

# MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING (MAT) HANDBOOK

This handbook provides information and policies specific to MAT students and should be referred to in conjunction with:

- Graduate studies policies <https://www.shepherd.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-policies> and
- The Educator Preparation Program Student Handbook and Practicum Handbook <https://www.shepherd.edu/education/handbooks> which provide information and policies applicable to both undergraduate and graduate programs leading to initial teacher licensure.

## Overview of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program

The Master of Arts in Teaching is a program designed for individuals with a content specialization who desire teaching licensure in that specialization. Content specialization coursework typically comes from the candidate's undergraduate degree program which is analyzed during the admission process. Admitted MAT teacher candidates complete 39-credit hours of graduate coursework in education and any remaining content courses required for specialization completion. Education coursework includes field experiences in public school classrooms and a student teaching component.

Teacher certification is awarded by the state department of education. To this end, admission, retention, and completion requirements are linked to state policy to ensure that prospective teachers completing the program are able to successfully apply for teaching certification.

- Art (PreK-Adult)
- Biology (9-Adult)
- Chemistry (9-Adult)
- Elementary Education (K-6)
- English (5-Adult)
- Family & Consumer Sciences (5-Adult)
- General Science (5-Adult)
- Mathematics (5-Adult)
- Music (PreK-Adult)
- Physical Education (PreK-Adult)
- Social Studies (5-Adult)
- World Language (Spanish, German, French, Japanese) (5-Adult)

### **Admission**

Prospective MAT teacher candidates apply for admission through the school of Graduate and Professional Studies. <https://media.suweb.site/2019/09/Admissions-Application-Changes-09.11.19.pdf?v=1568384514?v=1568384404>

The candidate must submit an application, official transcripts from all institutions of higher education, and required test scores (as follows) for review. To be eligible for admission with full status to graduate studies and the MAT program, candidates must:

- A. Hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
- B. Meet GPA Requirements:
  - Overall GPA of 2.75 on all undergraduate course work or in the event that an applicant has multiple degrees, the Overall GPA of the most recent degree will be used as long as the cumulative GPA of all degrees including the MAT meets state policy for certification.
  - Overall GPA of at least 2.5 on all undergraduate coursework with testing showing high academic ability as follows:
    - Graduate Record Exam (Verbal: 440 or higher and Quantitative 560 or higher) or
    - A passing score as defined in the WV Licensure Testing Directory on the Praxis Content test associated with the selected teaching specialization;

- C. Achieve passing scores on the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Tests (CASE) as delineated in state policy or provide evidence of exemption as outlined in the Current WV Licensure Testing Directory. The following are the approved Praxis Core tests as of September 25, 2025:
- a. Reading #5713 with a score of 156 or higher
  - b. Writing #5723 with a score of 162 or higher
  - c. Math #5733 with a score of 150 or higher
- D. Complete the following undergraduate core classes, or their equivalent, with a grade of C or above in each course
- ENGL 101 English and Rhetoric I
  - ENGL 102 English and Rhetoric II
  - COMM 202 Fundamentals of Speech
- E. Complete at least 50% of required content specialization coursework for the selected area of certification with grades of C or higher and a combined GPA of at least 2.5 on all Specialty Studies Coursework. See current required content specialization courses (Downloaded from the Graduate Studies/MAT webpage) and procedures followed for the transcript review process below.
- Candidates who have completed at least 25% of required content specialization coursework may be admitted if a passing score on the current state-approved PRAXIS content exam(s) is submitted. Please note that meeting the content knowledge exam(s) designated in the WV Licensure Testing Directory are required under state policy for ALL candidates prior to student teaching.
  - Any content specialization coursework not completed at the time of admission, must be completed before student teaching.
  - Content specialization courses taken after admission can be taken at any regionally accredited institution of higher education, but official transcripts must be submitted to Shepherd University Graduate Studies prior to the start of student teaching.

