



Institute on Aging  
Department of Aging & Geriatric Research  
COLLEGE of MEDICINE



# Discover Careers in Aging

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[online.aging.ufl.edu](https://online.aging.ufl.edu)



## **What Are the Differences Between Aging, Gerontology and Geriatrics?**

Aging is the process of growing old: the persistent decline in mental and physical capacity due to the accumulation of molecular and cellular damage over time. Professionals trained in **gerontology**, the study of aging, and **geriatrics**, a branch of medicine devoted to the care of older adults, are able to help aging populations as they transition from one stage of life to the next.

### **Gerontology is the study of aging and individuals throughout the course of their lives. It includes:**

- The study of age-related biologic, sociologic and psychologic changes.
- The analysis of the effect our aging population has on society.
- The application of this knowledge toward policies beneficial for older adults.

### **Geriatrics refers to the branch of medicine devoted to the diagnosis, management and prevention of diseases and illnesses associated with aging. It includes:**

- A focus on health and disease in elderly populations.
- The administration of high-quality, person-centered care.
- Consideration for the welfare of informal caregivers.



## **What Career Opportunities Are Available in Gerontology?**

This professional field is composed of physicians, nurses, social scientists and other gerontological workers who specialize in the study of aging and age-related problems.

Gerontologists may work directly with patients, or they may work as educators or researchers in the field of aging. Their focus may strictly adhere to aging studies or be divided amongst disciplinary, professional or clinical areas.

### **Gerontology Career Activities:**

- Provide direct care to older adults in hospitals, hospice facilities and nursing homes.
- Perform diagnostic tests to assess the mental and physical health of older adults.
- Conduct research to shed light on factors that affect aging throughout a person's life.
- Collaborate with healthcare professionals to diagnose and treat age-related illnesses.
- Provide caregivers with recommendations for older adults' care and treatment.
- Advocate for older adults to receive proper access to health care services.

## Find the Perfect Career for You

Gerontologists have the pleasure of working with aging populations to improve their quality of life. Their versatile skill set makes them an invaluable asset in a number of environments. The growing shift in population distribution means that gerontologists will remain in high demand in the years and decades to come.



Driven by the aging of baby boomers, the number of **Americans ages 65 and older** is projected to reach **77 million by the year 2034**. Within two decades, seniors will outnumber children for the first time in U.S. history.



### Expanding Career Opportunities

For the first time in human history, the majority of people can expect to live well into their sixties. A longer life brings new opportunities for older adults and their families, but it can also result in challenges that require the expertise of professionals well-versed in gerontology and geriatrics.



## Stimulating and Challenging Work Environments

There will be about 2.5 working-age adults for every retirement-age person in the U.S. by 2060. In the coming decades, this population will not only age considerably but also become more racially and ethnically diverse. The needs of older adults will vary depending on factors such as race, gender and health, and it's up to gerontological workers to account for an individual's unique circumstances when providing care and services.

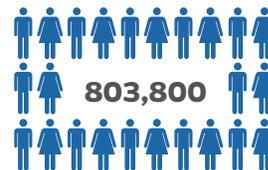
### Employment Outlook for Gerontological and Geriatric Specialists

Projected employment in gerontology and geriatric medicine by 2029:

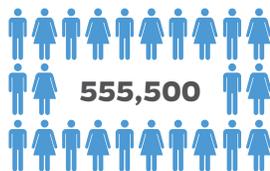
source: bls.gov



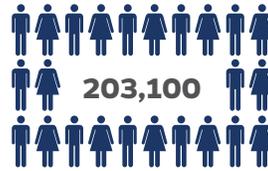
Registered Nurses



Social Workers



Health Service Managers



Speech-Language Pathologists



Recreational Therapists

## Working with the Active Elderly Versus the Inactive Elderly

### Active Elder Care Career Opportunities:

- Organizing recreation programs.
- Managing volunteer activities.
- Providing educational opportunities.

### Inactive Elder Care Career Opportunities:

- Administering long-term healthcare.
- Developing rehabilitation programs.
- Managing population health.

## Multidisciplinary Opportunities

Encompassing an array of disciplines, the field of aging offers numerous opportunities for gerontological workers and specialists. Gerontologists may even find themselves working alongside professionals from other disciplines to better provide for the needs of older adults. Career options include:



### Service Provider

Coordinate housing, legal, transportation, nursing and other essential eldercare services.



### Educator

Educate college students interested in obtaining skills and knowledge in geriatric care.



### Health Professional

Administer day, home or hospital care to older adults as part of a healthcare team.



### Researcher

Explore issues affecting older adults, such as age-related diseases like dementia.



