



4+1 Program in Autism Studies

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FACULTY/PROFESSIONAL SPECIALISTS

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The 4+1 Program in Autism Studies allows students to complete a bachelor's degree and the Master of Autism Studies in five years with a savings of money and time compared with what would be required if they completed both degrees separately. Depending on their undergraduate major and senior comprehensive project, students in this 4+1 program might also have opportunities to coordinate their comp and their master's capstone project, providing a richer and more advanced research experience than would otherwise be possible.

The Master of Autism Studies provides students with a unique opportunity to examine autism from scientific, therapeutic, educational, and humanistic perspectives. Students gain deep expertise in autism spectrum disorder by completing a curriculum in which every course focuses on autism. Students also develop the skills needed to become leaders in the interprofessional field of autism services by completing rigorously interdisciplinary coursework and by exploring a broad range of evidence-based approaches to autism intervention. In addition to providing unparalleled interdisciplinary expertise in autism, the Master of Autism Studies is distinctive in the way it incorporates the voices of people on the spectrum into the curriculum as well as in the way it engages with the Catholic intellectual tradition and the mission of Saint Mary's College. Almost any undergraduate major or bachelor's degree can be combined with the Master of Autism Studies in the 4+1 Program in Autism Studies. For more information on the Master of Autism Studies, see the Master of Autism Studies section of the bulletin.

Undergraduates from Saint Mary's and other approved institutions may apply to the 4+1 Program in Autism Studies during their junior year. If admitted into the program, students will take two autism studies courses (AUST 500 and AUST 520) during the summer between their junior and senior years (summer 3), and will take one or two additional autism studies courses (normally, AUST 510 and/or AUST 611) during the fall and spring semesters of their senior year (year 4). Students will be charged the rate of undergraduate summer tuition for the courses taken in the summer between their junior and senior years. Since courses taken in the fall and spring of the senior year will be counted as part of the student's academic year coursework, students will not be charged additional tuition for these courses (as long as they do not exceed 18 credit hours per semester). After their baccalaureate graduation, students will complete all remaining Master of Autism Studies coursework in the fall, spring, and summer of their fifth year. For courses taken in the fifth year, 4+1 students will be charged the per credit hour tuition rate equivalent to the graduate cohort they will be joining.

PROGRESS TO COMPLETION

The following chart shows the sequence of courses students typically take to complete the 4+1 program.

Summer 3 (between Jr & Sr Years)	Fall 4 (Sr Year)	Spring 4 (Sr Year)	Summer 4	Fall 5	Spring 5	Summer 5
AUST 500	AUST 510	AUST 611		AUST 530	AUST 580	AUST 560
AUST 520				AUST 535	AUST 570	AUST 700*
				AUST 540	AUST 550	

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS

Upon completion of the Master of Autism Studies program, students will:

- Understand the lived experiences of autistic persons; reflect on the interplay among these experiences and broader theories of human nature, society and culture; and examine ethical theories and practices relevant to autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Be able to find, understand and evaluate scientific research about ASD, its causes, its treatment, common co-morbid conditions, etc.
- Understand the major scientific and social scientific theories of ASD and of relevance to ASD.
- Understand important models or approaches used in treating ASD (e.g., ABA, DIR, TEACCH, sensory integration, etc.); make decisions about the appropriateness of individual models/approaches for individual persons with autism that take into account scientific evidence, levels of efficacy, clinician's experience, ethical considerations, and the wishes of the client and/or caregivers; and practice/implement these models/approaches at a level commensurate with the student's professional and/or personal engagement with autism.
- Understand therapeutic disciplines and their techniques for assessing and treating ASD; make decisions about the appropriateness of individual techniques/methods/interventions for individual persons with autism that take into account scientific evidence, levels of efficacy, clinician's experience, ethical considerations, and the wishes of the client and/or caregivers; and practice/implement these techniques at a level commensurate with the student's professional and/or personal engagement with autism.
- Understand educational policies, pedagogical theories, and pedagogical practices relevant to ASD; make decisions about the appropriateness of individual pedagogical practices for individual persons with autism that take into account scientific evidence, levels of efficacy, educator's experience, ethical considerations, and the wishes of the student and/or caregivers; and practice/implement these techniques at a level commensurate with the student's professional and/or personal engagement with autism.
- Understand federal and state laws relevant to ASD (including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, No Child Left Behind, etc.), as well as international policy statements and pastoral statements that shape our responses to autism (e.g., the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the World Health Organization World Report on Disabilities, and the Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities).
- Understand social policies and be able to access (or help provide access to) social services relevant to persons with autism in areas of life including education, therapies, healthcare, housing, and meaningful work.

- Understand and respond in constructive and just ways to the complex intersectionalities of autism and gender, such as: differences in prevalence rates for autism among males and females; differences in the experiences of autistic women and men; factors—psychological, sociological, economic, political, etc.—that impact how people of different genders respond to their roles as caregivers of autistic people; and factors that shape how people of different genders respond differently to the call to be service providers for autistic people and approach their work differently.
- Understand and act in a manner consistent with the inherent dignity of autistic persons as described in the Americans with Disabilities Act, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities, and the Autism Studies program Statement of Values.

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this program.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Application form.
- Personal statement.
- Writing sample or video interview response.
- The most competitive candidates will have maintained at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA in undergraduate coursework, though experience with autism (e.g., being autistic, working in an autism-related field, or being a caregiver) will also be taken into account.

Applications for the summer term open September 1. Applicants are responsible for completing the application form and providing all supporting materials (see the Saint Mary's College graduate programs website for more details). The application deadline is March 31.

For Master of Autism Studies program requirements and course descriptions, see the Master of Autism Studies section of the bulletin.