

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY

College of Business

YOUR IDEAS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

Are you ready to surround yourself with experienced business mentors and develop your own network of like-minded people sharing the same entrepreneurial spirit and determination? You could go through years of trial-and-error, financial setbacks, and high risks with limited rewards – or you could feel confident starting your own business.

Today's organizations are faced with rapidly changing environments, creating both challenges and opportunities to evolve and prosper.

The Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship focuses on launching or growing a start-up organization. Our students benefit from both faculty and fellow student entrepreneurs through our learning community experience, mentorship, and professional network access. Our graduate certificate program offers a focused path that will help you start a business efficiently. The program was tailored to meet the needs of today's entrepreneurs' busy schedules while also offering the tools and strategies you need to succeed.

Our graduate certificate program will help students develop the tools, assets, experience, and network needed to lead an entrepreneurial initiative, whether a business, organization, or groundbreaking product or service. It emphasizes how to start a new venture, from your first idea, to the official launch date, to scaling the effort.

Many of the program's coursework assignments can be immediately applicable to tasks that entrepreneurs will need to complete to move forward with their venture. Examples include developing a press kit, "pitching" the business to various audiences, establishing a partnership and/or management team, and exploring the financial feasibility of an endeavor to assess and manage risk.



To begin your application, visit gradapply.wcu.edu
Contact an admissions officer at (828)227-7398
or send us an email to grad@wcu.edu if you have any questions.

WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

Our graduate certificate program was designed for aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners who are ready to practically turn their ideas into a reality. Our program is designed to give aspiring entrepreneurs tools and skills they can start using today. From navigating ideation and looking at product feasibility, to exploring markets and funding, students can expect to leave this program with the steps they need to realize their goals.

Our program helps you answer questions like:

- I want to learn how to identify a viable business opportunity, how do I do this?
- Now that I have an idea, where do I start?
- How do I create and test a minimum viable version of my idea and get my first customers?
- How do I frame my winning idea in a way that gets others interested, excited, and bought in?

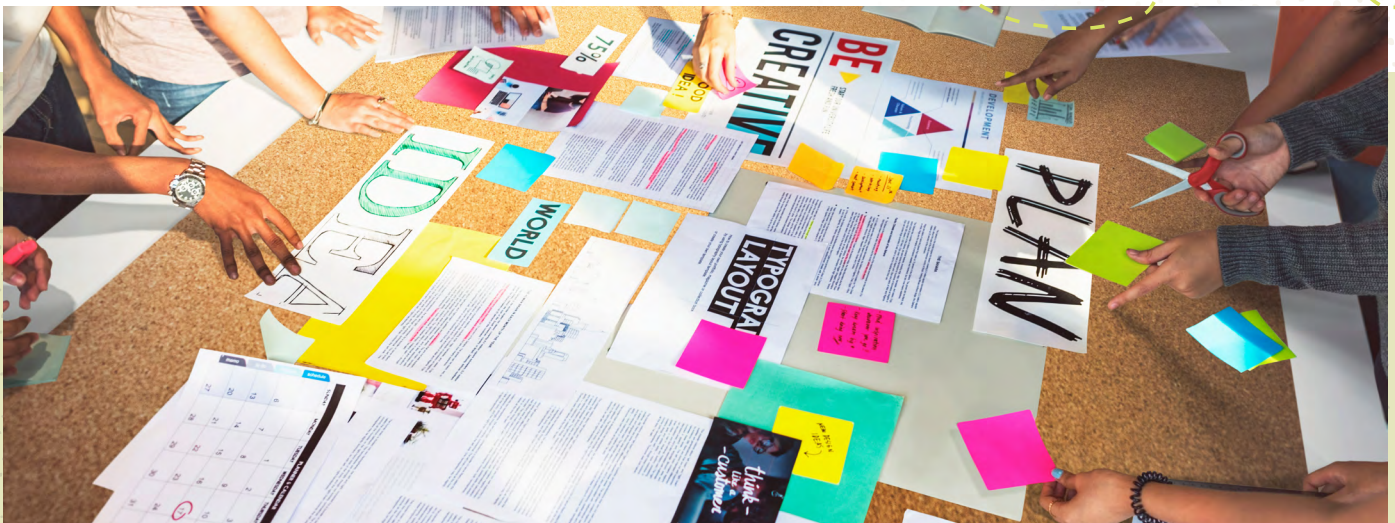
These are excellent questions – and the resources and learning experiences facilitated in this program can help prepare you for these responsibilities.