**Projected Job Growth for Aging and Geriatric Specialists**

Projected increase in employment over the next decade:

source: bls.gov

**Opportunities to Make a Difference**

Geriatricians report some of the highest levels of job satisfaction among health professionals. Gerontological workers and specialists enjoy meaningful relationships with older adults, the chance to work on a health care team and a healthy work-life balance, all of which contribute to their professional fulfillment.

## Online Graduate Programs in Gerontology

The University of Florida offers an entirely online **Master of Science in Medical Sciences with a concentration in Gerontology** and a **Graduate Certificate in Aging and Geriatric Practice**. These programs will provide the knowledge and skills you need to advance your career in the field of aging.

- Courses are asynchronous and can be completed at students' convenience.
- Curriculum is updated regularly to reflect the latest trends and research findings.
- Tuition is competitively priced and the same for all students, regardless of their location.
- Virtual classrooms are taught by leading doctors and researchers in the field of aging.
- No clinical experience or campus visits required.

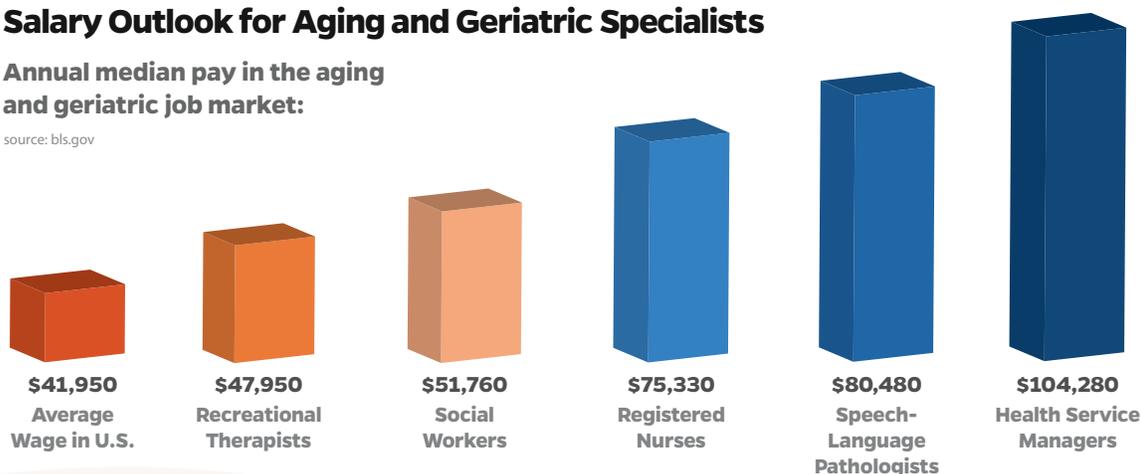
Pursue a Master of Science in Gerontology and tailor your degree to your interests with one of three specialty tracks:

- **Geriatric Care Management:** Become an advocate for older adults by implementing individualized care to help them remain independent for as long as possible.
- **Geropsychology:** Explore the impact of mental health on the quality of elder life and learn to recognize the difference between normal cognitive aging and cognitive impairments.
- **Medical Physiology:** Gain a deeper understanding of the fundamentals of geriatric medicine and a competitive edge in your medical career or as a health-profession school applicant.

### Salary Outlook for Aging and Geriatric Specialists

Annual median pay in the aging and geriatric job market:

source: bls.gov



## Application Requirements

### Master of Science in Gerontology

- A bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree.
- An upper-division GPA of 3.0 (B grade) or higher.
- Two letters of recommendation.
- A resume\* and statement of purpose.

### Graduate Certificate in Aging and Geriatric Practice

- A bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree.
- An upper-division GPA of 3.0 (B grade) or higher.
- A resume and statement of purpose.

For more information about applying to the University of Florida's online graduate program in gerontology, visit [online.aging.ufl.edu/apply](http://online.aging.ufl.edu/apply).

Questions about the program? **Contact Student Support Services at 844-707-7988.**

\*Pursuant to Florida Statute, your application requires inclusion of all post-high school education and employment, as well as information about ongoing international affiliations and research funding. Please ensure this information is included on your curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé.



## The Department of Aging and Geriatric Research

The mission of the University of Florida's Department of Aging and Geriatric Research is to improve the health, independence and quality of life of older adults by means of interdisciplinary teams in the areas of research, education and health care. The department is the academic home to a diverse group of faculty members who lead our online classrooms and are eager to pass on their knowledge and experience to graduate students. The department also serves as support infrastructure for the Institute on Aging (IOA), which integrates the latest research findings into elderly patient care, research and education.



**online.aging.ufl.edu**

**Sources:** <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>  
<https://www.geron.org/about-us/our-vision-mission-and-values/what-is-gerontology>  
<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2009-11-27-0911260706-story.html>  
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