

## Flexibility, Variety, and Quality in Teacher Education

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“He who dares to teach must never cease to learn” (Anonymous).

North Carolina, like several other states, is faced with a critical shortage of qualified teachers. It is estimated that in the next ten years, North Carolina will have a need for over 100,000 new teachers. And not just any teachers; in this age of “accountability” and “No Child Left Behind,” North Carolina is looking for high quality teachers who can effect real change when it comes to student learning outcomes. To meet this challenge, institutions of higher learning in the Tar Heels state are offering a greater variety of learning modalities for teachers who are seeking teaching licensure. Here at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP), we offer various programs that are designed to meet the needs of our public schools, while offering flexibility to prospective teachers in training.

Our mission requires quality and personal service. UNCP has been very successful in recruiting quality faculty for all of our programs. But, our true hallmark of success has been our personalized service – “UNCP, where learning gets personal,” is not some simple marketing device. It is our mantra, our mandate, and our mission. Each and every administrative unit is committed to providing personal and caring service to our students.

“Students do not fall through the cracks here. We won’t have it!” said Dr. Collie Coleman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Outreach. “Unlike those mega universities out there, each and every student truly matters to us.” High quality service, especially for distance learners, is what makes a really big difference in attracting and retaining high quality students.

UNCP offers many concentrations in education. Our traditional teacher education programs include Art Education, Biology Education, Birth-Kindergarten, Elementary Education, English Education, Exceptional Children, Mathematics Education, Middle Grades Education, Music Education, Physical Education, Science Education, and Social Studies Education.

One of our most successful programs is lateral entry. Lateral entry is a contractual agreement between an individual and a school system (LEA). A school system may hire an individual who has a background in the area he/she will teach but who has not taken professional education courses. When the individual is hired, the school district applies to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for a lateral entry license (temporary permit or provisional license) that allows the individual to teach for a specified period of time in that school system. Part of the agreement requires that the individual be admitted and be allowed to complete a licensure program within the specified period of time in order to convert his/her lateral entry license to a clear and continuing license.

Lateral Entry is an “alternate” route to teaching for qualified individuals outside of the public-education system. It is a method that allows qualified persons to teach while obtaining a license as they teach. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s Licensure Section authorized lateral-entry licenses on a provisional basis in licensure areas that correspond to the individuals’ academic study. Lateral-entry license holders are subject to the regulations that apply to other beginning teachers in North Carolina. Lateral-entry teachers must meet testing requirements within the first two (2) years of employment and have a maximum of three (3) years to complete all course requirements.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction issues licenses to teach in the public schools. Individuals who already possess a baccalaureate degree must satisfy the same requirements for licensure as undergraduate teacher education majors. To determine which requirements have been met through previous study, an

individual must complete a Request for a Plan of Study form available from the School of Education, Licensure Office. Transcripts from each institution attended must accompany the Request. Based upon review of the transcript(s) by the School of Education and the appropriate program coordinator, an individualized program of study is developed. Upon successful completion of the prescribed program of study, the student may apply for licensure recommendation from The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Licensure-only students are subject to the same Teacher Education Program admission and continuation regulations as degree-seeking students. Additional information is available from the School of Education.

We also offer graduate programs in Art Education, Elementary Education, English Education, Mathematics Education, Middle Grades Education, Music Education, Physical Education, Reading Education, Science Education, Social Studies Education, and the Master of School Administration.

Another way into teaching is the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.), which is an interdisciplinary degree option within the Teacher Education degree program. The M.A.T. is intended for graduates from accredited colleges or universities with an undergraduate major in humanities, sciences, or social sciences with few, if any, formal courses in education. The program is available only to those individuals who have not earned licensure and who are seeking licensure in the teaching field in which they wish to earn the graduate degree.

The program will include graduate work in the teaching pedagogy and advanced professional education coursework in one of the following areas: Art Education, English Education, Mathematics Education, Middle Grades Education, Music Education, Physical Education, Science Education, and Social Studies Education. A 3-hour (10 week) internship is required if the candidate does not provide appropriate documentation of at least one year of successful K-12 teaching experience.

UNCP offers flexible options including night and weekend classes, online courses, as well as courses at our various program locations at community colleges through out North Carolina. We also offer courses at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville.

North Carolina needs teachers now, but not at the expense of quality. It is important to note that in 2000, “UNCP ranked second out of 47 colleges and universities that train teachers in North Carolina, and first among universities with enrollment under 10,000. Only four schools were ranked exemplary while five were rated low performing.” UNCP continues to provide these high quality programs each year, and at the same time offer flexible options for people trying to learn in this fast-paced society.