

AUTISM STUDIES PH.D.

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

<https://www.towson.edu/chp/departments/autism-studies-doctorate/>

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The Autism Studies Ph.D. program is a research doctorate that prepares graduates to engage in applied research, teach and train others, and influence policy. The program is designed to strengthen graduates' research skills while deepening their knowledge and perspectives on autism. This four-year, full-time program draws upon interdisciplinary experts across TU, including practitioners, educators, and researchers who work with autism-related issues in their fields. Students in the Ph.D. program in Autism Studies will have the opportunity to become proficient in various research methodologies and apply these to pressing questions and topics within their own disciplines and across disciplines. They will collaborate with expert faculty, as well as external partners, as they deepen their research acumen and investigate significant issues related to autism and neurodiversity.

The doctoral degree requires the completion of at least 60 units beyond a master's degree, with 16 units of course work on the interdisciplinary foundation of autism, 18 units of course work on research and research methods, 9 units of cognate (i.e., self-selected courses across disciplines to deepen understanding of chosen topics), and 17 units of dissertation study.

Requirements

Admission Requirements

Application deadlines and a full listing of materials required for admission can be found on the website.

Degree Requirements

This Ph.D. program is a 60-unit hybrid program following completion of a master's degree in a related field of study. This is a full-time program; however, competitive part-time applicants will be considered under rare circumstances. Required courses will be divided into four major areas of study: Interdisciplinary Foundations of Autism (Core), Research and Research Methods, Cognate, and Dissertation Study.

In addition to their course of study, students will obtain teaching and leadership experience in autism studies; this may be completed as a graduate assistantship, during the cognate courses, or through an individualized opportunity that reflects the experience of the student.

Substitutions to courses in the Core, Research & Research methods, and Cognate categories may be made in line with the research focus of the student with permission from the advisor and program director.

Code	Title	Units
Interdisciplinary Foundations of Autism		
IDHP 650	HISTORICAL AND CURRENT PERSPECTIVES OF AUTISM	3
IDHP 795	AUTISM STUDIES DOCTORAL FOUNDATIONS SEMINAR	1
Family Collaboration		
Select one from the following (or other courses with approval):		3

FMST 601	APPLIED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	
FMST 610	FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION	
SPED 605	WORKING WITH FAMILIES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	
Autism in Children		
Select one from the following (or other courses with approval):		3
IDHP 621	CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	
SPED 620	EDUCATING STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS	
Autism in Teens and Adults		
Select one from the following (or other course with approval):		3
IDHP 623	CONTEMPORARY ISSUES FOR ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	
SPED 629	TRANSITION FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD ACROSS THE LIFESPAN	
Laws, Policy, Ethics, and Advocacy		
Select one from the following (or other course with approval):		3
IDHP 741	ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES IN CLINICAL PRACTICE	
SPED 765	LEADING CHANGE IN AUTISM: ADVOCACY, LAW AND EDUCATION POLICY	
Research & Research Methods		
General Research Methods		
Select one from the following (or other course with approval):		3
EDUC 789	RESEARCH METHODS, DESIGN, AND ANALYSIS	
PSYC 687	ADVANCED EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN I	
OCTH 609	ADVANCED RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS IN OCCUPATION BASED PRACTICE	
Quantitative Methods		
Select one from the following (or other course with approval):		3
EDUC 790	ADVANCED MEASUREMENTS AND STATISTICS IN EDUCATION	
PSYC 688	ADVANCED EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN II	
Qualitative Methods		
Select one from the following (or other course with approval):		3
EDUC 791	ADVANCED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS	
GEOG 620	QUALITATIVE METHODS	
OSC 890	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: OCCUPATION AND LIFE NARRATIVE	
Grant Writing		
PRWR 619	GRANT AND COMMUNITY WRITING	3
Applied Research		
IDHP 792	INDEPENDENT STUDY IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM	3
Self-selected Research Course		
Select one from the following (or other courses with approval):		3
FMST 880	GRADUATE PROJECT IN FAMILY SCIENCE	
PSYC 687	ADVANCED EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN I	
PSYC 688	ADVANCED EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN II	

PSYC 689	MULTIVARIATE METHODS	
PSYC 691	INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION IN PSYCHOLOGY	
OSC 870	MIXED METHODS DESIGN AND ANALYSIS FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS RESEARCH	
Cognate		
Select 9 units from the following (or other courses with approval):		9
EDUC 660	MATTERS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND EMPOWERMENT IN LEARNING COMMUNITIES	
EDUC 755	ADULT LEARNING THEORIES	
EDUC 601	CONCEPTS AND ISSUES IN EDUCATION	
GEOG 652	GEOGRAPHIES OF HEALTH	
GEOG 672	SPECIAL TOPICS IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY	
HLTH 619	MANAGEMENT OF POST-ACUTE CARE SERVICES	
HLTH 657	HEALTH ADVOCACY ACROSS SERVICE SETTINGS	
IDHP 600	TRANSITIONS: HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT	
IDHP 641	COMMUNICATION, BEHAVIOR, AND PARTICIPATION LINKAGES FOR PEOPLE ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	
IDHP 642	PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION IN AUTISM	
PSYC 622	ADVANCED MULTICULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY	
PSYC 624	MULTICULTURAL ISSUES IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY	
PSYC 625	FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT	
PSYC 627	TRAUMA AND PTSD	
PSYC 733	EXCEPTIONAL CHILD: ADVANCED ISSUES	
OCTH 604	ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL EDUCATION	
OSC 744	PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF PEOPLE IN THEIR CONTEXT	
SPED 621	FORMAL AND INFORMAL ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENTS WITH ASD	
SPED 622	SOCIAL THINKING AND CONNECTEDNESS FOR STUDENTS ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM	
SPPA 600	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DISORDERS FROM BIRTH THROUGH PRESCHOOL	
SPPA 606	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND DISORDERS IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN	
SPPA 615	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS & SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY	
SPPA 714	AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION	
Dissertation Study ¹		17
IDHP 997	AUTISM STUDIES DISSERTATION	
Total Units		60

¹ These units will span the development, proposal, data collection, analysis, writing, and defense of the dissertation project.

Learning Outcomes

The educational objectives for the Autism Studies Ph.D. program are congruent with the mission and vision of Towson University to develop doctoral-level programs that prepare graduates for workforce requirements and that are responsive to an ever-evolving external environment. The specific educational objectives of the program are to prepare graduates who will:

1. Develop substantive core research-based knowledge in the field of autism and a related discipline (e.g., education, occupational therapy, sociology).
2. Apply interdisciplinary research-based perspectives and practices to promote collaboration and innovation in the field of autism research and practice.
3. Master methodologies required to evaluate and conduct independent research.
4. Design and conduct original research in the field of autism.
5. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate research findings and autism knowledge more generally to professionals and laypeople.