

AUTISM STUDIES CERTIFICATE

Program Website: <https://www.towson.edu/chp/departments/health-sciences/grad/autism-certificate/>

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The Autism Studies Graduate Certificate (GC) provides students with the knowledge and skills to support both children and adults on the autism spectrum.

More than 2% of the U.S. population is on the autism spectrum which means we are all living, learning and working beside people with autism. Professionals who understand autism are needed in schools, clinics, hospitals, universities, workplaces, public agencies and beyond. This GC provides a stamp of autism expertise that validates your commitment to working in the field and prepares you to broaden your role as an educator, early childhood professional, mental health professional, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, agency staff, disability specialist, researcher, advocate or policymaker.

Topics covered include typical traits of individuals on the spectrum, their gifts and challenges, co-occurring conditions, epidemiology, evidence-based interventions, classroom and workplace strategies, family impact, research and key policy issues.

The 16-unit "live" online program—including five 3-unit courses and one 1-unit course—generally takes 1-2 years to complete. Many courses are offered in the evening to accommodate working professionals.

In some cases, it is possible to combine this Graduate Certificate with a Master's or doctoral degree program to enhance your professional credentials. This option may be of particular interest to students in advanced degree programs such as Occupational Therapy, Child Life, Health Science and Early Childhood Education. Many courses can also be used towards the Autism Studies doctoral program.

Requirements

Admission Requirements

Application deadlines and a full listing of materials required for admission can be found on the website.

Prerequisites for Admission

Completion of the following courses with a grade of "C" or better:

- Human development across the life span (one lower-division course)
- Human Biological Science (one lower-division course)
- Social or Behavioral Science (one lower-division course)

Documentation of completion of 30 hours of human service activity as part of field experience, volunteer or paid work in the last five years (e.g., experience with a human service agency or community program, educational or health program, advocacy group, Special Olympics)

NOTE: Students may request a *competency in lieu of course work review* by the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program Committee for the required courses for admission. Students must submit documentation of didactic

preparation (e.g., workshops, professional development or related courses) and professional practice that verifies course content mastery.

Certificate Requirements

The Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program in Autism Studies consists of a total of 16 units: 10 units of required courses and 6 units of electives.

Code	Title	Units
Required Courses		
IDHP 621	CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	3
IDHP 623	CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	3
SPED 605 or FMST 610	WORKING WITH FAMILIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ¹ FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	3
IDHP 681	SEMINAR IN AUTISM SPECTRUM ISSUES	1
Electives ²		
	500-700 level courses in arts; education; family studies; health science; interdisciplinary health professions; kinesiology; nursing; occupational therapy and occupational science; psychology; or speech-language pathology, audiology and deaf studies that directly apply to people on the autism spectrum	6
IDHP Elective Courses ³		
IDHP 770	SPECIAL TOPICS IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	
IDHP 791	DIRECTED READINGS IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	
IDHP 792	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	
Total Units		16

¹ Courses may be taken as part of required or elective courses in student's graduate program.

² Courses must have prior written consent and approval from the director of the autism certificate program for learning activities to satisfy requirements of the autism certificate.

³ Courses may be taken in lieu of required electives.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate acquisition of knowledge related to the field of autism that addresses epidemiology, etiology, and diagnosis as well as strengths and challenges of individuals with autism, issues faced by their families, and the roles and effectiveness of relevant systems (e.g. public schools, adult service agencies).
2. Students will critically evaluate autism research to identify evidence-based interventions, policies, and practices that contribute to optimal outcomes and enhance quality of life for people on the autism spectrum and their families.
3. Students will effectively communicate autism information, sensitive to whether their audience consists of professionals or laypeople, using technology as appropriate.