



### **The Program**

UMass Boston's PhD Program in Gerontology is located in the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies. Gerontology is a rapidly expanding field that focuses on the study of aging processes and aging populations. Advanced work in Gerontology is interdisciplinary, bridging theories, concepts, and research methods drawn from the social and behavioral sciences. UMass Boston's PhD Program is designed to prepare students for leadership roles as educators, researchers, planners, and policy makers. It is one of the most renowned doctoral gerontology programs in the world and the only Gerontology doctoral program in the northeast United States. The program's approach reflects the mission of the UMass Boston. Special attention is given to the needs of the low-income elderly, and to issues of racial and cultural diversity.

The curriculum of UMass Boston's PhD Program in Gerontology is designed to give graduates command of a broad body of specialized knowledge in aging and social policy, as well as the capacity to formulate and execute methodologically sound procedures to expand that base of knowledge. Students gain practical experience as researchers and policy analysts and cultivate the written, oral, and listening skills needed to communicate effectively. The program may be completed in four or five years: five semesters of full-time coursework, one semester combining completion of a qualifying examination with preliminary dissertation work; and two to four semesters of full time dissertation work.

### **Admission Requirements**

Admission to the program is competitive; approximately six to eight full-time students are enrolled each year, in addition to a limited number of part-time students. Admission requirements include a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; an undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 or better; strong general GRE scores (verbal and quantitative); transcripts of all prior academic work; three letters of recommendation; a resume; and a personal statement. Members of minority groups are encouraged to apply. The admissions committee expects to interview applicants in person or by phone, whenever possible. Priority is given to those who submit applications and all supporting credentials by February 1. This date is especially important for applicants who wish to be considered for a research or teaching assistantship.

### **Degree Requirements**

Degree requirements for the Gerontology PhD Program include coursework, an empirical research paper, a qualifying paper examination and a doctoral dissertation.

#### ***Coursework***

Students in the Gerontology PhD program must accumulate 69 credits.

- A. Four foundation courses, which emphasize different disciplinary approaches to aging (12 credits)
- B. Six research courses, which emphasize research methods and statistics (18 credits),
- C. Two policy foundation courses (6 credits)
- D. One advanced gerontology policy course, providing a scholarly, in-depth examination of aging policy (3 credits)
- E. Three professional development seminars: one credit each (3 credits)
- F. At least six elective courses at the graduate level (18 credits)
- G. Dissertation research (9 credits)

#### ***An Empirical Research Paper***

By the end of the fourth semester of study, students are expected to complete an empirical research paper, comparable to an article that would be published in a professional academic journal.

#### ***A Qualifying Paper Examination***

The qualifying paper exam tests students on their ability to lay the foundation for a substantial research project by reviewing diverse literature and developing a sound conceptual/theoretical framework that reflects current scientific understanding of the phenomena being studied. The exam is normally taken following the completion of all required coursework. After passing the qualifying paper examination, the student becomes a candidate for the PhD degree.

#### ***A Doctoral Dissertation***

Students are required to complete a doctoral dissertation that reflects an original and independent scholarly contribution to the state of knowledge in the field of gerontology.

## **Faculty. Their Doctoral Training and Expertise**

*Kathrin Boerner, PhD*, Free University of Berlin • Adult Development and aging (Coping with chronic illness, end-of-life, bereavement)

*Jeffrey A Burr, PhD*, University of Texas at Austin • Sociology (Social demography, household composition, labor force, race/ethnicity, productive activity, aging and health)

*Francis G Caro, PhD*, University of Minnesota • Sociology (Emeritus) (Long-term care, productive aging)

*Elizabeth Dugan, PhD*, University of North Carolina Greensboro • Human Development and Family Studies (Older drivers, healthy aging, psychological outcomes)

*Len Fishman, JD*, University of Maryland • Law (Long-term services and supports, senior housing)

*Jennifer Hefele, PhD*, Brandeis University • Social Policy (Long-term services and supports, quality of care, racial/ethnic disparities)

*Kyungmin Kim, PhD*, Penn State University • Human Development and Family Studies (Long-term services and supports, intergenerational relations in aging, support exchanges across generations, family caregiving)

*Edward Alan Miller, PhD*, University of Michigan • Political Science and Health Services, Organization and Policy (Long-term services and supports, intergovernmental relations, program implementation and evaluation, telemedicine and e-health)

*Jan E Mutchler, PhD*, University of Texas at Austin • Sociology (Diversity, intergenerational support, health disparities, economic security, social demography)

*Pamela Nadash, PhD*, Columbia University • Public Health and Political Science (Long-term services and supports, comparative health policy, consumer choice, integrated care)

*Frank Porell, PhD*, Carnegie-Mellon University • Urban and Public Affairs (Performance measurement, disability risks, service utilization, market behavior, sentinel injuries)

*Maximiliane Szinovacz, PhD*, University of Vienna • Sociology (Families/family caregiving, retirement, grand-parenthood, intergenerational relationships)

## **The University of Massachusetts Boston**

UMass Boston, part of the five-member UMass system, is an urban public university. Large enough to offer a broad range of academic choices, UMass Boston is also small enough to maintain a closeness of community. The campus houses extensive research and teaching laboratories and computer resources, intramural and intercollegiate athletic facilities, and a world class library. Concerts, lectures, and plays on campus offer additional opportunities for a satisfying student life. The scenic waterfront campus, with easy access to Boston's culturally rich downtown, is located next to the John. F. Kennedy Library & Museum and the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the U.S. Senate.

## **Notable Facts about the Gerontology PhD Program**

- Established in 1990: One of the first programs in the world to award a PhD in Gerontology
- Has produced more graduates with a Gerontology PhD than any other program
- During the past year current PhD students published nearly 30 articles and reports, largely in peer-reviewed journals, and gave close to 50 professional presentations
- Program alumni have published more than 1,100 journal articles, reports, book chapters, and books; and made more than 1,300 professional presentations
- Recent noteworthy alumni accomplishments include two Distinguished Professorships, and one Vice Chair of the United Nations NGO Committee on Ageing—Geneva

## **Contact Us**

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