

What can I do with a degree in...

EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT?

What is **EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT?**

The mission of the Emergency and Disaster Management Program is to enhance the safety and security of the community, the region, and the nation by providing a functional and relevant education and other assistance to those who are or are preparing to be responsible for preventing, mitigating, responding to, or recovering from, a natural, man-made, or technological disaster.

Theory and hands-on practice are brought together through the program's interdisciplinary curriculum. Taught by faculty with a wide range of expertise and experience, many of whom are nationally recognized for their research and service, the curriculum applies the evolving knowledge and standards of public safety and security management and remains current with developments in the field and best practices.

What are the **DEGREE OPTIONS?**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Emergency and Disaster Management

(NOTE: There is also an option to minor in Emergency and Disaster Management)

What is the **ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Students declare the Emergency and Disaster Management (EDM) major with the Advising Center, located in Killian Annex. An appointment can be made at MyWCU.



What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

Depending on qualifications, our graduates are prepared to become a variety of professionals including emergency management specialists, emergency dispatchers, emergency medical technicians, mobile asset managers, continuity of operation planners, homeland security officers, bioterrorism coordinators, emergency and disaster planners, local preparedness coordinators, police and safety officers, disaster program directors, disaster training specialists, disaster training instructors, emergency hazardous materials planning program managers, hospital emergency preparedness administrators, and more. **NOTE:** Advanced degrees may be required for some of the listed professions. Please see an advisor or career counselor for more information.

Who employs **EMERGENCY & DISASTER MANAGEMENT graduates?**

Our graduates gain employment with a variety of employers including local, state, and federal government agencies such as Department of Homeland Security, national and international agencies such as the American Red Cross and International Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agencies, Salvation Army, hospitals, school systems, colleges and universities, and private businesses and corporations.

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

Many first-year students in the Emergency and Disaster Management major will focus on the liberal studies requirements as well as introductory EDM courses. [Check out the degree requirements](#) and make an appointment with your advisor. Learn to read your degree audit to empower you with program requirements.

Students in their second year will likely continue with liberal studies electives, continued topics related to EDM, as well as introductory courses with their minor. [Check out the degree requirements](#) 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 getting involved with the Emergency Management and Disaster Student Association or the student chapter of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) or the North Carolina Emergency Association (NCEMA).

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU.

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

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

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

Job shadow with professionals in the career area you wish to pursue.

Volunteer with area non-profits or organizations which interest you.

Consider the [study abroad programs for your major](#) or talk with a study abroad advisor about targeted experience for your areas of interest.

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](#).

Check out [CCPD's list of career-building activities](#) and participate in an activity this year, such as attending Career Fair Plus.

Connect with a career counselor early 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. Learn about their admission requirements so that you are aware of the expectations.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Biology
Chemistry
Communication

Criminal Justice
Environmental Health
Forensic Anthropology
History

International Studies
Natural Resources
Political Science
Spanish

3rd YEAR

Third level courses focus on upper-level EDM courses and special topics relating to your chosen minor. **Check out the degree requirements** and make an appointment with your advisor.

Consider internship experiences that will give you practical and hands-on experience. Continue to build your resume.

Consider networking with professionals in your field at national or regional professional conferences such as the **FEMA Higher Education Symposium**, or the **North Carolina Emergency Management Association Conference** (NCEMA).

Develop deeper relationships with the organizations for which you volunteer. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

Connect with alumni in your field through **LinkedIn**

Visit the CCPD to hone your professional resume and cover letter. Apply for internships and utilize the **Writing and Learning Commons** for MCAT, GRE, and other professional exam preparation sessions. 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 complete the major coursework requirements, as well as your chosen minor electives. Be sure to **check out the degree requirements**, make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and **apply for graduation!**

Investigate requirements for full-time jobs. 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 the gap. Connect with your faculty advisor or career counselor.

Join professional organizations such as the **International Association of Emergency Managers**, or the **North Carolina Emergency Management Association**.

Network with employers and non-profits at the annual Career Fair Plus event, held each October and February.

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 using the **CCPD**.

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

INTERNSHIP Information

At Western Carolina University there are numerous internship opportunities for students. In some cases internships are established through a faculty member in the student's major. Oftentimes students find part-time jobs in an area related to their field of study. When this happens, students should discuss with their academic advisor the possibility of receiving college credit. Generally, three hours of major elective credit can be earned for a minimum of 200 hours of experience.

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
- critical thinking and evaluation
- problem solving under pressure
- written and oral communication
- professional teamwork
- leadership abilities
- relevant software skills

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- comprehend how the roles, functions and interrelationships affect the coordination of planning and response to disasters.
- critically analyze how risk principles apply to the assignment of priorities and resources.
- apply knowledge of the legal framework, regulations and protocols to disaster events.
- apply principles of basic research methods to a review of the literature and the development of a research project.
- integrate and apply Emergency and Disaster Management theories, principles and concepts to address real life disaster events and emergency situations.
- communicate in writing and orally to convey professionalism
- coordinate effectively and facilitate collaboration

Professional **RESOURCES**

- Federal Emergency Management Agency: www.fema.gov
- International Association of Emergency Managers: www.iaem.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Emergency and Disaster Management program at 828-227-7464 or visit edm.wcu.edu

To schedule an appointment with a career counselor, contact the Center for Career and Professional Development, 828-227-7133 or careerservices@wcu.edu.