



Gerontology Student Handbook

Updated January 2023

“Leadership in an Aging World: Creating Futures through Innovation, Integration, and Impact.” Our degree will give you a broad range of skills essential for leadership in gerontology.

Gerontology Program Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the needs associated with aging through all levels from the micro (individual) to the macro (society).
- Advocate for older adults by working globally at the policy level or working one-on-one with older adults.
- Demonstrate how to relate course materials to real-world experiences.
- Navigate the complicated world of money management, retirement options, the cost of health care, and more.
- Understand design principles that allow older adults to continue living in their own homes.
- Identify and utilize health systems to afford older adults the highest level of quality of life.
- Motivate older adults to take personal responsibility for their own health and wellness.

Participating Universities:

There are six Great Plains IDEA institutions participating in the Gerontology program. Degree titles vary by institution.

- **University of Arkansas** – Master of Science in Human Environmental Sciences
- **Iowa State University** – Master of Family and Consumer Sciences
- **University of Missouri*** – Master of Arts in Human Development and Family Science, Emphasis in Gerontology
- **North Dakota State University** – Master of Science in Human Development and Family Science: Gerontology
- **Oklahoma State University** – Master of Science in Aging Studies
- **Texas Tech University** – Master of Science in Human Development and Family Sciences

Course descriptions, a course planner, and contacts for participating universities are located on the Gerontology webpage: <https://www.gpidea.org/program/gerontology>

	Master’s Degree	Graduate Certificate
University of Arkansas	X	
Iowa State University	X	X
University of Missouri*	X	X
North Dakota State University	X	X
Oklahoma State University	X	
Texas Tech University	X	X

***University of Missouri is no longer accepting new students into their program.**



Program Requirements

Graduate Certificate = 15 credit hours

Core courses: 6 credit hours

Elective courses: 9 credit hours

[See a list of courses for the certificate](#) and when they are offered in our interactive course planner.

Master's Degree = 36 credit hours

Core courses: 24 credit hours

Elective courses: 12 credit hours

Optional Independent Study/Practicum/Thesis: 1-6 credit hours (These may be included as elective coursework and differs by home university. Consult your academic advisor.)

[See a list of courses for the master's degree](#) and when they are offered in our interactive course planner.

Generally, courses can be taken in any order with the exception of:

- **Perspectives in Gerontology** is an introduction course and should be taken the first or second semester.
- **Professional Seminar in Gerontology** is a capstone course taken near the end of the program. It is an integrative course and students should have, at a minimum, completed four core courses; otherwise, no course is a pre-requisite for any other course.

Master's Degree Comprehensive Exam Requirements by University

University of Arkansas	Creative project or internship, both with paper and oral defense
Iowa State University	Presentation of professional seminar paper with oral defense
University of Missouri	Comprehensive exam paper with oral defense
North Dakota State University	Thesis or paper all with oral defense, or practicum
Oklahoma State University	Thesis, project, or internship
Texas Tech University	Presentation of professional seminar paper with oral defense

Admission Requirements:

To qualify for the master's degree and certificate programs, students must:

1. Be admitted to the program at a participating university
2. Complete the necessary coursework
3. Meet the master's degree requirements of their admitting/degree granting university

To be admitted to either the certificate or master's program students must submit an application to one of the participating universities. Each university follows its own admissions requirements, although most are very similar to each other.

Succeeding in an Online Program

The Great Plains IDEA website has a "[Student Success Center](#)" with a wealth of resources to help you succeed in this program. One particular aspect of the program to be aware of is that you will encounter three different learning management systems, the online platforms we use to deliver your courses. The success center provides information on these three platforms as well as a handy log to keep track of your login, password, and access point for each system.



Who to Contact for Help

Academic Advisor

Your academic advisor is the faculty member who will help you as you make your academic decisions and as you progress through the program. When you receive notice from an institution that you have been admitted to the program, you will also be assigned to an academic advisor. You should consult your academic advisor for assistance with the following:

- Course planning and selection (including elective approval)
- Transfer credit questions
- Plan your culminating experience
- Help with research interests

Campus Coordinator

Campus Coordinators are available to help students navigate their home institution and to help with the course enrollment process. Coordinators serve as a first point of reference for the following information:

- Enrollment processes (but contact your academic adviser for course selection assistance)
- General policy information at your home institution
- General Great Plains IDEA information and policies
- Assistance with the Learning Management System

A list of campus coordinators can be found on the [Gerontology webpage](#) in the right sidebar titled “University Contacts.”

Graduate Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Graduate school differs from your undergraduate experience. You will need to take on more responsibility and initiative than you did as an undergraduate student in order to successfully complete your program. Time management and motivation are essential to your success in classes and other program requirements.

You will need to:

- Become familiar with the information in the [Great Plains IDEA Student Handbook](#) and this addendum and with the applicable rules, regulations, and procedures they contain.
- Learn and adhere to the academic rules, procedures, and policies of your home institution.
- Ensure that you have adequate technical skills, adequate computer hardware, and high-speed Internet access.
- Meet the requirements for degree completion in a timely manner.
- Follow scholarly guidelines for maintaining academic integrity.
- Exhibit the highest standards of professionalism in teaching, research, and scholarship.

