ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATION POLICIES

Additional Requirements for the Master of Education Degree

In addition to fulfilling these requirements, candidates for certain master of education degrees must give evidence of successful teaching experience approved by the department chairperson. Other experiences in lieu of this requirement must be approved by the relevant department and the vice provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

ACT 48

All educators holding Pennsylvania public school certification including Intern, Instructional I and II, Educational Specialist I and II, Administrative, Supervisory, Letters of Eligibility, and all vocational certifications are affected by the requirements of Act 48. Educators must maintain their certifications as active by earning six collegiate credits or six PDE-approved, in-service credits or 180 continuing education hours or any combination of the above every five calendar years. Note: Each collegiate or in-service credit is equal to 30 continuing education hours.

Pennsylvania Act 24 of 2011 provided for a two-year suspension of most Act 48 continuing professional education requirements for school educators and leaders. The Act 48 suspension began August 29, 2011. During this moratorium period educators may continue to accrue Act 48 credits, which will be credited to the compliance period in effect as of August 29, 2011. Educators with continuing education periods ending on or after August 29, 2011 will have their expiration date extended by two years. Additional information about the moratorium can be found at the Pennsylvania Department of Education website (http://www.education.state.pa.us).

Education Specialist Certification

Commonwealth regulations also provide for certification as an educational specialist to those persons who successfully complete an approved program of study and have the recommendation of the preparing institution. The Educational Specialist Certification is issued on two levels.

Educational Specialist I (Provisional)

The Educational Specialist I Certification is issued for entry into a professional position in the public schools of the Commonwealth. The applicant must have completed an approved program of study, possess a baccalaureate degree, and been recommended for certification by the preparing institution.

Educational Specialist II

The Educational Specialist II Certification is a credential issued to an applicant who has completed three years of satisfactory service on an Educational Specialist I Certification, and who has completed 24 semester hours of post-baccalaureate or graduate study at a regionally approved institution. In addition, the applicant must have received the recommendation of the superintendent of the school district in which his or her most recent service was performed, or in the case of an intermediate unit, the executive director, or in the case of an approved nonpublic school, the chief school administrator.

Formal Admission to Teacher Education for Certification

Upon entrance to the University, graduate students enrolled in educator preparation programs ("candidates") leading to Pennsylvania certification must meet with their academic advisor(s) to complete an "Approved Program of Study" (APS) form. This form outlines all of the candidates' certification requirements, indicates candidates' approval for Formal Admission to Teacher Education (FATE) and is signed by the University certifying officer attesting to their unique course of study at WCU. At present, to be eligible for and qualify for designated advanced courses, one must have a minimum 3.0 GPA (most programs have higher GPA requirements). The original APS is submitted to the Office of Teacher Certification during the first semester. Candidates must have a 3.0 GPA in their graduate studies to maintain FATE and good standing at WCU.

Periodic regulatory changes from the Pennsylvania Department of Education may alter these requirements for candidates seeking post-baccalaureate certification. Candidates are urged to remain aware of updates to FATE requirements through regular communication with their advisors.

Candidates with FATE whose programs culminate in a student teaching semester must apply to student teach during the first month of classes (September or January) one academic year prior to the intended student teaching semester.

Educator Preparation Degree

The primary mission of the educator preparation programs at West Chester University is the initial preparation and continuing development of teachers and other education professionals (hereafter, “educator preparation”). Preparation for these roles within the University's conceptual framework, Learning and Teaching in Context, ensures strong academic achievement for PK-12 students in the public schools and other educational settings of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The University is committed to excellence in education by preparing candidates to exhibit five unit outcomes exemplified in the following roles: knowledge and pedagogical specialist, assessment and instructional designer, diversity advocate and classroom community builder, school and community professional, and self-directed practitioner.

The University is committed to preparing exemplary professionals to assume their roles and responsibilities as educators in a multicultural, global society; to pursue personal and professional development opportunities; to support the continuing improvement of schools; to assume leadership; and to participate in the education community.

Graduates Seeking Level II Certification

The Instructional II certification is issued to a person who holds level I certification and has completed three years of satisfactory teaching in a Pennsylvania public school as certified by the superintendent of the school district in which the person’s most recent service was performed or, in the case of an intermediate unit, the executive director or, in the case of an approved nonpublic school, the chief school administrator.

In addition, the person must have completed 24 semester hours of collegiate credit at an approved baccalaureate or advanced-degree-granting institution subsequent to the conferring of the baccalaureate degree. The credits may be satisfied, in whole or in part, through in-service programs approved by the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education. Last, the person must successfully complete an induction program offered by a public school district and approved by the PDE.

Instructional I (Provisional) Certification

The Instructional I certification is issued for entry into a teaching position in the public schools of Pennsylvania and is valid for six years of service in Pennsylvania (not calendar years). To receive an Instructional I teaching certification, a person must meet all of the requirements for the certification and must be recommended to the PDE by the institution of higher education at which the person completed the requirements.
Requirements Common to All Areas of Certification

On June 1, 1987, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education implemented revisions to the Pennsylvania Code. These revisions require all undergraduate candidates who apply for Pennsylvania teaching certifications to pass state competency tests in basic skills, as well as general, professional, and specific knowledge of the subjects in which they seek teacher certification. Post-baccalaureate candidates are exempt from the basic skills tests.

As changes are made in requirements for all certification programs, it is the candidate's responsibility to satisfy the new requirements.

The Pennsylvania Teacher Intern Certification Program

West Chester University does not offer the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) teacher intern certification.