

# MA in Aging Studies

A master's degree in aging studies from Wichita State University provides students the opportunity to maximize their career potential by specializing in the aging professions, complementing existing experience and building upon their educational background. Skill sets are diversified by flexible curriculum that prepares students for a wide range of professional settings.

Students may transition a career/area of interest to an aging service position within another industry (e.g. social work, senior living, senior services, nursing home administration, fitness, nutrition, business). The aging studies curriculum incorporates a variety of perspectives from the numerous disciplines concerned with the physical, mental and social aspects of life.

The MA in aging studies can be completed 100 percent online. It comprises 36 total credit hours. Core courses comprise 15 credit hours. Additional hours are chosen within three curricular concentrations: senior living management, senior community services and public health.

**Senior Living Management:** Prepares students to serve in administrative, managerial and director positions within senior living and long-term care communities.

- Administrator-in-Training Program (AIT) (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/#aitpracticumplacementtext>): Students pursuing this concentration are also eligible to complete the AIT program, providing the practical experience required to become a licensed nursing home administrator.

**Senior Community Services:** Prepares students to engage adults aging in the community through senior centers, senior programming and/or social services. Ideal for current social service professionals looking to advance their careers, enhance their capacity to work with older adults, and combine what they do with aging.

**Public Health:** Prepares students to work in the public health sector such as local government agencies and community programming. Specific focus in public health and aging, epidemiology, environmental health, and the social/behavioral aspects of public health.

- Graduate Certificate in Public Health (GCPH) (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/graduate-certificate-public-health-program/>): Students in this concentration also earn the GCPH, a nationally recognized certification, alongside their master's degree.

Students choose from one of three culminating study options: thesis, internship and coursework, to complete the program. Professionals with licensed credentials may be eligible for 3-6 credit hours of Credit for Prior Learning. Review the Requirements tab for further details. The aging studies program provides quality distance education, enabling students to earn the MA from anywhere in the state or country.

## Admission and Application

1. Admission to the Graduate School at Wichita State University;
2. A grade point average of 2.750 (4.000 system); and
3. International applicants must have a score higher than 79 on the internet-based TOEFL examination, an overall minimum band score of 6.5 on the IELTS examination, or a score of 58 on the PTE-Academic examination.

## Additional Supporting Documents

1. Contact information and recommendations from two professional references;
2. A personal goals essay of 500 words or less which clearly articulates the applicant's reason for seeking admission to the aging studies program. Essay should be reflective of their desire for admittance and professional goals related to the aging studies program; and
3. Include in the personal goals essay, a statement documenting computer literacy including experience with online learning, Microsoft Office and overall familiarity with online navigation. Students are highly encouraged to review the information found on the Wichita State Office of Online Learning website, paying particular attention to the Introduction to Online Learning, and Computer Skills and Preparation information.
4. **The GRE is not required for admission.**

To be reviewed for admission, applicants must submit the designated application for admission, application fee, supporting transcripts and additional supporting documents to the Graduate School via the online application portal.

The priority application deadlines for scholarship consideration are: July 15 for fall admission; December 1 for spring admission; April 15 for summer admission. Applications are reviewed when the graduate application fee and all supporting documents have been submitted and received by the program director. Applicants will be notified of their admission status by the Graduate School. Upon enrollment, they will be assessed a \$50 nonrefundable acceptance fee. For additional details, please see the aging studies program website (<https://www.wichita.edu/academics/online/publichealth/>).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Link opens new window.

## Program Requirements

| Course   | Title  | Hours |
|--|--|-------|
| Required Core Courses for All Concentrations (15 credit hours)   |  |       |
| PHS 702  | Research Methods   | 3     |
| PHS 710  | Perspectives on an Aging Society                         | 3     |
| PHS 717  | Health Communications and Aging                          | 3     |
| PHS 718  | Family Care Management                                   | 3     |
| PHS 765  | The Medicare System                                      | 3     |
| Select one of the following culminating experiences (3 credit hours)   |  | 3     |
| PHS 790  | Aging Studies Practicum (Internship option) <sup>1</sup> | 3     |
| or PHS 660   | Administrator-in-Training Long-Term Care Practicum       |       |
| PHS 795  | Thesis Research (Thesis option)                          | 3     |
| Coursework Elective Option (with comp exam). Any 3-credit-hour graduate-level course in PHS could count as an elective with advisor approval, including PHS 877 Independent Readings. Outside relevant graduate level courses may also be considered. Consult a graduate advisor for approval. |  |       |
| Total Concentration Hours (see options below)  |  | 18    |
| Total Credit Hours   |  | 36    |

<sup>1</sup> PHS 660 Administrator-in-Training Long-Term Care Practicum available in Senior Living Management Concentration only.

In addition to the core courses and culminating option, students select one of the following concentrations.

