Interdisciplinary Certificate in Disability Studies

The WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities, in collaboration with the Department of Special Education, offers a graduate certificate program in disability studies. The certificate in disability studies prepares students, as citizens, to cope with the complex economic and social issues related to disabilities by learning directly from persons with disabilities and their families. Students will be trained to enter the workforce with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to provide state-of-the-art services to persons with disabilities and their families and to interact with co-workers who have disabilities.

Through the certificate program, students collaborate with and learn from experts in the disability arena, including pediatric neurologists, geneticists, speech-language pathologists, audiologists, special education leaders, social workers, physical and occupational therapists, and others. These professionals, who are experienced clinicians, researchers, and educators, provide didactic instruction, clinical instruction, and mentorship to students.

Students will also have the opportunity to gain leadership and management skills that prepare them to enter the workforce with increased professional independence. The certificate program exposes students to social justice issues, Appalachian concerns, principles of practice, and cultural diversity while developing their expertise in rural practice environments. As part of the program, students have the opportunity to observe programs that serve those with disabilities and their families.

• Students must take two three-credit hour mandatory interdisciplinary courses: one of which is DISB 580.
• Six hours may be elective courses that cover subject matter related to persons with disabilities or courses within the student’s own academic discipline for which they have received prior approval from the certificate program director and the course instructor. Students will be required to complete a project that applies coursework to issues relating to persons with disabilities.
• Two credit hours are earned through thirty volunteer hours in which the student has direct interaction with persons who have disabilities.
• One credit hour is the capstone experience (DISB 686) which includes samples of the student’s accumulated work in disabilities, a final essay, and an oral presentation.
• Students must earn a B- or better in all courses to be awarded the certificate upon completion of all requirements.