

Advising Information for Elementary Education Students

I. Majors, degrees, certificates and endorsements

Your major is Elementary Education; you will receive a B.A. in Elementary Education. Your major has three categories of courses: Education courses, non-Education courses, and your content area. Each of these categories is reviewed below.

It is important to remember that universities grant degrees, majors, and minors while the state grants certificates and endorsements to teach. They are not the same thing, so pay attention to what the catalog says and then confirm that information with your Education advisor. Note: The State of Washington may change certification requirements at any time and is under no obligation to follow Whitworth's catalog. Also, the federal government may also change how teachers are qualified. They also do not have to follow the catalog. The lesson here is to check and double-check with your advisor on certification and endorsement requirements.

II. Endorsements and Certificates

Your teaching certificate will show the academic areas in which you are legally qualified to teach in the State of Washington; these areas are called endorsements. The requirements for each of the endorsement areas are available from the Department of Teacher Education or from the catalog. Each endorsement requires certain content courses, methods course(s), and field experiences for each endorsement area. Candidates must also pass the WEST-E/NES Test, a Washington State exam for each endorsement area.

When you complete all the Elementary Education program requirements, you will receive a Residency Certificate from the State of Washington with an endorsement to teach preschool through the eighth grade (K-8). In addition to your K-8 endorsement, you may also complete endorsements in other areas. This is explained below in the Content Area section. Even though you're certified to teach K-8, you will more likely to be hired if you have an additional endorsement in a content area. Such areas could be math, English/Language Arts, and art for example. See Section V below.

III. Education Courses (see Elementary Certification Plan)

Freshmen may begin to take Education courses in their first Jan Term or Spring semester if they have an established university grade point average. First-year students at Whitworth who have transferred in credits through Running Start or AP credit may not take Education courses in their first semester and are strongly encouraged to wait until completing their first semester to begin the program. See your advisor for the best approach regarding starting the program.

The general education requirements for Oral Communication, Math, Social Science, and American and Global Diversity are fulfilled through the Elementary Education program.

IV. Non-Education courses (see Elementary Certification Plan)

You are required to take a number of courses outside of Education to fulfill state content requirements. These courses may be started as a freshman and do not require admission into the program. A number of these courses also meet general college requirements. These courses include:

Math: MA 221 and MA 222, Math for Elementary Teachers I and II, are required and fulfill the university math requirement.

Science: We have designed two courses to meet the required science knowledge for elementary majors: NS 101, Earth and Sky and BI 102, Introduction to Biology. Transfer students may work with the chair of the department to petition that other science courses substitute for these courses.

Social Science: HI 131 and HI 201 are required and fulfill the university social science requirement.

Remember any of these non-Education courses can also be used in your Content Area (see below).

V. Area of Concentration (this can be confusing so read carefully)

The basic requirement: You must complete a minimum of 20 semester credits in one teaching area (endorsement). Reading **cannot be used** for your content area, nor can areas such as Business and Theology because there are no state endorsements in these academic areas (sorry--state law).

You have five options for completing your 20 semester credit content area. As you'll see below, some of these options overlap.

1. You can take **any 20 semester credits in one concentration area** that is considered an endorsable teaching subject. For example, you could take any 20 semester credits in English or you could take all your 20 credits in math. This option gives you lots of freedom to choose courses, but does **not** lead to completing an endorsement or a minor.
2. Instead of any 20 semester credits in one concentration area, you could follow the requirements for a **minor**. The advantage of this option is that a minor will show up on your transcript and looks academically stronger than the "any 20 credits" option. Note: some minors are less than 20 credits, but you will still need to complete at least 20 credits in one area to fulfill state law. For example, you can use the Special Education minor plus an additional Special Education course to add up to 20 credits in this area, but remember the minor in special education does not lead to an endorsement (see point #5).
3. You could use your content area to fulfill the requirements for an **endorsement**. In a number of cases, doing the minor is the same as doing the requirements for an endorsement. For example, completing the minor in math is the same as completing the requirements for an endorsement in math. In some academic areas, such as Spanish, you will see that the minor requirements are different than the requirement for the endorsement.