### **Admission Review Process**

1. Upon receipt of the application, transcripts, and required test scores, Graduate Studies reviews the materials and completes a transcript analysis to determine eligibility as follows:
  - Required undergraduate core classes and specialization coursework completed at institutions of higher education are identified from the submitted transcripts. Only courses receiving a grade of C or better can be used to fulfill requirements.
  - Cumulative GPA for all prior undergraduate coursework is computed to determine overall GPA.
  - Specialty studies GPA is computed on all courses designated to fulfill a specialty studies requirement.
  - Passing test scores and/or exemption as required for admission are confirmed.
2. After graduate studies completes the initial review, the Content Specialization Coordinator reviews the transcript analysis making any necessary corrections. They then sign and date the document to certify its accuracy before returning it to graduate studies.

PLEASE NOTE: Upon review of accepted specialty courses, the Content Specialization Coordinator is authorized to require additional coursework/experiences if she or he judges the accepted course deficient in addressing the content, theme, and/or goals and objectives of the Specialization and the

Educator Preparation Program. It is the prospective candidate's responsibility to provide sufficient information about accepted courses to permit informed judgment.

3. The prospective teacher candidate will receive a letter from the MAT Coordinator indicating admission status and what admission criteria, if any, are needed to move to “full” status in the program. Along with this letter, the student will receive the Transcript Review form, which details where the student stands in regard to criteria needed for admission, the Statement of Moral Character form, the Teacher Eligibility Form, and the TCDA.

Please see graduate studies policies regarding provisional and conditional admission. In the event that an individual is admitted with provisional or conditional status, the teacher candidate must complete requirements for full admission prior to the completion of 9 credits of required MAT coursework. Teacher candidates must have full admission to proceed with additional required graduate-level MAT courses. It is the teacher candidate's responsibility to provide documentation required to demonstrate that requirements for full admission have been met.

4. The prospective candidate must submit the signed Statement of Moral Character form attesting that they have not been convicted of a felony or crime related to moral character as established by West Virginia Code. Individuals convicted of a felony or crime related to moral character (i.e. sexual abuse, physical abuse, child abuse, etc.) will be denied admission to the Educator Preparation Program. Falsification of this information will result in removal from the Educator Preparation Program. If at any point in the Educator Preparation Program a teacher candidate is convicted of such a crime, she or he will be removed from the program. Please see EPPC Handbook and practicum manual for additional information regarding criminal background checks and the state's permit process.
5. The prospective candidate must also submit the completed Teacher Eligibility Form. The Shepherd University MAT program is designed to provide teacher certification eligibility for each graduate. In the interest of the integrity of the academic program, its students, and the schools of West Virginia, it is necessary that every applicant meet Shepherd University's academic and professional standards. Any applicant who has previously applied to or been admitted to any accredited Teacher Education Program(s), but did not complete the program, will be presumed to not meet the University's standards for admission and must be interviewed by the faculty of the School of Education in order to determine whether or not the student meets the academic and professional standards of Shepherd University's Educator Preparation Program.
6. Once all admission requirements have been met, the Office of Graduate Studies will notify the Admissions Office who will then issue a letter to the student indicating their status in the program.

### **Getting Started After Admission**

1. Upon admission, new teacher candidates should access the orientation guide found in the resources section of the Graduate Studies webpages. This guide provides important information needed to access student accounts and the learning management system. It is the responsibility of the teacher candidate to become familiar with this information.
2. The MAT program coordinator acts as the academic advisor for all MAT teacher candidates. Admitted candidates need to set up an advising session to create a plan of study that includes MAT required courses, any remaining required specialty studies courses, and required assessments.
3. With the candidate's confirmation, the MAT program coordinator emails a request to the registrar's office for first semester course registration. If the first semester of classes occurs during the summer, the request to the registrar's office will also include a request for registration in fall semester classes. Once enrolled in the requested courses, it is the responsibility of the newly admitted candidate to interface with financial aid and the billing office regarding payment of tuition and fees.

4. During subsequent semesters, teacher candidates should set up an appointment with the MAT advisor during advising weeks to review the plan of study and receive a PIN that will allow self-registration using RAIL.

