

What can I do with a degree in...

PARKS & RECREATION MANAGEMENT?

Why study **PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT?**

WCU's Parks and Recreation Management (PRM) Program prepares students for professions in the leisure service, recreation, outdoor, and tourism industries, as well as with land agencies such as the National Parks and U.S. Forest Service. As a PRM major, you will earn certifications, complete meaningful projects, present research, obtain experiences, and participate in conferences.

The WCU Parks and Recreation Management program's mission is to advance knowledge, educate professionals, engage communities, and affect positive social and environmental change using innovative, experiential, and equitable practices.

What is the **DEGREE OPTION?**

Bachelor of Science in Parks and Recreation Management

NOTE: Students may also minor in PRM. WCU also offers a Master of Science in Experiential and Outdoor Education.

What is the **UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION PROCESS?**

Any currently enrolled student at WCU may declare Parks and Recreation Management as an undergraduate major. Please make an appointment with your advisor via your MyWCU student portal. *NOTE: Students must maintain a 2.5 cumulative GPA to graduate from the program.*



What **JOBS ARE AVAILABLE?**

The field of parks and recreation offers graduates a wide range of career options in community recreation, outdoor leadership and instruction, commercial and resort recreation, community health and wellness, and recreation resource management.

NOTE: Advanced degrees may be required for some of the above careers. Please speak with an advisor or career counselor for more information.

Who employs **PARKS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT graduates?**

Our graduates work for a variety of employers including hotels and resorts, non-profit organizations, federal, state, and local government agencies, educational institutions including higher education, convention centers, camps and outdoor recreational programs, and hospitals and health organizations.

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.

Looking for a minor? Consider these options:

Coaching
Hospitality and Tourism
Leadership

Natural Resource Management
and more! See your advisor

1st YEAR

2nd YEAR

3rd YEAR

4th YEAR

EXCEL IN ACADEMICS

Coursework your first year will focus on foundational classes within the liberal studies catalog. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

The second year continues with additional liberal studies requirements as well as introductory PRM courses and other electives. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Courses in your third year will focus heavily on upper-level PRM requirements and PRM electives to complement your education. Students in their third year also typically take PRM 383, 384, and 385, which are the mini internship (50-hour internship) courses and must be taken before the fourth-year Capstone internship (400-hour summer internship) course. Check out the [8-semester plan](#) and make an appointment with your advisor.

Courses in your final year will focus heavily on upper-level PRM requirements and PRM electives to complement your education. NOTE: Students take PRM 483/ 484 (PRM Internship Capstone) the summer after their fourth year.

Check out the [8-semester plan](#), make an appointment with your advisor, complete your degree audit, and [apply for graduation!](#)

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.

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.

Complete an internship that will give you practical hands-on experience in your field. Contact the CCPD for help in your internship search.

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 advisor or career counselor.

See what on-campus employment opportunities are available by logging in to JobCat via your MyWCU. Employment with BaseCamp Cullo-
whee would be a great option.

BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Connect with the [Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning](#) and ask about the [Spark 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. Ask for special projects or responsibilities that you can highlight on a resume.

PRM also has unique study abroad opportunities for students. Study Outdoor Education with our partner program at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in Ireland. Discuss this option with your PRM advisor for more info."

Volunteer with nonprofits that focus on your ideal career path.

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

Join professional organizations such as the [National Recreation and Park Association](#), or the [NC Recreation and Park Association](#).

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

Consider joining clubs or organizations on campus and become involved in leadership positions such as the PRM Club.

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.

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.

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.

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 50,000 employers)

DID YOU KNOW?

MORE INFORMATION

INTERNSHIP Information

Excellent internship opportunities, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Navitat, Nantahala Outdoor Center, Project SOAR, and several camps, surround the WCU campus. The strongest industry in the region is tourism, so our students enjoy internships at attractions and resorts in Western North Carolina and in the coastal areas of both North and South Carolina at places like Wilmington, Hilton Head Island, Myrtle Beach, and Charleston. Community parks and recreation agencies also abound in the region.

Students must complete three mini internship courses and one Capstone internship course, typically taken the summer after the student's fourth year. Students must complete 400 clock hours with at least 10 weeks of experience to complete the internship requirement for this program.

SKILLS LEARNED in the classroom

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

- knowledge of parks and recreation industry
- oral and written communication
- problem solving
- decision-making
- technical skills
- planning
- teamwork
- leadership

KNOWLEDGE Base

This program will prepare students to:

- Demonstrate the nature and scope of the relevant park, recreation, tourism or related professions and their associated industries;
- Understand techniques and processes used by professionals and workers in these industries, as well as the foundation of the profession in history, science and philosophy.
- Design, implement, and evaluate services that facilitate targeted human experiences and that embrace personal and cultural dimensions of diversity.
- Apply entry-level knowledge about operations and strategic management/administration in parks, recreation, tourism and/or related professions.

Professional **RESOURCES**

- American Camps Association: acacamps.org
- American Camps Association, Southeastern: acacamps.org/southeastern
- Association for Experiential Education: aee.org
- Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education: aore.org
- National Recreation and Park Association: nrpa.org
- North Carolina Recreation and Park Association: ncrpa.net
- Resort and Commercial Recreation Association: rcra.org
- Wilderness Education Association: wea.wildapricot.org

QUESTIONS?

For questions, please call the Parks and Recreation Management program at 828-227-3844 or visit prm.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.