



BIRTH-KINDERGARTEN
Student Handbook
Western Carolina University

Professionalism. Caring. Strength.

Welcome: If you love children and want to be a vital force in shaping young children's development, WCU's Birth-Kindergarten (BK) Program is for you. The BK program provides you with a rigorous curriculum, plentiful resources, a strong background, and valuable experiences in working with young children and their families.

BK goals include giving you the knowledge and skills needed to meet children's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs from birth to kindergarten in a variety of settings. Your teachers and mentors will be professionals from the field of Special Education, Early Childhood Education, and Elementary Education programs.

Our 100% online programs offers a B.S. degree with an early childhood concentration or a professional education concentration that leads to licensure, and an alternative licensure program for students who already have a degree and are seeking a teaching license. We base our admission and retention policies for the professional education concentration on the standards and guidelines of the State of North Carolina and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

In collaboration with our BK partners across North Carolina providing quality field experiences, our program is designed to foster the development of the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed by an early childhood professional.

Appropriate values and dispositions are central to the early childhood professional. We model collaborative, caring, and intellectually stimulating learning communities so our students will create environments for all the children in their care that encourage curiosity, foster motivation, promote social competence, and the achievement of high quality, developmentally appropriate, inclusive settings.

About This Handbook: We hope that you find this information useful. We want you to have all the resources you need to make sound decisions about your future. In the next few pages, you'll find information on how to gain acceptance to our program, how to matriculate through and move towards graduation. If after reading this you still have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the academic advisors for the BK Program, Rachel Wike and Annie McCord. You can reach Rachel and Annie by phone at (828) 227-7027, or by email at amccord@email.wcu.edu or rwike@email.wcu.edu. Again, thanks for your interest and good luck with your decision-making. We hope that you find a fulfilling future in teaching, and we hope that Western Carolina University can help you get there.

"At Western, I have had a lot of opportunities to observe and get involved in my field before going into the workforce."

Bethany Griffith, Birth-Kindergarten Education Major

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BK Fast Facts

BK Program: Three programs: Professional Education Concentration, Early Childhood Concentration (non-degree), and Licensure.

BK Location: 100% Online

BK Admissions: Selective program; approximately 30 students per semester

BK Timeline: Fall/Spring Admissions Only- Degree seeking. Fall/Spring/Summer- Alternative Licensure.

BK Total Enrollment: 185 students per semester average (since Fall 2007)

WCU Calendar: Two semesters (August to December and January to May) and multiple summer sessions.

WCU Costs: Costs of WCU Distance Learning are discussed at <http://tuition.wcu.edu>.

WCU Financial Aid: 74% of students receive some form of financial aid.

BK Faculty: 4 full-time faculty members; 75 percent hold doctoral or terminal degrees. We have several qualified adjunct professors.

WCU Class Size: Most classes have fewer than 30 students.

WCU Accreditations: Western Carolina University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelors, masters, education specialist, and doctorate degrees.

BK Program Eligibility

How: Entry to the BK Program is selective and not based on open enrollment. To be accepted into the Birth-Kindergarten Program, a future student must meet the application requirements of the University and must have:

- earned 30 hours toward a two-year Associate Degree **or**
- earned an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree or Associate of Science (A.S.) degree from an accredited community college **or**
- an Associates of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree from an accredited community college **and**
- earned a 2.75 grade point average minimum
- Potential for completing the baccalaureate degree

Alternative licensure applicants are expected to have a conferred four-year degree, earned a 2.75 GPA, be considered in good standing by all academic programs, and have the approval of the BK Program Director to meet admission eligibility.

Other: Once you have been accepted to the BK Program you must maintain a 2.75 grade point average from solely your WCU courses.

BK Program Goals

Why: Competent early childhood professionals create respectful environments where they model and affirm acceptance of differences and work in partnership with family members. Candidate outcomes include:

KNOWLEDGE Candidates for the BK Program will possess the foundations of knowledge in early childhood education and the specialized skills of working with young children with special needs and their families: (a) Promote child development for children with and without disabilities, including those at risk, (b) Understand assessment and evaluation processes and the uses of each in the development of cognitive, social-emotional, communication, motor, adaptive and aesthetic development, and (c) Establish and maintain family and community relationships.

PEDAGOGY Candidates of the BK Program are nurturing professionals who use their knowledge of early childhood development to create an integrated curriculum and responsive environment for ALL children: (a) Connecting with ALL children, with and without disabilities, including those at-risk and their families, (b) Conducting appropriate, ongoing, formal and informal assessments, which guide their instructional design, and (c) Using specific teaching/learning strategies appropriate for young children to design, implement, evaluate, and adapt learning experiences.

DIVERSITY Candidates of the BK Program will possess an appreciation and respect for diversity: (a) Understanding the impact of diversity on learning, (b) Understanding the culture of individual children and their families, and (c) Exploring their own culture and belief system.

PROFESSIONALISM Candidates for the BK Program will conduct themselves as competent members of the early childhood profession: (a) Serve as team members, (b) Serve as leaders, (c) Reflect on their practice.

