

# Graduate Certificate in Autism Diagnosis:

Enhancing training in autism diagnosis



Early Years



## Background

The Graduate Certificate in Autism Diagnosis (GCAD) available through the University of Western Australia trains psychologists, paediatricians, speech pathologists, occupational therapists and psychiatrists in the assessment and diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The course includes online training and placement experiences in multi-disciplinary assessment of autism. While the course has run successfully since 2015, improvements in expanding its content and availability across Australia were made through this project.



## Aim

1. Develop teaching modules for the GCAD course covering the diagnosis of toddlers and adults.
2. Produce videos of multidisciplinary assessments to be used in training
3. Improve placement opportunities for GCAD students from outside Western Australia.



## Who took part

7

Children and their parents



## How we did the research

1. The new modules for the diagnosis of toddlers and adults were developed by staff at the University of WA with feedback from a national advisory group.
2. We obtained ethics approval to video-record the autism assessments of children conducted at the UWA Robin Winkler Clinic with the support of the Autism Association of WA and Patches Paediatric Child Health and Education Services.
3. We approached organisations who conduct autism assessments in the eastern states of Australia to ask if they could provide placement experiences for GCAD students.

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## What we found

The GCAD course was enhanced through completion of all parts of the project.



The new modules for the diagnosis of toddlers and adults were developed and have been used successfully with several cohorts of GCAD students.



Audio-visual recordings were made of the assessments of seven children conducted by a team consisting of a paediatrician, psychologist and speech pathologist. These recordings are now used in several phases of the GCAD training.



Placement opportunities were developed with the support of a number of organisations to provide placement experiences for GCAD students in the eastern states of Australia.



These developments mean that the GCAD course provides best-practice training in the diagnosis of autism to clinicians right across Australia, including practitioners in rural and remote regions.



## Who did the research



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

## Acknowledgments

We thank all participating families who generously permitted the recording and use of diagnostic assessment sessions.

Thanks also to the Autism Association of Western Australia, PATCHES Paediatric Child Health & Education Services, the West Australian Department of Communities - Neurodevelopmental Disability Assessment Service, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Sydney Children's Hospital, and the Western Australian Autism Diagnosticians' Forum.

## Find out more

Download the final report and executive summary on the Autism CRC website:

[autismcrc.com.au/reports/  
EnhancingGCAD](https://autismcrc.com.au/reports/EnhancingGCAD)