

Professional Teaching: Experience-Based Learning Emphasis - Master of Science in Education

The 32-credit Professional Teaching: Experience-Based Learning Emphasis is a Master of Science in Education (MSED) program that takes four-terms to complete. The **hybrid/blended** program uses a cohort model, encouraging ongoing collaboration and support as candidates advance through the degree together. The cohort participates in face-to-face classes approximately four weekends per semester; although field experiences in the third and fourth semester may alter the schedule. Depending on the site location, there may be potential for cost-free overnight lodging at Wisconsin environmental centers or similar.

The program prepares educators to transform teaching and learning through the design and facilitation of experience-based learning connected to local communities and real-world contexts. Grounded in theories of experience-based learning and community connected learning, the program equips educators to develop curricula that foster reflection, purposeful engagement, collaborative inquiry, leadership, and conscientious decision-making.

Educators examine the ways environments influence learners' sense of self, social belonging, and cultural understanding while strengthening skills that support accessible, meaningful learning. They design and facilitate learning communities that integrate learner-centered approaches and reflective practices, ensuring instruction that is relevant and connected to students' experiences and surroundings.

Graduates are prepared to:

1. Design and facilitate experience-based curricula that connect academic content to students' communities, natural environments, and authentic real-world contexts.
2. Apply experience-based education theory and research to create learning environments that foster reflection, inquiry, and collaborative problem-solving across educational settings.
3. Lead immersive learning activities that build critical thinking, resilience, leadership capacity, and social-emotional skills through authentic engagement with local, regional, and statewide communities and environments.
4. Conduct systematic action research to assess, refine, and improve instructional practice using evidence-based methods and reflective inquiry.
5. Cultivate learning communities characterized by trust, dialogue, shared purpose, and cultural understanding that cultivate learners' sense of self and social belonging.
6. Model conscientious decision-making and adaptive leadership through professional practice grounded in research, reflection, and responsiveness to learners' individual and group needs and contexts.

The program integrates theory with applied practice by engaging educators directly in local, regional, and statewide field experiences where they investigate authentic challenges, collaborate with partners,

and design instruction that responds to the demands of varied learning environments. As a result, participation may involve department approved field experiences in outdoor environments, including structured, experience-based activities in natural and community settings, such as camping, hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing, fishing, orienteering, environmental field investigations, and outdoor team-building initiatives. All such activities are designed to align with course objectives and are conducted with appropriate planning, supervision, and adherence to institutional policies and safety guidelines. Individuals requiring accommodations are encouraged to apply; reasonable modifications and supports will be provided in accordance with university policy.

Cohorts typically start in the summer and fall. Inquire about possible spring start dates.

Program requirements

Admission

To qualify for admission to the Professional Teaching: Experience-Based Instruction Emphasis Program, a candidate must:

- Meet all UWL graduate application requirements.
- Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- Have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 2.85 or higher on a 4.00 scale; or an average of at least 3.00 in the last half of all undergraduate work; or an average of at least 3.00 for no less than 12 semester credits of graduate study at an accredited graduate school.
- Departmental or school/college approval to enter the graduate program.

Part-time enrollment is not available.

Curriculum

(32 credits)

Required coursework (listed in order of enrollment):

Code	Title	Credits
EDU 615	Foundations of Experience-Based Education (Foundations of Experience-Based Learning)	3
EDU 616	Foundations of Learning Communities (Foundations of Learning Communities)	3
EDU 641	Educational Research I: Introduction	2
EDU 619	Designing Experience-Based Curriculum (Designing Experience-Based Curriculum)	3
EDU 620	Creating and Cultivating Learner-Focused Communities (Creating and Cultivating Experience-Based Curriculum)	3
EDU 642	Educational Research II: Exploration	2
EDU 745	Intentional Facilitation in Experience-Based Learning (Intentional Facilitation in Experience-Based Learning)	3
EDU 747	Insightful Expeditions (Insightful Expeditions)	3
EDU 743	Educational Research III: Conduct	2
EDU 749	Journeys of Growth Through Experience (Journeys of Growth Through Experience)	3
EDU 751	Summit of Learning: A Journey of Achievement (Summit of Learning: A Journey of Achievement)	3

EDU 744	Educational Research IV: Publication	2
Total Credits		32

Program completion requirements

- Cumulative graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher.
- A grade of "C" or greater must be earned in all courses.
- Complete all courses and other program requirements, including action research.
- Complete the "Intent to Graduate" form online via the WINGS Student Center immediately following registration for the final term of the program.
- Pay the graduation fee and remove all other indebtedness to the university. Payment of graduation fees does not imply readiness for graduation and does not take the place of submitting the intent to graduate form.

7. Pay the graduation fee and remove all other indebtedness to the university. Payment of graduation fees does not imply readiness for graduation and does not take the place of applying for graduation.
8. Complete all requirements within 30 days after the official ending date of a term in order for a degree to be awarded for that term. (See #5 above for separate deadline for written capstone experience.)

Degree requirements

University graduate degree requirements

After being admitted to the program of one's choice, candidates for a graduate degree must:

1. Complete any preliminary course work and deficiencies.
2. Complete all courses and other program requirements, including residence requirements prescribed for the degree desired in the respective school or college within a seven-year period from the date of initial enrollment, with the exception of students enrolled in the Student Affairs Administration and Leadership Ed.D. (SAA Ed.D.) graduate program. SAA Ed.D. students must complete all degree requirements within ten years from the time of initial enrollment in the graduate program.
3. Earn a minimum of 30 credits for a master's degree; 54 credits for a doctorate or post-master's degree. Earn at least one-half of the minimum number of credits required in the program in graduate-only level courses (700, 800, 900, and non-slash 600 level courses). Some UWL graduate programs require more than 30 graduate credits. Please review the individual program requirements (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/graduate/programrequirements/>) listed in the catalog for the exact number of credits required.
4. Earn a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00.
5. Satisfy dissertation, thesis, seminar paper, terminal/graduate projects and internships, or comprehensive examination, where applicable. A dissertation or thesis approved by the committee must be submitted to Graduate & Extended Learning for editorial review and approval by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. The recommended initial submission date for review is two weeks before commencement. Ordinarily, a seminar paper or project report does not have to be approved by the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. However, if the seminar paper or project report is to be archived in Murphy Library, the student must follow the same rules as they apply to the dissertation/thesis requiring approval from the Dean of Graduate & Extended Learning. For further research/dissertation/thesis guidelines (<https://www.uwlax.edu/gel/graduate-education/thesis-and-dissertation/>), see Graduate & Extended Learning.
6. File a completed "Intent to Graduate" form online via the WINGS Student Center immediately following registration for the final semester or summer term in residence. December graduates and winter intercession should file by May 1. May and summer graduates should file by December 1.