

# Webster University 2007 Assessment Of The Graduate Program in Gerontology

Prepared by the GERN Program Assessment Task Force, Chair  
(This draft prepared by E. Buday WW Mentor of Gerontology)  
Revised 12/22/06

# Outline of the Graduate Program in Gerontology Assessment

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## General Introduction

## **Introduction to GERN Program Assessments**

The responsibility to periodically assess the GERN Graduate Program at Webster University is the general responsibility of the Worldwide Mentor of Gerontology. The current assessment process began during the 2006 –2007 academic year.

The assessment will be implemented by a GERN Graduate Program Assessment Task Force. This Task Force will be chaired by the Worldwide Mentor of Gerontology and include, the Webster University Director of Assessment.

The Assessment Task force has the responsibility to:

1. Initiate any Revision in the Assessment Process
2. Implement the Assessment
3. Complete an analysis of the Results
4. Interpret the Results
5. Disseminate the Results Make
6. Recommendations for Improvement

The Worldwide Mentor for Gerontology is responsible for the implementation of recommendations for the improvement suggested by the assessment. The Worldwide Mentor for Gerontology is also responsible for attaining and monitoring the demographic program data (enrollments, graduation rates, student demographics, etc.) that will be used as a part of assessments.

Graduate GERN Program Assessments will take place on a five (5) year cycle.

## Assessment Goals

The following goals are the specific goals of this GERN Program Assessment that relate to GERN Program Site Assessment, Course Assessment and Student Assessment. These specific assessment goals are;

To recognize that students who wish to be admitted to the Webster University GERN Program are required to meet graduate admission requirements, have a strong background in the behavioral and social sciences, and to have a transcribed course or formal verification of competence in each of the following areas (or a content equivalent): human growth and development, psychology of learning and/or cognition, personality theory, abnormal psychology or psychopathology, and social psychology. Therefore, students are assessed for basic undergraduate education before being admitted to the graduate program.

To recognize that the professors' assessment of the GERN student involved in each course within the GERN curriculum is a reflection of the students' performance related to the goals/objectives/learning outcomes required by each course description and specified in the goals/objectives/learning outcomes found on each GERN course syllabus. Webster University GERN Program also maintains a variety of Academic Policies and Procedures that relate to grading and grade point maintenance.

To assess (via survey) each GERN Program course. The survey will be given to every professor who has taught the course from SP 2006-FA2007.

To assess (via survey) the number of students who have completed the Masters of Arts program and the Certificate program in Gerontology.

To assess (via survey) whether each GERN course syllabus meets the learning goals as stated in the course description.

To assess (via survey) whether each GERN course syllabus relates to the student the course learning goals.

To assess (via survey) whether each GERN course syllabus indicates how the student achievement of these goals will be assessed.

In the process of completing the survey, the professor is reminded of their responsibility in relating the learning goals to their students on the syllabus.

To assess (via survey) how the professor could improve the course syllabus.

To use the results of this assessment to make recommendations in order to improve the GERN program.

## **Assessment Method**

The GERN Program Assessment will be assessed using the following:

1. Each student who graduates from the GERN Program at any site has been assessed coming in to the program (Program course prerequisites), throughout the program (Course performance, Practicum performance, Internship performance) and at the end of the program (overall grade point and curriculum requirements for graduation).
2. A second assessment involves a survey of areas relating to each site that offers the GERN Program.
3. A third assessment involves a survey of professors and the syllabi that they construct.
4. A statistical analysis and interpretation will be generated and disseminated to GERN Program faculty and staff.
5. A set of recommendations will be made as a result of this assessment. These recommendations will be disseminated to GERN Program faculty and staff. The Worldwide Mentor for Gerontology will have the responsibility of implementing change as a result of these recommendations.

