

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Education & Social Work

The primary mission of the graduate educator preparation programs at West Chester University is to prepare professionals (hereafter "educator preparation") for the classrooms of Pennsylvania. The College of Education and Social Work's conceptual framework (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/missionVision.aspx>) 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 content knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/dispositions.aspx>). 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.

Candidate Professional Dispositions Expectations & Evaluation

The educator preparation programs at West Chester University have developed professional dispositions and requirements essential for the profession. These dispositions are based on the 2011 Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards (<http://www.ccsso.org/resource-library/intasc-model-core-teaching-standards/>). Candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate dispositions in courses (assignments, interactions with others) and out in the field with mentor teachers and students in PK-12 settings. Please review information regarding professional dispositions and the evaluation process (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/dispositions.aspx>) for further details.

Assessment Management Software

The educator preparation programs at West Chester University use Anthology Portfolio (hereafter "Anthology"), a web-based software, as a comprehensive data management system for assessments of student learning outcomes and tracking of field placements and clinical experiences. Anthology establishes electronic documentation for continuous improvement of the educator preparation programs and accreditation. Students use the system to complete key unit and program course assignments/assessments, field experience evaluations, applications, and portfolios.

Fees and Other Expenses

All candidates pursuing certification in Pennsylvania can expect to spend \$300 on required licensure tests, \$60 per year on criminal clearances, an average of \$30 for TB testing, \$200 on the Pennsylvania certification application, and \$18 per year on an Anthology Portfolio account. If licensure testing or clearances must be repeated for any reason during the candidate's enrollment at WCU, the candidate will incur additional expenses. It is preferred that the TB testing must be updated every two years for all early grades preparation PK-4 majors entering early childhood centers.

Note: Fees and other expenses are subject to change within the time span of a student's University career due to changing requirements at national, state and local levels.

Teacher Candidacy

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 Teacher Candidacy, and is processed by the Dean's Office, Office of Teacher Certification.

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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 Teacher Candidacy requirements through regular communication with their advisors.

WCU educator preparation candidates who achieve Teacher Candidacy must maintain a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 to retain Teacher Candidacy status. In most cases, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 must be earned to qualify for Pennsylvania certification. Candidates who have Teacher Candidacy status and later fall below the required cumulative GPA are permitted to repeat advanced professional education course work which they have already taken and earned a grade below B- to improve their GPA to the required level (GPA of 3.0). Such candidates will not, however, be permitted to register for additional advanced professional education course work in their programs until they again achieve the minimum cumulative GPA required for Teacher Candidacy (GPA of 3.0). Contact your program chair or advisor for guidance.

Completion of an Ethics Module (for students applying for Teacher Candidacy after Spring 2025).

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 Human Services Child Abuse Report before they can enter an early field experience setting. Under no circumstances may candidates complete field experiences without the proper clearances. Clearances must also be submitted to, reviewed, and verified by the Office of Candidate Services before candidates may enter the field. Please review the WCU policies on clearances as well as the courses that require clearances (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/clinical-experiences-candidate-services/clearances.aspx>). 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.

Requirements for Student Teaching

Student teaching is the culminating experience of the educator preparation program. Candidates must complete student teacher applications via the program's assessment system (Anthology) one year before the semester in which they intend to teach.

To be eligible to complete a student teaching experience, candidates must have:

- Completed the prerequisite course requirements,
- Met the grade point average (3.0) or higher,
 - Pennsylvania's Chapter 354 and therefore, the PA Department of Education, requires a 3.0 for candidacy. However, those with a 2.8 or above may be conditionally admitted. Please contact the Office of Clinical Experiences and Candidate Services for questions.
- Satisfied the requirements for Teacher Candidacy.

All candidates for certification must take all required licensure tests (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialwork/patests.aspx>) prior to student teaching. Please review all testing information for specific details regarding the testing requirements for your area of certification.

See program listings and advising sheets for specifics and any additional program requirements. Candidates should contact their departments for specific requirements.

Candidates are assigned a student teaching placement in schools with which the University has a formal agreement.

Deadline to Apply for Student Teaching

Fall Student Teaching Placement

Candidates seeking to student teach during the fall semester should submit all appropriate information no later than ***February 15th of the previous academic semester. Completed applications submitted on or before this date will have priority over incomplete or late applications.** We encourage candidates to submit their applications as early as possible to ensure a placement within a school district:

- Attend the Pre-Registration meeting one year in advance (previous fall semester)
- February 1st - Submit the student teaching application
- February 15th - Completed applications are submitted to school districts

Late applications or those that were returned because they were incomplete can be submitted no later than *February 23rd to be considered for student teaching in the fall semester.

- Applications not completed by this date will not be considered for student teaching during the fall semester.

Spring Student Teaching Placement

Candidates seeking to student teach during the spring semester should submit all appropriate information no later than ***September 15th of the previous academic semester. Completed applications submitted on or before this date will have priority over incomplete or late applications (see below).** We encourage candidates to submit their applications as early as possible to ensure a placement within a school district:

- Attend the Pre-Registration meeting one year in advance (previous spring semester)
- July 1st - Submit the student teaching application
- September 15th - Completed applications are submitted to school districts

Late applications or those that were returned because they were incomplete can be submitted no later than *September 23rd to be considered for student teaching in the spring semester.

- Applications not completed by this date will not be considered for student teaching during the spring semester.

*If this date falls on the weekend, the completed application is due the following work day.