BK Student Dispositions

Why: We foster the following values and dispositions in education candidates to ensure that all students learn. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency in the following dispositions:

1. **Students will project a positive demeanor.**
2. **Students will behave responsibly.**
3. **Students will exhibit trustworthiness.**
4. **Students will build positive interpersonal relationships.**
5. **Students will demonstrate cultural responsiveness.**
6. **Students will be engaged learners.**

7. **Students will demonstrate emotional and social self-control.**
8. **Students will collaborate effectively.**
9. **Students will use effective communication.**
10. **Students will engage in appropriate decision-making.**

For more information about the Policies and Procedures for Assessing Teacher Candidate Dispositions, please visit teachereducation.wcu.edu. You may also find additional information about Professional Dispositions in the BK Student Support Site.

BK Program FAQs

What is the Birth-Kindergarten Program? The Department of Human Services offers a Bachelor of Science degree through the Birth-Kindergarten (BK) Program. Within the BK Degree Program, a student will choose a concentration, either the Early Childhood concentration or the Professional Education concentration. Those who pursue the Early Childhood Concentration are typically interested in a career that does not involve classroom teaching. Students in the alternative licensure program will take courses which lead to licensure. Examples of career options for BK Early Childhood Concentration majors include: Home-Based Early Intervention Specialist, Family Resource Specialist, and Child Care Resource & Referral Specialist. BK students who pursue the Professional Education Concentration or Alternative Licensure are typically interested in a career as a classroom teacher. Individuals in either program might teach in a public school kindergarten classroom, a NC PreK classroom, or a Head Start classroom.

How is the BK Program delivered? BK courses are accessed through the Blackboard Learning Management System. All instructional activities engaged in by students such as lectures, group interactions, reading assignments, class projects, presentations, submission of assignments, e-mail exchange, test administration, and other course functions occur within the online Blackboard environment.

What type of computer and internet access do I need? All students should have, at a minimum, a personal computer running Windows XP or a Macintosh computer running system OS X or higher. The computer must be able to connect to the university's network through an appropriate DSL or Cable modem. A minimum of 512 MB RAM memory is essential, as is a 40 GB hard drive. All computers should have either a CD-R or CD-RW (preferred) drive. Systems must be capable of connecting to Western's network, utilize a WCU-supported OS, as well as have a supported version of Microsoft Office. Systems having less than these minimum specifications will not perform satisfactorily or meet WCU's computer requirement. Due to limitations, Windows XP Home Edition is NOT supported. It is recommended that students have a working microphone and webcam. Often, students use a headset with a microphone.

In addition, all students should be able to perform common computer functions such as e-mailing, chat, discussion boards, browsing the Internet, zipping and unzipping files, downloading and uploading files, keyword searching, and be able to use Microsoft Office products including Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

Common online pedagogies used in the BK Program include:

Chat Rooms – synchronous (at the same time) communication with others in the class
Discussion Boards – asynchronous (not at the same time) communication with others in the class
Assignment links – electronic tool(s) for uploading and submitting written assignments and files
Online Tests – self-administration of timed quizzes and exercises
Email – communication between two or more members of the class

Webinars - synchronous/asynchronous communication with the instructor and other students

Videos- video clips of classroom practices recorded and uploaded to learning platform

What are the general requirements for the BK degree?

A minimum of 120 semester hours are required. This requirement is comprised of:

Birth-Kindergarten: 63-72 hours, and
Liberal Studies: 42 hours if from WCU, and
General Electives: 9-15 hours

What courses are required for the program?

See the degree plan information for Professional Education Concentration (Licensure) and Early Childhood Concentration. See individual licensure plans of study for alternative licensure students.

Can I transfer community college early childhood courses to WCU?

Yes, students can transfer some NC community college early childhood courses into the Birth-Kindergarten degree. These courses will be transferred into the BK program:

EDU 144 + 145	= BK 363	EDU 234	= BK 366
PSY 244 + 245	= BK 363	EDU 259, EDU 151	= BK 470
PSY 320	= BK 363	EDU 221	= SPED 240
EDU 146	= BK 462		

Other EDU or ECE courses taken at the community college level can be used to satisfy General Elective or Guided Elective courses needed for degree completion. Courses outside the North Carolina system will be evaluated course by course.

What Liberal Studies courses are required?

The Liberal Studies requirements can be met in two ways: 1) Completion of 42 hours of approved liberal studies coursework through WCU (<http://liberalstudies.wcu.edu>); or 2) Completion of the equivalent transfer coursework at a NC Community College. You will need to make a decision very early regarding the way in which you will complete the Liberal Studies requirement. If you choose to complete equivalent transfer coursework at a NC Community College, you will be working with an advisor at the community college in determining the courses you need to take there.

How is the Liberal Studies requirement different if I received an A.A./A.S. or an A.A.S. degree at the community college?

Pursuant to University of North Carolina System Policy, students who graduate from an accredited community college in North Carolina and who have earned either an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree will have fulfilled all Liberal Studies (general education) requirement

at WCU. Students who have earned a degree from an accredited institution located outside of North Carolina will undergo a course-by-course evaluation for transfer credits and may have to complete additional courses to fulfill the Liberal Studies requirement.

Students who possess an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree from a NC Community College will undergo a course-by-course evaluation for transfer credits. In most cases, the student will be required to complete additional courses at a NC community college or through WCU to fulfill the Liberal Studies requirement.

