

Pathway for Paraeducators Frequently Asked Questions

How long is the program?

The program is three years, including summers.

Do I need to have a paraeducator position to be in the program?

By the start of the program, individuals must have a position as a paraeducator. When applying for the program, you could still be in the process of securing a position.

Do I need to be in a general education elementary classroom or special education classroom to be in the program?

Elementary Education Major (K-5 general education):

In year one and two of the program, you do not need to have a paraeducator position in a general education classroom. Paraeducator positions could be in special education units, preschools, middle schools, or elsewhere in the district. In year two, you will need *access* to a general education classroom to practice planning and teaching lessons to complete some of your coursework. *In year three, you will need to be placed in a general education elementary classroom.* You should work with your principal and district personnel in advance of year three to ensure that you are placed in an elementary classroom for your practicum and student teaching placements.

Special Education Major (K-12 Learning & Behavior Disorders - LBD):

In year one and two of the program, you do not need to have a paraeducator position in a special education classroom. Paraeducator positions could be in general education classrooms. In year two, you will need *access* to a special education classroom to practice teaching lessons and creating individualized learning plans for students with disabilities for your university coursework. *In year three, you will need to be placed in a special education classroom.* You should work with your principal and district personnel in advance of year three to ensure that you are placed in a special education classroom for your practicum and student teaching placements.

Early Childhood Education Major – Teacher Certification (Birth-5 years):

In year one and two of the program, you do not need to have a paraeducator position in a preschool classroom. Paraeducator positions could be in K-12 classrooms. In year two, you will need *access* to a preschool classroom to practice planning and teaching lessons to complete some of your coursework. *In year three, you will need to be placed in a preschool classroom.* You should work with your principal and district personnel in advance of year three to ensure that you are placed in a preschool classroom for your practicum and student teaching placements.

Can I transfer in past credits? If I do, will the program be shorter?

If you have past college coursework, you may be able to transfer in some or all the credits. To determine your eligibility for this, you should submit official copies of your transcripts to the university as part of the application process. Because we believe in the value of completing the program with a cohort of peers, the program will still take three years to complete. However, transferring in credits can significantly lighten your course load each semester—especially in the first year and a half of the program.

What supports are provided to ensure my success?

Students go through the program with a cohort of peers, which become an integral part of program and students' success. In this cohort model, you take courses with everyone in your cohort so that you can rely on and support one another through the process. In addition to this, students in the cohort are assigned one College of Education faculty liaison, as well as one academic advisor, who have experience in understanding the specific needs and qualities of the individuals in this program. Beyond people support, the university provides academic and financial support as they are able and as needs arise.

How much does the program cost?

Students in the program pay full tuition, which is *approximately* \$11,000 per academic year and an additional \$5,000 in the summer semesters. However, this number could be significantly less depending on the number of credits you may transfer in and the amount of federal and university financial aid that you qualify for through completion of the FAFSA.

What will my schedule look like each semester?

In fall and spring semesters, students generally take between 12-16 credits. These courses are offered online, in the evenings, and using a hybrid approach (blend between face-to-face and online sessions). *Each semester, students can expect to be on campus one-two evenings a week.* In the summers, students take between 9-12 credits, which are offered online, in the evenings, and using a hybrid approach.

When does the program start?

Students start classes as a cohort in the first summer session. Classes for the next cohort start May 2026. The program begins with a course that serves as an introduction to the program and university. If students want to begin some of their general education courses before summer to lighten their loads each semester in the program, we encourage this as well and can advise students regarding which courses to take.

Interested?

- Contact College of Education Advising Director: coeadvisingcenter@nku.edu
- Apply to the university for Summer Admission: <https://www.nku.edu/apply.html>