Launch Your New Venture During the Program

Our curriculum encourages you to tailor your learning experience around a new start-up company, organization, or idea, allowing you to start your own for-profit business or non-profit organization during the program. Our experienced faculty will mentor you along the way, offering a truly unique experience for those eager to hit the ground running.

Our program is among fewer than 6% of programs accredited by the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Through a mix of online learning and real-world scenarios, our Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship is the right choice for anyone eager to learn what it takes to build and lead an entrepreneurial venture.



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MORE THAN A CERTIFICATE

Our Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship program is more than a certificate. It's a life-changing learning opportunity that will expand the way you think and how you execute your entrepreneurial strategies. You will acquire the soft and hard skills necessary to be a successful entrepreneur.

Our curriculum will teach you how to think strategically about the entire scope of a new venture – providing you with a strong entrepreneurial foundation.

The U.S. Census Bureau finds that nearly five million new businesses are registered each year. There is no doubt entrepreneurial mindset and skills are in high demand, even if you plan on leveraging those skills in an existing business or organization to create impactful change.

The assignments in our graduate certificate program are tailored to meet the needs of today's entrepreneurs. Students can expect to learn skills such as business planning, developing change strategies, managing risk, and identifying new threats and opportunities as they come. From your venture's start, to growth, our program will equip you to hit the ground running and be successful. Students will benefit from exclusive networking opportunities, mentorship from successful entrepreneurs, and access to a vibrant community of like-minded professionals.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSES



- ENT 600: Entrepreneurial Planning
- ENT 601: Entrepreneurial Innovation
- ENT 630: Entrepreneurial Growth
- ENT 645: Entrepreneurial Marketing



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Students who choose our graduate certificate program are typically acting as the venture owner or founder, and aim to:

- Become an entrepreneur (and need help developing an idea into a feasible start-up)
- Build a new business or organization from the ground up
- Grow or expand an existing venture
- Radically change, ramp-up, or otherwise adapt to address new threats and opportunities
- Build organizations within an industry profession (such as an architecture firm, engineering consulting service, or a medical practice)
- Contribute to entrepreneurial ecosystems supports within markets

The hallmarks of our programs align with the professional demands across numerous industries to develop and support startup entrepreneurs, managers, and leaders who are able to:

- Apply innovation and creativity to managing people/projects
- Navigate uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk, while supporting teams through change, experimentation, and transition
- Consider new and innovative approaches to solving problems
- Demonstrate and apply industry-specific expertise, responsibility, critical thinking, initiative, and communication skills

Go from Classroom to National Competition to Successful Venture

Entrepreneurship students across our graduate programs are encouraged to participate in national, regional, and local pitch competitions for additional funding support and validation of their ideas. Master of Entrepreneurship program alumnus Ed Carroll won a \$10,000 mini-grant from the NC IDEA SEED pitch competition for his company, Edison Marks.

Edison Marks focuses on distilling the ins and outs of cybersecurity into personalized, easy action steps — something judges knew small businesses would be excited about, especially the ones looking to reduce their risk of cyberattacks.



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FACULTY INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Because our faculty have real-world business experience and are engaged in entrepreneurship research and consulting, they can help students understand the link between theory and practice, sharing real-life examples from their careers and anchoring the learning outcomes to match what businesses need most from graduates.

For example, faculty have worked with the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Health Administration (NHA), and other federal agencies on grants and helping commercialize new products or initiate new ventures.