Transfer students who have questions in regard to their previous college courses fulfilling WCU's Liberal Studies requirements are urged to contact Rachel Wike or Annie McCord, advisors in the BK program.

Rachel Wike and Annie McCord
Suite 201
828-227-7027
rwike@wcu.edu or amccord@wcu.edu

Can I receive academic credit for years of service or other training I have completed?

No, WCU does not recognize years of services, training, certifications, or other continuing education units as being equivalent to academic courses at the university level. Transfer credit will only be awarded for courses offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by nationally recognized, regionally accredited organizations. Evaluation of academic transcripts is conducted by the Registrar, not the individual department.

WCU Registrar
206 Killian Annex
Cullowhee, NC 28723
Telephone:(828) 227-7216
Fax: (828) 227-7217
registrarsoffice@wcu.edu

How do I apply to WCU?

For Admissions information, visit <http://admissions.wcu.edu>.

For the application to apply to the Birth-Kindergarten Program, visit <http://distance.wcu.edu>.

Admission to distance learning programs is a two-stage process. The Office of Admissions is responsible for collecting and reviewing all required documentation (both WCU and UNC General Administration requirements) to ensure your admissibility to the university itself (stage 1). Program Directors/Coordinators then make programmatic decisions after admissibility to the university (stage 2).

What is the New Online Student Orientation?

Maybe you are new to distance education courses, or maybe you are an experienced online learner. In either case, you are going to need a lot of specific information to be a successful online learner. You will need an orientation, access and login information to navigate your specific course and the university systems. You will need to know how to access library resources, get help with advising, order your textbooks, and much more—all online.

In order to provide you with this information and fully prepare you to start your courses, the Division of Educational Outreach has developed the New Online Student Orientation, an online learning experience designed to provide the tools you'll need for successful online learning.

In addition, the BK Program maintains a BK Student Support Site. Students are added to the site upon admission and are expected to use the site to find program-specific resources, such as announcements, links to advising resources, application to capstone courses (Internship and Action Research), etc.

What is the tuition rate for distance learning courses?

WCU Tuition and Fees: <http://tuition.wcu.edu>

Who can I contact for additional information?

After reading through this handbook, if you still have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Academic Advisors for the BK Program, Rachel Wike and Annie McCord. You can reach Rachel and Annie by phone at (828) 227-7027, or by email at amccord@email.wcu.edu or rwike@email.wcu.edu.

Financial Aid Information

How: You will need to contact the WCU Financial Aid Office for any and all questions regarding financial aid. Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST

Financial Aid Office

118 Killian Annex

Cullowhee, NC 28723

Phone: (828) 227-7290

Fax: (828) 227-7042

Email: finaid@wcu.edu

BK Support Site

Why: The BK Student Support Site was developed to serve as a 24/7 hub of everything BK! Please note, the Support Site is not a replacement for your WCU email or personal contact with your instructors or Academic Advisors.

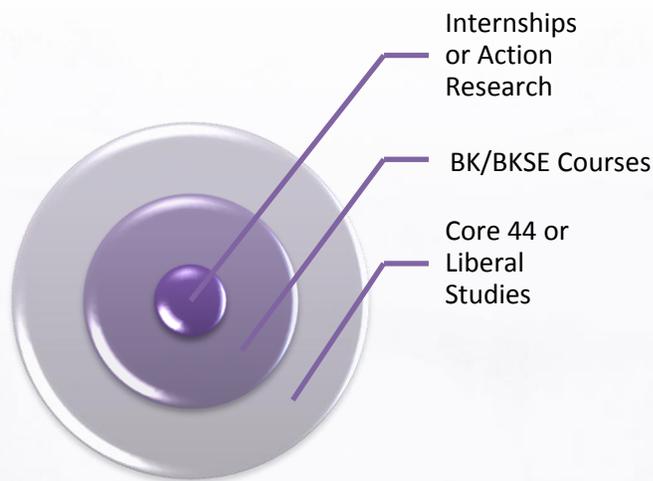
The BK Support Site can be found in Blackboard, and you will be able to access this site after you have been admitted to Western Carolina University. This site provides you with information about the program as well a place to communicate with your instructors, your advisor, and other students in the program. You can ask questions via email and discussion boards.

BK Course Books & Bookstore

How: The WCU Bookstore website will include the texts required for the courses you plan to take. The staff at the WCU Bookstore will ship your book to you within 24 hours of your order. They are aware of required text books for each semester by the end of the preceding semester. If you choose to access textbooks from other sources, please assure that you are getting the correct edition of the text. Books can be ordered at the following address: <http://books.wcu.edu>. Look for the link "Student Textbook Ordering."

BK Course Descriptions & Overview

What: BK 250-Introduction to Birth-Kindergarten is a MUST for first semester students in the BS degree program. In BK 250, you will learn about the early childhood profession, the different concentrations within the BK Program, the expectations for BK Majors, as well as the requirements for Admission to the Teacher Education Program. Please remember that an advisor is available to guide you, but you are responsible for your course of study. It is **up to you to make decisions** about courses and to follow the guidelines for each concentration. BK 250 is the place to get started and a great resource in helping with this.



