

Professional Teaching: Learner-Focused Instruction Emphasis - Master of Science in Education

The 32-credit Professional Teaching: Learner Focused Instruction 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. Cohort sites are located in multiple locations across Wisconsin and typically start in the spring, summer, and fall.

The program equips educators to enhance instructional practice through evidence-based curriculum design and assessment that responds to learners' knowledge, experiences, and community contexts. Grounded in experience-based learning and connected to local communities, the program prepares educators to create instruction that builds on learners' strengths and connects learning to the environments where they live and grow.

Through coursework focused on place-based curriculum design, authentic assessment, and systematic inquiry into teaching practice, educators develop advanced skills in planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction. They gain practical experience in collaborative curriculum development, inquiry-based projects, and professional communication, while cultivating instructional leadership and a commitment to shared growth.

Interactive learning, inquiry-based projects, and department approved third-term local field experiences (e.g., cultural centers, museums, local businesses or governments, community mapping, neighborhood investigations, story gathering) add real-world applicability to teaching and learning.

Graduates of the program are prepared to design instruction that engages learners with curriculum connected to their real-world experiences and communities, fosters critical thinking and problem-solving, and develops the skills needed for active participation in both academic and civic contexts. They utilize advanced techniques to continuously assess and refine their instruction, ensuring learning experiences are purposeful, responsive to learners' individual and collective needs, and strengthen their connections to the people and places that shape their lives.

Graduates are prepared to:

1. Design community-centered learning environments by creating, implementing, and evaluating instruction that builds on students' experiences and knowledges.
2. Employ context-adaptive pedagogy by selecting and adjusting instructional strategies based on learners' backgrounds, experiences, and learning conditions.
3. Design learning experiences that promote students' transfer of knowledge and skills from classroom settings to practical, real-world applications.

4. Demonstrate reflective and collaborative leadership by using reflection and shared professional processes to strengthen instructional practice and improve students' learning experiences.
5. Conduct practitioner inquiry and action research by implementing action research cycles with professional expertise to improve educational practice.
6. Communicate professionally through scholarly writing by effectively conveying research findings and instructional decisions to a variety of audiences.

Program requirements

Admission

To qualify for admission to the Professional Teaching: Learner-Focused 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 Learner-Focused Communities)	3
EDU 642	Educational Research II: Exploration	2
EDU 746	Learning Through Place (Learning Through Place)	3
EDU 748	Curriculum as Community Practice (Curriculum as Community Practice)	3
EDU 743	Educational Research III: Conduct	2
EDU 750	Youth as Co-Designers (Youth as Co-Designers)	3
EDU 752	Teaching for Sustainability (Teaching for Sustainability)	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.

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 intersession should file by May 1. May and summer graduates should file by December 1.
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.)