### **Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Student Handbook**

The Educator Preparation Program at Shepherd includes both undergraduate and graduate degrees that have been approved by the West Virginia Department of Education. Students admitted to the MAT are governed by the EPP Student Handbook. However, because it is a graduate program, some adjustments, as follows, need to be taken into account when applying information contained in the EPP Student Handbook to the MAT Program.

References to the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior year do not apply to MAT students.

Undergraduate courses generally have a parallel graduate counterpart. If you are unsure what graduate level course would take the place of references to undergraduate courses, please talk to your academic advisor.

**Practicum Hours:** Both undergraduate and graduate programs are required by state policy to have supervised practicum experiences in preparation for a culminating full-time clinical experience (student teaching). State policy for undergraduate programs requires a full year residency in lieu of a traditional 1 semester student teaching experience in the senior year. Because of the relatively short length of a master's program compared to an undergraduate degree and options available to graduate students to work as long-term substitutes or on provisional teaching permits, at present, a full-year residency is not required for MAT students. Specific field hours required for the MAT are tied to specific courses in the program and included in course descriptions.

**Practicum Placements:** The EPP manual indicates that all field-based coursework taken prior to the final student-teaching/residency placement will occur within the State of West Virginia. However, special provisions are in place for MAT students who have been hired to teach on a provisional permit in a county that has a current signed MOU in place.

**GPA:** While undergraduates are required to maintain a 2.75 GPA, the graduate school requires MAT students to maintain a 3.0 GPA. Core curriculum is fulfilled at the undergraduate level and is not required for the MAT. Specialty studies requirements for MAT students may be fulfilled at either undergraduate or graduate levels and is evaluated at the time of admission and again during the retention review the semester prior to student teaching.

**Juncture:** The EPP handbook refers to juncture in several places when key reviews of program requirements take place. To differentiate between undergraduate and graduate programs, the terms "admission" and "retention" are used in place of Juncture 1 and Juncture 2 for MAT students. Procedures and most requirements for selection & retention remain the same for both undergraduates and graduate students.

Juncture 1 is the equivalent of a MAT student having 'full admission' status. MAT students must have full admission to proceed beyond 9 credits of 5XX MAT required coursework.

Juncture 2 is the equivalent of a MAT student applying for a 'retention' review and should be completed at the time the student teaching application is completed.

Certification Review takes place for MAT students at the conclusion of the MAT degree.

**Praxis Core:** Undergraduates have Praxis Core checkpoints within their initial education coursework to ensure that they are able to proceed through their program in a timely manner. Because Praxis Core requirements are tied to MAT admission, MAT students do not have these checkpoints.

Transfer Students: Transfer of graduate credits is considered at the time of admission and program plans developed with the MAT academic advisor take transfer credits into account along with any content coursework not completed as part of an undergraduate degree.

### **Practicum Manual**

EPP policy specific to field requirements is found in the Practicum Manual. Students admitted to the MAT are governed by the Practicum Manual. However, because it is a graduate program, some adjustments, as follows, need to be taken into account when applying information contained in the Practicum Manual to the MAT Program. Differences in terminology already identified in regards to the EPP Student Handbook also apply to the Practicum Manual.

### **Courses with Practicum Components**

The following MAT courses include practicum components. References to requirements associated with their undergraduate counterparts, if any, apply.