Most classes have a field experience component that must be implemented in a high-quality early childhood classroom, with a family, or in a public school setting. **Hands-on learning is a critical part of a student's education in the field of early childhood/early childhood special education. Please assure that you can devote time to both course and field experience requirements.**

Birth-Kindergarten Courses

BK 250 - Introduction to Birth-Kindergarten - Introduction to the Birth-Kindergarten major and profession. Credits: (3)

BK 260 - Foundations of Child Study - Childhood in western culture from a multidisciplinary perspective. Emphasis on the philosophical roots of the early childhood model and its role in educational reform. Credits: (3)

BK 312 - Kindergarten Curriculum - Overview of methods for kindergarten curriculum for typical and atypical children in the public school environment. Credits: (3)

BK 315 - Early Childhood Literacy, Birth-5 - A study of emergent literacy in young children from a developmental and constructivist perspective. Includes regular observation and data collection. Credits: (3)

BK 316 - Mathematics and Science A study of the development of young children's understanding of numeracy and scientific concepts from a constructivist perspective. Includes regular observation and data collection. Credits: (3)

BK 361 - Environments for Young Children The physical, emotional, and social environment suitable for young children; room arrangement, scheduling, space utilization, and teacher-child interaction. Credits: (3)

BK 363 - Child Development Physical, emotional, social, and mental development from birth through middle childhood. Credits: (3)

BK 366 - Infant Development and Curriculum Dynamics of infant development and curriculum for both typical children and children with, or at risk, for disabilities. Credits: (3)

BK 414 - Theory and Practice in Early Childhood Administration Policies, procedures, and responsibilities for administration of early childhood education programs. Credits: (3)

BK 457 - Action Research Development, implementation, and evaluation of action research addressing an issue or trend in early childhood education. Early Childhood Concentration only. Credits: (9)

BK 458 - Action Research II Development, implementation, and evaluation of action research addressing an issue or trend in early childhood education. Early Childhood Concentration only. Credits: (9)

BK 462 - Adult-Child Interaction Various cultural paradigms influencing behavior of adults regarding children's discipline. Facilitation of self-management through nonverbal and verbal communication, and the dimensions of play. Credits: (3).

BK 470 - Early Childhood Curriculum Materials, environments, and interactions for 2-5 year olds in all curricular areas including thinking and social problem-solving for children with and without disabilities. Credits: (3)

BK 473 - Early Childhood Assessment for Responsive Instruction Exploration of the development needs of the early childhood learner and the assessment techniques teachers utilize in the development of responsive instruction. Field experience and subscription to electronic portfolio required. Credits: (3)

BK 482 - Internship I Observing, planning, teaching, and evaluating young children with and without disabilities in a variety of settings. 2 days a week. Credits: (6)

BK 483 - Internship II Observing, planning, teaching, and evaluating young children with and without disabilities in a variety of settings. 5 days/week, full-time. Credits (10)

BK 496 - Internship Seminar The interrelationships of theory and practice in the context of experience. Credits: (2).

BKSE 313 - Assessment of the Young Child with Disabilities- Assessment activities including screening, diagnostic assessment, and educational assessment for young children, with emphasis on connecting observation, assessment, planning, and evaluation. 2 Lecture, 3 Lab. Prerequisite: SPED 240, Credits: (3)

BKSE 314 - Assessment of the Young Child - Assessment in children birth to five in a variety of early childhood settings such as homes, daycare and public schools. Early Childhood Concentration only. Prerequisite: SPED 240, Credits: (3)

BKSE 345 - Adaptations and Modifications for Young Children with Disabilities - Methods and materials for supporting young children with disabilities in their naturally occurring environments. 2 Lecture, 3 Lab. Prerequisite: SPED 240. Credits: (3)

BKSE 350 - Early Childhood Disorders and Interventions - Review of early childhood disorders and specific education interventions for children with special needs. Prerequisite: SPED 240. GPA of 2.75. Credits (3)

BKSE 412 - Interagency Practicum - Professional roles and functions of early childhood teams, transdisciplinary team process, structures of interagency collaboration, service coordination, and transition. 2 Lecture, 3 Lab. Prerequisite: SPED 240, admission to teacher education or permission of instructor; 2.5 GPA. Credits: (3)

BKSE 411 - Family Collaborative Planning - Development, implementation, monitoring of plans (IFSP, IEP); knowledge of state, federal legislation, agency programs affecting young children with disabilities and their families. Collaborating, interviewing families. PREQ: 2.5 GPA. Credits: (3)

BKSE 415 - Promoting the Social/Emotional Competency of the Young Child - Causes, prevention, and strategies when working with young children with challenging behaviors. Prerequisite: SPED 240, Credits: (3)

BKSE 427 - Teaching Reading to Young Children with Disabilities - Methods and materials for teaching reading to young children with disabilities. Prerequisites: 2.75 GPA. Admission to Teacher Education. Credits: (3)

SPED 240 - The Exceptional Child - Areas and characteristics of exceptionalities; problems in learning and personal-social adjustment of exceptional children; educational alternatives. Credits: (3)

Elective Courses

What: Both BK Concentration Degree Plans have a select number of guided elective classes required. Many courses taken at the community college can be used to meet the guided elective requirements. Your advisor will make the substitutions for you. If you do not have enough community college courses, then you will need to take additional classes at WCU. However, most transfer students have enough courses from the community college. Just make sure you mention it to your advisor so they can make the substitutions for you.

