

CERTIFICATE IN ADAPTIVE EXERCISE

With over 16% of the global population living with a disability, there is a growing demand for professionals who can provide adaptive exercise solutions and promote inclusivity in fitness and wellness areas. The undergraduate Certificate in Adaptive Exercise is designed to equip students with specialized knowledge and skills to work effectively with individuals with physical and mental disabilities in fitness and recreational settings. This program emphasizes an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to fostering an understanding of diverse disabilities, and creating environments that are inclusive, safe, and empowering. The certificate will emphasize respectful and inclusive language, ensuring students can effectively and empathetically communicate with individuals with varying abilities. Students will apply knowledge in real world setting as they complete a service learning component of the certificate.

This certificate is open to all majors.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion, students will be able to:

1. Discuss and explain disability, disability rights, using history, legislation, universal design, and people first language, to foster a respectful and inclusive approach to exercise programming and patient/client interactions throughout one's lifespan.
2. Examine key legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that have shaped the rights of individuals with disabilities throughout history.
3. Discuss the principles of universal design and its role in creating accessible environments.
4. Practice people-first language to foster respect and dignity in communications and interactions within and social factors that impact exercise programming for individuals with chronic diseases, disabilities, and other unique health considerations across the lifespan.
5. Identify and describe unique exercises, tools and contraindications associated with assessing and prescribing exercise for special populations, ensuring safe and effective interventions.
6. Apply evidence-based guidelines during a service learning component that prioritize safety, effectiveness, and quality of life for diverse populations.
7. Discuss integrating physical activity as a management strategy for mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, and substance abuse, considering the unique needs of these populations.
8. Identify activity opportunities available for special populations at the national, state and local levels.

Learn more about the Certificate in Adaptive Exercise on the Department of Health and Exercise Science website. (<https://www.chhs.colostate.edu/hes/programs-and-degrees/>)

Requirements Effective Fall 2025

Students may double-count a maximum of 6 credits towards this certificate and the Certificate in Youth Mentoring with Campus Connections and/or the Certificate in Disability and Neurodiversity.

Additional coursework may be required due to prerequisites.

Code	Title	Credits
Required courses:		
HES 427	Inclusive Fitness Training	3
HES 434	Physical Activity Throughout the Lifespan	3
Select one course from the following:		2-5
ETST 270	Introduction to Critical Disability Studies	
ETST 420	Disability, Race, Gender in the Environment	
HDFS 315	Disability Across the Lifespan and Culture	
LASL 1XX, LASL 2XX, or LASL 3XX (American Sign Language)		
OT 355	The Disability Experience in Society	
Select one course directly related to disability from the following:		3
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HDFS 470A	Campus Connections: Youth Mentor	
HES 478B	Exercise Science Capstone: Research ²	
HES 486	Practicum–Wellness Program Management ²	
HONR 499	Senior Honors Thesis ³	
Program Total Credits:		11-14

¹ Only practica, research experiences and theses focused on disability and exercise are eligible and must be verified by the HES department.

² Restricted to majors only.

³ Restricted to honors students only.