#### **All Teacher Candidates**

EDUC 581 – Social Foundations of American Education (EDUC 200) 10 Hour Service Learning Project  
EDUC 582 – Learning in Context (EDUC 320) 20 Hour field placement in specialization

#### **Secondary Teacher Candidates**

EDUC 583 – Planning, Conducting, and Assessing Instruction (EDUC 370) 37 Hour Placement  
EDUC 503 – Literacy in the Content Area (EDUC 443) 50 Hour Placement  
EDUC 57X – Content Pedagogy (Depending on Content Area: EDUC 422, 423, 424...) 20 Hour Placement

#### **Music Teacher Candidates**

In lieu of EDUC 583 and 57X, take  
MUSC 522 – Instrumental Pedagogy (MUSC 322) (15 Hour Placement in an Instrumental Classroom)  
MUSC 525 – Choral Pedagogy (MUSC 325) (15 Hour Placement in a Choral Classroom)  
MUSC 526 – General Music Pedagogy and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology (MUSC 326) (15 Hour Placement in an Elementary general music classroom)

#### **Physical Education Teacher Candidates**

In lieu of EDUC 583 and 57X, take  
PHED 501 – Elementary PE Methods (20 Hour Placement in an Elementary PE Classroom)  
PHED 531-- Secondary PE Methods (37 Hour Placement in a Secondary PE Classroom)

#### **Elementary Teacher Candidates**

EDUC 586 – Reading 1 – Requires 35 hours in a primary grade classroom  
EDUC 587 – Reading 2 – Requires 35 hours in an intermediate grade classroom  
EDUC 588 – Integrated Pedagogy – Requires 35 hours in an elementary classroom

### **Pre-Student Teaching Field Placements**

In regard to pre-student teaching field placements, MAT candidates adhere to all policies outlined in the Educator Preparation Program Practicum Handbook with the following exception.

#### ***MAT GRADUATE STUDENT FIELD PLACEMENT POLICY EXCEPTION***

*State policy allows school systems to hire individuals who possess an undergraduate degree without teacher certification in the event that a certified teacher cannot be found. Consequently, MAT graduate level teacher candidates are eligible for employment as Long Term Substitutes or as Teachers of Record with a state-issued First Class Type A Permit. The classroom for such individuals may be used for pre student teaching field requirements under the following conditions.*

- *The classroom must be consistent with the teacher candidate's MAT specialization.*

- *For specializations spanning more than one programmatic level, a minimum of one field experience of at least 20 hours requiring planning, instruction, and assessment that is evaluated by a university supervisor and a cooperating teacher certified in that area with at least 3 years of experience must be at each additional programmatic level included in the specialization.*
- *State required diversity experiences must be met before graduation which may require a field experience in a different school.*
- *The school administrator must approve the use of the classroom for the university practicum.*

The instructors of courses that have a required field component will provide a log for documenting field hours. MAT students must obtain the signature of the cooperating teacher (or school-based administrator when fulfilling hours in their own classroom) to verify completion of required hours. A copy of these hours should be provided to the course instructor. A copy should also be submitted to the field placement coordinator according to directions provided to the course instructor.

In the event that two or more courses requiring field hours are taken concurrently, the teacher candidate will inform the field placement coordinator. The field placement coordinator, course instructors, and teacher candidate will then determine if separate classrooms are needed or if the combined total of field hours can be fulfilled in a single placement.

When field hours are completed in a single placement for two or more classes, a master hours log should be maintained documenting the cumulative required hours. Copies of the master log should be provided to each and every course instructor.

Instructors of courses that require a field placement, will provide access to the Shepherd University “Code of Conduct” for field. MAT teacher candidates are required to review this document and provide the instructor with a signed copy of the associated letter of agreement prior to beginning field hours.

### **Student Teaching**

In regard to student teaching, MAT candidates adhere to all policies outlined in the Educator Preparation Program Practicum Handbook including but not limited to completion of both specialization and professional studies courses, state-required content test(s) (See WV State Testing Directory), and the edTPA. In regard to student teaching placements, there are two graduate student exceptions to policy outlined in that handbook.

### **Student Teaching in Your Own Classroom**

MAT Teacher Candidates hired on a state-issued First Class Type A Provisional Permit may student teach in their own classroom under the following conditions.

