

N.C. Environmental Education Certification for B.S. in Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) Students at Western Carolina University

What is the point of this guide?

This guide provides a general overview of the N.C. Environmental Education Certification Program (<https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/about-certification>) and its requirements. Specifically, for PRM students, this guide also contains what classes count for criteria hours when completing the program.

What is the N.C. Environmental Education (EE) Certification Program?

The EE certification is a program designed to help current and aspiring environmental educators learn more about the field of EE and the many techniques to help develop and conduct educational programs. The program is designed for both formal and nonformal educators, so educators will benefit from this training regardless of where they work.

Why should I complete the EE Certification?

There are many benefits to completing this certification. This program encourages professional development in EE and helps environmental educators learn how to instill a sense of stewardship in children and adults. Many of these programs will have educators learning both directly and indirectly from EE professionals. Not only would educators gain quality knowledge and resources, they would also make many connections with other EE professionals as they complete the certification. Finally, this certification is recognized as a professional credential throughout North Carolina and would be a great resume booster.

How do I complete the EE Certification?

The first step is to enroll in the N.C. EE certification program and create an account (visit <https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/how-enroll> and follow directions).

Note: There is a \$50 enrollment fee, however, it is recommended to check with your university and/or employer to see if they would be willing to cover the cost since this counts under professional development.

Certification is a self-paced, experiential program that includes five different components along with a 5-year renewal component after the certification is completed. These components align with the North American Association for Environmental Education's Guidelines for Excellence (<https://naaee.org/programs/guidelines-excellence>). Participants have four years to complete the five components.

Note: Participants can document EE related programs and trainings up to a year before they start the program. Some examples include seminars, ranger led hikes, the Certified

Interpretive Guide (CIG) training, or the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) training. So while participants have four years once they start the program to complete it, they can submit documentation up to a year old. This also applies going forward. Documentation older than a year will not be accepted, so make sure to submit EE forms before they expire.

Criteria Details

This program is broken up into six different sections, each focusing on different areas of professional development in EE. Below provides basic information about the different criteria. For more detailed information about the criteria, visit <https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/program-requirements>.

Criteria I – Instructional Workshops: Criteria I requires 70 hours of coursework and programs to be considered complete. These workshops must be selected from the list of approved workshops (<https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/program-requirements/criteria-i/elective-criteria-i-workshops>). They are typically a facilitator training with a curriculum guide (e.g. Project WILD).

There are also two criteria I workshops that are required. The *Basics of Environmental Education* is an independent study assignment for environmental educators to become familiar with other programs and agencies involved with EE. It is recommended as a good beginning point for certification. The other required workshop is the *Methods of Teaching Environmental Education (MOTEE)*, which helps introduce environmental educators to common teaching practices used in the EE field. Both of these count for 10 Criteria I hours, so only 50 Criteria I hours remain to be completed.

Note: The *Methods of Teaching Environmental Education* is hosted a few times a year, each at a different part of the state. It is recommended to keep an eye out for when you are available to take this course since this one may be harder to be scheduled.

Criteria II – Instructor-led Outdoor Experiences: Criteria II requires 50 hours of programs led by qualified outdoor instructors. There are no required programs, so participants schedule and attend them on their own. At least 50 percent of the entire program must be spent outdoors in an active, interpretive or hands-on way.

Criteria III – Knowledge of Environmental Education Resources and Facilities: Criteria III requires 30 hours of attending EE-related programs, seminars, lectures, and site visits at EE centers. Up to 10 hours may be documented at one time. At least 10 hours must be site visits to EE centers with 5 of those hours outside your home region but still in NC. Check out this map for some EE site recommendations and region information: <https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/program-requirements/criteria-iii>

Note: Those who are not North Carolina residents completing this certification must instead do 5 of the 10 hours *inside* NC.

Criteria IV – Experience Teaching Environmental Education: Criteria IV requires 30 hours of teaching EE. Actual teaching makes up at least 20 hours (10 hours must be teaching outdoors) with up to 10 hours of preparation and/or follow-up time.

Note: Teaching hours are documented directly on the account, not by form.

Criteria V – Community Partnership Project: This project provides participants with the opportunity to lead a partnership that will have a positive and lasting effect on the community and will increase environmental awareness and understanding. While the partnership project can be located at your place of work, it must be a project that goes beyond your assigned duties, job description and/or work plan. Also, you must initiate and manage the partnership project. Finally, you are required to contact the office before beginning your project to make sure it meets all the program criteria.

Note: A minimum of 20 hours must be completed, however, the majority of projects will take more than the required hours. It is recommended to keep notes of your progress to make submitting the final information easier.

Criteria VI – Continuing Education Credits: Once educators earn their certification, they are required to complete 50 hours of Continuing Education every five years in order to maintain an active status within the program. Once submitted and approved, the educator's certification will be renewed and the certification will remain active for the next five years.

These hours can come from programs that qualify for Criteria I, II, and III except for site visits. Essentially, you must receive direct instruction or attend a program that is EE related. Webinars and conferences count in addition to outdoor, interpretive programs and workshops.

Note: Above descriptions are only a general overview of the criteria, so it is recommended to visit (<https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/program-requirements>) for more detailed information before submitting documentation.

How to Submit Documentation

PRM students should contact their professor to receive their class form. Please see below for what PRM classes count for hours.

Criteria I through III and continuing education credits are documented with an [EE Form](#) which can be scanned and emailed to EEcertificationNC@lists.deq.nc.gov or mailed to the Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs, 1601 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601. Criteria IV and V submissions are entered directly by you into your online portfolio account which is created when you enroll.

Note: Forms are not stored in a database, so it is recommended to keep scanned or hard copies of forms for your records.

