Distributed by UW News Service, October 6, 2025

Link to original story: <https://www.uww.edu/news/archive/2025-08-urock-graduate-teachers>

**UW-Whitewater at Rock County launches online program to graduate more licensed teachers in Wisconsin**

Written by Kristine Zaballos

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater at Rock County has launched a program that allows professionals with a Foundations of Teacher Education (FOTE) degree from a Wisconsin technical college the opportunity to earn a Wisconsin elementary and middle school educator license while they continue working.

The [**Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in FOTE to K-9**](https://www.uww.edu/online/bachelors/applied-arts-and-sciences#education-fote-to-k-9) was developed to address an ongoing teacher shortage in the State of Wisconsin by providing an affordable online pathway to licensure. According to a 2025 report by the State Department of Public Instruction based on data gathered in 2023, Wisconsin continues to see shortages created by the numbers of licensed teachers leaving the profession. An untapped resource in many schools is paraprofessionals — individuals working with students under the supervision of a licensed educator who may not have earned a bachelor’s degree. The BAAS in FOTE to K-9 provides the education and training that paraprofessionals and other aspiring educators not currently employed in a school setting need to attain licensure as they remain in their jobs.

“The curriculum is designed to build on the practical knowledge gained through the FOTE program at our technical colleges in Wisconsin,” said Kelli Danielski, assistant dean of student success in the College of Education and Professional Studies at UW-Whitewater. “The goal is to get prepared teachers into the classrooms as soon as possible. The program’s flexibility allows students to start coursework in a fall, spring, or summer semester as they work in their paraprofessional roles in local pre-K-12 districts.”

The program, which is approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, offers classes year-round to provide as many opportunities as possible for future teachers to complete their degrees.

“The degree emphasizes universal skills such as writing, communication, critical thinking and adaptability,” said Kim Kostka, an associate dean on the [**Rock County**](https://www.uww.edu/rock) campus who helped to support faculty in the development of the coursework. “It offers a flexible option to attain K-9 general licensure, and students are eligible to continue directly into a master’s degree upon completion of the BAAS.”

The Education (FOTE to K-9) emphasis is one of the emphasis areas available with [**online Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS)**](http://uww.edu/online/bachelors/applied-arts-and-sciences), specifically designed for working adults to offer them a flexible degree-completion pathway. Other emphases include criminology, digital marketing, human services, leadership, occupational safety, operations and supply chain management and professional selling. A [**personalized emphasis**](https://www.uww.edu/online/bachelors/applied-arts-and-sciences#personalized) is also available.