EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PROGRAM GOAL

When West Chester Normal School was founded in 1871, its primary purpose was to educate students to become teachers. More than 140 years later, West Chester University has expanded its curricular offerings, but teacher education remains the most popular program among our graduate students.

Not surprisingly, education and training teachers properly continue to be national priorities. An increased focus on children's early years of development and recent federal legislation, the "No Child Left Behind Act," which requires a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, have left critical shortages at every level from beginning caregivers/teachers through university professors.

As a result, West Chester University has developed the master of education in early childhood education, designed to prepare advanced-level teachers who

1. understand children's development and know their subject matter,

2. create developmentally effective learning experiences and assess continuously and authentically,

3. value diversity,

4. collaborate with community partners and advocate for children and families, and

5. engage in ethical professional practices and commit to personal/professional growth.

Additionally, high standards of scholarship, effective communication skills, knowledge of current trends in early childhood, and understanding technology are essential.

PROGRAMS OF STUDY

With the need for leadership in the early childhood profession great, West Chester University has created the following two tracks focusing on the development of new leaders for these programs:

- Accomplished teachers – master of education in early childhood education (ECE) for individuals with certification

- Program administrators – master of education in ECE but not certification

The course work in the program provides students with the breadth and depth of knowledge needed to become an effective early childhood leader. Students will develop a strong foundation in child development and understand the multiple factors that influence it. Students will combine the knowledge of child development, cultural and family background, appropriate academic content, technology, and assessment in order to design, implement, and evaluate learning experiences for all children.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates with certification are employed in public schools and early education programs with young children birth through third grade. Many graduates are in supervisory roles in childcare centers and social service agencies working with young children and their families. Graduates with a special interest assisting young children with disabilities find positions in early intervention. Some graduates work as parent education coordinators while others are curriculum specialists for training programs or state agencies. Opportunities also exist for graduates in child advocacy/family policy positions. Additionally, others teach at community colleges and as adjunct faculty in four-year institutions.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

I. Early Childhood Education Core (24 credits)

ECE 502 Advanced Child Development: Prebirth – Age Eight

ECE 504 Play as a Learning Medium

ECE 505 Families, Communities, and Education in Multicultural America

ECE 511 Trends and Issues in ECE

ECE 512 Integrated Curriculum and Assessment: Birth to Age Eight

ECE 513 Advocating for Young Children and Families

ECE 515 Coaching and Supervision in Early Childhood Education

EDA 508 Early Childhood Special Education

II. Supporting Courses (six credits)

Students select 6 credits of electives based on program track and under advisement.

III. Capstone Courses (three credits)

ECE 550 The Early Childhood Professional as Researcher

In addition to the successful completion of the above curriculum, students must achieve a 3.0 GPA.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL M.Ed. TRACKS

- Completed application, including goals statement (apply online at www.wcupa.edu/grad)

LEARN MORE

- Undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university
- Undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. (If applicant possesses a master's degree, the GPA requirement applies to that degree.)
- Pennsylvania Instructional I Teaching Certification or its equivalent*
- Evidence of course work in special education/inclusion. Students without this evidence will be required to complete an additional course during their M.Ed. program.
- Two letters of recommendation

Note: Post-baccalaureate certification students may petition the Office of Graduate Studies for a change of status to the M.Ed. program in ECE when they have completed Level I certification course work. Courses taken at the graduate level during the completion of the certification requirements may be counted towards the M.Ed.

Submit completed application and arrange to have complete undergraduate transcripts and proof of a baccalaureate degree sent to Graduate Studies. The transcripts should include the cumulative grade point average of all undergraduate work.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Write: Office of Graduate Studies and Extended Education
McKelvie Hall
102 West Rosedale Avenue
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-2943

Fax: 610-436-2763

E-mail: gradstudy@wcupa.edu

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* For certified teachers only seeking the M.Ed. in the accomplished teacher track

Web: www.wcupa.edu/grad

Visit: www.facebook.com/wcugrad

Or contact the department:

Write: Dr. Catherine M. Prudhoe,
Program Coordinator
Department of Early and Middle Grades Education
309C Recitation Hall
West Chester University
West Chester, PA 19383

Call: 610-436-3071

E-mail: cprudhoe@wcupa.edu

Web: www.wcupa.edu/_academics/coed/departments/earlymiddlegrades/graduate.asp

The Graduate Catalog is available online at www.wcupa.edu/_information/official.documents/graduate.catalog/.

ABOUT GRADUATE STUDIES

West Chester University offers high-quality graduate degrees in more than 70 disciplines or areas of study, as well as certificate and certification programs. The graduate studies program has grown remarkably since its introduction in 1960. West Chester University's program is the largest within the 14 institutions in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education enrolling more than 2,100 graduate students.

Programs can be taken on a part-time basis, and most of the graduate classes are scheduled during late afternoons and evenings for the benefit of in-service teachers and other employed persons.

ABOUT WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY

A regional, public institution, West Chester University of Pennsylvania offers high-qual-ity undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as certification and certificate programs, in more than 100 subject areas. As the second largest member of the State System of Higher Education, West Chester offers a full and rewarding educational experience as well as reasonable tuition.

With a rich heritage dating back to the 19th century, West Chester University was founded in 1871 as West Chester Normal School for the purpose of training teachers for the Commonwealth's newly established public schools. In 1960, West Chester State Teachers College expanded its programs to include liberal arts and graduate degrees and, as a result, dropped "Teachers" from its name. In 1983, West Chester State College became one of the 14 institutions in the State System of Higher Education. Along with its university status, the school acquired a new system of governance and the opportunity to expand its degree programs.

Today, more than 15,400 graduate and undergraduate students, as well as 1,500 faculty and staff, study and work on the 406-acre campus. Situated in the Borough of West Chester, the campus is a picturesque mix of Gothic, Victorian, and modern architecture with pleasant, tree-shaded walks.

Strategically located at the center of the mid-Atlantic corridor, West Chester University is just 25 miles west of Philadelphia and 17 miles north of Wilmington, Del. The campus is convenient to major cultural institutions, recreational activities, and commercial businesses, many of which provide internship opportunities for WCU's students.