Webster University Graduate Gerontology (GERN)  
Program and the  
Mission of the University

A statement of the Mission and Scope of Webster University and a statement of the General Education Goals is found on page 6 of the Webster University 2005-2007 Graduate Studies Catalog. It reads:

### **Mission and Scope of Webster University**

Webster University is an independent, comprehensive, nondenominational, multi-campus, international university with undergraduate and graduate programs in various disciplines, including the liberal arts and sciences, the fine and performing arts, teacher education, communications, and business and technology. Webster University combines the cultural and intellectual legacies of the past with a pragmatic concern for meeting the challenges of the present and the future. In doing so, Webster University:

Creates a student-centered environment accessible to individuals of diverse age, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Sustains a personalized approach to education through small classes and close relationships among faculty and students.

Develops educational programs that join theory and practice and instill in students the spirit of systematic inquiry.

Encourages creativity, scholarship, and individual enterprise in its students and faculty.

Promotes international perspectives in the curriculum and among students and faculty.

Encourages in its students a critical cast of mind, a respect for diversity, and an understanding of their own and others' values.

Fosters in its students a lifelong desire to learn and a commitment to contribute actively to their communities and the world.

Educates diverse populations locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Strengthens the communities it serves through support of civic, cultural, corporate, and educational organizations.

Webster University was established in 1915 in Webster Groves, Missouri. The University now serves students at its home campus; at four other locations in metropolitan St. Louis; on military bases across the United States; at campuses in 42 other U.S. cities and internationally at four European campuses, in Bermuda, and five in Asia.

## **College of Arts and Science Mission Statement**

Webster University's College of Arts & Sciences fosters free and rigorous intellectual inquiry among students and faculty in an atmosphere that respects differences in background, belief, and aspiration. We promote the values that ground an open, critically reflective, culturally diverse, and democratic society, and we prepare students to be active contributors to such a society.

As part of an international university, we encourage students to expand their horizons by learning the languages and worldviews of other cultures. We inspire students to seek the common ground upon which humans create sustainable relationships with each other and with their wider environment.

Owing to the general and fundamental nature of our various disciplines, we are committed to providing academic and intellectual support to the entire university.

We include several professional programs, which are guided by contemporary practices, appropriate accreditation standards, and the best recent scholarly activity.

## **Gerontology Program Description**

The curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for careers related to gerontology. Within this framework, students are provided with a broad educational base concerning the impact of aging on individuals and cultures. The courses in the program draw upon a variety of disciplines such as management, the behavioral and social sciences, economics, political science, and the natural sciences. The gerontology core courses as well as the program electives are concerned with maximizing the application of gerontological knowledge particularly in areas of direct service, consulting, program development, management, and administration.

## **Gerontology Program And the Mission of Webster University and the College of Arts and Science**

The Gerontology Program meets all of the aspects of the Webster University Mission Statement and the College of Arts and Science Mission Statement.

## Section 1

### Gerontology Program Learning Goals

The Gerontology Program Learning Goals are achieved in a variety of ways within the Gerontology Program. The major Gerontology Program Learning Goals are:

1. The Primary Goal of the Graduate Program in Gerontology is to prepare students for a career in gerontological administration. It is expected that all graduates will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of aging as it applies to:
  - a. Concepts related to healthy aging in terms of physical, psychological, economic and social science domains.
  - b. Theoretical approaches to healthy aging in the physical, psychological, economic and social science domains.
  - c. The application of scientific research to real world issues including program development.

The Gerontology Program provides the following supports (2-4 below) to help students develop and advance in their achievement of a career in the field of gerontology.

2. Provide the student with a curriculum that aids in the attainment of the Primary Goal.
3. Provide a faculty that teach the courses within the curriculum in line with the stated course descriptions and the requirements of syllabus construction (statements of learning outcomes, exact course description, student evaluation, etc.)
4. Provide a support staff that aids in the student attainment of the Primary Goal
5. Provide a mechanism to periodically review the program and provide recommendations for improvement of the program as an outcome of the review/assessment.

Students are required to fulfill the following for successful program completion:

1. Students will be required to complete the core curriculum.
2. Students will be required to complete their academic course requirements utilizing elective courses.
3. Students will be expected to synthesize and integrate the learning experiences acquired in gerontology and to evaluate the research and current topics relative to this major. This is viewed as a capstone experience.

