

Arcadia University

Application for Title IV Approval of a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program

1.a. Delivery of Services to Students

The Raising Expectations for Academic Learning or REAL Certificate at Arcadia University is a four-semester post-secondary initiative for young adults with intellectual disabilities who are interested in participating in an academic, vocational and social university experience. The Certificate serves individuals with intellectual disabilities who are currently (or were formerly) eligible for a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and have completed a high school program.

The REAL Certificate offers students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to participate in the same learning environments available to same-age peers in an academic-, vocational- and social inclusion-focused program. This two-year program includes auditing a minimum of one (1) undergraduate course per semester and completion of a specified number of vocational and other social experiences on and off-campus. An individual plan for college participation is developed for each student.

1.b. Supports for students to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction

The Certificate embraces the principles of access and equity to all opportunities in society, and promotes the advancement of academic knowledge, social skills and career options for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This Certificate provides learning opportunities in three main areas: academic participation, career development and employment, and social membership. Each of these areas will also help with the acquisition of specific independent living skills, in preparation for a post-school transition into a more work-focused environment. This certificate does not offer higher education credits towards a college degree.

This certificate is for interested and motivated students who (34.CRF.668.231; components (a).1 – (a).3; component (6)):

- Are between the ages of 18 and 25.
- Have been identified as having an intellectual disability and were eligible for FAPE under IDEA.
- Are in their final years of high school (up to 3 years) or who have completed secondary education.

- Are not able to access college by meeting typical entrance criteria, but are interested in continuing to develop skills needed to transition into an adult independent and a vocationally satisfactory life.
- Are able to learn to navigate the college environment with necessary supports and to be unsupervised for a minimum of one hour.

1.c. Advising and Curriculum Structure

College Classes and Person-Centered Planning

REAL Certificate students begin their college experience and each semester by engaging in person-centered-planning with the program coordinator and the student's guests (e.g., family members and/or close friends). This advising process will help identify interests, strengths, and goals for each student, as well as the supports and accommodations necessary for success in the academic, social, and vocational components of the program. Students will then register to audit courses on campus, for which they will receive credit within the REAL Certificate towards graduation. Students will be expected to audit one class per semester, unless it is determined by the team that they can also successfully complete a second class within one semester.

Career Exploration and Vocational skills

All students in the Certificate will engage in vocational experiences each of the four semesters. This component includes a combination of professional development (e.g., resume preparation, job searches, mock interviews), work-study positions, and other vocational training opportunities on campus. The REAL Certificate will work towards matching students with meaningful paid employment through opportunities both on and off campus, whenever possible.

As the goals of each student in the program will be individually determined, it is challenging to identify specific occupations that this program will prepare students for. It is possible that we may support students who are preparing for the following categories of occupations:

- 43-9000 Other Office and Administrative Support Workers
- 35-9000 Other Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers
- 41-2000 Retail Sales Workers
- 53-7064 Packers and Packagers, Hand

1.d. Participation in Academic Components

When auditing courses, students will participate in the full course curriculum with typical peers, but will be responsible for learning a portion of that curriculum, with assignments modified to meet his/her individual needs. Faculty members will receive information from and will be supported by the Certificate Coordinator to develop assignments that are individualized for each student. At the beginning of each semester the

coordinator will articulate and present a plan for the assignments and other requirements that the student is expected to complete for the course. The student will review and acknowledge agreement with the expectations for participation in the course. Students will be supported by the coordinator and the peer network in the form of pre-teaching sessions where concepts and activities will be introduced and discussed before class, which will allow students to participate with their peers without disabilities. They will take exams, write papers, and complete projects as appropriate for their individualized level and they will receive feedback based on the goal(s) stated in their plans for each class they choose. Students will be expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress as they proceed through the program.

Life Skills (embedded in other components)

Participation in academic, vocational and social components will emphasize the improvement in the necessary skills to live and work independently upon graduation, including community living, safety, nutrition, hygiene, and personal skills. While completing the person-centered process to determine individual goals for each REAL Certificate student, emphasis will be placed to ensure that students, staff and peers are aware of their needs in relation to the improvement of life skills. Each semester students, family members and peers will complete a report to evaluate the individual's performance in this area and to determine objectives for the following semester.

1.e. Opportunities for Social and Academic Integration

The REAL Certificate places great value in the social opportunities with same-age peers, which define a typical university experience and encourage the development of appropriate social skills. Because social growth and development are key goals for students with intellectual disabilities, a plan for social integration will be developed in the person-centered planning process. Students will have access to all clubs and activities on campus, and through the person-centered planning process they will select organizations and activities that align with their interests and goals. Specific social goals (e.g., playing an intramural sport, watching a soccer game, etc.) will be included in the person-centered planning process, and will be reviewed each semester to determine if the student is successful in meeting those goals. Students also will play a significant role in determining the level of social support they will have and in connecting with the peer mentors who provide that support. Success in the social area will be measured by direct observation, self-report from students and by feedback from peers. Key outcomes for the social component of the program will include discovery of personal and social interests, the ability to access and enjoy social organizations, clubs, and activities, and the development of friendships.

