

Careers in Aging

Why is a gerontology background important?

The older population will continue to grow significantly in the future, especially between the years 2010 and 2030 when the baby boomers reach age 65. By 2030, there will be about 71.5 million older persons, more than twice their number in the year 2000. People 65+ represented 12.4% of the population in the year 2000 but are expected to grow to 20% of the population by 2030. The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.6 million in 2002 to 9.6 million in 2030. Because of the increasing numbers of older persons and the fact that we are generally living longer, there is a growing need for people to work in the field of aging who have a variety of skills. Those currently in this field have great job satisfaction by addressing the challenges of those growing older and helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of many elders. They also enjoy the wit, wisdom and creativity of this age group. For more information on the older population you may wish to view the Profile of Older Americans 2004 at http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/profile_2004.pdf.

What types of jobs are available in this field?

Gerontological specialists carry out diverse roles which are similar to those of other professions. However, gerontological specialists devote the major portion of their professional time to working for or with older people. Their roles fall into seven categories:

Direct Service Provision: Provide social, psychological, health or legal services – determining needs, developing plans, finding resources and solving problems.

Program Planning & Evaluation: Design, implement, and evaluate programs to meet the varied needs of a diverse group of older people. They often work in social service & community agencies.

Marketing & Product Development: Specialists are employed by corporations, organization and institutions to develop and market new services and products. They assess needs and wants of various groups of older people and seek niches that are unfilled.

Advocacy: Community activists which encourage government and private sector involvement with the needs of older persons. They often work for non-profit organizations advocating for specific programs in health care, community services, and government policy.

Education & Training: Specialists are active in planning, teaching, and evaluating instructional programs for older people and their families as well as being involved with degree programs and continuing education of practitioners in aging.

Research: Design and conduct basic research on the mechanisms of aging as well as applied studies on program outcomes and the needs of older persons. This will include collecting information, analyzing data, and reporting their findings. Researchers are increasingly in demand because of the need to understand aging and the desire to make all programs as effective as possible.

What are some fields where a background in gerontology is useful?

Life and health Insurance	Health and/or social assessment	Legal services
Travel programs	Information and referral	Counseling
Advocacy	Nutrition	Research
Training	Job Placement	Marketing
Housing	Transportation	Public relations/media
Social services	Area planning & coordination	Creative arts
Education	Architectural services	Industrial and product design
Home health care	Rehabilitation	Banking
Retirement Planning		

What primary major(s) do most students choose to pair with gerontology?

Students have chosen a variety of majors including Architecture, Health professions, Business, Family Studies, Social Work, Art or Music therapy, Horticulture Therapy, Psychology/Counseling, Dietetics, Apparel Design, Law, and Education among others.

What are the salaries in this field?

Salaries for those with a background in gerontology are competitive within a particular discipline. Many times a credential or certificate in gerontology may serve as a valuable asset when competing for jobs. For information on salaries visit the Occupational Outlook website by the Bureau of Labor Statistics at www.bls.gov. Below you will find links to additional information on careers in aging.

Professional Associations

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education

www.aghe.org

Gerontological Society of America

www.geron.org

American Society on Aging

www.asaging.org

American College of Health Care Administrators

www.achca.org

American Physical Therapy Assoc. - Geriatrics

<http://geriatricspt.org/>

American Psychological Association

www.apa.org/pi/aging/practitioners/homepage.html

National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

<http://www.caremanager.org/>

National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education

<http://depts.washington.edu/geroctr/>

Kansas Association of Homes & Services for the Aging

www.kahsa.org

Kansas Health Care Association

www.khca.org

National Policy and Research Center on Nutrition & Aging

www.fiu.edu/~nutreldr/SubjectList/C/Careers_Aging.htm

American Federation for Aging Research

www.afar.org/

Careers in Aging

Agework Career Center

www.geron.org/agework/index.html

Careers in Aging - Consider the Possibilities

www.careersinaging.com/careersinaging/

Jobs in Long-term Care

www.jobsinltc.com/

Senior Housing and Assisted Living

<http://www.seniorhousingjobs.com/>

Caregiver Job Clearinghouse

www.carecareers.net

Administration on Aging-Careers in Aging

www.aoa.gov/prof/notes/Docs/Careers_in_Aging.pdf