Welcome
This Graduate Certificate prepares students to provide educational, social, behavioral, and community services and information to individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and their families. Individuals who complete the program will be knowledgeable about:

- Characteristics of various disorders included in the spectrum of autism
- Educational strategies collaboration efforts
- Communication technology skills to be implemented with individuals with ASD

Classes are taught online with field experience and practicum required in two courses. These experiences can be completed at theKelly Autism Program office within the Suzanne Vitale Clinical Education Complex at WKU in Bowling Green, KY, or at a location approved by the program advisor.

Studying Online
Online classes require self-discipline and motivation, especially since you do not have a specific time and place established for class meetings. Familiarizing yourself with what’s required of an online student and the many tools available to support online learners is key!

The Orientation for Online Learners provides guest access to Blackboard, along with helpful information ranging from pre-enrollment through registration. It is designed to walk you through the different processes involved with admissions, financial aid, advising and registration. The Student Resource Portal provides one-click access to academic support and student resources across campus. The link to each area is provided below:

Orientation for Online Learners:  www.wku.edu/online/orientation
Student Resource Portal:  www.wku.edu/online/srp

In addition to online support, which is accessible in these areas, there is also a team of distance learning professionals available to answer questions, listen to your concerns and provide solutions. You can reach us at learn.online@wku.edu.

Admission Requirements

This certificate program will be open to students who have completed a master's degree or higher in any of the following programs:

- Education
- Exceptional Education
- Literacy, School Psychology
- Communication Disorders
Social Work
Marriage and Family Therapy
Mental Health Counseling
Nursing or Public Health.

It may also be appropriate for professionals in related areas seeking to learn more about individuals who have been diagnosed with ASD.

Applicants to the graduate certificate program first need to be admitted to The Graduate School by completing the online graduate application at www.wku.edu/graduate. (NOTE: Select "Apply First Time Graduate & Transfer" if you have not taken graduate courses at WKU before. Select "Apply for Graduate Readmission" if you have previously taken WKU graduate courses or are currently enrolled in graduate courses at WKU.)

Once you have submitted the online application, mail any required supporting materials to:

Western Kentucky University
The Graduate School
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11010
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1010

Questions? Contact The Graduate School by email at graduate.school@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-2446. Approximately 10-14 days after all required admission documents have been submitted, you should receive a letter from the WKU Graduate School indicating your admission status.

Certificate Program Requirements (15 credit hours)

Required Courses

EXED 610: Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders: Comprehensive review of ASD from the perspectives of various disciplines. Theories of causation, developmental aspects, descriptive and diagnostic characteristics, and legal and social issues. Thirty field experience hours required.

EXED 612*: Collaboration with Schools and Agencies for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Preparation of teachers to work as consultants in a team model; exploration of local, state, and regional agencies involved with individuals diagnosed with ASD. Supervised practicum required at designated sites.

EXED 615: Instructional Strategies and Design for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Development of competencies and philosophies of instructional design specific to teaching students with ASD. Emphasis on research-based instructional strategies, plans and classroom structures.

EXED 618: Social Skills Instruction and Behavioral Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Development of competencies in assessing, designing, and implementing social skills instruction and behavioral programming for students with ASD.
EXED 619: Assistive Technology and Communication Interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Investigation of assistive and instructional technology, as well as alternative and augmentative communication devices to implement with students with ASD.

*EXED 612 consists of 120 supervised practicum hours, and is held at the Kelly Autism Program at WKU. This three-week course will provide opportunities to work with individuals with ASD from ages 7 through adulthood both in academic and community/employment settings.

Financial Aid

Eligibility
Financial Aid includes grants and loans for educational purposes. The government requires the student to file a form online to the government agency for this purpose which is called FAFSA at www.fafsa.ed.gov to apply. Once that form is completed and filed, the student will receive an email from WKU about the status. All financial aid comes through the WKU Student Financial Aid office and they communicate mostly through email. The email will explain all the grants and/or loans that are available to the student and how to receive the money.

Nearly all students are eligible for some form of financial assistance. In fact, over 90% of the students who applied for financial aid in recent years received an award offer. Every effort is made to assist you and your family in obtaining the resources necessary to meet the difference between the total cost of attending Western Kentucky University and your ability to contribute toward your education.

If you would like to apply for financial assistance (loans, grants, scholarships, veteran’s benefits) the first step is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Please refer to the Financial Aid Guide for additional information and complete instructions.

Please keep in mind, you must maintain satisfactory academic progress to continue to qualify for financial aid. For additional information on receiving, and keeping your financial aid, please refer to the WKU Financial Aid website to review the complete policy on Satisfactory Academic Progress at http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/sap.php.

Helpful Resources

- Orientation for Online Learners: www.wku.edu/online/orientation
- The Student Resource Portal: www.wku.edu/online/srp
- The WKU Graduate School: www.wku.edu/graduate

Financial Aid and Scholarship Information

- WKU Financial Aid Information: http://www.wku.edu/financialaid/
- Student Aid: Types of aid, who qualifies and how to apply: https://studentaid.ed.gov

Career Resources and Average Salary Information
Resources to aid in finding a major right for you, as well as the most current information regarding average salary, job outlook and the most common positions within the field, may be found on the websites below:
Find Occupations, Salary Information and Job Outlook: http://www.onetonline.org/find/career
Identifying A Career Based on Personal Interests: https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers
Choosing a Graduate Degree: http://www.onlinemastersprograms.org/

Contact Information

WKU Online Support: Carol Taylor
Email: learn.online@wku.edu
Phone: (270) 745-5173
Toll-Free: (888) 4WKUWEB / (888) 495-8932