EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

College of Education and Social Work

The primary mission of the undergraduate educator preparation programs at West Chester University is the preparation of teachers and other education professionals (hereafter “educator preparation”) for the classrooms of Pennsylvania. The University's conceptual framework, Learning and Teaching in Context, guides the preparation of educators who can ensure strong academic achievement for PK–12 students in schools and other educational environments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The University is committed to excellence in educator preparation by preparing candidates to exhibit knowledge, skill, and professional dispositions 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. Further, the University is committed to the preparation of exemplary professionals to assume roles and responsibilities as educators in a multicultural, global society; to pursue lifelong personal and professional development opportunities; to support the continuing improvement of schools; and to embrace opportunities for leadership in the education community.

West Chester University offers the following undergraduate degree and certification programs for those who wish to prepare themselves to be certified teachers. These programs are described more fully in the departmental listings.

Formal Admission to Teacher Education (FATE)

All candidates seeking either a degree or certification in teaching must apply for Formal Admission to Teacher Education (FATE), a process required by PDE that is different from being admitted to the University. This provision applies to those who have already received University admission to pursue majors in educator preparation. Achieving FATE enables educator preparation candidates to enroll in the advanced coursework required to complete degree and certification programs.

New guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) change the timeline for achieving Formal Admission to Teacher Education. According to the guidelines effective August 1, 2015, candidates who complete 60 or more credits of college-level coursework may register for additional professional education courses as long as those courses are not designated as advanced-level professional education coursework (please contact your program chair or advisor for guidance).

The minimum standards for formal admission to a WCU educator preparation program include the following:

1. Major in an educator preparation program or enrolled in an elective certification program
2. 48 semester-hour credits of college-level study
3. A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.8 on all college-level work
4. Passing scores, as established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on one of the following: (1) Pre-Service Academic Performance Assessments (PAPA) in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics; (2) Core Academic Skills for Educators (CORE) in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics; (3) Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT); American College Test (ACT); or a combination of qualifying scores from the four test vendors. Please consult with the Teacher Certification Office, 302 Recitation Hall, regarding up-to-date testing information, including acceptable scores, or visit the PDE website (http://www.education.pa.gov).
5. Six semester-hour credits of college-level (100 level or above) mathematics, three semester-hour credits of college-level (100 level or above) English composition, and three semester-hour credits in literature taught in English
6. Recommendation by the department of the candidate’s major. (Department recommendation may be contingent upon completion of additional and/or more rigorous requirements than the minimum described above.) Secondary education majors obtain a recommendation from their content advisor as well as their professional and secondary education advisor.

WCU educator preparation candidates who achieve Formal Admission to Teacher Education must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.8 to retain FATE status. In most cases, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 must be earned to qualify for Pennsylvania certification. Each program has designated, for its own majors, its advanced professional courses. Only those majors who have been formally admitted to teacher education are eligible to take these courses. The Office of Candidate Services processes all applications for formal admission to teacher education programs.

Candidates who earn Formal Admission to Teacher Education and later fall below the required cumulative GPA are permitted to repeat advanced professional education coursework to improve their GPA to the required level (2.8). Such candidates will not, however, be permitted to register for additional advanced professional education coursework in their programs until they again achieve the minimum cumulative GPA required for formal admission (2.8).

Early Field Experiences

Designated courses require early field experience to observe and work with PK–12 students in schools and other settings. Candidates must have a current TB test result, Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record, Federal Criminal History Report, and Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse Report before they can enter an early field experience setting. Under no circumstances may candidates complete field experiences without the proper clearances. The WCU policies on clearances are located on the College of Education and Social Work’s website (http://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/clearances.aspx). Please note that new University policy gives the dean of the College of Education and Social Work the authority to revoke enrollment in early field experience courses of any candidate who fails to provide criminal clearances prior to the start of the fourth day of the semester according to publicized procedures.

Student Teaching

Student teaching is the culminating experience of the educator preparation program. Candidates must file applications to student teaching at the Office of Clinical Experience, located in 107 Wayne Hall, one year before the semester in which they intend to teach. Please note that due to the current renovation of Wayne Hall, the Office of Clinical Experience is temporarily located in 105 Ruby Jones Hall.

To be eligible to complete a student teaching experience, candidates (undergraduates and post-baccalaureates) must have:

- Completed the prerequisite course requirements,
- Met the state-mandated grade point average (2.80) or higher,
- Satisfied the requirements for Formal Admission to Teacher Education, and
- Provided a score report which verifies that they have taken the appropriate licensure exam as identified by PDE in the subject area where the candidates are enrolled to achieve certification.

See program listings and advising sheets for specifics and any additional program requirements. Candidates should contact their departments for specific requirements. A candidate must earn an academic grade of C or better in both student teaching assignments and graduate with the state-mandated minimum grade point average (3.0) or higher to qualify for a Pennsylvania teaching certification.

