



**International Board of Credentialing  
and Continuing Education Standards**

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **University of West Florida to Offer IBCCES-Accredited Autism Course**

February 29, 2016 (JACKSONVILLE) - The University of West Florida is now offering an Autism Awareness course has been accredited by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards ([IBCCES](#)). IBCCES has accredited this course to be a part of their Certified Autism Specialist™ program, which will allow students to opt to receive their professional autism certification after taking the Autism Awareness course through UWF.

"University of West Florida's Department of Continuing Education is pleased that our Autism Awareness course is credentialed by IBCCES," said Patti Spaniola, Program Director, Continuing Education, University of West Florida. "Offering an instructor led online course is a valuable resource for students interested in learning more about autism."

This course provides an overview of autism spectrum disorders and interventions used to assist individuals diagnosed with autism. There are class discussions and five weekly quizzes based primarily on Temple Grandin and Richard Panek's book *The Autistic Brain: Thinking Across the Spectrum* and on material in the course lessons. Online sources are also used in the course, including several relating to the revised criteria for diagnosing autism, published in the American Psychiatric Association's 2013 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

"My students have found the course to be helpful in understanding autism spectrum disorders," Dr. Carlene Thornton, Autism Awareness Course Instructor, University of West Florida, said. "Some students have children or relatives who have been diagnosed with autism and the information they learned about in the Autism Awareness class has enabled them to improve their relationships with their loved ones."

Students that complete the UWF course are eligible to qualify for the autism certification programs offered through IBCCES. A Certified Autism Specialist™ is defined as a professional who is responsible for the support and/or services provided to an individual on the autism spectrum that directly relates to the professionals' specific scope of practice. The certification was created by a board of industry experts to recognize the voluntary effort to meet rigorous professional standards in ongoing professional development in autism.

"We are pleased to partner with UWF to offer professional autism certification to their students through their continuing education program and training," Myron Pincomb, IBCCES Board Chairman, said. "Our mission is to certify an army of highly trained professionals who have a positive impact and improve the lives of individuals with autism and other special needs. UWF is helping us to be able to do that."

For more information on the Certified Autism Specialist™ program, please visit [www.ibcces.org](http://www.ibcces.org). For more information on UWF's Autism Awareness program, please visit [www.uwf.edu/continuinged/](http://www.uwf.edu/continuinged/).

For press inquires, please contact Kristin Chambers at [kristin@ibcces.org](mailto:kristin@ibcces.org).

## About IBCCES

In 2001 the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES), was established to meet the credentialing needs of professionals who work with individuals with special needs. In 2001, IBCCES first established the industry standards for a Certified Autism Specialist. Each year these standards are reviewed and updated by our board of industry professionals including researchers from leading universities, a former state level special education director, industry leaders, as well as clinicians in the fields of mental health, behavior analysis, speech and language pathology, school psychology, occupational therapy, and parents. Our Certified Autism Specialist standards are now used by organizations all over the world to ensure the highest quality of care and training for professionals in the field of Autism.

IBCCES adheres to international standards for boards that grant professional credentials. The IBCCES certification procedures and content undergo various reviews and validation, pursuant to the professions that are eligible for certification, as well as standards established by content experts in the field. IBCCES leading standards are now used by organizations all over the world to ensure the highest quality of care and training for professionals in the field of autism, with a goal to develop an army of highly trained and certified professionals who can improve the quality of life and education for individuals with autism.

