This major is designed to prepare you to become an elementary teacher. However, you will also gain valuable and highly transferable skills for many different career paths including positions at boards of education, consulting firms, test preparation companies, adoption agencies, and educational publishers.

Graduates from our elementary education programs are justice-seeking people, educators, and leaders. Deeply engaged with children, communities, colleagues, and the field of education, our students allow themselves to be vulnerable by repositioning challenges as new opportunities to learn. We constantly question and seek greater understanding and alternative approaches in the classroom. We are part of a growing movement that disrupts the status quo in public education as we build a just future together.

Program length: This program is a four-year baccalaureate degree that will prepare you to earn your teaching license after your fifth year of study in the M.Ed. program. You will earn your teaching license after completing the one-year, graduate-level M.Ed. program in elementary education.

Visit teach.umn.edu for a comprehensive overview of teacher education at the University of Minnesota and the industry-driven method we use to educate and train future leaders in the teaching field.

Meet Our Students
"My first semester here I was able to do a practicum at a school that actually offered me a part-time job the following year. I could tell that this school was partnered with the U of M for a reason; the program faculty really want to help you through all steps of your journey. It has been amazing seeing how the program supports students through their school connections."

Demaris Johnson, B.S. 2019

Student Experiences

Students benefit from over 1200 hours of classroom practicum experiences during the program. Elementary Education Foundations majors will complete three separate practicum experiences during their undergraduate program: Elementary Teaching, Reading Foundations, and Special Education Foundations. Students gain a deep understanding of teaching through these unique opportunities, including creating and teaching their own lesson plans, working in classrooms with students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and mentoring elementary learners in literacy skill development. Each of these experiences is directly linked to your coursework and takes place within Twin Cities elementary schools that are part of our CEHD partnership network. Upon acceptance into the M.Ed and initial licensure program during your fifth year, your student teaching experience will include co-teaching with a master teacher. You'll merge the theory of your coursework with the complex and compelling realities of the classroom to enter your career with confidence and experience in the field.
Study Abroad Options

There are several options for elementary education foundation majors to study abroad in multiple continents. The teaching practicum experience in Montepelier, France fulfills required teaching practicum hours while teaching English in a French school.

Meet Our Faculty

Cynthia Zwicky has been an educator for more than 25 years. In this time she has worked as a classroom teacher, a mentor to new teachers and as a coordinator for various programs and initiatives, primarily with Minneapolis Public Schools. She has also taught undergraduates seeking a degree in elementary education where the emphasis was on teaching in urban schools.

In addition to her teaching experience, Cynthia is a nationally recognized and locally respected authority on Restorative Justice Circles.
You might also explore

Teaching English as a Second Language Minor
Early Childhood
Human Resource Development
Special Education
Child Psychology
Youth Studies
Racial Justice in Urban Schooling Minor

Associated Careers

Elementary school teacher, Adoption Agencies, Boards of Education, Curriculum Coordinator, Educational Policymaker, Test Preparation Companies, Youth Advocate

Admission Information

Freshman admission information

Transfer admission requirements for the College of Education and Human Development.