Note: This program is based on trustworthiness, so please make sure EE Forms are accurate. It is the responsibility of the participant to make sure hours properly reflect what has been done and to provide a facilitator signature or completion certificate along with the EE Form.

Requirements to Keep Certification

Upon completion, and in order to remain current with the certification, 50 hours of Continuing Education must be completed every 5 years.

Note: All Continuing education credits are capped at 10 hours per experience. For more information, visit <https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/program-requirements/continuing-education>

PRM Classes

As many classes in the PRM program directly involve EE instruction, they can count towards varying criteria hours depending on the course. Taking the required courses will provide the required 20 out of 30 Criteria III hours with the last 10 needing to be site visits, which you can complete throughout the PRM program or on your own. Required courses will provide 10 Criteria II hours, and electives can boost this number depending on what is taken.

Note: Contact your professor for the class EE form. Make sure to change the date to match the last month of the semester you took the class. For example, a Spring 2023 class should have 5/23 as the date.

Please see below for what classes offer criteria hours:

Required Courses

PRM 254 – Introduction to Outdoor Pursuits: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

PRM 361 – Program Planning and Evaluation in PRM: 10 hours Criteria III for completion

PRM 362 – Sustainable Recreation and Public Land Management: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

PRM 383/384/385 – Mini-Internship in PRM: Internships can provide many opportunities for hours, so document hours outside this course.

PRM 461 – Management and Administration of PRM Services: 10 hours of Criteria III for completion

PRM 483/484 – Capstone Internship: Internships can provide many opportunities for hours, so document hours outside this course.

Elective Courses

PRM 320 – Facilitating Environmental Education Experiences: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

Note: Aquatic WILD will be completed during this course and count as 6 Criteria I hours. This needs to be documented separately.

Note: Students will partially complete the required Criteria I *Basics of Environmental Education* for an assignment. Fully completing this outside of class requirements will give 10 hours of Criteria I and check off one of the two required parts of Criteria I.

Note: There will be two teaching opportunities in schools that can count for Criteria IV.

PRM 321 – Introduction to Environmental Interpretation: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

Note: Any site visit hours should be documented separately.

PRM 354 – Outdoor Living and Expedition Skills: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

PRM 365 – Nature RX: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

PRM 427 – Wilderness Education: 10 hours of Criteria II for completion

Note: If a student teaches an EE lesson to classmates, those hours could count towards Criteria IV. To count, the lesson must be written so that it would be suitable to teach as a public program to a group of people. It's always a good idea to run lesson ideas past Marty and Lisa if you think you want to count them towards Criteria IV.

PRM Students Submitting Class Documentation

Every course will have ready-made forms filled out. Please check on Canvas or contact your professor for the form. These documents only need to be signed and dated by professor before emailing them to EEcertificationNC@lists.deq.nc.gov. The only parts done solely by the students are documenting Criteria III site visits, Criteria IV teaching hours, and Criteria V project.

Contacts

NC Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs

Please see the website (<https://www.eenorthcarolina.org/certification/about-certification>) or contact Lisa Tolley or Marty Wiggins for any information about the program. Additionally, they will have the final say on what counts for criteria, so contact them if you need anything clarified.

Lisa Tolley - [919-707-8125](tel:919-707-8125) or lisa.tolley@ncdenr.gov

Marty Wiggins - [919-707-8124](tel:919-707-8124) or marty.wiggins@ncdenr.gov

Mailing Address:
Mail Service Center 1601
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1601

PRM Faculty

Dr. Callie Schultz, Tanya Poole, and PRM academic advisor are also contacts within the PRM program regarding the EE Certification program. They can provide general information about the program or help locate workshops to fit criteria you may need.

Callie Schultz – csschultz@wcu.edu

Tanya Poole - Tanya.poole@ncwildlife.org



N.C. Environmental Education
Certification Program

EDUCATOR EXPERIENCE FORM

EE Form

Name: _____

This form can be scanned and emailed to EEcertificationNC@lists.deq.nc.gov

Indicate hours in one of the following criteria:

I _____ **Criteria I, Instructional Workshop Basics of EE, Methods of Teaching EE** or an **approved Criteria I**

Hours

Visit [this link](#) for a complete list of approved workshops. *70 hours required and must include the Basics of EE independent study and Methods of Teaching EE workshop.*

II _____ **Criteria II, Outdoor Experience.** Programs, workshops, classes, etc. held **actively outside** (at least 50%) and **led by a qualified instructor.** *50 hours required, up to 20 hours allowed per experience.*

Hours

III _____ **Criteria III, Knowledge of Resources.** EE-related seminars, site visits, conferences, lectures, programs, etc. Can be held indoors, outdoors or as webinars if they relate directly to EE. *30 hours required, up to 10 hours allowed per experience.*

Hours

_____ **Eastern Region Hours** _____ **Central Region Hours** _____ **Piedmont Region Hours** _____ **Western Region Hours**

_____ **Continuing Education Credit.** CE credits are only for individuals already EE certified. CE credits can be Criteria I or II activities and can also be indoor or outdoor EE-related classes, programs, lectures, webinars, meetings or conferences. Site visits to EE Centers, passive tours, teaching or volunteer hours **cannot** be used for CE credit. *50 hours of CE credits are required every 5 years. Up to 10 hours allowed per experience.*

Activity Details:

Title of Activity _____

(Date of Activity M/D/Y) ____/____/____ Location of Activity _____

Brief Description of Activity

For Program Instructor or Interpreter Only:

(Print) Name and Title _____

Signature _____ (Date M/D/Y) ____/____/____

Phone Number () - Email _____

Scan and email forms: EEcertificationNC@lists.deq.nc.gov

Forms can be mailed: N.C. Office of Environmental Education and Public Affairs; 1601 Mail Service Center; Raleigh, NC 27699-1601