

Docket Item:

Community College Approval: Portland Community College, Certificate of Completion in Paraprofessional Educator within 13.1501 – Teacher Assistant/Aide.

Summary:

Portland Community College proposes a new Certificate of Completion in Paraprofessional Educator. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed program. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the degree as proposed.

Staff Recommendation:

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:
RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following degree: CCo in Paraprofessional Educator.



Portland Community College seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission's approval to offer an instructional program leading to a Certificate of Completion in Paraprofessional Educator.

Program Summary

PCC's Education Department offers a Paraeducator AAS Degree and a Paraeducator certificate, in addition to Teacher Relicensing and Elementary Education Transfer courses. These programs are designed to prepare students who wish to work in a variety of educational settings. All students who wish to pursue licensure path to becoming a teacher will be advised accordingly. The Paraeducator AAS degree and the Paraeducator certificate are designed for those who would like to work as Instructional Assistants or in non-licensure positions in educational settings. They prepare students to resolve everyday challenges and to professionally support teachers in planning, presenting and evaluating instruction and learning. The educator's responsibilities may include assisting small group instruction in reading, math, English language development, assisting individual students in the above academic areas and self-help skills, daily living skills, following behavior programs as directed by the teacher, and preparing and assembling materials. The particular responsibilities assigned to the educator depend on the program and personnel in each school. Employment opportunities exist in Portland and in surrounding areas as a result of the present legislative support for equal education for students with special needs. The program is designed for persons of all ages, races, cultures, and economic backgrounds. The program values and encourages diversity in the field of education. This is an Oregon Department of Education approved statewide program that meets the requirements of No Child Left Behind for "highly qualified" status.

Education courses may also be applied to the 90 credits required for an Associate of General Studies Degree. See a program advisor for information about transferring to a four-year institution. Many classes will be available via distance learning during the year. Please refer to the quarterly schedule or contact education faculty for details.

Students wishing to transfer into Teacher Education programs may wish to pursue an Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree, transferable to four-year public universities and colleges in Oregon. They are allowed to take up to 12 credits from the Education Department as general electives. ED 224 is recognized as transferable to teacher education programs statewide. Students should check with the institution to which they will be transferring regarding the transferability of other Education Department courses. Students will be expected to meet the same prerequisite in writing and be in good academic standing. Contact an Education Department advisor for more information.

Teacher relicensing candidates may use PCC education courses to meet state requirements. Education courses numbered 101 or higher may generally be used for relicensing. Contact Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission at 503-378-3586 or www.oregon.gov/tspc for specific requirements. Interested students should also contact an Education Department advisor. See Course Description (ED prefix) section for a complete listing of ED courses.

PCC's Education Department works in conjunction with Northwest Regional Educational Service District (NWRESD) and Multnomah Educational Service District (MESD) Outdoor School to offer students the opportunity to gain experience while working with sixth grade students in an outdoor school setting. For more information contact the Education Department or the NWRESD or MESD Outdoor School Departments.

1. ***Describe the need for this program by providing clear evidence.***

Employment for Teacher Assistants in 2017 was much larger than most occupations in the region. The total number of job openings is projected to be much larger than most occupations in the region through 2027. This occupation is expected to grow at a somewhat slower rate than the regional average growth rate for all occupations through 2027. Average annual wage in the Portland Tri-County area is \$35,330.

This certificate will prepare future educators more rapidly for a non-certified paraprofessional position in K-12 schools. The new certificate prepares future paraprofessionals in the following areas: instructional strategies, special populations, diversity, equity and inclusion, technology and behavior/classroom management strategies. Built into the coursework is a career readiness component and portfolio which helps students get hired upon completion of the certificate.

2. ***Does the community college utilize systemic methods for meaningful and ongoing involvement of the appropriate constituencies?***

The program worked with its advisory board along with the Oregon Department of Education to determine the needs of this certificate program. It will continue to meet and consult with those constituencies to monitor and assess the health and viability of the certificate. The advisory board meets on a regular basis.

3. ***Is the community college program aligned with appropriate education, workforce development, and economic development programs?***

This certificate helps draw non-traditional students to the teacher pathway, helping ultimately to diversify the teacher workforce in Oregon. There is a well-documented need to train educators to meet the impending educator shortage in Oregon, as well as to recruit more diverse educators state-wide, as evidenced by House Bill 3375 and the Oregon Educator Equity Act. Paraprofessionals are an important

part of the educator pathway and while they are not certified, they cannot really be separated from their certified colleagues because (1) they are educating students (certified or not) and (2) increasingly they are recruited to become certified as teachers due to their experience, skills and diverse backgrounds.

It is important to see paraprofessionals as vital educators who work with the hardest to serve students, particularly those in poverty, with special needs or language needs. They require training as much as certified staff do in order to equitably serve diverse needs. This was well-acknowledged when “No Child Left Behind”(NCLB) was passed when educator effectiveness and preparedness was recognized as critical for school improvement. While school districts acknowledge and prefer the value of well-trained non-certified staff, the needs to hire are so great that they often hire paraprofessionals with little to no educational experience or training. Local school districts welcome the opportunity to hire well-trained non-certified educators and PCC can assist with this important priority. It indeed serves the larger community to have well-trained paraprofessionals as they in turn have a significant impact on the often marginalized student populations they serve.

4. *Does the community college program lead to student achievement of academic and technical knowledge, skills, and related proficiencies?*

Portland Community College already plays an important role in training K-12 educators. The Oregon State legislature has recognized the importance of recruiting a diverse teacher workforce in Oregon and has acknowledged the important role the community college plays in recruiting such students due to affordable tuition, broader access to first generation students and students of color. Currently, PCC’s Education courses serve working and future teachers and paraeducators, all of whom occupy different places along the educator pathway and have different reasons for taking the coursework. The courses are typically occupied by future and working educators which provides a richer classroom experience. Coursework has been online for a number of years due to the broad service area and the diverse needs of our working students and families.

5. *Does the community college identify and have the resources to develop, implement, and sustain the program?*

Portland Community College has assessed the needs of this program and has the resources to develop and maintain it.

Assurances

Portland Community College has met or will meet the four institutional assurances required for program application.

1. *Access.* The college and program will affirmatively provide access, accommodations, flexibility, and additional/supplemental services for special populations and protected classes of students.

2. *Continuous Improvement.* The college has assessment, evaluation, feedback, and continuous improvement processes or systems in place. For the proposed program, there will be opportunities for input from and concerning the instructor(s), students, employers, and other partners/stakeholders. Program need and labor market information will be periodically re-evaluated and changes will be requested as needed.
3. *Adverse impact and detrimental duplication.* The college will follow all current laws, rules, and procedures and has made good faith efforts to avoid or resolve adverse *intersegmental* and *intra-segmental* impact and detrimental duplication problems with other relevant programs or institutions.
4. *Program records maintenance and congruence.* The college acknowledges that the records concerning the program title, curriculum, CIP code, credit hours, etc. maintained by the Office are the official records and it is the college's responsibility to keep their records aligned with those of the Office. The college will not make changes to the program without informing and/or receiving approval from the Office.