

PATIENT COUNSELING, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) ACCELERATED CHAPLAIN CERTIFICATION CONCENTRATION/AGING STUDIES, CERTIFICATE IN (GRADUATE CERTIFICATE) [DUAL DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE]

Advanced study in patient counseling and aging studies is available through a dual degree and certificate program co-sponsored by the Department of Patient Counseling and the Department of Gerontology in the College of Health Professions.

The program allows students to earn a Master of Science in Patient Counseling with the accelerated chaplain certification concentration and a Certificate in Aging Studies with a minimum of 42 credits rather than the 45 credits necessary if the two degrees were pursued separately. This efficiency lowers the overall cost of tuition while also reducing time to earning both degrees.

Program goals

The objectives of this dual degree and certificate program are to:

- Prepare graduates to address the complex needs of a diverse aging population using holistic knowledge of the biopsychosocial aging process
- Provide graduates with an understanding of empirically and theoretically based components contributing to optimal aging using evidence-based, best-practice approaches
- Prepare graduates to demonstrate ability to provide care with sensitivity and respect in a diverse population of older people
- Prepare graduates to work with interprofessional teams in organizations and institutions to benefit and support older people and caregivers

Among the many benefits offered by participation in the dual degree and certificate program are the following:

- Students holding these degrees will be more competitive in both hospital and long-term care institutions. This is especially notable as the aging population in the U.S. increases.

The diplomas for this dual degree and certificate program may be awarded sequentially. However, students must complete a separate graduation check out for each program.

Student learning outcomes

See the individual program pages for student learning outcomes.

Other information

Advising

The student is assigned an adviser from each program to develop a plan of study. Advisers from each program will provide guidance on course requirements for their respective programs.

Admission requirements

Students must meet the admission requirements for each program. Admission into one program does not guarantee admission into the other.

The Certificate in Aging Studies program is open to qualified students who have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or the equivalent and who have met all **general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School**

The admission requirements for the Master of Science in Patient Counseling (<https://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/school-allied-health-professions/patient-counseling/patient-counseling-ms-accelerated-chaplain-certification-concentration/#admissionrequirements>) can be found on the program page.

Application procedure

Applicants may apply any time after acceptance into the Master of Science in Patient Counseling program.

Students may contact VCU Graduate Admissions to have their transcripts and letters of recommendation from the Ph.D. application attached to their certificate application. A new personal statement is required.

Dual degree and certificate requirements

As standalone programs, the M.S. comprises 30 credits while the certificate requires 15 credits. The dual degree and certificate program allows students to share two credits, therefore decreasing total credits to completion from 45 to 43.

Based on the equivalent knowledge acquired by successfully completing PATC 635 in the master's program, GRTY 606 is satisfied in the certificate curriculum. Three credits of this course satisfy the requirements of the certificate, and two credits satisfy the requirements for the M.S.

Curriculum requirements

| Course | Title | Hours |
|--------------------------|---|-------|
| M.S. requirements | | |
| • Core requirements | | |
| PATC 611 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice I | 3 |
| PATC 612 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice II | 3 |
| PATC 613 | Group Process I | 2 |
| PATC 614 | Group Process II | 2 |
| PATC 615 | Group Process III | 2 |
| PATC 617 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice III | 3 |
| PATC 635 | Clinical Ethics (taken for three credits; satisfies GRTY 606 in certificate) ¹ | 3 |
| PATC 639 | Spiritual Care Management | 2 |
| PATC 640 | Research Basics | 1 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------|
| PATC 641 | Evidence-based Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Inquiry | 1 |
| PATC 642 | Developing and Presenting Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Research | 1 |
| PATC 646 | Clinical Practicum I | 2 |
| PATC 647 | Clinical Practicum II | 2 |
| PATC 648 | Clinical Practicum III | 2 |
| • Electives | | |
| Courses may be taken in patient counseling, gerontology and rehabilitation counseling. Other electives may be allowed with prior permission of the program director and chair. | | 2 |
| PATC elective course (500 level or higher) | | |
| GRTY elective course (620 and 630 series) | | |
| RHAB elective course (620 and 630 series) | | |
| Certificate requirements | | |
| GRTY 601 | Biological and Physiological Aging | 3 |
| GRTY 602 | Psychology of Aging | 3 |
| GRTY 603 | Social Gerontology | 3 |
| GRTY 606 | Aging and Human Values (satisfied by PATC 635) | 3 |
| Restricted elective | | 3 |
| Select from: | | |
| GRTY 604 | Problems, Issues and Trends in Gerontology | |
| GRTY 615 | Aging and Mental Disorders | |
| GRTY 638 | Long-term Care Administration | |
| GRTY 691 | Topical Seminar | |
| GRTY 692 | Independent Studies | |
| Total Hours | | 43 |

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Students in the dual degree and certificate program are required to enroll in this course using the three-hour option.

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree and certificate program is 43.

Sample plan of study

Year one

| Semester 1 | | Hours |
|--------------------|---|-----------|
| GRTY 603 | Social Gerontology | 3 |
| PATC 611 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice I | 3 |
| PATC 613 | Group Process I | 2 |
| PATC 635 | Clinical Ethics (satisfies GRTY 606 in certificate) | 3 |
| PATC 640 | Research Basics | 1 |
| PATC 646 | Clinical Practicum I | 2 |
| Term Hours: | | 14 |

Semester 2

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| GRTY 601 | Biological and Physiological Aging | 3 |
| PATC 612 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice II | 3 |
| PATC 614 | Group Process II | 2 |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| PATC 639 | Spiritual Care Management | 2 |
| PATC 641 | Evidence-based Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Inquiry | 1 |
| PATC 647 | Clinical Practicum II | 2 |
| Term Hours: | | 13 |

Year two

Semester 3

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| GRTY 602 | Psychology of Aging | 3 |
| PATC 615 | Group Process III | 2 |
| PATC 617 | Theory of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Practice III | 3 |
| PATC 642 | Developing and Presenting Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Research | 1 |
| PATC 648 | Clinical Practicum III | 2 |
| GRTY restricted elective | | 3 |
| PATC elective | | 2 |
| Term Hours: | | 16 |
| Total Hours: | | 43 |

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this dual degree and certificate program is 43.

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