Different mechanisms will be in place to support students as full participants in the various social organizations, sporting events, and social experiences available on the

Arcadia University campus. The social supports will be as inclusive as possible. An important component of this initiative is the utilization of a peer mentor system to assist all students in their transition to and participation on campus. All peer mentors will receive training through peer facilitation training. Mentors will serve to introduce students to all that the campus offers, from clubs and intramurals to service projects and campus events (e.g., basketball games, movies, dining, etc.) with students.

An announcement to recruit peer mentors and a short presentation in classes is given to Education students in the Spring semester (Appendix 4). An announcement is also sent to all undergraduate students and given out at the clubs and activities fair at the beginning of the Fall semester. Arcadia University is a welcoming campus with a strong commitment to social justice and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Our education faculty are recognized for their work in inclusive education (e.g., Dr. Graciela Slesaransky-Poe, Dr. Christina Ager, Dr. Kim Dean, Dr. Clare Papay) and the values of including students with disabilities are instilling in our undergraduate students from their very first education semester. The vast majority of our education students is working towards a dual certification that includes special education, and has experiences working with students with disabilities throughout their programs. We have a thriving Education Club and our undergraduate students eagerly volunteer for any opportunity to interact with students with disabilities. Our faculty recognizes that including students with disabilities on our campus aligns with our commitment to social justice and diversity.

2. Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy

Pursuant to Title IV (federal) regulations, the following constitutes Arcadia's policy on satisfactory academic progress for students in the REAL Certificate.

Measurement of academic progress

Students accepted in the REAL Certificate will begin an individualized planning process to determine their personal goals, interests and needs (34.CRF.668.231; component (a).4). This planning process will help the students and their advising and support teams to determine the courses they would like to audit and the work experiences to which they would like to have access in each of the four semesters at Arcadia University. In order for students to be able to participate in these experiences successfully, they will need to demonstrate basic reading, writing and communication skills, as well as the ability to safely stay unsupervised situations on campus for no less than one hour.

Given the nature of this Certificate and that students will not earn an academic degree, they will not receive traditional grades for their participation in Certificate activities. Twice a year, at the end of each semester, the REAL Certificate Coordinator will review the student's accomplishments based on Performance Evaluation Checklists and will indicate in the student's records if the student 'passed' or 'failed' the experience. Expected passing performance will be demonstrated by ratings of 'average,' 'above average' or 'superior' in

academic (Appendix 1) and vocational (Appendix 2) experiences. Social experiences will be rated as 'satisfactory' or 'needs improvement' (Appendix 3). Each student is expected to complete his/her planned experiences in all three areas in order to maintain his/her place in the certificate. The expectations for each semester will be reviewed with each student each semester. The student will acknowledge understanding of the expectations for the semester by signing a semester participation plan.

Academic participation: The courses which students in the certificate will be able to audit (i.e., will attend and participate, but will not receive college credit) will be regular 3- or 4-credit college options offered to undergraduate students (34.CRF.668.231; component (5).ii). Students will audit a minimum of one course per semester and, in special circumstances, two courses will be allowed. In each course, students will be expected to (1) satisfy the attendance policies set forth by the course instructors and (2) demonstrate reasonable progress towards course goals, as described in the student's individualized semester plan.

Vocational participation: In addition, students will be expected to participate in work experiences on or off campus, under the guidance of the REAL Certificate personnel (34.CRF.668.231; component (5).iv). In each work experience the students will be expected to (1) satisfy the attendance policies set forth by the employer and (2) demonstrate reasonable progress towards employment goals, as described in the student's individualized semester plan.

Social participation: Students will participate in university-based social activities with other undergraduate students, such as eating lunch, joining peers in recreation areas, or attending sporting events. Activities will be less structured than academic or vocational assignments, but peer mentors will be aware of the certificate goals regarding social interactions. On a regular basis, the REAL Certificate coordinator will observe or interview students to assess participation in this area. Social experiences will be rated as 'satisfactory,' based on a pre-determined checklist.

To be eligible for continued receipt of Title IV financial aid, students must satisfactorily complete at least 80% of the expectations included in their individual participation plan, as measured on an academic year basis (i.e., the student must have earned an average of 80% of the measured goals set forth in the individual participation plan in the Fall and Spring semesters of each year).

