

Frequently asked Questions

Kansas State University Great Plains IDEA

Online Masters in Gerontology & Online Certificate in Gerontology

What is GP-IDEA?

It stands for the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance. The Great Plains IDEA is an award-winning multi-state alliance of Human Sciences Colleges that was founded in 1994 as a means to create a marketplace for sharing distance education courses and programs at the graduate level. It utilizes the growing field of distance education to connect students around the country and afford them the opportunity to be admitted to one member institution and study at other member institutions via Internet-based courses. For more information go to www.gpidea.org.

What online programs do you offer in gerontology?

We offer a 36-credit master's degree program and a 21-credit graduate certificate program, which consists of a subset of courses from the master's program. The certificate program has been designed for students whose goal is a credential in gerontology and who do not need a master's degree. We do not offer a web-based undergraduate degree in gerontology.

How does the program work?

Several institutions are participating in the online gerontology and certificate programs. Students who participate are accepted into the program of their choice, enroll through one institution, take web-based courses offered by the other institutions, and meet graduation requirements at the institution through which they take courses. The program was developed and implemented by a team of graduate faculty representing all participating institutions.

How much does the program cost and what does that include?

By agreement among the institutions the common tuition rate currently is \$430 per credit hour. Books and other materials are not included. No other campus fees are assessed. Student fees are paid to the institution to which you are accepted, regardless of which institution is teaching the courses.

How long does it take to complete?

Students typically complete the master's program in four years if they are employed full time and taking only one course each semester. Students who take two classes each fall and spring semester, and one in the summer, should complete the program in 2 ½ years. The certificate program can be completed in less time.

How often are courses offered?

Each course will be offered at least once a year with sustaining enrollment. New elective courses will be added as they are developed.

Are the classes taught entirely online?

Yes. Several of the classes will be taught by professors who are based at other universities in the U.S.

Do I have to be admitted into all the graduate programs at the participating universities?

You only need to be admitted to the university you select as your "home" university, which is the university through which you will enroll for courses and receive your degree.

What are the application deadlines?

There is no application deadline for the KSU Great Plains IDEA Gerontology program. Application materials should be submitted **at least** three months prior to the start of the semester. These materials will not be reviewed until all required information is received. At that time the graduate committee will consider the request for admission to the Gerontology program and notify applicants of their decision within 8 weeks.

What are the credentials of your faculty?

All the faculty members have been certified as Graduate Faculty members at their respective universities. The faculty members were chosen because of their expertise in the area related to the course they are teaching.

Is this an accredited program?

Kansas State University is a fully accredited university.

Is a practicum included in the program?

A maximum of 3 credit hours for a practicum may be used as an elective in the program. A practicum is not required for completion of the program. Students should visit with their major professor if they wish to add a practicum to their studies.

Who will serve as my advisor for the program?

When you are admitted to a program at one of the participating institutions, you will be assigned an on-campus advisor. You may meet with your advisor in person, by phone and/or email.

Who will answer my questions if I have a problem or concern?

If your question is related to your application materials, please contact the Center on Aging at gerontology@ksu.edu. Once you are accepted to the program the campus coordinator should be able to answer most of your questions or direct you to other resources for assistance. Contact the coordinator at 785-532-3965 or gpideacc@ksu.edu.

Where do I purchase my textbooks?

Students are sent a list of required textbooks for each course, and a list of possible sources for purchase. Many times they are available through the teaching institution's campus bookstore, and students will be supplied with the phone number to call and order through them. Books are sometimes available online through amazon.com or Barnes and Noble, or directly from the publisher. Students will often shop around once they receive the textbook list to see where they can obtain the best price. When doing this, be careful that you are ordering the correct edition of the textbook and that the source can get the book(s) to you in a timely manner prior to the start of class.

Is financial aid available?

In most cases, students must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours to be eligible for financial aid. Contact the Student Financial Assistance office at ksusfa@k-state.edu or 785-532-6420. Be sure to explain that you are interested in the online masters degree rather than an on-campus program.

Are the gerontology programs covered under the VA benefits?