### **College of Arts & Sciences Gerontology Program Description**

The Gerontology Master's curriculum is designed to prepare students for a career in gerontological administration. Focused on providing a broad educational base in the field of aging and the aged the courses in this program draw upon a variety of disciplines such as the behavioral and social sciences, management, political science, and the natural sciences. This interdisciplinary perspective reflects the complexity of the environments within which individuals live and age.

#### **Gerontology courses are offered at the following locations:**

##### **Continental United States**

Albuquerque, NM  
Lakeland & Brandon Metropolitan Campus, FL  
North Orlando Metropolitan Campus, FL  
Ocala Metropolitan Campus, FL  
South Orlando Metropolitan Campus, FL  
St. Louis, MO - Home Campus

### **Program Curriculum**

The 36 credit hours required for the master of arts (M.A.) or the 51 credit hours required for the master of business administration (M.B.A.) with an emphasis in gerontology must include the following courses:

- GERN 5000 Gerontology (Requisite Course)
- GERN 5600 Economic Issues for Older Adults
- GERN 5620 Physiology of Aging
- GERN 5630 Psychology of Aging
- GERN 5640 Management of Programs for Older Adults
- GERN 5660 Research and Assessment in Gerontology
- GERN 5670 Social Science Perspectives in Gerontology
- GERN 6000 Integrated Studies in Gerontology

In addition, the student chooses elective courses offered in this major and/or from the program curricula of other majors.

If the requisite course is waived, the student must choose an elective course from this major or from the program curriculum of another major. Students pursuing dual majors who have the requisite course(s) waived will complete only the remaining required courses for the dual majors.

### **Graduate Certificate in Gerontology**

The certificate program in gerontology is designed to expand students' marketability and skills in their chosen profession by providing a broad educational base concerning factors related to the aging of individuals and society. The program was developed on the premise that students and professionals in a variety of disciplines and professions have the greatest potential to meet the pressing needs of the aged and our changing society, provided they are given the requisite training in the application of gerontological knowledge.

All certificate courses must be taken at Webster University. Students may pursue the certificate by itself or integrate their certificate studies with an M.A. degree program. Students enrolled in the M.A. degree program in gerontology are not eligible to receive the gerontology certificate.

The 18 credit hours required for the graduate certificate in gerontology include the following courses:

- GERN 5000 Gerontology (Requisite Course)
- GERN 5600 Economic Issues for Older Adults
- GERN 5620 Physiology of Aging
- GERN 5630 Psychology of Aging
- GERN 5640 Management of Programs for Older Adults
- GERN 5670 Social Science Perspectives in Gerontology

### **Course Descriptions**

#### **GERN 5000 Gerontology (Requisite Course) (3)**

This course introduces the student to the gerontology specialty area. The course provides the student with an overview of the psychological, sociological, political, and physiological processes related to aging and the elderly. This course includes an examination of basic theoretical perspectives, problems, and the future of gerontology.

#### **GERN 5500 Professional Seminars (1-3)**

Students participate in seminars designed to examine contemporary issues in gerontology. The professional seminar supplements the core and elective courses in the area of gerontology by focusing on issues of current and special interest. Course may be repeated for credit if content

differs. Graduate students may apply a maximum of 3 credit hours of these seminars as electives to meet the credit-hour requirements for graduation. This course may not be completed by directed study.

#### GERN 5600 Economic Issues for Older Adults (3)

This course focuses on the economic issues relevant to middle-aged and older adults. The student examines topics related to pre- and post-retirement planning, such as financial planning, housing options, and legal concerns. Particular emphasis is placed on what gerontology specialists can do to assist middle-aged and older adults in facing later life transitions. The course includes an examination of the economic impact of the older adult on society.

#### GERN 5620 Physiology of Aging (3)

This course provides the student with an overview of the changes that occur in the human body as a function of age. All of the major systems within the human body are discussed, ranging from the cardiovascular system to the central nervous system. This course focuses on normal, age-related physiological changes; however, age-related dysfunctional changes are discussed. Additional emphasis is placed on the implications of physiological change on the psychological functioning of the aging individual.