Determination of satisfactory academic progress will be made at least once a year and before the Financial Aid Office disburses any Title IV (federal) funds for the subsequent semester or year. Title IV (federal) funds include: Federal Direct Stafford, PLUS and GradPLUS Loans, Perkins Loans, Pell Grants, SEOG, TEACH Grants and Federal Work Study. A list of students who have not met the satisfactory academic progress criteria during the academic year will be provided to the Office of Financial Aid each May. For those students who are receiving Title IV aid, the Executive Director of Federal Aid Programs and Financial

Aid Systems will send out a notification of their right to appeal. If the student chooses to appeal, he/she will be granted one term of probation if the appeal is approved.

Maximum Time Frame for Certificate Completion

The Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy for Federal Student Aid requires that the student must complete the Program within 150% of the normal time frame for program completion.

It is expected that students will complete the Certificate in consecutive full-time semesters (Year 1: Spring and Fall; and Year 2: Spring and Fall), unless s/he can provide documentation of extenuating circumstances that require the student to temporarily withdraw from the University (e.g., illness or death of a family member that directly affected the student's ability to participate in the program). If the student withdraws, the tuition costs will be pro-rated for that semester and the student will be allowed to register in the next full semester, when open placements become available.

Students will only be eligible for Title IV funds for three (3) years from the semester when accepted into the Certificate.

When minimum standards of progress are not achieved

Probation and/or dismissal: Students who do not meet course and work expectations as described in their individual plans will be placed on academic probation for one semester, where s/he will be expected to improve her/his performance. Students in this situation will be strongly encouraged to communicate or discuss any actions or disciplinary notices with their parents and staff as early as possible, and their individual programs will be reviewed by the team to encourage improvements in the following semester. If the expectations are not met for a second time, the student will be dismissed from the program.

In addition to satisfactory academic progress, students must abide by the Honor Code, Student Code of Conduct, Alcohol Policy and Drug Policy delineated in the Student Handbook. Furthermore, all students will be afforded the same rights and due process mechanisms (e.g., grade appeals, grievance procedures) that are given to traditional students.

Academic progress appeal process

If a student considers that there were extenuating circumstances which prevented him/her from making satisfactory academic progress (i.e., the death of a relative, a serious personal illness/injury, or other extenuating circumstance), and can demonstrate that the illness/injury or extenuating circumstance had a direct impact on his/her academic, vocational, and social performance, he/she will be notified accordingly and may submit the Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeal Form, available at www.arcadia.edu/finaidforms2013 to the Executive Director of Federal Aid Programs. Information submitted by way of an Academic Progress Appeal will remain confidential. If

the Financial Aid Academic Progress Appeals Committee determines that there were mitigating circumstances that had a direct bearing on the student's academic performance, then the student can receive Title IV (Federal financial aid) during a probationary period for one semester. If a student fails to meet both standards of academic progress for Title IV aid purposes at the end of the probationary period (semester), then the student becomes ineligible for Title IV aid until he/she meets the appropriate progress standard(s).

Reinstatement

Students dismissed for unsatisfactory academic progress for the first time are not permitted to request reinstatement until the following academic year. Requests for reinstatement must be made in writing to the Directors of the REAL Certificate. The student will be interviewed and considered with all other applicants for the following academic year.

Students who maintain satisfactory academic progress

It is noted that Satisfactory Academic Progress will not automatically guarantee a student's approval of Title IV assistance, as certain requirements for Title IV eligibility remain applicable and this new statute does not change those requirements. When the program receives Federal approval as a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program, all literature and web-based material regarding the program will detail the eligibility requirements for Federal financial assistance under the Federal Pell Grant, FSEOG, and FWS programs. Furthermore, all material will reference 34 C.F.R. § 668.233 regarding financial assistance.

3. Credit and Clock Hours for Certificate Activities

To earn a Certificate of Completion from the REAL Certificate, students will spend an average of 20 hours per week on campus. This time will be spent attending classes, gaining work experience, receiving academic tutoring and other instruction, and socializing with peers. Students will follow the regular 15-week Fall/Spring semester calendar. Typical progress through the program would include four (4) semesters of the following activities:

3-6 hours/week – Attending class

Audit a minimum of one undergraduate course (based on personal goals and interests). Student will attend, participate, and complete assignments (modified as needed).

3-6 hours/week – Tutoring and enrichment

Student will participate in individual academic sessions to support his/her progress in class.

2-10 hours/week – Vocational experience

Student will explore interests and possibilities; job rotations and training.

8-12 hours/week - Social opportunities

Student will participate in activities such as meals, physical activity, events and clubs with other Arcadia undergraduate students.

1-5 hours/week - Individual instruction

Designed to meet goals in the student's individual program plan and approved by the team. Instruction could be provided by an outside agency or school district staff.

Clock hours per semester would meet a minimum of 300 hours.

4. Credential and Outcomes Offered

Students who successfully complete four (4) semesters of participation in courses, work experiences and social activities will be awarded a REAL Certificate of Completion from Arcadia University.

