

SECONDARY EDUCATION

What can I do with a major in secondary education?

Students who major in secondary education usually plan to teach middle or high school after graduation. Most students are motivated by a strong desire to work with young adults and help them to succeed academically and socially. Although permanent teaching jobs are not always easy to find, math, science, foreign language, and special education secondary school teachers may find their skills particularly in demand. The teaching profession can offer stable employment, good health and retirement benefits, generous vacation time, and personal fulfillment. Most education majors plan to become classroom teachers, but some will go on to pursue other, related, careers. Examples of these careers include:

- Environmental educator
- Human resources specialist
- Fundraiser
- Non-profit program manager
- After-school or summer youth program coordinator
- Corporate trainer
- Curriculum developer

What is the academic path to become a secondary school teacher?

Public schools and some private schools in the United States require teachers to have valid teaching certificates.

Students who plan to teach secondary school have a variety of educational pathways for receiving a teaching certificate. Some universities offer secondary education as an undergraduate major; graduates of those programs can teach with a bachelor's degree. Other universities – such as the University of Washington-Seattle and Seattle University – do not offer secondary education as an undergraduate major. A student who wanted to attend that university and become a teacher should choose a major in the field he/she plans to teach and plan to do a post-baccalaureate or master's-level education program to earn the teaching certificate.

Most programs in secondary education require a strong preparation in the subject matter that the student plans to teach. For example, a student who plans to teach math should major in math as an undergraduate. A student who hopes to teach social studies will usually major in history. In addition to the major field of study, a student can add additional endorsements that authorize the student to teach other subjects. Endorsements are available in many specific academic fields, such as chemistry or Spanish, as well as broader areas such as special education, bilingual education and TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), and literacy.

How can I prepare at Seattle Central for a major in secondary education?

Students planning to major in secondary education at a baccalaureate institution usually take **courses to prepare for their academic major, as well as general education requirements**, to prepare to transfer. Required prerequisites vary according to the chosen major and the transfer university, so it is strongly recommended that students work with an advisor at Seattle Central as well as advisors at the universities where they are considering transferring to ensure they take the appropriate classes to be prepared to enter the major when they transfer.

The transfer degree a student should choose will depend on what subject the student plans to teach at the secondary level. Advisors can help students look at prerequisite requirements and choose the degree that will work best for them.

Consider an emphasis to your associate degree before you transfer, such as Global Studies, Global Health, Sustainable Agriculture or Equity and Social Justice. This can enhance your resume, personal experience and be something you put into your personal statement. You may even already have completed it without knowing it! For questions on how to plan your emphasis, please contact your advisor.

Tips for Success as a Secondary Education Major

- Consider which path to earning a certificate in secondary education is right for you. Some students choose the university first and then follow the pathway that university offers. Others choose based on the length of the program and when they want or need to start teaching. Students who choose a program that offers a bachelor's in education will be able to teach directly following completion of the bachelor's degree. Students who choose the post-baccalaureate or master's path will need additional education following completion of the bachelor's degree in order to teach. This path takes one to two years longer, but the starting salary with a master's degree is often higher than with a bachelor's degree.
- Some universities do not offer an undergraduate major in secondary education. If you want the option of earning a bachelor's in education, make sure the university you intend to transfer to offers a bachelor's in the variety of education you hope to study.
- Check prerequisites, admission requirements, and GPA requirements at your intended transfer university early so you can be well-prepared to transfer.
- Check both university *admission* and *graduation* requirements at your preferred transfer university as a guide to choosing your classes. Some universities, for example, may require a year of foreign language as a graduation requirement. It may be much easier (and cheaper!) to meet that requirement at Seattle Central rather than waiting until later.

Pathways to earning a Secondary Education Teaching Certificate:

Bachelor's degree in secondary education in the Seattle area:

CWU-Des Moines	Elementary Education w/ Middle Level Math
Seattle Pacific University	Secondary & Special Education

The main campuses of Central Washington University, Western Washington University, Washington State University, and Eastern Washington University all offer bachelor's degrees in secondary education.

Post-baccalaureate teacher certification in the Seattle area (not a master's degree):

UW-Tacoma	K-8 with K-12 Special Education Certification
	Secondary Math or Science Certification

Master's degree in education in the Seattle area (includes teacher certification):

Seattle University	Master in Teaching – Secondary (5-12), Special Education, and ELL (English Language Learners)
UW-Bothell	Secondary and Middle Level Teacher Certification M.Ed.
UW-Seattle	Master of Teaching, Secondary
	Master of Education, some pathways include certification

Next Steps:

- Research the universities you may attend and the prerequisite classes they require for your major.
- Meet with an advisor to choose a transfer degree, discuss prerequisites, and plan what classes you need to take in the next quarter or two.
- Explore professional organizations for more information about education and career options.