### **Senior Living Management Concentration**

Students should inquire with their advisor about adding the graduate certificate in healthcare leadership (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/certificate-healthcare-leadership/>) or the graduate certificate in public health (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/graduate-certificate-public-health-program/>) to the senior living management concentration.

| Course             | Title  | Hours |
|--------------------|--|-------|
| PHS 562            | Senior Living Operations                               | 3     |
| PHS 626            | Senior Living Hospitality                              | 3     |
| PHS 622            | Human Resource Management in Health Care Organizations | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |  | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |  | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |  | 3     |

#### *Recommended Electives Aging Focus*

|         |                                       |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| PHS 512 | Diversity and Aging                   |
| PHS 560 | Community Resources and Aging Network |
| PHS 625 | Senior Community Programming          |

#### *Recommended Electives Graduate Certificate Healthcare Leadership*

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| PHS 803 | Healthcare Finance                              |
| PHS 812 | Healthcare Policy and Administration            |
| PHS 815 | Healthcare Leadership and Operations Management |

#### *Recommended Electives Graduate Certificate Public Health*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| PHS 623 | Public Health and Aging                        |
| PHS 808 | Managerial Epidemiology                        |
| PHS 814 | Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health |
| PHS 816 | Environmental Health                           |

**Total Credit Hours** 18

### **Senior Community Services Concentration**

Students should inquire with their advisor about adding the graduate certificate in public health (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/graduate-certificate-public-health-program/>) to the senior community services concentration.

| Course             | Title                                 | Hours |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| PHS 512            | Diversity and Aging                   | 3     |
| PHS 560            | Community Resources and Aging Network | 3     |
| PHS 625            | Senior Community Programming          | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |                                       | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |                                       | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |                                       | 3     |

#### *Recommended Electives Aging Focus*

|         |                              |
|---------|------------------------------|
| PHS 515 | Women and Aging              |
| PHS 516 | Age, Work and Retirement     |
| PHS 520 | Family and Aging             |
| PHS 525 | Dying, Death and Bereavement |
| PHS 626 | Senior Living Hospitality    |

#### *Recommended Electives Graduate Certificate Public Health*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| PHS 623 | Public Health and Aging                        |
| PHS 808 | Managerial Epidemiology                        |
| PHS 814 | Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health |
| PHS 816 | Environmental Health                           |

**Total Credit Hours** 18

### **Public Health Concentration**

Students pursuing the public health concentration will automatically earn the graduate certificate in public health (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/graduate-certificate-public-health-program/>) in addition to their MA degree. Students should inquire with their advisor about adding the graduate certificate in healthcare leadership (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/health-professions/health-sciences/public-health-sciences/certificate-healthcare-leadership/>).

| Course             | Title  | Hours |
|--------------------|--|-------|
| PHS 623            | Public Health and Aging                        | 3     |
| or PHS 812         | Healthcare Policy and Administration           |       |
| PHS 808            | Managerial Epidemiology                        | 3     |
| PHS 814            | Social and Behavioral Aspects of Public Health | 3     |
| PHS 816            | Environmental Health                           | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |  | 3     |
| 500+ Open Elective |  | 3     |

#### *Recommended Electives Aging Focus*

|         |                                       |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| PHS 512 | Diversity and Aging                   |
| PHS 515 | Women and Aging                       |
| PHS 516 | Age, Work and Retirement              |
| PHS 525 | Dying, Death and Bereavement          |
| PHS 560 | Community Resources and Aging Network |
| PHS 625 | Senior Community Programming          |

#### *Recommended Electives Graduate Certificate Healthcare Leadership*

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| PHS 622 | Human Resource Management in Health Care Organizations |
| PHS 803 | Healthcare Finance                                     |
| PHS 812 | Healthcare Policy and Administration                   |
| PHS 815 | Healthcare Leadership and Operations Management        |

**Total Credit Hours** 18

Students are expected to consult with their graduate advisor and establish their plan of study following the completion of 12 graduate credit hours, as discussed in the Graduate School section of the Graduate Catalog.

### **Credit for Prior Learning**

Industry recognized field specific external credentials are valued by our faculty. Documentation of external credentials allows prospective students to enter with executive status. In accordance with the Graduate School's Credit for Prior Learning (<http://catalog.wichita.edu/graduate/academic-information/degree-certificate-completion/credit-prior-learning/>) (CPL) policy, CPL may satisfy up to six (6) curricular credit hours. In addition, the following program policies apply:

- CPL credits are included in the total transfer credits allowed toward a degree.

- All CPL credit hours posted to academic records are always equivalent to specified courses. Future enrollment in a course designated for CPL equivalency is not permitted. CPL associated courses cannot be repeated to receive additional course credits towards the degree.
- CPL credits may be earned through credentials up until completion of 75 percent of the curriculum. This includes credentials awarded before joining the program.

#### **Portfolio Program**

The CPL Portfolio Program is a process used to compile documentation and ultimately demonstrate that earned credentials are equivalent to specific courses. Students use the Portfolio Program to request credit for learning achieved through nonacademic mechanisms. If equivocal, associated credit hours will be posted to the academic record by the registrar's office. Each portfolio will include:

- Introduction: provide an overview of how the credential/professional experience is related to the course.
- Course Information: provide the catalog course description and course learning outcomes.
- Summary: match each course learning outcome to professional experiences or credential content.
- Narrative: demonstrate how each course learning outcome was actualized.
- Documentary Evidence: include documentation to support knowledge of learning outcomes.
- Resume.

Students may submit course-specific portfolios to request CPL for verified professional credentials, certifications, or licenses issued by a governmental agency or professional organization. Students are eligible to receive credit for credentials issued or valid during the effective dates, or validity period, for the credit recommendation. Pre-approved external credential equivalents:

- Assisted living license equivalency: PHS 562 Senior Living Operations
- Operator's license equivalency: PHS 877 Independent Study
- Activities director certification equivalency: PHS 625 Senior Community Programming
- Social services designee certification equivalency: PHS 877 Independent Study
- Medicare SHICK certification equivalency: PHS 765 The Medicare System
- Social work equivalency: PHS 520 Family and Aging

#### **Applied Learning**

Students in the Master of Arts in aging studies are required to complete an applied learning or research experience to graduate from the program. The requirement can be met by completing the following course requirement: PHS 717.