Students will be assessed based on their individual plans for college participation, which will list the required academic, social, and employment experiences that students must complete each semester. The plan will be developed upon entry into the certificate program and will be revisited at the beginning of each semester. A portfolio of student work in each of the three required areas will be completed. Students will be evaluated by their instructors, peer mentors, and the coordinator at the end of each semester through a questionnaire. Students will also complete self-evaluation each semester. In the final semester, students will present a culminating project to a panel of evaluators (faculty and staff). Students must summarize their experiences in the certificate and state their future goals to the panel. Panel members will evaluate the presentation and make a recommendation for certificate completion.

(1) Satisfactory academic performance will be indicated by success in audited inclusive academic college courses, as demonstrated by good attendance, appropriate behavior in class, and completion of assignments.

(2) Success in meaningful employment skills will be indicated by the active participation and increased independence in work activities sampled each semester, or by the acquisition and retention of a paid position that aligns with personal interests.

(3) Satisfactory social interactions will be assessed by direct observation, self-report, and peer reports. Students will receive peer support and social skills instruction, as well as access to all campus activities so that they can develop friendships with same-age peers and participate in an active social network.

At the completion of the two-year period, students are eligible for a REAL Certificate of

Completion based on the following criteria:

- Completion of 1200 hours of learning activities over a four semester period (300 hrs per semester);
- Achievement of at least 80% of the objectives per semester within each component of the individual plan for participation; and
- Recommendation for a REAL Certificate of Completion by the panel

5. Letter to Accrediting Agency

A copy of the letter sent to our accrediting agency, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, is provided in Appendix 5.

**Appendix 1
REAL Certificate
Academic Course Evaluation**

Please complete the following evaluation about the REAL Certificate student who attended your class this semester. Thank you for your support!

Student's Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Class Attended: _____

Classroom Behavior	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs Improvement
Had good attendance					
Participated in class activities					
Showed motivation and paid attention					
Maintained positive relations with peers					
Requested assistance when needed					
Accepted constructive feedback					

Please feel free to offer any comments you wish about the REAL Certificate and this particular participant.

Feel free to contact The REAL Certificate Coordinator at 215-572-4095 if you have questions or concerns about this evaluation. Thank you!

**Appendix 2
REAL Certificate
Vocational Experience Evaluation**

Please complete the following evaluation about the REAL Certificate student who participated in your work site this semester. Thank you for your support!

Student's Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Work site: _____

Work Related Behavior	Superior	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Needs Improvement
Attendance and punctuality					
Hygiene and grooming					
Communication skills					
Relations with supervisor and co-workers					
Motivation to work and learn					
Ability to accept and follow directions					
Attention to task and quality of performance					
Production speed or production quantity					
Problem solving skills					
Enthusiasm on the job					

Please feel free to offer any comments you wish about the REAL Certificate and this particular participant.

Feel free to contact The REAL Certificate Coordinator at 215-572-4095 if you have questions or concerns about this evaluation. Thank you!

**Appendix 3
REAL Certificate
Social Experience Evaluation**

Please complete the following evaluation about the REAL Certificate student who participated in social activities with you this semester. Thank you for your support!

Student's Name: _____

Your Name: _____

Worksite: _____

Social Behavior	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Comments
Attendance and punctuality			
Hygiene and grooming			
Communication skills			
Relations with peers during activities			
Motivation to participate in activity			
Ability to accept and follow group activities			
Problem solving skills			
Attention to safety issues			

Please feel free to offer any comments you wish about the REAL Certificate and this particular participant.

Feel free to contact The REAL Certificate Coordinator at 215-572-4095 if you have questions or concerns about this evaluation. Thank you!

Appendix 4
Peer Mentor Announcement

The Raising Expectations for Academic Learning (REAL) Certificate will launch in Fall 2013

BE A PEER MENTOR!



The REAL Certificate is a 2-year course of studies for students with intellectual disabilities. REAL Certificate students will be auditing undergraduate classes, working, and spending time on campus...just like you!

Peer mentors will be a big part of the success of the REAL Certificate. Here are several ways you can volunteer to support REAL Certificate students:

Attending and supporting

*students in classes
Providing tutoring for classes and assignments
Attending sporting and other campus events
Serving as a job coach
Eating lunch on campus with a student
Mentoring and teaching personal development goals
Helping collect data on individualized goals*

We are looking for reliable, motivated, and committed

peer mentors beginning in Fall 2013. You can sign up for any amount of time from one hour to a whole day! You will be assigned a regular time for each week of the semester. Training will be provided at the beginning of the Fall semester. Being a peer mentor is a GREAT experience for your resume

Interested?

Contact Dr. Clare Papay via email (papayc@arcadia.edu)

Tell us:

Why you are interested

Your availability in the Fall (be specific)

Any non-education classes you are taking this Fall

Any campus activities that you regularly participate in (clubs, sports, events, etc.)

Appendix 5
Letter to MSCHE