

Oregon Education Pathways for Teachers

General Education Content Course Recommendations for Prospective Early Childhood and Elementary Teachers

For prospective early childhood and elementary teachers, the goal of general education is a broad preparation in content that will support successful classroom teaching in grades PreK through 8 and that provides the knowledge needed to pass the Multiple Subjects Exam required for early childhood and elementary teacher licensing in Oregon. The following recommendations for general education courses are made, noting that they are broad and in some cases ill-defined. Anyone desiring to teach at these levels should be in contact with academic advisors familiar with teacher preparation programs in the state. In some cases, institutions have more specific entrance requirements in some content areas than the recommendations found in this document. The total number of credits recommended for each subject area assumes that many individual courses carry 4 credits (quarter hours) and that the minimum for acceptable General Education courses is 3 credits.

Science

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete at least 3 laboratory science courses, totaling at least 12 credits. These courses should cover topics typically taught in elementary schools with attention being given to Oregon Benchmarks and broad understanding of the field. For example:

- Life science – biology, botany, zoology
- Physical science – physics, chemistry, general physical science
- Earth/space science – geology, astronomy, earth science, environmental science

The preferred pattern would be at least one course in each of the 3 general science areas, and a sequence of 2-3 courses in at least one of the areas.

Math

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete at least 3 mathematics courses, totaling at least 12 credits, to include a Math 211, 212, 213 type sequence that addresses:

- Geometry,
- Probability and statistics,
- Number theory,
- Algebraic relationships,
- Measurement, and
- Concepts and principles of problem solving with a focus on applications.

If the 211, 212, 213 type sequence totals fewer than 12 hours, the additional hours of mathematics should be at the 100 level or above.

Social Sciences

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete one broad foundational course, of at least 3 credits, from each of these five categories:

- US History
- World History/World Civilizations
- Geography/Economics
- Civics/Government/Political Science
- General
Psychology/Sociology/Anthropology

English Language Arts (Writing, Literature, Communication)

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete at least 15 credits of coursework, including a 2-course writing sequence, and one broad foundational course from each of these categories:

- American Literature
- Non-American Literature
- Public Speaking

Fine Arts

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete at least 2 foundations or introductory courses (appreciation, history, etc.), that are not considered skills or application courses (drawing, painting, keyboarding, etc.) totaling at least 6 credits from these categories:

- Music
- Art
- Drama/Theatre
- Dance

PE/Health

Recommended: Prospective early childhood/elementary teachers should complete at least 2 courses, totaling 6 credits, of physical education and/or health courses that prepare prospective teachers to meet the goals expressed in:

The Oregon K-12 Physical Education Standards:

“The study of physical education prepares students for the long-term benefits of an active and healthy life. A physically educated person performs a variety of physical activities, participates regularly in physical activity, and knows the benefits from involvement in physical activity and its contributions to a healthy life.”

The Oregon K-12 Health Standards:

“The study of health education prepares students to make healthy decisions and take healthy actions on matters concerning personal, family, and community health. Its goal is for students to become health literate (the ability to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information and services) and to use such information and services in health-enhancing ways.”

Content/Skills Not Addressed

This document does not make specific course recommendations in the following areas:

- Reading
- Technology Literacy
- Problem Solving
- Collaborative Work Skills

These are considered skills that students should possess on leaving high school and are entrance requirements for college level work. Most components of these skills are addressed by the Oregon Diploma Requirements – Essential Skills. Recognizing that the level of development will vary widely across candidates, it is recommended that all lower division general education coursework support and enhance these skills. In addition, teacher preparation programs are generally designed to analyze and teach applications of these skills in appropriate coursework and field experiences.