Our Faculty Have Experience With:

- Starting Their Own Ventures
- Consulting Firms
- Economic Development Organizations
- Small Business Administration Organizations
- Family Businesses
- Manufacturing Facilities
- Trade Industries
- Retail Establishments
- Fortune 500 Firms
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Private School Charters
- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- And More



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AFFORDABLE PAYMENT OPTIONS TO FIT YOUR BUDGET

Financial Assistance and Tuition Rates

With some of the most competitive graduate tuition rates in North Carolina, we keep affordability and accessibility a priority. We make it easy for you to elevate your career prospects while seizing the opportunity to earn an affordable graduate certificate.

View our [tuition and fee](#) rates online. Look for the “graduate business” category (students using military benefits may get special rates, listed under the “military graduate business” category).

Scholarships are available to all students, with a university-wide application deadline of February 1, and a College of Business graduate scholarship deadline of June 30, for the upcoming academic year. To learn more about scholarships and how to apply, visit our [scholarships webpage](#)

International Applicants

As a fully online program, we welcome candidates from around the world to study from their home countries. International applications are evaluated based upon English language proficiency and prior coursework / degree equivalencies.

Approved transcript evaluation agencies and more information on international applicant requirements are available by visiting internationalgrad.wcu.edu.



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ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Prospective graduate students must hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

Application Requirements:



Copies of transcripts



Minimum 3.0 GPA *

*An applicant who has successfully completed a graduate degree previously or who has a letter of recommendation from an employer does not have to meet the undergraduate grade point average requirement.

Application Deadlines: April 1, August 1, December 15



How to Apply

Applicants can [apply online](#) through the Graduate School at WCU.

Additional Admissions Information

Please visit the [Graduate Certificate in Entrepreneurship program](#) page to get the most up-to-date admissions information by following these links:

- [Application Deadlines](#)
- [Admissions Requirements](#)
- [Attend an Upcoming Virtual Open House](#)



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WHAT CAN WCU OFFER YOU AND YOUR FUTURE?

Tucked away in the mountains of western North Carolina, WCU is a close-knit community of faculty and students working together to build a global network. With more than 11,500 students attending Cullowhee, Asheville, and online programs, WCU offers a large network of students and alumni locally and across the country (and around the world!) to leverage for future networking opportunities.

WCU has more than 120 undergraduate majors and concentrations and more than 40 graduate programs focusing on high-demand degrees, including various programs in business, engineering, science, healthcare, education, humanities, and the arts.

WCU's College of Business graduate programs provide a diverse range of graduate degrees and certificates for recent graduates and working professionals. We focus on developing the relevant skills, experience, and leadership acumen needed to advance in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Relationships Matter to Us

WCU College of Business faculty value one-on-one relationships with students, supporting them throughout their graduate experience and continuing to offer mentorship after the graduation caps have been thrown and tassels turned to the other side.

Our professors share deep business wisdom and offer a rich experience to empower students in their careers now and well into the future. We aim to foster lasting relationships with alumni and local businesses to keep our community thriving together.

Why Enroll at WCU College of Business?

Our accredited and devoted faculty are the #1 reason students love their graduate experience at WCU.

Our programs are built around deeply engaged faculty who not only have years of experience as educators but are also leaders in their respective fields, bringing their diverse knowledge directly into each classroom.

We believe education should be accessible and affordable for anyone dedicated and willing to learn. WCU offers students an affordable, high-quality education that carries all the prestige of the UNC system.



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World-Class Faculty

More than 94% of the faculty members in the College of Business hold doctoral degrees representing 38 different universities. Beyond the classroom, senior faculty members publish research, work in public service, and provide private consulting. Faculty members are also active in professional organizations and serve as editors for professional and academic journals.

Real-World Education and Experience

Our programs offer an immersive learning environment with a proven and collaborative approach that mirrors the demands of dynamic business environments. We focus on expanding critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills so you can leave the program feeling confident in your next career move. You will emerge personally and professionally empowered to pursue a career as a thought leader, or star employee.

Flexibility

Whether you are a working professional looking to move up the ranks in your field, or a recent undergraduate who wants an educational advantage as you enter the workforce, our programs are designed for your individual needs.

Accreditations

Western Carolina University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award Baccalaureate, Master's, and Doctorate Degrees.

WCU's College of Business is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the premier global accrediting agency for business programs. Less than 6% of business schools have AACSB accreditation for their graduate and undergraduate programs.



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