



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

## Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Bomotho

# Postgraduate Degrees

Centre for Augmentative  
and Alternative  
Communication (CAAC)



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## This is what we do...

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Thandi is a 3-year old with a smile that lights up any room. She loves watching other children play from where she sits in her wheelchair. Although Thandi shows her delight by smiling and laughing, she cannot say that she wants to join the fun, she cannot tell others what she likes and dislikes, she cannot tell her Mommy that she loves her.... But her Mom is convinced that Thandi understands more than what she is able to say.

For many therapists and teachers supporting children with severe communication disabilities to participate in a range of activities that will create greater independence can be daunting. To ensure that children, like Thandi, have access to appropriate and affordable intervention, the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication at the University of Pretoria offers a range of formal training options:

- Honours degree in AAC
- Masters degree in AAC
- Masters degree in ECI
- PhD degree

Our degree programmes follow a blended learning approach. It is therefore compulsory for students to also attend the week-long contact sessions arranged on the Hatfield Campus of the University twice each year. A range of custom-designed programmes e.g. Basic AAC training, workshops and a consultation service for children and adults who have severe communication difficulties are also offered on request.



**CAAC is the Wharton Reimagine Education Award 2016 winner .**

**Gold Award:**

Enhancing post-graduate student achievement from Honours to PhD (University of Pretoria, South Africa)



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## Augmentative and Alternative Communication

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The way human beings communicate distinguishes them from other species. Each of us has a unique identity, which is reflected in the way we express our thoughts, feelings, desires, dreams and ambitions. Every human being is wired to communicate.

Inability to express oneself in words can be devastating, whether the cause is congenital or traumatic. At its worst, it means that life is sealed up inside.

At the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC), we hold team consultations to find communication solutions for people who have little or no functional speech. In collaboration with a client's family and service providers (therapists, doctors, teachers), we explore communication methods and the use of devices to supplement speech, and match these with the client's abilities, needs and context. We also offer training on specific aspects of AAC, tailored to the needs of specialised groups such as ICU nurses, therapists, teachers and doctors.

### 10 Good reasons to apply for a post graduate degree

1. Improve your research skills by conducting research in your area of interest
2. Improve your career prospects
3. Equip yourself with new skills and knowledge
4. Pursue your interests in more depth
5. Become a scholar in your own right
6. Build and extend your professional network
7. Collaborate with national and international scholars
8. Make meaningful and evidence based decisions in your clinical work
9. Make a valuable contribution to the knowledge of Africa and the world
10. Invest in your future





# Honours Degree

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

NQF Level 8

Course code: 01242132

**Not being able to speak is devastating. It destroys the independence of those who suffer from it and puts them at great risk of being abused or neglected ... a silent victim is the perfect victim!**

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) strategies play an important role in facilitating communication. A variety of AAC strategies are available, including unaided strategies which include the use of gestures, signing, pointing and facial expressions as well as aided strategies which employ both low tech strategies such as communication boards and books to display objects, pictures, symbols or written words, and high tech devices that generate speech output.

## For whom is the degree intended?

The degree has been developed for teachers and therapists who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills in the field of AAC.

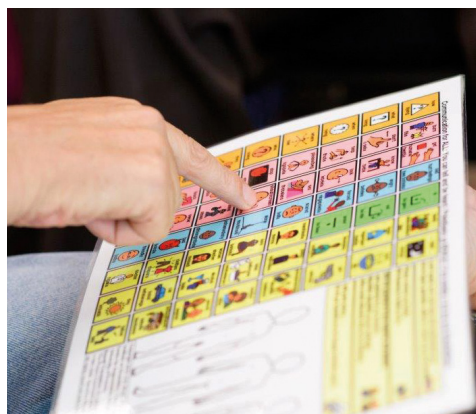
Requirements for prospective students to qualify for admission are that, prospective students need to have a relevant 3-year bachelor's degree, at a NQF level of 7, be working in the field of severe disabilities, satisfactorily complete an admission assignment and have Internet access at home, (as educational material is primarily delivered online).

## Degree structure

This is a one year part-time, blended learning degree programme (online and in situ contact sessions). Day-to-day communication is conducted via email. Study guides and readings are available online as study aids and it is compulsory for students to attend the week-long contact session presented on the Hatfield Campus of the university.

**Closing dates:** International students need to apply by 30 June and SA students by 30 November of the year preceding study.

*Please note that contact with the programme manager is essential before application!*



Modules		Credits
AAK 718	Introduction to severe disabilities and AAC	30
AAK 702	AAC assessment procedures	20
AAK 703	AAC communication technology	15
AAK 715	Implementation of AAC	25
AAK 717	Research methodology	30
Total credits		120

# Master's Degree

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (MAAC)

NQF Level 9

Course code: 01252133 (Research), 01252134 (Course work)

**Are you involved in interventions with individuals with severe communication disabilities? Do you wish to gain more specialized knowledge and skills in communication intervention for persons in need of AAC? If so, the Master's Degree in Augmentative and Alternative Communication is for you!**

## What does this degree offer?

- The opportunity to obtain a strong theoretical foundation in AAC-related issues
- The opportunity to receive input from professionals with different backgrounds with professional training in AAC; speech language therapists, occupational therapists, and physiotherapists
- The opportunity to conduct research on an AAC-related area of interest



## Requirements for prospective students

To qualify for admission, prospective students are required to have a BCommunication Pathology, BA(Hons) with specialisation in AAC, or any other relevant Honours degree.

Candidates may be required to write an admission examination. Students must have full and consistent access to their own computers as well as broadband Internet and email facilities since educational material is primarily delivered online.

## Degree structure

This is a 2-year, blended learning degree programme (online and in situ contact sessions). It is compulsory for students to attend the week-long contact sessions arranged on the Hatfield Campus of the University twice each year. Students can choose between the research oriented and course work oriented options offered in this degree.

