



GRADUATE STUDIES FACT SHEET

CERTIFICATE OF SPECIALIZATION IN AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

MISSION OF THE PROGRAM

This program is to provide professionals, parents, and other members of the community access to empirically validated educational approaches for teaching persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), strategies for implementing these approaches, and methods to assess their effectiveness, i.e., the effect of education/treatment on the person's quality of life.

THE PROGRAM

The autism certificate program is based on the following assumptions:

- People with ASD and their families have a wide range of disability-specific strengths and needs.
- Professionals who specialize in the treatment of individuals with ASD must understand the ASD profile, its history, and the challenges faced by families of individuals with ASD.
- Professionals who support individuals with ASD must collaborate with each other.
- Specialization in autism requires course work, guided observation, and supervised clinical practicum.
- Assessment and intervention must be based on evidence-based practices.

THE CURRICULUM

The program offers career enhancement for professionals currently working with individuals with ASD. Community professionals will enhance their abilities to serve clientele who have autism and their families. The program can serve as a stepping stone for individual students seeking graduate degrees in service areas including speech and hearing science,

psychology, education, physical education, social work, and medical fields. Many graduates are seeking careers in service-related positions in Pennsylvania and the surrounding states. Graduates in this program are fortunate to have numerous opportunities that satisfy their primary goal of supporting the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families. In addition, courses can be used as Act 48 credits for curriculum for Pennsylvania certified teachers.

This program is interdisciplinary with three colleges within WCU participating:

1. College of Arts and Sciences
 - Department of Psychology
2. College of Education
 - Department of Early Childhood and Special Education
3. College of Health Sciences
 - Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
 - Department of Kinesiology

PROGRAM OFFERED

Due to course sequencing, summer admission is required for this 18-semester-hour certificate program (six courses).

Required courses

- EDA 503 Family Systems in Special Education: Field and Seminar (a 42-hour field experience with a family living with an individual with autism)
- EDA 520 Introduction to Autism: Understanding Autism and the Interdisciplinary Process (taught by faculty from all five disciplines as recommended by National Research Council 2001 Report)
- EDA 530 Teaching Children with

Autism (detailing educational settings and interventions)

- KIN 587 Contemporary Issues in Adapted Physical Activity: Students in the Autistic Spectrum (dedicated to adapting physical education needs and recreational programs)
- PSY 521 Issues in Autism: Diagnosis and Behavioral Treatments (dedicated to validated assessment and treatment)
- SPP 565 Communicative Enhancement for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (detailing communicative interventions and strategies)

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Candidates should have the following qualifications:

1. Applicants must have a baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited in the United States or its equivalent from a school in another country.
2. West Chester University is phasing in new GPA requirements. A minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA will be required.
3. If GPA is below the minimum required University GPA of 3.0, scores from either the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) general test or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT), with a score at the 50th percentile are required.

Students should apply online at www.wcupa.edu/grad/.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Write: Office of Graduate Studies and Extended Education
McKelvie Hall

102 West Rosedale Avenue
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-2943
Fax: 610-436-2763
E-mail: gradstudy@wcupa.edu
Web: www.wcupa.edu/grad
Visit: www.facebook.com/wcugrad

Or contact the department:

Write: Dr. Vicki McGinley, Graduate
Coordinator
Department of Special Education
305-B Recitation Hall
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-2579
Web: [www.wcupa.edu/_academics/
coed/WCUcertificateof
AutismSpectrumDisorders.asp](http://www.wcupa.edu/_academics/coed/WCUcertificateofAutismSpectrumDisorders.asp)

The Graduate Catalog is available online
at [www.wcupa.edu/_information/official.
documents/graduate.catalog/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_information/officialdocuments/graduate.catalog/).

ABOUT GRADUATE STUDIES

West Chester University offers high-quality
graduate degrees in more than 70 disciplines

or areas of study, as well as certificate and
certification programs. The graduate studies
program has grown remarkably since
its introduction in 1960. West Chester
University's program is the largest within
the 14 institutions in the Pennsylvania State
System of Higher Education enrolling more
than 2,100 graduate students.

Programs can be taken on a part-time
basis, and most of the graduate classes
are scheduled during late afternoons and
evenings for the benefit of in-service
teachers and other employed persons.

ABOUT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

A regional, public institution, West Chester
University of Pennsylvania offers high-
quality undergraduate and graduate degrees,
as well as certification and certificate
programs, in more than 100 subject areas.
As the second largest member of the State
System of Higher Education, West Chester
offers a full and rewarding educational
experience as well as reasonable tuition.

With a rich heritage dating back to the
19th century, West Chester University was
founded in 1871 as West Chester Normal
School for the purpose of training teachers

for the Commonwealth's newly established
public schools. In 1960, West Chester State
Teachers College expanded its programs
to include liberal arts and graduate degrees
and, as a result, dropped "Teachers" from
its name. In 1983, West Chester State
College became one of the 14 institutions
in the State System of Higher Education.
Along with its university status, the school
acquired a new system of governance
and the opportunity to expand its degree
programs.

Today, more than 15,400 graduate and
undergraduate students, as well as 1,500
faculty and staff, study and work on
the 406-acre campus. Situated in the
Borough of West Chester, the campus is a
picturesque mix of Gothic, Victorian, and
modern architecture with pleasant, tree-
shaded walks.

Strategically located at the center of the
mid-Atlantic corridor, West Chester
University is just 25 miles west of
Philadelphia and 17 miles north of
Wilmington, Del. The campus is convenient
to major cultural institutions, recreational
activities, and commercial businesses, many
of which provide internship opportunities
for WCU's students.