Completing an Educator Prep Program

To complete our educator prep programs (graduate) program, that is, to be a program completer, candidates must have:

- Completed the required coursework
- Earned at least minimum grades in courses specified by their program
- Complete with a GPA that meets the University requirements

Note: If interested in applying for certification since the PA state-mandated minimum grade point average of 3.0 or higher is required unless testing requirements are met to allow for a lower GPA.

Applying for Pennsylvania Certification

Candidates apply for certification through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in conjunction with the University's Certification Office. The application is submitted online through the PDE's Teacher Information Management System (TIMS). For more information about Pennsylvania certification, review the Certification Information (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialWork/certificationInfo.aspx>) and the PDE website (http://www.education.pa.gov/pages/default.aspx%22%20/t%20%22_blank/).

Instructional I or Educational 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 or Educational Specialist I Certification, which is issued by the 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 and Social Work, who serves as the certifying officer of the University.

To qualify for a Pennsylvania Certificate candidates must:

1. Complete an approved education preparation program at the Bachelors, Graduate or Post Baccalaureate level in your subject area. Your initial teacher preparation program must include a student teaching experience.
2. Meet all Certification Testing requirements (https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/CertTestingRequirements/Pages/default.aspx%22%20/t%20%22_blank/) established by the PA State Board of Education.
3. Meet all other requirements established by the PA Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators.
 - a. Affirm the candidate is known and regarded by the preparing institution as a person of Good Moral Character (<https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/PAEducators/Pages/Good-Moral-Character.aspx>) who possesses the personal qualities that warrant issuance of the requested certificate
4. Submit an online application for certification via PDE's TIMS - MyPDESuite (https://www.mypdeapps.pa.gov/wfTims.aspx%22%20/t%20%22_blank/) - with the state-mandated minimum grade point average of 3.0 or higher (or qualify with testing requirements for a lower GPA).
5. Receive the recommendation of your preparing college/university.
 - a. The PA Department of Education considers the PDE430, (<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/Certifications/Fees%20and%20Forms/PDE%20430.pdf>) the PA statewide evaluation form for student professional knowledge and practice, which is part of the WCU Professional Education Unit-wide assessment, necessary for certification. WCU translates this content into the Assessment Management Software through the Danielson Framework evaluation, the Unit-wide assessment, and Candidate Signature Page. WCU University supervisors must complete the Danielson Framework evaluation so that candidates can review and complete the Candidate Signature Page assignment. Final ratings must be satisfactory, which means a minimum of 2 (Basic) in each category. Completion and minimum scoring requirements for both the Danielson Framework evaluation and Candidate Signature Page are required to earn an institutional recommendation for certification.
 - b. *Note: assessments are subject to change within the time span of one's University career due to changing requirements at national, state, and local level; and candidates may still be required to meet requirements.

Instructional II or Educational Specialist II Certificate

This certification requires three years of successful teaching in Pennsylvania under the Instructional I or Educational Specialist I Certification, successful completion of an Induction Plan approved by

the 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.

Note: Each collegiate or in-service credit is equal to 30 continuing education hours.

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

For Higher Education Opportunity Act - Title II test results, please review the College of Education and Social Work's educator preparation programs accreditation webpage (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialwork/assessmentAccreditation/EducatorPrep.aspx>).

Questions related to these tests should be directed to West Chester University's Professional Testing Center (PTC) (<https://www.wcupa.edu/education-socialwork/testingcenter.aspx>). The PTC administers these tests throughout the calendar year according to the dates established by Educational Testing Service (ETS).

Definitions and Guidelines for Graduate Certificate Programs

Definitions

A graduate certificate program is a focused collection of courses that, when completed, affords the student a record of academic accomplishment in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Graduate certificate programs are a minimum of 12 credits.

Admission criteria for graduate certificate programs are the same as for graduate degree programs. While the courses in a graduate certificate program may be used as evidence in support of a student's application to a graduate degree program, the certificate itself is not considered a prerequisite, nor is it a guarantee of admission. Graduate certificate students are not eligible for graduate assistantships.

While taking the last course(s) of the certificate program, the student should apply for the certificate through their RamPortal account.

Guidelines

1. Students are awarded a graduate certificate upon completion of a well-defined program of course work within an approved graduate program.
2. The didactic material encompassed within a graduate certificate program may represent a subset or extension of an existing graduate discipline.
3. For a graduate certificate program, the number of graduate credits is expected to be a minimum of 12. The number of credits must be appropriate to the learning objectives and focus of the program.
4. Graduate certificate programs may be at the post-baccalaureate or post-master's level. Post-master's graduate certificate programs must be designated as such.
5. Graduate certificate programs do not include a thesis.
6. All graduate certificate programs will be reviewed within the course of regular graduate program assessment and review.
7. Certificate programs also may be proposed for post-baccalaureate students that consist of undergraduate credit courses, professional credit courses, or noncredit courses. In such cases, the programs will not be considered to have met the standards for graduate certificate programs.

8. With the exception of courses offered in collaboration with another institution or expressly addressed in the certificate program requirements, a majority of credits for the certificate program must be completed at West Chester University. Graduate credits from another accredited institution may be accepted for transfer and are subject to the transfer of credit policy in place with approval of the department and the Dean of The Graduate School.
9. Students pursuing a graduate certificate will be required to meet the same admissions and academic requirements as those defined for degree-seeking students (e.g., maintenance of a 3.0 GPA).
10. The title of any graduate certificate program must contain the words "Graduate Certificate Program." Only Pennsylvania Department of Education certification programs may include the word "certification."

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 The Graduate School.

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.

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.