Online Courses Expectations

What: As in any university experience, the student can expect to spend approximately 3 hours for every one hour of course credit each week. For example, when enrolled in a course that earns 3 hours credit, the student can expect to spend an average of 9 hours each week involved in course activities. These hours may be spent reading course materials, interacting with peers and the instructor, creating and submitting assignments, implementing field experience activities, researching topics of interest and/or taking assessments.

The online environment is a “print rich” environment. Content is often delivered in formats that require the student to read and respond in writing. The response may be in the form of a research paper, an asynchronous discussion with peers, a personal reflection journal, a response to an essay question on a test, a Power Point presentation, or other print media. It is important for the BK major to be comfortable with this print rich environment.

Other aspects of distance education that should be considered are the need for the student to take the initiative to check into their course on a regular basis, to ask questions when needed and to offer feedback regularly. Managing the multiple expectations of different instructors can be challenging for some online learners. It is important to be prepared to manage these multiple expectations effectively and efficiently.

With the courses that you take in the program with a BK and BKSE prefix, instructors and professors will give you feedback on the assignments that you have submitted in the form of written feedback or a rubric. The work that you do should be high-quality and well-written. It should not be a regular habit for you to receive grades based on how many times you log into the course or an assignment but should be graded on the work you complete. Your instructors and professors will be interactive and you should feel their presence. Students who maintain a regular and on-going presence in their online courses will feel the presence of their instructor, much like in a face to face class.

If you are considering taking a week or two off during the semester, please note, that accommodations cannot be made for you. You should consider courses offered by the BK Program at Western Carolina University, to have the same policies and procedures as face-to-face courses. Please do not ask faculty to accept your work late or to give you assignments early. Building community is an important of each course, and this is done by weekly participation. Examples of this are planned surgeries, vacations, weddings, etc. Please note that if you choose to take time off during the semester, you will receive points for the time that you are away.

Advising Information

You will be assigned a professional Academic Advisor in the WCU Suite 201 Office. This individual is specifically in place to assist and guide you in academic and career goals. You will be assigned an advisor after you have been admitted to the university and the program.

When you first come to WCU, the Registrars' office will matriculate your transfer credit and develop your degree audit.

Please be sure to check your degree audit. This will be your best measure of where you are in the program. There are directions on the BK Support Site of how to run your degree audit.

BK Faculty & Staff

Lori Caudle, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Birth Kindergarten/Human Services. Date of appointment, 2010.

Cathy G. Grist, Ph.D. Director. Associate Professor of Birth Kindergarten/Human Services. Date of appointment, 2002.

Myra Watson, MAEd., NBCT. Instructor of Birth Kindergarten/Human Services. Date of appointment, 2011.

BK Course Schedule

Fall Semester				Spring Semester		
BK Core Courses	Early Childhood Concentration	Professional Education Concentration		BK Core Courses	Early Childhood Concentration	Professional Education Concentration
BK 250	BKSE 411	BK 312	BKSE 313	BK 250	BK 414	BKSE 412
BK 361	BK 457	BK 316	BK 482	BK 260	BKSE 314	BKSE 427
BKSE 415	BK 458	BK 473	BK 483 & 496	BK 315	BK 457	BK 482
				BKSE 345	BK 458	BK 483 & 496

Summer Semester			
BK Core Courses		Early Childhood Concentration	Professional Education Concentration
BK 315	BKSE 345	BK 366 (even years)	BK 316
BK 470	BKSE 415		BK 473
BK 361	BK 462 (odd years)		BKSE 350

New Student: First Semester Checklist

What:

- Review welcome letter information
- Set up Catamount email account
- Review the New Online Student Orientation information
- Assure that you have the computer hardware and software required
- Assure that you have high speed internet access (dial-up internet will not be sufficient to be successful in the program)
- Talk with your advisor about your anticipated schedule and enroll in BK 250 as your first course as well as any other courses you might want to take
- Contact Financial Aid if necessary
- Check WCU Bookstore for textbook information
- Submit tuition payment on time to avoid being dropped for nonpayment
- Login to MyWCU, explore, and run a Degree Audit
- Login to Blackboard, explore, and complete BK Online Experience when prompted by email

Why: As a new student, you will be eager to register for your next semester as soon as WCU opens registration. For those who declare the Professional Education concentration, you will not be able to

register for the Professional Education specific courses until you are admitted to the Teacher Education Program – there are no exceptions to this. Remember, admission to the Teacher Education is more than just emailing your advisor your declaration. You must also complete all the steps for the WCU Teacher Education Program (<http://teacheradmission.wcu.edu>).

For students in either BK Concentration, you must earn at least a C in all BK/BKSE courses required in the BK Major, and maintain a WCU Grade Point Average of at least a 2.75 in order to maintain your status in the BK Program.

If you do not maintain a 2.75 GPA in the program, you will not be able to enroll in additional BK courses (this is all major courses with a BK or BKSE prefix), however, you can continue to take liberal studies courses and repeat courses that you made a C- or below in order to raise your GPA.

