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Faculty of Education rising to meet demand for early years educators with new Bachelor of Education program

The University of Lethbridge Faculty of Education is adding a new undergraduate degree that will prepare future educators for the unique challenges of teaching in Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms. The Bachelor of Education in Early Years Education marks the first time in 30 years the Faculty has offered a four-year degree as part of its renowned teacher education program, as well as the first time students will be allowed direct entry into the program from high school.

“We’ve heard from superintendents in our area that there’s a real need for teachers who are able to help young children build foundational skills in literacy and numeracy,” says Dr. Richelle Marynowski (BEd ’94), Associate Dean, Undergraduate



Programs with the Faculty of Education. “These skills are important to student success both throughout school and later on in their lives.”

The Early Years degree is the third BEd option offered by the Faculty of Education, joining the five-year Combined Degrees program, where students graduate with a Bachelor of Education as well as a second degree from another faculty, and the After Degree program, where students with a previously completed undergraduate degree can earn their BEd in two years.

“This allows high school students who already know they want to work with young children the opportunity to start that journey earlier,” says Marynowski. “The program also responds to the needs of school divisions across the province for teachers in this area.”

Entry to the Faculty of Education has always been very competitive, and the addition of the Early Years program will allow for 45 more students to begin their teacher education

journeys this fall. As in the Combined Degrees and After Degree programs, Early Years Education students will complete 27 weeks of off campus practicum experience, more than twice the amount required for teacher certification in Alberta. While Early Years students will complete that practical classroom time exclusively in K – 3 classrooms, they will graduate provincially certified to teach K – 12, just like students in the other BEd programs.

Applications are now being accepted for the program's first cohort, which will begin in the Fall 2024 Semester. The deadline to apply is March 1, 2024, and more information can be found on the ULeithbridge website at: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/future-student/program/early-years-education>

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/faculty-education-rising-meet-demand-early-years-educators-new-bachelor-education-program>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.