

University of West Georgia College of Education



Guide to Graduation

In support of Chancellor Davis' retention, progression, and graduation initiatives, the College of Education seeks to provide students with information to assist them with the goal of graduating in four years. Several factors can affect the route to graduation. Knowing these factors ahead of time will enable students to make intelligent decisions and to move more smoothly through the core curriculum as well as the professional education curriculum.



Factor 1 – Do the Math!

Education degrees minimally require 123 credit hours. Attending only in the fall and spring for four years (8 semesters) means that you need to average just over 15 hours/semester to finish in 4 years. In reality, many students only average 12-14 hours/semester due to a variety of reasons such as working part-time, family, etc. Thus, in order to graduate in four years, many students consider completing summer coursework in addition to attending full-time in the fall and spring. It is also important to plan ahead when you are an education major since your junior and senior years often are designed in 15-18 hour blocks with sequenced coursework that includes completing field experiences in schools off campus.



Factor 2 – Study and Stay Focused!

Dropping or withdrawing from courses can set you behind in two ways. First, by dropping or withdrawing from a course, you reduce the number of hours you are completing each semester. Second, at some point, you must increase hours taken in a future semester to replace the hours you lost. Staying focused and maximizing effective use of study time are critical in helping you stay on track. With this said, it is important to consider how a D or an F might impact your GPA. Keep in mind that habitual withdrawal from courses could negatively affect your financial aid as well as extend the number of additional semesters you'll need to complete your program.



Factor 3 – Changing Major

Changing majors early in your college career may or may not affect your ability to graduate in four years. In your first two years, you are typically scheduling core curriculum courses. Thus, fulfilling the core curriculum requirements in Areas A-E is much easier than completing the curriculum requirements for Area F and the professional education sequence. Changing your major after completion of Area F may require you to complete additional courses needed for certification.



Factor 4 – High Standards

Nationally as well as in Georgia, there are high standards for entering teacher education programs. The standards usually require that candidates maintain a particular GPA and that they are able to pass basic skills tests. If you have completed Areas A-F, but have not (1) passed the Regents' Test, (2) passed the GACE Basic Skills Assessment, and (3) met the program specific minimum GPA, then you will not be eligible to begin the professional education sequence of courses. To raise your GPA, advisors often will suggest that you consider a minor, or that you complete additional courses that will complement your major. Regarding the GACE, students are typically encouraged to take this required basic skills test after completing a significant portion of the core curriculum (but especially English and math). In considering when you might schedule the GACE, it is highly recommended that you schedule the first attempt in such a way that you have time to attempt it a second time if needed and prior to the semester in which you anticipate beginning the professional education sequence so as not to delay your graduation.



Factor 5 - Responsibility

Be responsible. In the College of Education, all teacher education programs provide students with a detailed Program Sheet (checksheet) that is divided into two halves. The first half of the Program Sheet lists the core curriculum requirements while the second half lists the professional education curriculum. For the most part, the first half of the Program Sheet should be completed in your first two years and the second half of the Program Sheet should be completed in the second two years. By working with a College of Education advisor regularly, planning carefully, and recording the courses you complete each semester on the Program Sheet, you can monitor your progress toward graduating in four years.