How: To run a personalized degree audit/evaluation:

1. Log into MyWCU (<http://MyWCU.wcu.edu>)
2. Click on the “Personal Services” tab
3. Click on the “Student” tab
4. Click on “Student Records”
5. Click on “Degree Audit/Evaluation”
6. Choose the appropriate term (if this is an option) and click submit
7. You will see your current curriculum information including your major. To run a degree audit/evaluation, click on “Generate New Evaluation” at the bottom of the page.
8. Select the button next to your major and click the Generate Request button.
9. Wait patiently for the audit to generate. Once you are able to see your audit, the courses you still need to satisfy will appear with a red “No” next to them.

Comparing BK Concentrations

Why: Your career goals can help you decide which concentration best suits your needs.

The Professional Education Concentration can lead to a NC Standard Professional I Teaching License. So if you are interested in teaching in a public school setting, or another classroom setting that requires a teaching license, then your goal would be to complete the Professional Education Concentration. For those students who are interested in working with young children in non-public school settings, or who are interested in supporting young children through work with their families or agencies that are not classroom-based, then the Early Childhood Concentration may be more appropriate. Please note that those who are interested in the Professional Education concentration will be required to pass the Praxis Core exam as part of the application to Teacher Education.

When you look at the checklists for the 2 concentrations, you will see similarities and differences. The similarities (BK Core courses) reflect the knowledge base that all early childhood professionals should hold. The differences reflect coursework specific to certain settings or careers.

Early Childhood Concentration

The Early Childhood concentration is ideal for those who wish to work with young children and their families but are not interested in classroom teaching. Graduates of the Early Childhood Concentration often pursue middle management or administration careers. Other Early Childhood Concentration graduates work in local Departments of Social Services, early intervention services, child care resource and referral agencies, or foster care and adoption programs. There are many opportunities for the graduate of the Early Childhood Concentration.

Requirements

- 44 Hour Core
- Liberal Studies
- 120 total hours to degree
- 9-15 hrs elective courses
- 10 BK Core prerequisite courses
- 4 BK Concentration courses
- Electronic Portfolio Subscription
 - Surveys
 - Common Assignments
- Action Research (18 hrs)
 - Action Research I (9 hrs)
 - Cannot be waived
 - One semester length
 - Up to full load of concurrent courses
 - Action Research II (9 hrs)
 - Cannot be waived
 - One semester length
 - All other coursework complete

Action Research I & II

What: Action research has been described as "an attempt to study a real situation with a view to improve the quality of actions and results within." It is intended for early childhood professionals to be able critically examine and improve their own practices in a systematic manner of research and plan for future action.

The first semester (BK 457) is the study of the background and purpose of action research while developing a topic (hypothesis) for research. By the end of the semester, a design and plan for the research is formulated.

The second semester (BK 458) is spent implementing the research and compiling the results. A written paper at the end of the project addresses the hypothesis and an action plan for future change. In the past, some students have chosen to present their findings at local conferences or in-service trainings.

As with other university courses, you can expect to spend approximately 3 hours for every 1 hour of course credit earned. Because many students are developing their research hypothesis and

implementing changes in their work environments, the time spent may not be in addition to “work time.” For those students who will be conducting their research and implementing changes in environments where they are not employed, the student should expect to spend a substantial amount of time in observations and interactions at their research site. Strategies for improvement that have been implemented by previous students include modification of a strategy in teaching, distribution of questionnaires, specific interventions with individual children, as well as offering community meetings in efforts to promote change or improvement in practices. Strategies for improvement will depend on the outcome of the research hypothesis.

Mertler, Craig. (2008). *Action research*. Sage Publications, Inc.

When: Students complete Action Research I and II at the very end of their BK degree plan. Before applying for Action Research, you need to make sure that you have completed all liberal studies requirements. This has to be *completed* before you can register -- no exceptions.

Please remember the following. In order to complete Action Research you must:

- Completed WCU liberal studies
- Liberal studies must show on your WCU transcript as complete.
- All BK/BKSE courses have a grade of C or above
- WCU cumulative GPA is a 2.75 or above
- If you scored below a C in any of these courses, you can retake the course in an attempt to improve your grade. You will not be able to register for either Action Research course if any BK/BKSE courses show a grade of C- or below.

What: You will need to submit the Action Research application and all accompanying materials that go along with the application (including a background Recheck) to the Electronic Portfolio in the semester prior to the semester when you hope to register for Action Research I. Deadline dates correlate with those for internship and can be found on the Office of Field Experience website: <http://ofe.wcu.edu>.

Please keep in mind if you do not follow due dates that you will not be able to complete your Action Research and this can hold up graduation. The Office of Field Experiences **does not allow late applications**.

If you are already working in an approved setting, you are responsible for communicating with your supervisor about your action research responsibilities while employed.

Where: Students may complete Action Research in any early childcare setting.

Action Research Policy

If you have applied for action research but need to drop action research for any reason, you must do so before the last day of classes the semester prior (Fall/Spring). Failure to do so, may result in an additional semester delay in action research and an Action Plan. Please notify your advisor of your intent to drop action research as soon as possible. Placement is expected to remain the same from action research I to action research II.

Professional Education Concentration

The Professional Education Concentration can lead to a NC Standard Professional I Teaching License. If you are interested in teaching in a public school setting, or another classroom setting that requires a teaching license, then your goal would be to complete the Professional Education Concentration. In order to pursue the Professional Education Concentration, you must meet the admission criteria for the Teacher Education Program (see <http://teacheradmission.wcu.edu>).

