5 tips for earning an MEd while still teaching full time

Keep working, keep living—here’s how.
You’ve got this!
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As you know, being a teacher is just as rewarding as it can be tiring. Nearly every day of the week, you’re grading papers and lesson planning. You may have kids of your own and advise Key Club. You may exercise every AM, or tutor every PM. Whatever your lifestyle, you don’t want to shuffle it around—but you do want a Master of Education.

Of all the potential benefits—increased pay, knowledge, respect, a leadership role—something is lighting a fire in you to do exactly what you implore of your students daily: learn something new. Invest in yourself. Dare to do.

So, can you really manage an MEd program with your current schedule? Absolutely. At Concordia University-Portland—where, according to IPEDS (2015), we’ve awarded more MEds than any other school—we have a lot of experience in empowering life-changers like you to earn that degree, and love the journey. You can totally do this; here are a few tips to help.
Create Your Inspiration Board

It doesn’t matter whether your passion is glue sticks or graphs, this is one creative project we promise you can do (and will be worth it). As you research programs online, take a cue from those motivational posters that hang in grade school classrooms: create something digital (perhaps a Pinterest board) or analog (like a collage in your bedroom) that will inspire you day in and day out. For those times when you feel exhilarated or the exact opposite, this will help keep you going. Sound silly? Get this: In a recent survey by TD Bank, 82 percent of small business owners who used a vision board from the start reported that they achieved more than half their initial goals.

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

- Who you’re doing this for
- Your reasons for earning an MEd
- How it’ll feel when you have your MEd in hand
- Motivational quotes
- Links to TED Talks
- What you’ll do when you graduate
Build Your Support Network

In addition to an inspiration board, having people in your life who can support you, cheer you on, have your back, fill in for you, and hold you accountable is invaluable for fitting a graduate program seamlessly into your life. Let your family know what your plan is and what your hopes are. Chat with your employer about your decision. Inform friends that some things may shift in your schedule, but it’s only temporary—and that you’d love their encouragement along the way. And if you’re up for it, share your news on social media. Earning a graduate degree is an immensely exciting decision, and one to be proud of!

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN...

Publicly sharing your progress can help motivate you to accomplish your goals
(For Company)

Successful people stay calm in part by turning to their support system
(Harvard Business Review)

High performers have strong ties to people who give them developmental feedback, challenge their decisions, and push them to be better
(Harvard Business Review)
Audit Your Schedule

As you’re reading this, you’re undoubtedly thinking about the fact that enrolling in a graduate program may mean you have to make a few sacrifices. The truth is, if you do have a packed schedule, you may at the very least have to hit pause on a few of your current weekly obligations to ensure that you have time for coursework. That’s okay! Remember, your program will end and you can resume doing everything you’re doing now. How about some help?

- Make a list of all your ongoing obligations and activities, then divide them up. Keep those that give you joy and you simply can’t give up; put the others, if you can, on hold for the time being.

- Say no when you need to! As things come up, be honest with yourself about what you can and can’t take on (check out the book The Power of a Positive No by William Ury).

- During your research, ask enrollment teams what exactly the workload entails and if they have a sample day you can look at (again, visualize!).
Consider the Obvious

With your motivational tools and new schedule in place, it’s time to construct your initial list of programs. You probably already recognize that the most convenient modality for a working professional is an online format—and we agree. But you’re reading this guide for tips, and this is a big one: not all virtual programs are created equal. As you surf through the countless options out there, consider the obvious (and not-so-obvious) markers of a program worth your time.

SOME MED PROGRAMS...

**ARE PARTLY ONLINE** | **ARE 100% ONLINE**
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If you don’t have time to meet in person or complete extra field work, choose one that’s fully online.

**AREN’T ACCREDITED** | **ARE ACCREDITED**
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Accredited programs must meet certain criteria in terms of quality, meaning you’re much better off going that route.

**AREN’T ASYNCHRONOUS** | **ARE ASYNCHRONOUS**
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Asynchronous = you can log in to class on your own time, on your own schedule.

**DON’T HAVE SOCIAL PROOF** | **TOUT SOCIAL PROOF**
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Good programs almost always show stats and testimonials in favor of their curricula, outcomes, and faculty. If you don’t see any proof, that may be a red flag.

**EXIST SOLELY ONLINE** | **ONLINE AND ON CAMPUS**
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As a teacher, you know how important heritage, history, and experience are when it comes to quality education. The connection of an online program to a physical campus can help you feel part of something rooted and powerful despite the distance.
Once you have a list of options that pass those obvious checkboxes on the previous page, now’s when you really want to dig in. At each of your top choices, connect with the enrollment team and ask questions that will shed light on whether or not you really belong in their program. Your goal is to love the school you pick so that you make it work, no matter what; otherwise it’ll be too easy to delay starting your MEd program or lose the motivation to complete it. Consider asking these questions to find the school that truly speaks to you. Good luck!

- How does the online program live up to the promise of a campus-based experience?
- Why does this school invest time and resources into MEd programs? Why teachers?
- If their school didn’t exist today, why should it be created? Why is it relevant today?
- How connected are the alumni and current students—does an actual community exist online?
- What kind of support will you receive throughout the program?
- What do they believe in, what’s their mission?
THANK YOU!

Our goal is that by the time you get to this page, you’re feeling more reassured about joining an MEd program no matter what’s going on in your life. With planning and motivation it’s doable and worth it. Thank you for giving us this time to help you embark on your next adventure!

As you consider programs, we hope you’ll explore Concordia University-Portland’s MEd offerings—available 100% online or on campus in Portland, Oregon. Here’s a little about us and what we offer…

We believe teachers like you should be celebrated—the work you do is strenuous, important, and life-changing. Why you do what you do, is why we do what we do. Congratulations on taking a huge step in your career and your life. You’re about to do something truly exciting!
For more on us

VISIT OUR BLOG

REACH OUT TO OUR ENROLLMENT TEAM

EXPLORE OUR WEBSITE

APPLY NOW