Department of Education

The Department of Education has three program areas: Curriculum & Instruction, Educational Leadership, and Adult & Higher Education. As the undergraduate teacher education unit, Curriculum & Instruction provides programs in elementary education and secondary education. The Teacher Education Program is nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC/CAEP)) as well as by the Montana Board of Public Education.

Curriculum & Instruction also offers a Master’s degree for advanced professional development for practicing teachers and other education professionals, a graduate endorsement in Library Media, and a Doctoral degree (Ed.D.) for those preparing to teach in education departments at the university level.

The Educational Leadership program offers a Master’s degree for the principalship, a Superintendent’s Endorsement obtained beyond the Master’s degree, an Education Specialist degree, and a Doctoral degree to prepare individuals who are seeking careers in a variety of areas of Educational Leadership. The Educational Leadership program is nationally accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) as well as by the Montana Board of Public Education.

The program in Adult and Higher Education offers Master’s and Doctoral level degrees and a College Teaching Certificate for those seeking careers in Higher Education or other post-secondary educational venues.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Education is to prepare highly qualified professional educators and administrators through exemplary campus and distance based programs and field placements in quality public and private schools. In addition, the department contributes to the State of Montana and the nation through the faculty’s active research and outreach efforts.

Undergraduate Teacher Education Program—Conceptual Framework

The Teacher Education Program at MSU believes that learning to teach in educational settings is a complex task requiring a thoughtful blending of content mastery with carefully guided field experiences. In order to meet the multiple demands of an ever-changing profession, we ensure that students understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines and can create standards-based learning experiences that are meaningful for students.

1. Content Mastery

   The Teacher Education Program at MSU has been designed to provide our students with a rich and well-balanced education grounded in the liberal arts & sciences and current educational theory, research, and practice. Students participate in learning communities within our program in which they develop in-depth content knowledge for their work as classroom teachers and school leaders. Our graduates understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines and can create standards-based learning experiences that are meaningful for students.

2. Understanding Development and Diversity of Learners

   Graduates of the Teacher Education Program understand how K-12 students learn and develop and can provide learning opportunities which are adapted to diverse learners and support their intellectual, social, and personal development. Our graduates are committed to building a caring, respectful, and supportive learning environment and are prepared to provide access to the necessary tools to help every student learn. They are also cognizant of and committed to Montana's American Indian cultures and the values embodied by the Indian Education for All Act.

3. Pedagogical and Technological Proficiency

   We believe that professional educators must have sound pedagogical content knowledge and be skilled in the use of research-based instructional practices. Our graduates understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to foster students’ motivation for learning and encourage their conceptual understandings through the development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance/work force skills. Our graduates understand the principles of differentiated instruction and can integrate these concepts and practices into their teaching. The graduates of our Teacher Education Program also demonstrate knowledge of effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques and effectively use educational technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

4. Excellence in Instructional Design and Assessment

   It is essential for teachers to understand and practice alignment in curriculum, standards, and assessments. Our program is committed to current models of instructional design in which our candidates focus on defining learning outcomes and determining evidence that all learners have met curricular goals. Our graduates plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals. They also understand how to analyze pre-, formative, and summative assessment of student learning for individuals, small groups, or whole class settings to ensure the intellectual, social, and personal development of every learner.

5. Professionalism in Practice and Reflection

   Continuous improvement of the education profession depends upon the systematic practice of professional reflection, inquiry, and collaboration to discover new and more effective educational approaches. Our graduates demonstrate the ability to reflect on classroom decision-making with regard to content, diversity, pedagogy and assessment in order to improve teaching and learning. They are reflective practitioners who examine their own biases and endeavor to provide equitable educational opportunities for students. They also demonstrate an understanding that education happens in a context and develop effective relationships with family and community members. As candidates move from campus to the K-12 classroom, they are expected to adhere to and model our program’s Professional Expectations and Montana’s Code of Ethics for teachers.

Graduate Programming within the Department of Education (http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/education-health-human-development/education/#programstext)

Link to the Department of Education Overview (http://catalog.montana.edu/graduate/education-health-human-development/education)