#### GERN 5630 Psychology of Aging (3)

This course provides the student with an introduction and analysis of current knowledge and concerns related to psychological aging. It addresses the theoretical and empirical foundations relevant to the psychological study of the later part of the life span. The course is taught from an interdisciplinary perspective and focuses on topics related to perceptual, cognitive, personality, and interpersonal social development. Issues related to psychological adjustment and the topic of death and dying are examined.

#### GERN 5640 Management of Programs for Older Adults (3)

The student examines the theory and practices relevant to the management and administration of organizations. Particular focus is placed on organizations providing services for the elderly. The economic, political, legal, and social issues that affect these organizations are studied in the context of the effect these issues have on the administration of services. Identification of deficiencies in current programs and the proposing of alternative modes of care for the elderly are explored.

#### GERN 5650 Counseling for the Aged (3)

This course provides a comprehensive examination of the mental health needs of older persons and counseling-related services that help to meet some of these needs. Counseling theories and methods are discussed, with emphasis on the role of the paraprofessional counselor.

#### GERN 5660 Research and Assessment in Gerontology (3)

The course introduces the student to basic statistical methods, methods of research, and methods of assessment. The research aspect of the course includes the empirical research process, the deductive method, the inductive method, the survey, the field experiment, the field study, and program evaluation. In addition, the student is introduced to the basics of statistics as these apply to research and assessment. Basic research methods in gerontological administration and programming are examined and applied. This course is cross-listed with HRDV 5750.

#### GERN 5670 Social Science Perspectives in Gerontology (3)

The realities of the lives of older adults, viewed from a cross-cultural perspective with a concern for social issues and problems, will be the focus of this course. Ageism, homelessness, poverty, the structure of family, the meaning of community, and the role of government will all be examined. Using the tools of anthropology and sociology, we will explore variations among older adults that emerge from ethnicity, sex and gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, and geographic origin. We will seek an understanding of the meanings that various cultures give to their aging populations and to the social consequences of those meanings.

#### GERN 5680 Practicum in Gerontology (3–6)

Professional training is provided by gerontological specialists in aging network, business, social service, and health care industries. Field placement is dependent upon the student's discipline or profession. A formal practicum proposal must be submitted to the program mentor before a student can register for the practicum. May be repeated to a maximum of 6 credit hours.

#### GERN 5690 Issues in Gerontology (3)

Current and significant issues in gerontology are examined. The course focuses on existing theories and practices, with emphasis given to new and emerging topics in the field. Course may be repeated for credit if content differs.

#### GERN 6000 Integrated Studies in Gerontology (6)

The student is expected to synthesize and integrate the learning experiences acquired in gerontology and to evaluate the research and current topics relative to this major. Techniques used to accomplish these goals may vary. Prerequisite: completion of all other required courses in this major.

## Section 2

### Program Assessment (Process)

## Gerontology Course Evaluation

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number and Section : \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

As a means of on going program assessment, we are asking you to respond to these questions to help us evaluate how well the goals for this course match the goals of the Gerontology program. The mission of the Gerontology program is to prepare students for a career in gerontological administration. Focused on providing a broad educational base in the field of aging and the aged the courses in the program draw upon a variety of disciplines such as the behavioral and social sciences, management, political science, and the natural sciences. This interdisciplinary perspective reflects the complexity of the environments within which individuals live and age.

1. What was the most important thing that you learned in this class?
  
2. To what extent did this course enhance your ability to understand the concepts and terminology related to aging as they apply to the specific subject matter of this course?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not At All	A Small Amount	As Expected	More Than Expected	Far Beyond My Expectations
  
3. To what extent did this course enhance your ability to understand different or new theoretical approaches to the study of healthy aging?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not At All	A Small Amount	As Expected	More Than Expected	Far Beyond My Expectations
  
4. To what extent did this course enhance your ability to apply your knowledge to real world issues?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Not At All	A Small Amount	As Expected	More Than Expected	Far Beyond My Expectations
  
5. To what degree do you think this course fits with the Gerontology curriculum?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Poor Fit	Perfect Fit	Don't Know
  
6. To what degree did the course requirements match what was stated in the course description and in the course syllabus?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Poor Match	Perfect Match	Don't Know
  
7. After taking this course are you more inclined or less inclined to continue with the Gerontology program?  

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
Less Inclined	More Inclined	Don't Know
  
8. Are there any other courses that you would like to see developed for the Gerontology program or that you would like to see count as a program elective?
  
