FAQ’s about Teaching and Westmont’s Credential Program!

What is the Westmont Credential Program?

The credential program at Westmont is a series of coursework, classroom field experiences, and assessments that will prepare you to teach in California schools. A California teaching credential establishes your professional expertise and eligibility to teach in California’s public schools. California uses the term credentialing much as other states refer to certification.

What grade levels and subject areas can I earn a credential in at Westmont?

Students hoping to teach all subject areas in California elementary schools will need to earn a Multiple Subject Credential (see our liberal studies link for Multiple Subject Credential questions.) Single Subject Credentials options for those wanting to teach in a particular subject area include Art, English, History/Social Science, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education/Kinesiology, Science – General, Biology, Chemistry, or Physics, and Spanish.

What if I want to teach junior high or high school?

Those who want to teach junior high or high school generally major in the subject area they want to teach. In California, as long as you have earned a bachelor’s degree, you can take the CSET examination in a subject area of interest and apply to a fifth-year program to complete a single-subject teaching credential. It is often possible to add another subject area to a credential.

Can I complete a credential in four years?

Yes! With careful planning, and when needed with classes over the summer, Westmont students can complete a B.A. and the requirements for a preliminary credential in four years at Westmont. Students with a B.A. or B.S. from another institution can complete a credential in less than a year. Contact Dr. Michelle Hughes, Chair for questions about Westmont’s Credential Application and program requirements.

What is the 5th year program and how much does it cost?

Graduates of Westmont and other colleges or universities who choose not to earn their credential as part of their four-year program have the option of completing a fifth-year, post-baccalaureate program at Westmont. Fifth-year candidates who hold a B.A. degree, live off campus, and are not enrolled in classes on campus, will receive a scholarship equal to a 55% reduction in tuition during the semester they do student teaching (generally the spring semester). For details and application forms pertinent to the fifth-year program, contact the Education Department, as well as Financial Aid regarding scholarship opportunities.

Do I need a Master’s Degree to teach?

A Single Subject or Multiple Subject California Preliminary Credential is required to teach in California and earning a master’s degree is typically a student’s personal choice. The units earned in Westmont’s Credential Program will move a beginning teacher up the salary schedule in a school district. Typically, a 5-year student earns 33 + units post bachelor’s degree and a fast-track student earns 15-17 units post bachelor’s degree.
Why Westmont?

The Education Department at Westmont is a small, close-knit community. Courses in the credential program are taught by full-time faculty with small class sizes. During student teaching, full-time faculty will work alongside you and your master teacher through weekly seminars and observations and provide continuous feedback and support.

How do I get started and find out more?

Contact the Education Department in Porter Center for more information. Visit the department’s website http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/departments/education/ and make an appointment with Dr. Michelle Hughes (mhughes@westmont.edu), Dr. Andrew Mullen (amullen@westmont.edu), or Dr. Carolyn Mitten (cmitten@westmont.edu) to learn about pre-requisite courses and the program’s application. Consider enrolling in ED 100/101 Explorations in Teaching to explore the profession.