

Foundations of Teacher Education/Educational Assistant Program

Western Technical College

Supplemental Information

- **Course Sequence and Delivery.** The program provides the flexibility you need to complete your education. You can complete the Educational Assistant (EA) Technical Diploma Degree in three trimesters, or complete the Foundations of Teacher Education (FoTE) Associate Degree in four trimesters!
 - You may choose to earn a two-year **Foundations of Teacher Education Associate Degree** that consists of 61 credits and takes four semesters to complete: fall, spring, summer, and fall. Most area school districts recommend this program and look for the degree upon hiring.
 - The **Educational Assistant Technical Diploma** takes three terms to complete: fall, spring, and summer. With a technical diploma a student is considered “highly qualified” by local school districts and is highly sought after for employment as a paraprofessional. A student can have a job in the preK-12 school setting and still return to college in the fall to complete the last program courses (online and evening course delivery) to complete their Associate Degree.
- **Reliable Transportation.** You will need reliable transportation to complete the requirements of Practicum courses as the program utilizes practicum sites throughout the La Crosse area. Students are responsible for their own expenses for transportation related to that clinical site assignment.
- **Practicum.** The program utilizes many field experiences. Field or practicum settings are hands on learning opportunities in a real world work places such as elementary schools and classrooms throughout our district.
- **Criminal Background Check.** A criminal background check is required for all individuals who work with vulnerable adults and/or children. Viewpoint screening handles the process for Western. Instructions are linked to the Admissions Requirements page. Complete the directions on the link. Western does not accept background checks conducted by third parties (i.e., your employer). The criminal background check is valid for a one-year time frame. For subsequent years, you will be required to complete the State of Wisconsin Background Information Disclosure through the Welcome Center on an annual basis each year that you are enrolled in the program.

You are required to disclose **all** past experiences with the law. Although the information you submit refers to crimes, criminal conviction, and pending criminal charges, the information that comes back from the background check does include all contacts with law enforcement whether or not a criminal conviction occurred. It is very important that you be honest when completing the background check form. Some facilities may automatically refuse a student they perceive to be less than truthful on the form. Therefore, include contacts such as non-criminal traffic matters, arrests, charges for which you were acquitted, and charges that were pled down to an ordinance violation or forfeiture.

Education sites have the right to refuse placement to any student based on the background check results. If your background check reveals a past experience with the law, you will be asked to meet with the Dean, Nicole Cooksey, to discuss the results of the background check, and difficulties that might arise from securing a field placement. You will also be asked to read and sign the Disclosure of Possible Bar from Practicum Experiences waiver. This document explains that if you have charges on your background check, we are unable to guarantee that you will be able to be placed for the multiple practicum experiences that our program requires. If you are unable to secure a placement, you will not be able to graduate from the program. It is your decision whether or not you want to enter the program based on the uncertainty of being accepted at the education sites. In addition, if you want to continue your education beyond the associate degree, you should contact the appropriate state licensing board to ensure you are license- or certification-eligible.

New charges or arrests after the background check has been completed must be reported to Nicole Cooksey, the Dean of the Foundations of Teacher Education and Educational Assistant programs (608.785.9275), within five (5) working days. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

- **State Licensure.** Some school districts may require you to get a special education license from DPI, but this does not apply to all schools. It is a one-time fee of \$75 and you can apply for it after getting hired in a school if they require this.
- **Program Faculty.** If you have specific questions about the program or your particular situation, please contact the FoTE/EA program faculty directly.

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