completed. If not printed on letterhead, the address and phone number of the agency should be provided in the letter.

3. You must provide a typewritten description of the work experience to the Coordinator of Gerontology Program. The statement should (a) provide a summary of your duties and (b) present a rationale for why the experience is relevant and how it has contributed to your understanding of disability and disability issues. In other words, you should justify why the experience is worthy of academic credit. At a minimum, the summary should be one double-spaced typed page. If you are requesting more than 3 credit hours, your justification may need to be longer.

4. Documentation of research experience in the form of a published paper or extensive description from the research supervisor and a paper may also be used for credit.

*Students may request additional hours of credit. Such credit will be awarded to students who can document that their experiences provided them with increasing responsibilities in the field of Gerontology. Two ways in which students may document this is through promotions or added job duties.
Employment Opportunities
What will I do after graduation?

Students who complete the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology program are well prepared to work in gerontology or a related field.

**Employment opportunities**

Employment can be found in community-based programs, mental health programs, independent living centers, aging programs, and research facilities. Positions may be found in:

- Social Service
- Home Health Services
- Mental Health Services
- Rehabilitation Services
- Fitness/Recreation Programs
- Therapeutic Activities Programs
- Hospital/Healthcare Facilities
- Senior Community Centers
- Law Offices
- Adult Education Programs
- Governmental Agencies
- Profit/Non-profit Organizations

Careers in aging can be found on through the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education: [http://www.aghe.org](http://www.aghe.org)

**Mailing List**

After you graduate, please keep us informed of your mailing address and phone number. We would love to know what you are doing! Are you working in Gerontology? Are you integrating acquired knowledge and practices in fields outside of Gerontology? Keep us posted by calling, writing, or e-mailing the Coordinator of the Gerontology Program. You can also keep in touch online by clicking [HERE](http://www.aghe.org). By sharing your successes you help to inspire other students.
Academic & Professional Organizations
Academic and Professional Gerontology Organizations

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA)

From the GSA website:

The Gerontological Society of America (GSA) is the nation's oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. The principal mission of the Society — and its 5,500+ members — is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public.

The organization fosters collaboration between physicians, nurses, biologists, behavioral and social scientists, psychologists, social workers, economists, policy experts, those who study the humanities and arts, and many other scholars and researchers in aging. This stems from the belief that the intersection of research from diverse areas is the best way to achieve the greatest impact and promote healthy aging. Through networking and mentorship opportunities, GSA provides a professional “home” for career gerontologists and students at all levels.

GSA publishes the longest-running and most widely-cited peer-reviewed journals in its field: The Journals of Gerontology, Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences; The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences; and The Gerontologist. A monthly newsletter, Gerontology News, is also sent to members.

GSA hosts Careers in Aging Week, which brings awareness of the many professional possibilities offered in the field; AgeWork, an online resource with job listings; an awards program considered to be the field’s most prestigious; and the Ambassador Program, which is a grassroots network that fosters the study of Gerontology among students. Increasingly popular are the GSA Interest Groups that have been formed around specific topics that cut across disciplines.

Student Membership - $85/year
For more information on membership and benefits click HERE.

The American Society of Aging (ASA)

From the ASA website:

The membership of ASA is multidisciplinary and inclusive of professionals who are concerned with the physical, emotional, social, economic and spiritual aspects of aging. No other organization in the field of aging represents the diversity of settings and professional disciplines reached by ASA. Our 5000 members are practitioners, educators, administrators, policymakers, business people, researchers, and students.

ASA offers professional education, outstanding publications and online information and training resources that are nationally recognized. The breadth and depth of information available from ASA’s conference, webinars and publications, and the diversity of perspective and experience that characterizes ASA’s membership, are unmatched by any other professional organization in the field.
ASA’s professional education and training opportunities, headlined by the annual conference, provide nationally-recognized continuing education across a range of disciplines. ASA's annual conference, Aging in America, is the nation’s largest gathering of a diverse, multidisciplinary community of professionals in healthcare, social service, government, business and philanthropy with expertise in providing services and products for older adults.

ASA publications offer the latest information and research to help professionals stay on the cutting edge in the field of aging. Aging Today, our bimonthly newspaper, covers news, advances and controversies in research, practice and policy; Generations is a scholarly quarterly journal, covering topics in depth; and in-depth articles on best practice, policy, research and model programs, plus the stories of ASA’s multidisciplinary membership and the elders they serve, are offered in Aging Today Online, the regularly updated publication within our blog that is facilitated by ASA’s eight Constituent Groups.

Student membership - $75/ year
For more information on membership and benefits click HERE.