

ASSOCIATE PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

The College for Adults is enriched by the wide range of human experience among our student body and welcomes learners with a variety of abilities, and those of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

College for Adults

Believing that specialized professional education integrated with the liberal arts promotes career readiness and expresses the University's academic mission in dynamic and responsive ways, the associate degrees offered by the College for Adults advance three central learning outcomes: *professional preparedness* - readiness for entry-level positions or specialized roles; *academic preparedness* - intellectual and technological capability for educational advancement and lifelong learning; and *community awareness* - social understanding that demands involvement, service and leadership.

The curriculum in the associate degree programs includes coursework in the liberal arts and sciences, professional education and practical experiences such as laboratory work, clinical assignments, fieldwork and internships. A strong co-curriculum enhances student learning. Professional education programs have discrete educational objectives, and careful integration and alignment ensures that students are enriched by an immersive liberal arts and sciences education while ensuring mastery of professional skills and attributes.

A distinguishing feature of the liberal arts and sciences curriculum is the emphasis on mastery of critical skills that simultaneously represent essential attributes of a well-educated person and the qualities needed for success in the workplace. Graduates of St. Catherine University's associate degree programs (except OTA online) must demonstrate competency in these critical skill areas.

Courses in liberal arts and sciences encourage fundamental exploration of important elements that are central to the human experience. Literature, psychology, theology, natural science and social science have become vehicles that humans use to understand themselves and their world. Courses in these disciplines further identify personal struggles and accomplishments as related to others and the broader human condition. An enriched perspective prepares students to relate to and work with people who exhibit diverse responses to common problems or illness.

Courses in our professional programs provide students with the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function competently in their field. The curriculum is presented using a developmental and cumulative framework. That is, in the beginning of a student's learning experience, emphasis is placed upon laying the foundation that will constitute the base for professional education and work orientation. It is here that students learn fundamental concepts and skills. As students master these concepts and skills, they are introduced to increasingly complex ideas and learning activities.

Laboratory instruction provides students with safe and controlled learning experiences in which professional skills are developed and clinical problems are simulated. These exercises are carefully planned and sequenced so students can master necessary psychomotor skills, apply theoretical principles and integrate skills and principles into appropriate, ethical clinical judgments and actions. As an integral part of developing competence, students are involved in real-life situations in a variety of ways, including clinical laboratory settings, internships and fieldwork assignments. Both faculty and clinical staff provide expert instruction and supervision as students continue to practice and learn.