Candidates are assigned a student teaching placement in schools with which the University has a formal agreement.
To graduate from an educator preparation program with a baccalaureate degree, that is, to be a program completor, candidates must have:

• Completed the required course work
• Earned at least minimum grades in courses specified by their program
• Achieved and maintained Formal Admission
• Earned an overall GPA of at least 3.0
• Achieved grades of at least C in both student teaching courses
• Earned passing scores on the appropriate licensure exam(s) as identified by PDE in the subject area/program in which they are seeking certification

Applying for Pennsylvania Certification

Candidates apply for certification through PDE in conjunction with the University’s Certification Office. The application is submitted online through the PDE’s Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). Information about Pennsylvania certification is available from the Certification Office, College of Education and Social Work website (http://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/certificationInfo.aspx), and PDE. Applicants for the certificate must be citizens of the United States. A non-citizen must declare the intent to become a citizen of the United States and possess a permanent resident visa to qualify for a teaching certificate. For more information, contact the University’s Teacher Certification Office.

Professional Assessment for Beginning Teachers

Candidates pursuing initial Pennsylvania Instructional Level I Certification must meet the passing score on the examinations required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education at the time of certification application. Currently, these examinations include the following:

• As part of the requirements for Formal Admission to teacher education, all candidates must pass the Pre-service Academic Performance Assessment (PAPA) series of exams in reading, mathematics, and writing. Candidates are strongly encouraged to take these exams in the second semester of the first year of college study. An exception to the PAPA exams is offered to candidates who meet passing score criteria, as identified by PDE, on the ACT or SAT tests.

Note: Any candidate who registered for one or more tests of the Praxis I PPST series prior to April 2, 2012 or has successfully passed them before that date will have their scores honored by PDE. Candidates needing to do so are permitted to repeat any PPST test beyond the April deadline. For all others, PAPA testing replaced PPST on April 2, 2012.

• All candidates for certification must take all required licensure tests prior to student teaching. Score reports of all Praxis II, PECT, or ACTFL (OPI/WPT) tests must be produced during preregistration for student teaching as evidence of completing the academic department’s test requirements.

Higher Education Opportunity Act - Title II Praxis Test Results for Completers of the Traditional Teacher Preparation Program


Questions related to these tests should be directed to the Teacher Certification Office, 302 Recitation Hall. West Chester University is a designated Praxis test center and administers these tests six times a year according to the dates established by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

Instructional I Certificate

A candidate who completes one of the University’s educator preparation programs and passes all licensure tests required by the state qualifies for an Instructional I Certification, which is issued by PDE. This certification is valid for six years of teaching in Pennsylvania. Recommendation for the certification is made by the Dean of the College of Education, who serves as the certifying officer of the University.

Instructional II Certificate

This certification requires three years of successful teaching in Pennsylvania under the Instructional I Certification, successful completion of an Induction Plan approved by PDE, and the satisfactory completion of 24 credits of additional coursework completed at a baccalaureate-granting institution, after issuance of the baccalaureate degree. This certification is a valid license to teach in Pennsylvania.

All or part of the educational requirements for this credential may be obtained through approved, in-service programs. Effective July 1, 2000 (Act 48) the state requires all certified teachers and administrators to engage in continuing professional development activities. WCU coursework is an acceptable option for the six hours of college credit (or its equivalent) required for teachers and administrators every five years.

Certification in additional subject areas may be obtained by completing requirements for that area, or in certain areas, by completing a Praxis specialty examination (see PDE website [http://www.education.pa.gov]). Candidates should consult the department in which they seek certification for information and an evaluation of their credits.

Educator Preparation, Candidate Dispositions

Dispositional Expectations

If a faculty member documents that a particular educator preparation candidate is having difficulty with one of the following dispositional expectations in a University class or field-based course that the faculty member is teaching/supervising, he/she will request a meeting with the candidate, share evidence of the concerns, hear the candidate’s reason for behavior(s) of concern, make recommendations for improvement where appropriate, and follow up the meeting with a notice and action plan sent to the candidate and his/her department chair. The notice and action plan will be placed in the candidate's file in the department.

The candidate also may be required to meet with a committee of faculty within the major department, at the department’s discretion, to:

1. Explore the nature of the concerns
2. Hear the candidate’s reasons for the behavior(s) of concern
3. Discuss corrective measures for remaining in the professional education sequence

If the behavior of concern is not corrected satisfactorily, it may lead to the department’s recommendation to deny formal admission to teacher education and/or advancement in the program. These recommendations would be forwarded to the Associate Dean of the College of Education and Social Work for a ruling. At this time, if the candidate chooses to appeal the ruling, the matter would come before the Teacher Education Student Appeals Committee, according to established protocol.

The purpose of this committee is to hear candidate appeals of decisions made by the Associate Dean of the College of Education and Social Work related to formal admission to teacher education and other matters regarding candidates’ progress in educator preparation programs.

Fees and Other Expenses

All candidates pursuing certification in Pennsylvania can expect to spend $300 on required licensure tests, $40 per year on criminal clearances, an average of $30 for TB testing, and $200 on the Pennsylvania certification application. If licensure testing or clearances must be repeated for any reason during the candidate’s enrollment at WCU, he or she will incur additional expenses. Note: TB testing must be updated annually for all early grades preparation PK–4 majors entering early childhood centers. Note: TB testing must be updated annually for all early grades preparation PK–4 majors entering early childhood centers.

Tk20

The CESW uses Tk20 as a comprehensive online data management system for assessment of student learning outcomes and field placements. Tk20 establishes electronic documentation for continuous improvement of our programs. The CESW will purchase Tk20 accounts for students that require access. Tk20 accounts will be accessible for 7 years from the date of activation.