If you are registered as a student, and still have active benefits, then the classes you take will be covered by VA benefits. The process will be as follows:

- The student registers for classes.
- The student requests a certification be sent to the VA Office.
- The Registrar's Office sends a certification of the classes to the VA Office.
- The VA issues a check directly to the student.
- It is the student's responsibility to pay the tuition and fees. The tuition and fees are due in three installments for fall and spring semesters. Because of the processing time needed by the VA, payment may not be received by the student until after the tuition is due. In that case, it is the student's responsibility to take care of the tuition and fees and then be reimbursed by the VA.

May I take any on-campus classes to use as electives in the program?

Your graduate committee and/or major professor may approve on-campus courses to be used toward the elective requirements of the program.

What specific degree will I receive when I complete this program?

You will receive a Masters in Gerontology. If you are enrolled in the certificate program, you will receive a Graduate Certificate in Gerontology.

Will I be required to take the GRE for admission into the program?

KSU does not require GRE scores for admission to this program. For additional Graduate School information, please visit www.ksu.edu/grad/.

What is the procedure for admission into the program?

Complete and submit the following:

- Application fee: \$40 domestic, \$55 international (Applications will not be considered till this fee is submitted)
- Application to the KSU Graduate School (www.ksu.edu/grad/application/index.htm)
- Two official transcripts of all college work
- Three letters of recommendation and completed recommendation form
- Statement of Objectives

Applications should be sent to:

Pam Evans

Center on Aging

103 Leasure Hall

Kansas State University

Manhattan, KS 66506-3501

gerontology@ksu.edu

What type of equipment will I need to complete this online program?

You will need a computer with a CD-ROM drive, the ability to access and download materials from the Internet, and an updated web browser. You will also need access to a video/dvd player and a FAX. High-speed internet access is recommended.

Is my current email address acceptable for use in this program?

When you are accepted into the program and enrolled at KSU you will be assigned a K-State email address. This is the address you should use for all of your classes and correspondence because it is the address at which you receive communications from your instructor through K-State Online (KSOL), a course management system designed to deliver an interactive web-based classroom to students. You may access K-State webmail through your web browser via a link on the KSU home page. Your K-State email address may be forwarded to another email address if you prefer, although this is discouraged if you use a yahoo or hotmail account.

What types of jobs can I get with a gerontology degree?

Depending on the area of the country in which you live, and whether it is rural or urban, you should have a number of job options in areas such as direct services (health or legal services), program planning and evaluation, management and administration, marketing and product development, advocacy (health care, community services, government policy), education and training (instructional programs for older people or degree programs and continuing education of practitioners in the field of aging), or research. A good resource regarding job possibilities in the field of gerontology is a publication titled *Careers in Aging: Consider the Possibilities* by the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. This information can be found online at <http://www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/>.

Is it possible to retain my current job while completing this degree?

Yes, students may take the courses on a part-time or full time basis, depending on their individuals needs.

What is the pay scale for someone with this degree?

The pay scale would depend on the type of job, profit vs. non-profit agency, geographic location, etc. and there will be a wide variation based on the level of expertise required and/or level of responsibility. For specific information about the pay scale of jobs related to aging in your state, contact your state Department on Aging.

What library services are available to me with this program?

Off-campus access to KSU electronic resources includes the library catalog, databases, e-journals, and e-books; web-based subject guides; telephone or e-mail help from a librarian (including your subject specialist); and web-based library instruction tutorials. More information can be found at the Distance Learning web page at KSU Libraries <http://www.lib.ksu.edu/services/distance/index.html>. Once you are accepted into the program and enrolled into classes you will be given electronic access to these library resources.

What institutions are participating in this particular degree?

Colorado State University, Iowa State University, Kansas State University, North Dakota State University, Oklahoma State University, Texas Tech University

What other online degrees are available through GP-IDEA?

Community Development, Personal Financial Planning, Merchandising, and Youth Development are also available as online programs. For more information on these programs please visit <http://www.ksu.edu/ksugpidea/>.

Who do I contact for more information and/or regarding application materials?

Questions/Applications regarding admittance to Kansas State University should be directed to:

Pam Evans
Center on Aging
103 Leisure Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506-3501
gerontology@ksu.edu
(785) 532-5945

If you have questions regarding the other institutions involved in this educational alliance or regarding the Great Plains IDEA organization, you may visit their website at www.gpidea.org.