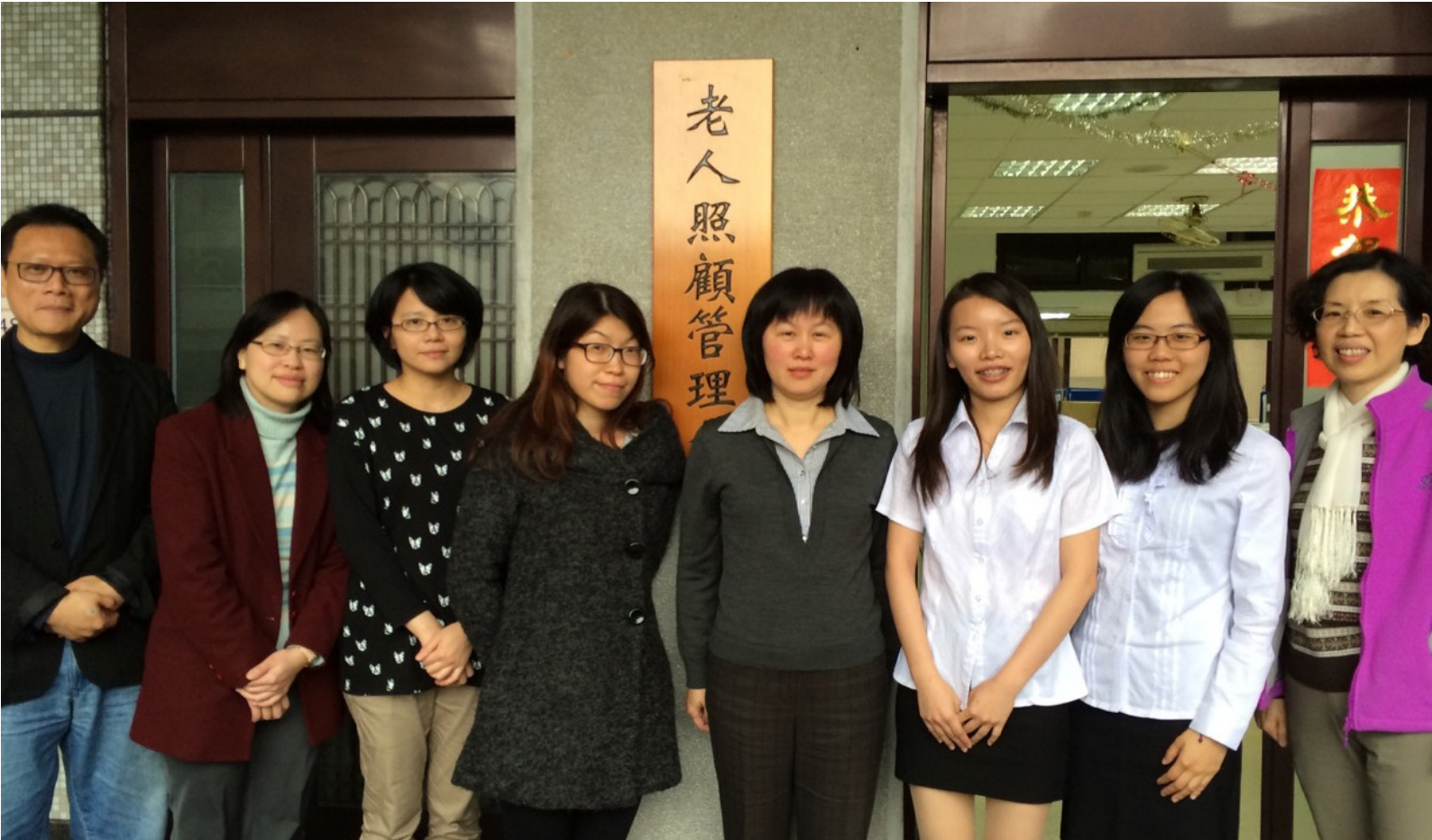


# Chang Gung University of Science and Technology

## Credit Program of Geriatric Care



Taiwan became an aging society in 1993 and is expected to become a hyper-aged society by 2018. In view of the rising demand for geriatric care and long-term care nurses, Chang Gung University of Science and Technology founded the Credit Program of Geriatric Care in 2014 in the hope of training students to become qualified specialists in geriatric

and long-term care and fulfilling the future requirements on geriatric care. Aiming to cultivate students' practical skills in geriatric care, the Department of Gerontological Care and Management applied to the Ministry of Education for the establishment of the Industrial College and meanwhile founded this special program for freshmen in the two-year technical

college.