9. Please include any additional comments you may have.

# Scoring Standards of Student Attainment for Gerontology

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (Score = 3)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (Score = 2)</b>	<b>Fails to Meet Expectations (Score = 1 to 0)</b>
<b>Knowledge of concepts related to gerontology &amp; aging through exam and/or essay and/or journal methods.</b>	Student can explain and apply their knowledge of how basic concepts relate to the study of gerontology & aging in both familiar & unfamiliar contexts.	Student can define basic terms in understanding gerontology & aging and apply their knowledge to familiar contexts.	Student demonstrates only a basic understanding of definitions with no ability to apply concepts (score = 1), or fails to define concepts correctly as well as no ability to apply concepts (score = 0).
<b>Identification of theoretical approaches to the study of aging as assessed through exam and/or essay, and/or journal methods.</b>	Student can compare, contrast, and evaluate different theoretical approaches to the study of aging and apply these theories to familiar and unfamiliar contexts.	Student can summarize various theoretical approaches to the study of aging, and apply these theories to familiar contexts.	Student demonstrates only basic understanding of theoretical approaches with no ability to apply their knowledge (score = 1) or fails to correctly identify theoretical perspectives with no application ability (score = 0).

Scoring Template For GERN

**Final 6000 Project**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Advisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Exceeds Expectations (Score = 3)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (Score = 2)</b>	<b>Fails to Meet Expectations (Score = 1 to 0)</b>
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**Theoretical Approach:**

1. Quality & originality of thesis	_____	_____	_____
2. Clarity of the theoretical approach	_____	_____	_____
3. Comparison & contrast of different theoretical approaches	_____	_____	_____
4. Applicability of project to the study of issues related to gerontology	_____	_____	_____

**Knowledge of Concepts:**

1. Application of correct terminology	_____	_____	_____
2. Understanding of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____
3. Application of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____

<b>Totals</b>			
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**FINAL TOTAL SCORE:**

<b>Final Score Percentage Legend</b> 19 – 20 = (90 – 100%) 17 – 18 = (80 – 89%) 15 – 16 = (70 – 79%)
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**Comments:**

# Journal Project

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Exceeds Expectations (Score = 3)	Meets Expectations (Score = 2)	Fails to Meet Expectations (Score = 1 to 0)
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**Theoretical Approach:**

1. Comparison & contrast of different theoretical approaches	_____	_____	_____
2. Applicability of project to the study of issues related to gerontology	_____	_____	_____

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**Knowledge of Concepts:**

1. Application of correct terminology	_____	_____	_____
2. Understanding of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____
3. Application of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____

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**Totals**

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**FINAL TOTAL SCORE:**

**Final Score Percentage Legend**

13 – 15 = (90 – 100%)

12 – 14 = (80 – 89%)

10 – 11 = (70 – 79%)

**Comments:**

# Essay

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Question Essay Addresses:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Exceeds Expectations (Score = 3)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (Score = 2)</b>	<b>Fails to Meet Expectations (Score = 1 to 0)</b>
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**Theoretical Approach:**

1. Quality & originality of essay	_____	_____	_____
2. Comparison & contrast of different theoretical approaches	_____	_____	_____
3. Applicability of essay to the study of issues related to gerontology	_____	_____	_____

**Knowledge of Concepts:**

1. Application of correct terminology	_____	_____	_____
2. Understanding of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____
3. Application of scientific concepts	_____	_____	_____

<b>Totals</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>
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**FINAL TOTAL SCORE:**

<b>Final Score Percentage Legend</b> 16 – 18 = (90 – 100%) 14 – 15 = (80 – 89%) 12 – 13 = (70 – 79%)
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**Comments:**

## Section 4

### Recommendations