

Elementary Education with Honors in Environmental Education

FAU Department of Teaching & Learning Information Sheet

The major in elementary education with honors in environmental education (EEhEE) is designed for preservice teachers who are passionate about nature, animals, or environmental issues. This an Honors in the Major program shows how environmental education can be integrated into elementary and middle school classrooms, including the latest research on the benefits of getting young learners out of the classroom more often. The program has a strong undergraduate research theme that explicitly links teacher action research to the Florida nature of science standards that teachers need to know, and introduces student teachers to inquiry tools that allow them to examine their own practice and contribute to an exciting new body of research in education, health, and social science.

The EEhEE program includes honors enrichment that highlights environmental science content themes and environmental education pedagogies directly applicable from grades K-8. Students will get certified in state and national environmental education curricula including Project Wild and Schoolyard Wild. Coursework and experiences are centered around northern Palm Beach and Martin counties, with their impressive range of high-quality natural sites and community expertise. In addition to learning how to teach in their own schoolyards, EEhEE students learn how to effectively integrate visits to, and from, community partners like local nature centers, gardens, wildlife rehabilitation clinics, and parks (city, county, state, and national). Whenever possible, student teaching placements will be in Palm Beach or Martin County green schools.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Students must have been admitted to the College of Education as an Elementary Education major, with a minimum GPA of 3.0;
2. Students must have completed at least 60 credits with at least a 3.0 overall GPA (this eligibility requirement is higher than the 2.5 GPA required for admission to the Elementary Education major);
3. No more than 20 percent of elementary education majors may be eligible for the EEhEE program.

Selection Criteria

1. A 500+ word essay describing why you are interested in integrating environmental education into your teaching career;
2. You must be willing to take the honors section of SCE 4350 on the FAU Jupiter campus;
3. You must be willing and able to travel to potential school-based placements outside of your home radius.

Standards to Remain in the Program

1. Maintain a 3.0 GPA in the major;
2. Meet the requirements of honors compacts in SCE 4113, EDG 3324, and student teaching;
3. Take the honors-enriched version of SCE 4350 (Jupiter campus);
4. Attend occasional workshops.

Note that students who are otherwise passing their required courses may leave the EEhEE program and continue with their Bachelor's in Elementary Education without penalty.

Honors Enrichment

1. The program begins with an honors compact in SCE 4113 Science Content and Standards for K-6 Teachers that includes becoming familiar with the Palm Beach County school district Field Research Ranger Program;
2. An honors section of 4350 Principles and Methods: K-9 School Science, typically taught by the environmental education coordinator, with an emphasis on better links to community partners, the use of outdoor classrooms within school grounds, and other nature, place, and outdoor-based pedagogies;
3. Placement in district Green Schools during EDG 3324 Effective Teaching Practices 2, and collaboration with cohort peers and faculty mentoring to take CITI Institutional Research Board training focusing on educational research;
4. A capstone during EDE 4943 Student Teaching or the Accelerated Introduction into Teaching (AIT), where students will work with their coordinating teacher and the honors faculty to develop, implement, and communicate a research project related to their environmental education practice. This will include a paper and presentation based on their project.

For more information, see:

<https://www.fau.edu/education/academicdepartments/tl/environmental-education/>

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