There are currently 19 students in this credit program. In terms of admission, teachers promote this program to their classes during orientation and announce latest news about the program on Facebook and other social networking websites, via which they can answer students' questions anytime. To lure students into the program, teachers also make information packages, which highlight the distinctive features and benefits of the program and contain information about fellowships, paid internships, outstanding instructors from the industry, and certificates of oral care assistants. At the beginning of a semester, teachers provide students with comprehensive information about the program and answer their questions. Interested students can fill out the application form and will be interviewed. The admission committee will assess students' motivation and expectations before final decisions are reached.

Within the framework of industry-academia cooperation, Chang Gung University of Science and Technology has been collaborating with Taoyuan Chang Gung Memorial Hospital of the C.G.M.F. and Nursing Home of Chang Gung Medical Foundation on the care of chronically ill and disabled patients. Another collaborating institute is Chang Gung Health and Cultural Village, which accommodates more than 700 healthy golden-agers. By attending to the special needs of elders that require rehabilitation or that are disabled, students can not only gain hands-on experiences in geriatric care practicalities but also strengthen their professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, the fact that the department is able to supply long-term and short-term care nurses to the industry further facilitates the interaction between industry and academia.

In designing and adjusting courses appropriate for program students, instructors of the program and Chang

Gung Memorial Hospital take into account the four special abilities required by the geriatric care industry: 'life care and ethics', 'geriatric care', health assessment and guidance', and 'communication and cooperation'. Most students have obtained a license of registered nurse before enrollment and are thus experienced in common nursing skills. They, nevertheless, still lack skills and knowledge of geriatric care. Therefore, this program has recruited 19 full-time and part-time instructors from the department and the industry and integrated their expertise in long-term care and management with the program courses, which focus on practicalities instead of theory. Most practicums are conducted by experts from the industry. Moreover, this program adopts team teaching to facilitate student training during internships. With geriatric care qualifications, students are able to obtain a job upon graduation. The disparities between school education and industrial practicalities can thus be minimized.

The establishment of this special program is beneficial to the school enrollment, as the knowledge imparted to students in this program is highly relevant to future industrial trends. This is definitely an advantage in the current industry-oriented society. Students will not only acknowledge the significance of this program but also acquire professional knowledge in long-term geriatric care. Their desire for employment will be strengthened and the future requirements of the industry will thus be fulfilled in advance. Teachers' participation in the organization of the program enhances the interaction between them and the industry, reinforces their practical experiences, and provides them with more industry-academia cooperation opportunities. The program is thus undoubtedly beneficial to



the university, teachers, and students in terms of industry-academia cooperation. Moreover, the course characteristics and orientations vary from semester to semester so that students will be able to appreciate the significance of long-term geriatric care. For example, as the course 'Geriatric Care Techniques and Practice' is similar to other courses that students have taken and focuses on the practice of practical skills, its contents and materials have been modified to help students master geriatric techniques. This course aims to cultivate students' ability to deal with various scenarios of taking care of disabled elders. After the completion of this course, students should be able to adjust their methods or even create new methods after taking into consideration the different conditions and cultures of individual disabled elders.

As far as internships are concerned, it is hoped that program students can obtain a job at a collaborating institute immediately after graduation. They will thus intern at

Taoyuan Chang Gung Memorial Hospital of the C.G.M.F. In preparation for their future career, students are offered paid internships and employed as a novice 3 months before graduation. They will be hired as a full-time employee after three months once they pass relevant evaluations. The collaborating institute has agreed with the university to have students intern at the unit where they will be working after graduation so that they can adapt to their workplace easily. According to research, it is not easy for newly employed staff to adapt to their workplace and thus the first three months of employment is usually the peak of resignation. One of the advantages of the industry-academia cooperation program is to reduce the possibilities of experiencing disappointment at a new job and to prevent brain drain. This is also one of the highlights of the program courses. Students' internships at the hospital are comprehensive and cover practicalities in wards, Nursing Home,

and Health and Cultural Village. Students will experience job tasks at various work sites and can choose where they want to serve in the end. Industrial demands and students' inclination will both be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, as the last 3 months of the 6-month-long internships is designated as the period of career connection, students' inclination will thus take priority. Not only can students' aspirations be fulfilled, but the demand for personnel can also be satisfied. Moreover, the costs of training will be reduced.

Chang Gung University of Science and Technology found that students of this program have a more stable attitude towards learning and are more hardworking and responsible than students in traditional classes. This is because program students have identified their future career and can make plans to achieve their career goals accordingly.

Finally, it is hoped that this industry-academia cooperation program and other

related programs could receive continued support from the Ministry of Education and industries. It has been half a year since the establishment of this industry-academia cooperation program. Even though the achievements in students' future employment are not easily discernible within a short period of time and the operation of this program has been confronted with several challenges, both teachers and students have done their best and both parties acknowledge the effects of the program, which has lasted for about half a year. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education could give this program its full support in terms of policy making.