Requirements

- Liberal Studies
- 120 total hours to degree
- 12 hrs elective courses
- 10 BK Core prerequisite courses
- 7 BK Concentration courses
- Electronic Portfolio Subscription
 - Surveys
 - Common Assignments
 - edTPA
 - Teacher as Leader
 - Individual Growth Plan
- Admission to Teacher Education Program
 - Praxis I Core Exam
- Internship = 18 hours
 - Internship I (6 hrs)
 - Cannot be waived
 - Up to full load of concurrent courses
 - One semester length, 2 days per week
 - Internship II (10 hrs)
 - Cannot be waived
 - Only Internship Seminar can be taken concurrently
 - One semester length, 5 days per week
 - Internship Seminar (2 hrs)
 - Co-requisite with Internship II
- *Special Considerations for Internship Courses*
- Must apply for both Internship I and Internship II
- Only offered fall/spring semesters
- Must be consecutive semesters

If you choose the Professional Education Concentration, please be aware that you will **not** be allowed to take some concentration specific courses until you are admitted to the Teacher Education Program. Those courses are:

- BK 312 – Kindergarten Curriculum
- BK 316 –Mathematics and Science
- BK 473-Early Childhood Assessment for Responsive Instruction

- BKSE 313 –Assessment of the Young Child
- BKSE 350 - Early Childhood Disorders and Interventions
- BKSE 412 – Interagency Practicum
- BKSE 427 – Teaching Reading to Individuals with Mild to Moderate Disabilities
- BK 482 – Internship I
- BK 483 – Internship II
- BK 496 – Internship Seminar

Think of the process of getting into the Professional Education Concentration as a domino effect. The first domino- taking the Praxis I during BK 250/ 1st semester sets up the other pieces to fall into place with the Teacher Education Program (TEP), and finally acceptance to the Professional Education Concentration.

General Internship Information

Who: Internships are a ‘capstone’ experience for Professional Education Concentration BK students. There are two internships and an internship seminar. Internship I is not required for alternative licensure students.

When: Students complete internships at the very end of their BK degree plan. Before applying for internships, you need to make sure that you have completed all liberal studies requirements. This has to be *completed* before you can register -- no exceptions.

Please remember the following. In order to complete Internship I or II you must:

- Be admitted to WCU Teacher Education
- Completed WCU liberal studies
- Liberal studies must show on your WCU transcript as complete.
- All BK/BKSE courses have a grade of C or above
- WCU cumulative GPA is a 2.75 or above

If you scored below a C in any of these courses, you can retake the course in an attempt to improve your grade. You will not be able to register for either Internship course if any BK/BKSE courses show a grade of C- or below.

What: You will need to submit the Internship application and all accompanying materials that go along with the application (including an updated background check) to the electronic Portfolio in the semester prior to the semester when you hope to register for the Internship. Deadline dates can be found on the Office of Field Experience website: <http://ofe.wcu.edu>.

Please keep in mind if you do not follow due dates that you will not be able to complete your internship and this can hold up graduation. The Office of Field Experiences **does not allow late applications**.

We will then let you know who your University Supervisor will be, as well as the section and course number you will need to register. Students are not able to choose their University Supervisors.

Please keep in mind that you will also need to have a BK licensed Cooperating Teacher at your site during your internship. The Office of Field Experience will provide the CT if you are placed. If you are already working in an approved setting, you are responsible for securing a CT, who will agree to serve during your internship.

Where: There are three approved settings to complete internship requirements: Head Start classrooms, NC PreK classrooms, and NC Kindergarten classrooms. Early Head Start is not approved as an internship setting.

Intern I: Internship I is the first semester of your BK capstone experience. It affords you the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions you have acquired through your BK Program experiences. In order to register for Internship I, you must apply early in the semester prior to the semester when you plan to do your internship. The Internship Application can be found in the Electronic Portfolio, and instructions to apply are available on the BK Student Support Site. Internships last for the entire semester. If you need to take a leave of absence from work, please plan on the entire semester from the beginning of the semester through exam week.

You must complete all of your liberal studies and community college transfer coursework before you enroll in BK 482-Internship I.

During your Internship I semester, you can enroll in additional WCU credit hours, up to a full load of 18 hours. However, it is recommended that no more than two courses in the same semester as Intern I.

Intern II: Internship II is the second semester of your BK capstone experience. It affords you the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions you have acquired through your BK Program experiences. If you completed Internship I and you do not need to change placement sites, you do not have to apply. If you are Alternative Licensure student, then you will need to apply for Internship II the semester before you want to begin internship. The Internship Application can be found in the Electronic Portfolio, and instructions to apply are available on the BK Student Support Site. Internships last for the entire semester. If you need to take a leave of absence from work, please plan on the entire semester from the beginning of the semester through exam week.

During your Internship II semester, you can enroll in additional WCU credit hours, up to a full load of 18 hours. However, it is not recommended that you take additional courses with Internship II. However, this is unavoidable at times.

Internship Policy

If you have applied for internship but need to drop internship for any reason, you must do so before the last day of classes the semester prior (Fall/Spring). **Failure to do so, may result in an additional semester delay in internship and an Action Plan.** Please notify your advisor of your intent to drop internship as soon as possible. Placement is expected to remain the same from intern I to action intern II.

