

What can I do with a degree in...

# ELEMENTARY OR MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION?

## Why study ELEMENTARY OR MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION?

As a student in the Elementary or Middle Grades Education programs, you will study with an exceptional group of faculty and cooperating teachers who are dedicated both to improving education and supporting your professional growth. Our curriculum combines challenging academic coursework with numerous opportunities to engage in field experiences in area public schools. The capstone experience in our program includes a year-long internship experience in area public schools.

Students studying Elementary Education will be recommended to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for K-6 initial licensure. Students studying Middle Grades Education will be recommended to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for 6-9 initial licensure.



## What are the **DEGREE** **OPTIONS?**

### **Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S. Ed.), Elementary Education**

*NOTE: Students will select 18 credit hours from a list of approved [second academic concentrations](#) to complete their degree.*

### **Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S. Ed.), Middle Grades Education**

*NOTE: Students will select one of four concentrations to complete their degree: math, science, social sciences, or language arts (26-29 hours for each concentration).*

*WCU also offers a Master of Arts in Education degree for those wishing to advance their education in the teaching professions.*

## What is the **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Admission into the Teacher Education program requires that students meet certain qualifications and submit an application. Students should apply the end of the semester the student is enrolled in EDCI 201: Teacher Leadership in a Diverse Society. Students must earn at least a C in EDCI 201 and ENG 101; maintain at least a 2.75 GPA; achieve minimum required scores on SAT, ACT, or Praxis examinations; and submit their application via Tk20. Please see full [admission requirements](#) for the Teacher Education program. *NOTE: Students must also pass licensure exams after graduating before becoming a licensed teacher in*

*the state of NC.*

## What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Graduates of the Elementary or Middle Grades programs are qualified to teach in grades K-6 or 6-9 respectively.

## Who employs **ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION?** graduates?

Our graduates work in elementary and middle grades educational institutions including private, public, and charter school settings.

# MAJOR MAP

**How to use this map:** Review the four categories and suggestions of activities and when you should consider engaging in them. Remember, these are just suggestions! There is a fillable space for you to add in any other ideas you have to set yourself up for success in life after college.

## 1st YEAR

## 2nd YEAR

### EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Coursework your first year will focus largely on liberal studies requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for Elementary Education](#) or the [8-semester plan for Middle Grades Education](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Students in their second year should enroll EDCI 201: Teacher Leadership in a Diverse Society before applying to the major. Other courses include introductory courses as well as additional liberal studies requirements. Check out the [8-semester plan for Elementary Education](#) or the [8-semester plan for Middle Grades Education](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

### GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

Check out [WCU's DegreePlus program](#) and choose which events in any of the four categories you want to attend. Categories include: Professionalism, Teamwork, Leadership, or Cultural Responsiveness.

Consider joining clubs or organizations related to your major such as WheeTeach.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to [JobCat 2.0](#).

Start your field experience hours through EDCI 201.

If you are thinking about attending a graduate school, start engaging in hands-on experiences required in graduate school admissions.

Engage deeper with [DegreePlus](#); choose an additional competency to complete.

### BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Lily Award](#), a program aimed to encourage and recognize students who are connected with their community.

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer.

If you want to [study abroad](#), this is a good year to have that experience. The Study Abroad Office has excellent suggestions on places to go to study your major specifically.

### PREPARE FOR LIFE AFTER COLLEGE

Further explore your career options or career interests using the [Center for Career and Professional Development's](#) online resources, [Focus 2](#), and [Onet Online](#).

Attend the [Catamount Career and Networking Day](#) to identify summer, part-time, or internship opportunities for additional hands-on opportunities.

Connect with a career counselor early on to explore opportunities and experiences you can do while in college to further develop your professional resume.

Start a spreadsheet of graduate schools you wish to apply to in a few years; label your spreadsheet with each school's admission requirements and application materials so that you are aware of the expectations.

## 3rd YEAR

Courses in your third year will focus heavily on upper-level Education requirements and electives. Check out the [8-semester plan for Elementary Education](#) or the [8-semester plan for Middle Grades Education](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Continue your classroom field experience hours. Students must complete at least 24 hours throughout their courses. Please check with an advisor for more information.

Consider networking with professionals in your field. [The North Carolina Association of Educators](#), for example, has many networking and professional development opportunities.

Volunteer with nonprofits that focus on your ideal career path.

Connect with alumni in your field through [LinkedIn](#).

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter (Make an appointment through MyWCU)

Utilize the [Writing and Learning Commons](#) for GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. Take the GRE, etc. Use [Big Interview](#) to learn more about professional interviews.

Schedule a visit to tour graduate schools of your choice, if applicable.

## 4th YEAR

Courses in your final year will focus on upper-level Education topics. Students will complete Internship I and II their last year for an intensive hands-on student teaching experience. Check out the [8-semester plan for Elementary Education](#) or the [8-semester plan for Middle Grades Education](#), make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

Finish your required field experiences.

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs or graduate school admissions. Assess what skills or experiences you're lacking and invest time in seeking additional opportunities such as certification programs, classes, or professional development workshops during your last year to fill that gap. Connect with your faculty, Suite 201 advisor, or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the [North Carolina Association of Educators](#), or the [National Association of Educators](#)

Network with employers and non-profits at the [Catamount Career and Networking Days](#).

Apply to graduate schools, if applicable.

Look for and [apply for jobs](#) between 4 and 6 months before graduation.

Polish your resume, cover letter, and interview skills by visiting the [CCPD](#).

Apply for and pass the [N.C. licensure examination](#) to become a licensed teacher in the state of North Carolina.

Internships are still the number-one educational experience employers look for in a recent college graduate resume. (Chronicle of Higher Education's study on 59,000 employers)

# DID YOU KNOW?

# MORE INFORMATION

## Required **FIELD & INTERNSHIP** Experience

All Education majors must complete early field experiences, as well as Internship I and Internship II. Early field experiences generally involve focused observation, interviews, and assisting the classroom teacher. Courses requiring these experiences include EDCI 201, PSY 323, SPED 339, and Elementary and Middle Grades methods courses. Methods courses may also require that candidates plan and implement lessons. Candidates are required to document from 5 to 24 hours in the classroom depending on the course.

### **Internship Information:**

Our students participate in a year-long internship during their senior year. Our two-stage internship gradually familiarizes you with real-world classrooms under the mentorship of dedicated, experienced public school teachers and a university supervisor.

While participating in Internship I, interns spend 15 hours a week in their K-6 or 6-9 public school classrooms while taking courses at WCU. During Internship II, interns work in the same public school classrooms full time, Mondays through Fridays. Interns are evaluated on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards using the Certificate of Teaching Capacity.

## **SKILLS LEARNED** in the classroom

The core competencies will center on developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes such as:

- information handling and organization
- curiosity and creativity
- social awareness
- verbal and written communication
- flexibility
- critical thinking skills
- problem solving
- teamwork
- leadership

## **KNOWLEDGE** Base

This program will prepare students to:

- speak and write effectively.
- be flexible with plans and schedules, and keep a plan moving along.
- identify needed actions for presented problems, find and use appropriate information to address the action or problem, identify alternative solutions, and make decisions.
- work effectively in groups.
- present a variety of lessons in an enthusiastic way.

## **QUESTIONS?**

For questions, please call Suite 201, the CEAP student success center, at 828-227-3317.

Schedule an appointment with a career counselor via your MyWCU, or contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or [careerservices@wcu.edu](mailto:careerservices@wcu.edu).