An endorsement in addition to your elementary certificate is a good option since it endorses you to teach in an area beyond your Elementary Education Endorsement. This option is particularly attractive for those who are interested in teaching in **middle school**. Many middle school principals prefer to hire teachers who have an Elementary Education background with at least one additional endorsement area. This combination allows them to hire you for teaching all subjects through the 6th grade and with the additional endorsement you are "highly qualified" for another subject in higher grades.

Are you required to have an additional endorsement to go with elementary? No, but we strongly suggest you add Reading and/or English Language Learners to your Elementary Education certificate.

4. This option is confusing, so read carefully. You can also complete your 20 semester credits in an area of **concentration that is a broad endorsement area. There are three: English/Language Arts, History/Social Studies, and Science.** That means you could fulfill the 20 semester credit content requirement by taking courses from an array of the academic disciplines that fall under these broad areas. The best way to do this is to use the catalog to find the classes required for a major with the teaching endorsement in a broad area and to choose 20 credits from that list of classes or at least from those disciplines that are listed.

For English/Language Arts, you can choose your 20 credits from English, Journalism, Speech, and Theatre Arts. For History/Social Studies, you choose your 20 credits from History, Political Studies, Sociology, and Economics. For Science, you could choose your 20 credits from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Natural Science. The advantage is the development of breadth in one area. The disadvantage is the lack of depth and the lack of a minor or endorsement. This option is most attractive to transfer students who have not started their content areas before coming to Whitworth and can combine courses from their community college work under one of these broad areas. Remember: this option **does not lead to an endorsement.**

5. The last option is to **double major in Elementary Education and another area.** The advantage is a deeper academic preparation and a major in an area besides Elementary Education. The obvious disadvantage is that this will require more time and coursework. Many students at Whitworth put together Elementary Education with another major and, we seriously encourage you to consider this option. **The major most often chosen is Special Education.** You can use Special Education in your 20 semester credit content area, so completing the major doesn't require that many more courses. The advantage of combining elementary education and special education is that you will be endorsed in two areas and greatly increase your marketability.

VI. English Language Learners (ELL) Endorsement

The English Language Learners endorsement (formerly English as a Second Language) is expected in some states such as California, Arizona, and Nevada. Students who are thinking they may want to teach in these areas are strongly encouraged to complete the English Language Learners endorsement/minor as a part of their program.

VII. Reading Endorsement

There are enough courses in literacy in the Elementary Education program that it only takes a few more courses to be eligible for the Reading Endorsement. Meeting the endorsement requirements is one course short of completing the minor in Reading. See the Reading Certification Plan or catalog for details.

See back page for FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions on Elementary Education Advising:

When can I start taking Education courses? When you have completed one semester at Whitworth you may take education classes during your first Jan term or Spring semester.

What can I take as a beginning freshman or transfer? You can take MA 221; MA 222; NS 101; BI 102; HI 131; HI 201 and also begin work on your 20 semester credits of content area.

Does ELL or Reading work for my 20 semester credits? ELL Yes. Reading No.

Do I take EDU 321 right after EDU 320? EDU 320 is a prerequisite for 321, and it is helpful to take it soon after EDU 320 but they do not have to be sequential.

Can I use Religion or Business for my 20 semester credits? No.

When do I get an Education Advisor? Toward the end of EDU 201, 202, 203, you will apply for the program and then upon acceptance you will be assigned an advisor.

What should I do for advising before I am admitted? Any education faculty in the undergraduate program will gladly assist you until you are admitted and given an advisor. Just come to the third floor of Dixon to the Teacher Education counter and ask for assistance in advising.

When do I start my 300 block classes in the elementary program? Plan this with your advisor. You must complete the EDU 200 block courses and be accepted in the program. Then you will take EDU 320 and EDU 321 before you take your 300 block classes, 400 block classes and your student teaching in consecutive semesters so you can have practicum experience in the classroom where you are likely to student teach.

When do I take all the other Education courses? Once you have been admitted (during the 200 block classes) and have completed EDU 320, you may take courses such as 343, 344, and 401. These courses do not have a specific time frame in which to be taken.