TEP: Acceptance to WCU Teacher Education Program

When: Praxis Core scores for admittance to TEP generally take 2-4 weeks. You may receive some scores immediately while others, such as the Writing score, may take longer. Complete the application to TEP **after** you have passed the Praxis Core and passed BK 250 with a C or better.

What: The Application for Admission to TEP is available online or at the WCU campus.

Online application: <http://teacheradmission.wcu.edu>

Rachel Wike, Coordinator
Killian Building 201A
Phone: (828) 227-7027
Fax: (828) 227-7610
Email: rwike@wcu.edu

The application should be completed by the student and returned to Suite 201 via email, fax or in person. The student must also complete the Statement of the Applicant about any past record of suspended or revoked license to teach and criminal convictions (excluding minor traffic violations).

Applicants are notified through Catamount email regarding admission.

How: All requirements for admission to TEP should be met by the beginning of the semester following the first semester in the B-K Program. The following criteria are minimum requirements for admission to TEP:

- Completed at least 30 hours (including transfer coursework)
- Earned a C (2.0) or higher grade in BK 250 and ENGL 101
- Earned/ Maintained a minimum cumulative WCU GPA of 2.75
- Achieved [required scores](#) on the SAT, ACT, or Praxis I (Reading, Writing, Mathematics)
- Subscribed to the [electronic portfolio](#)
- Completed the M5 Personality Survey and Diversity Inventory via the electronic portfolio
- Submitted the [Application](#) for Admission to TEP.

Electronic Portfolio Requirement

What is it?

edportfolio.wcu.edu

In 2016, we are transitioning from TaskStream to Tk20 as the technology tool we will use for our portfolio system.

An electronic portfolio system where you will submit work in various classes and during your internship/student teaching. These are either required by DPI for your license or are used to assess our academic programs. You will submit work in various classes to the electronic portfolio and use it to apply for your field experiences. It is not hard to use and is similar to submitting work in Blackboard.

What if I need help?

Contact Dr. Lee Nickles for assistance with any questions:

Office: Killian 101 Phone: 828.227.3299 Email: lnickles@wcu.edu

BK Courses with Electronic Portfolio Requirements

Course	Electronic Portfolio Assignments
<u>BK 250</u>-Introduction to Birth-Kindergarten	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Philosophy Statement Assignment➤ Diversity Survey➤ Personality Inventory
<u>BK 457</u>- Action Research I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Research Proposal
<u>BK 458</u>- Action Research II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Final Action Research Project
<u>BK 496</u>- Internship Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ edTPA Portfolio➤ Teacher as Leader (EE6)➤ Individual Growth Plan (IGP)➤ Diversity Survey
<u>BKSE 411</u>- Family Collaborative Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Family Collaborative Planning Project
<u>BKSE 427</u>- Teaching Reading to Young Children with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Article Review Assignment

TEP: Praxis Core Exam

What: The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) requires undergraduate degree-seeking teacher candidates to satisfactorily complete the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests, referred to as **Praxis Core**, which measure critical thinking and academic skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The tests were designed to provide comprehensive assessments that measure the skills and content knowledge of candidates entering teacher preparation programs.

Teacher candidates or those wishing to become certified are required to take the Praxis Core tests to demonstrate their qualifications. The SBE sets minimum scores that must be met for admission to teacher education.

Students who already hold a four year degree and are seeking a second degree or licensure-only certification ***are not required to fulfill this requirement.***

Test Score Requirements

Reading 156

Writing 162

Mathematics 150

A combined Praxis Core score of 468 meets the Praxis Core requirement. If individual test scores do not meet each requirement above, a combined score of 468 satisfies the requirement.

Moreover, **individuals with a total SAT score of 1100 (Verbal and Quantitative only) are exempt from Praxis Core testing requirements** for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a total SAT score of less than 1100, but a score of at least 550 on the Verbal test are exempt from Praxis Core in Reading and Writing.
- Individuals with a total SAT score of less than 1100, but a score of at least 550 on the Math test are exempt from Praxis Core in Mathematics.

Likewise, **individuals with a composite ACT score of 24 are exempt from Praxis Core testing requirements** for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a composite ACT score of less than 24, but with a score of at least 24 on the English are exempt from Praxis Core in Reading and Writing.
- Individuals with a composite ACT score of less than 24, but a score of at least 24 on the Math test are exempt from Praxis Core in Mathematics.

How: To register go to <http://www.ets.org/praxis> For more information about the Praxis tests, including test preparation materials, go to <http://www.ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials>. WCU also offers a test prep guide you may find helpful: <http://edtestprep.wcu.edu>. The Praxis Core test is offered only computer-based and are given year round by appointment. Students are highly encouraged to register early in the semester in which they are eligible to complete the test.

Apply for License

Students are expected to apply for their teaching license immediately upon program completion. If a student does not apply for initial licensure within **one year** of program completion, he/she is subject to any new program requirements at the time of application.

As of May 22, 2017 the PRAXIS II is no longer required by the state or WCU for BK licensure.

For information on how to apply for your NC Teaching license, go to <http://teacherlicensure.wcu.edu>. This site gives you instructions for how to navigate the NC DPI website (www.dpi.state.nc.us) and submit your licensure application.