**Closing dates:** International students need to apply by 30 September and SA students by 30 November of the year preceding the study.

*Please note that contact with the programme manager is essential before application!*

Research option		Credits
AAK 890	Dissertation: AAC Students are required to complete a dissertation on a topic related to the field of AAC, selected in collaboration with supervisor(s).	180
Coursework option		Credits
AAK 811	Theoretical constructs in AAC	45
AAK 895	Mini-dissertation: AAC	90
AAK 812	Implementation science in AAC	45
Total credits		180

# Early Childhood Intervention in South Africa

All too often medical professionals, teachers and counsellors are faced with the daunting task of providing early childhood intervention (ECI) for children who are at risk due to developmental delays. They can often not see their way forward because the challenges and obstacles they face seem to be so overwhelming. The following case study typifies the overwhelming task that awaits any interventionist. However, just because cases such as these are complex and challenging, does not mean that we do not have the obligation to support families and assist them to achieve the best possible outcomes for their children.

## CASE STUDY: BABY B

A baby girl, 13 months old, is found abandoned in an informal settlement just outside of Witbank. She is admitted to hospital with severe malnourishment and weighs 4.5 kg. She struggles to gain weight and it is suspected that she is also HIV positive.

There is little information about her parents but she has been visited on occasion by a neighbour. Baby B receives occupational therapy to address significant developmental delays but is a quiet little girl and does not interact very well. Her future is unsure.

There is no social worker on the hospital staff to give her the care she requires.

Fragmentation, duplication and the lack of an integrative approach to ECI at all levels, compromises the quality of healthcare service delivery in South Africa. This is exacerbated by manpower constraints as too few professionals qualify each year to be able to provide for the vast number of children who require early intervention services in our country.

It is therefore imperative that we think creatively and make use of available resources in the most effective manner possible.

A transdisciplinary teamwork approach to ECI has been proposed by leading researchers in the field as a means of addressing the constraints on intervention in our country. This approach requires professionals, family members and members of the community to work together, collaborating closely and sharing roles, responsibilities and information.

Unfortunately, professionals have not always been equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to be able to work effectively and sustainably as team members in the field, where resources come under such pressure. Against this background, the Centre for AAC at the University of Pretoria has developed the multi-professional Master's Degree in Early Childhood Intervention (MECI), to ensure that students are better equipped with relevant problem-solving skills to address the challenges in the field in a more comprehensive manner.

This degree is the culmination of the collaboration that has evolved between disability stakeholders, government departments and various departments at the University of Pretoria.



# Master's Degree

Early Childhood Intervention (MECI)

Administered through the Faculty of Health Sciences

NQF Level 9

Course code: 10258241

This degree equips professionals from various disciplines with specialised knowledge and skills in the field of early childhood intervention, enabling them to function optimally in a changing and challenging social context by:

- Working in teams with other professionals and community members to facilitate social development
- Understanding their own roles in the team of early childhood professionals
- Developing comprehensive strategies for intervention
- Critically evaluating accountability in service provision and its appropriacy and sustainability

## For whom is the degree intended?

Medical practitioners, therapists, teachers, educational psychologists, nutrition specialists and social workers who work with children from birth to six years of age, and their families.

## Requirements for prospective students

To qualify for admission, prospective students need to have an honours degree or an equivalent

Modules		Credits
ECI 801	Critical Theoretical Analysis in ECI, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theoretical framework and issues in Early Childhood Intervention</li><li>• ECI in the community: Team building and management</li><li>• Family- focused community intervention in ECI</li><li>• Applied Research in ECI</li></ul>	90
Second year		
ECI 867	Severe disability	30
ECI 874	Evaluation and Intervention	20
ECI 873	Measurement in ECI	20
ECI 872	Collaborative problem-solving	20
Total credits		180

4-year degree. Students must have full and consistent access to their own computers, as well as broadband Internet and e-mail since educational material and lectures are primarily delivered online.

## Degree structure

This is a 2-year blended learning degree programme (online and in situ contact sessions). It is compulsory for students to attend the week-long contact sessions arranged on the Hatfield Campus of the University twice each year. The degree is presented primarily via an online, web-based medium. Group work is required in collaboration with students from other professions.



**Closing dates:** International students need to apply by 30 September and SA students by 30 December of the year preceding study.

*Please note that contact with the programme manager is essential before application!*

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# PhD

AAC, Severe Disabilities and Early Childhood Intervention

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NQF Level 10

Course code: 01264614

## For whom is the degree intended?

This is a multi-professional degree tailored to accommodate students from varied disciplines such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology and special education. Background in AAC, severe disability or early childhood intervention is essential.

The training approach is collaborative and students and lecturers engage in ongoing interaction on the web, as well as during the week-long contact sessions arranged on the Hatfield Campus of the University twice each year. Interaction with international experts is an integral part of PhD training, exposing students to a broad range of methodologies and approaches to research in their respective fields.

**Closing dates:** For applications is 31 October of the preceding year of intended study.

Applications have to be accompanied by a research proposal. The format for this proposal can be obtained from the programme manager.

Please note that contact with the programme manager is essential before application!

## Academic information

Please note that all degree programmes offered by the CAAC are accredited



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## Financial information

For information on fees, bursaries and loans related to the degree programme, contact the University of Pretoria, Student Service Centre. Email: [ssc@up.ac.za](mailto:ssc@up.ac.za)

## PROGRAMME MANAGER'S CONTACT DETAILS

**Tel:** 012 420 2001 // **Fax:** 086 510 0841 // **Email:** [saak@up.ac.za](mailto:saak@up.ac.za) // **Web:** [www.caac.up.ac.za](http://www.caac.up.ac.za)

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