



FIU Embrace Education

Overview

The FIU Embrace Education Program offers two options for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Non-Degree seeking students

The FIU Embrace Education program for non-degree seeking students is a three-year, non-degree, certificate, inclusive postsecondary transition program for students ages 18-28 with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The primary goal of the program is to offer a comprehensive and integrated university-based education that is inclusive and accessible and promotes competitive, integrated employment and independent living in the community.

This non-degree certificate Program of Study provides access and participation in a variety of program activities through a system of supports provided by peer, faculty, academic and social mentors, an Employment Liaison, university-based resources, and other key project personnel who work directly with students to ensure that individual and program goals are met. The program provides integrated educational opportunity aimed at developing skills associated with career development and employment; campus and community engagement; self-determination; independent living; and academic enrichment including skill acquisition in ten (10) areas of specialization that prepares student for competitive, integrated, paid employment while developing the student's ability to live independently (as defined by the student) upon graduation. The program offers students a well-rounded experience while developing skills and competencies in their selected area of specialization. Students can earn micro-credentials and industry certifications in one of ten areas of specialization:

1. Hospitality Operations
2. Food Production
3. Computer Technology,
4. Digital Communication
5. Corporate Communications
6. Animation
7. Health and Nutrition
8. Operating Room Assistant Intern
9. Sterilization Technician Intern
10. Environmental Technician

The FIU Embrace Education program for non-degree seeking students is a liberal arts program and as such, students must complete twelve (12) classes: three (3) common core classes, as well as all classes in their area of specialization. A certificate of completion will be issued by FIU's Continuing Education Department upon the successful completion of all components of the program. Students can earn micro-credentials and industry certifications in their area of specialization. Also, the student must select additional courses from a list of electives to meet the twelve (12) course requirement for graduation. In addition to these courses, students are required to participate in various seminars/workshops, which will further help them to develop their independent living skills.

The following outlines the program components offered annually to non-degree seeking students, along with the minimal frequency of supports provided to students.

Program Components	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Number of academic classes (total 12 classes)	Fall - 2 classes Spring - 2 classes Summer - 1 class	Fall - 2 classes Spring - 2 classes Summer - 1 class	Fall - 1 class Spring - 1 class Summer - None
Volunteer hours	20 hours/semester	20 hours (at least 10 must be off campus)/semester	¹ suggested
Faculty Mentor meeting	1 hr./week not including summer semester	1/hr./week not including summer semester	1 hr./week not including summer semester
Academic Mentor meeting	2-3 hrs./week	2-3 hrs./week	2-3 hrs./week
Social Mentor meeting	1 hr./week	1 hr./week	1 hr./week
Job Shadowing	Fall semester -None Spring semester - 5-9 hrs./week Summer - None	Fall semester - 10 - 14 hrs./week Spring semester - 10-14 hrs./week Summer - None	None
Internship	None	None	Semester -15-20 hrs./week Summer - None
Dorm experience	None	Eligible to apply	Eligible to apply
Student Clubs	At least 1 club	At least 1 club	At least 1 club
Seminars	3 times per week	3 times per week	3 times per week
Student Mentor	Assigned a student mentor 1hr/week	Eligible to apply to mentor a new student	Eligible to apply to mentor a new student
Physical activity	At least 1 activity/week	At least 1 activity/week	At least 1 activity/week ²
Conference/Travel	None	Eligible	Eligible

¹ During the third-year volunteer hours are not required. However, it is suggested that students continue their civic engagement activities with an organization in the community.

² During the third year of the program, the physical activity component is not required. However, students are strongly encouraged and supported to continue this activity.

Degree-seeking students

The FIU Embrace Education program for degree-seeking students is a program for FIU students with ASD who need additional supports beyond those offered through university's Disability Resource Center (DRC). This includes an integrated system of supports provided by, academic and social mentors, an Employment Liaison, and other key program personnel who work directly with students to ensure that individual and program goals are met. The program provides integrated educational opportunity aimed at developing skills associated with career development and employment; campus and community engagement; self-determination; independent living; and academic enrichment.

Students enrolled in this program option must satisfy the requirements of their chosen undergraduate program in order to successfully graduate from FIU with a degree.

Residential Component

The residential component is an opportunity for FIU Embrace Education students, both degree and non-degree seeking, to reside in the FIU residential halls with their neurotypical peers. This unique program is designed to be a bridge between living at the family home and the ideal end-goal of living independently with minimal supports (semi-supported living).

The program is a simulation of independent living, where a Community Assistant (CA), also an FIU student, acts as a guide, mentor, and trainer. The Community Assistant serves as a peer facilitator to encourage a positive, healthy, safe, and cooperative living that fosters independence through the promotion of daily independent living skills, self-care, and appropriate social behaviors. Additionally, FIU Embrace students are required to participate in independent living seminars weekly. These seminars are designed to increase the student's knowledge in life skills such as money management, conflict resolution, sexual health, cooking, nutrition etc. In addition to the CAs, program staff will visit the dorms regularly in order to practice the independent living skills that are being taught during the seminars with the students residing in the dorms. This practice will assist the residential students in honing in on these skills as they reside in the dorm.