- The classroom must be in the student teacher’s specialization.
- Application for student teaching and all student teaching paperwork and requirements must be met before established deadlines. Please inform the field placement coordinator well before deadlines if you wish to be considered for possible student teaching in your own classroom.
- County and school administrators must approve the student teaching experience.
- For specializations spanning more than one programmatic level or when diversity requirements were not met prior to the student teaching semester, a minimum of 20 hours must take place in a second classroom. During the second placement, a university supervisor and a certified cooperating teacher who meets state qualifications for overseeing a student teacher must observe and verify that all Professional Teaching Standards have been met at that level. Additional time at the second programmatic level is required until all standards are met. Personal leave days may be required in order to meet state policy requirements for certification.

- All student teaching expectations must be met including, but not limited to, attendance at student teaching orientations, supervisor observations, and self-summative evaluations.

### **Out of Geographic Area Graduate Student Teaching Exception**

Teacher Candidates seeking licensure through a graduate program may request to student teach in a classroom outside the geographical area covered by on-campus university supervisors if the following conditions are met. (Approved by EPPC 3/9/2022)

- Programmatic level and diversity requirements (see Practicum Manual) have been met during pre-student teaching field experiences.
- Student teaching application submitted prior to the posted deadline includes a request for an Out of Area Student Teaching Exception.
- Retention form is submitted prior to the posted deadline.
- Praxis Content Test(s) score(s) are received by Shepherd prior to the posted deadline.
- **Full-time first class permit** in their content area has been approved.
- The county of hire has signed a limited MOU with Shepherd for a 1 semester student teaching experience. The MOU must include identification of an on-site administrator or teacher who meets both Shepherd University and WV requirements for supervising a student teacher to conduct three in-person observations using Shepherd University's Student Teaching Observation Tool. (Note: Two additional observations will be conducted virtually by a university-based supervisor).

A traditional student teaching placement will not be requested for graduate students seeking an Out of Area Exception. In the event that a request is made prior to eligible confirmed employment, it is the teacher candidate's responsibility to notify the Shepherd University student teaching coordinator when confirmed employment occurs. If not employed, student teaching will be deferred to a subsequent semester.

All permit paperwork and a signed MOU with the county of hire must be in place no later than 30 days before the first day of student teaching. In the event that permit and MOU paperwork has not been completed by this deadline, student teaching will be delayed until a subsequent semester.

During the student teaching semester, MAT students are encouraged, but not required, to register for at least 1 credit of EDUC 590, Student Teaching Seminar. The first half of the semester, this course is dedicated to supporting the preparation and submission of the edTPA, an assessment consequential for graduation and certification.

### **Master of Arts in Teaching Professional Studies Coursework**

Admitted Master of Teaching candidates complete foundations and pedagogy coursework to prepare for student teaching in their final semester. The following table depicts required MAT courses by specialization. Please see the Shepherd University Catalog for course descriptions <http://catalog.shepherd.edu/>. Please Note: This table does not include required specialization coursework not completed prior to admission to the MAT program.

<b>Master of Teaching Coursework</b>		
<b>Elementary Education</b>	<b>Secondary Education Art, Biology, Chemistry, ELA, FACS, Gen Sci, Math, PE, SS, World Language</b>	<b>Secondary Education Music</b>
EDUC 581 <i>Foundations of American Education</i> (10 Field Hours) (3 credits)		
EDUC 582 <i>Learning in Context</i>		



(20 Field Hours) (3 credits)		
EDUC 560 <i>Survey of Exceptionalities</i> (3 credits)		
EDUC 584 <i>Classroom Ecology</i> (3 credits)		
EDUC 527 <i>Inclusion Seminar</i> (3 Credits)		
EDUC 586 <i>Reading 1</i> (35 Field Hours) (3 credits)	EDUC 583 <i>Planning, Conducting, &amp; Assessing Instruction</i> (37 Field Hours) (3 credits) <i>Or PE PHED 501 Elementary PE Methods (4 credits)</i>	
EDUC 587 <i>Reading 2</i> (35 Field Hours) (3 credits)	EDUC 503 <i>Literacy in the Content Area</i> (50 field hours) (3 credits)	
EDUC 588 <i>Integrated Pedagogy</i> (35 Field Hours) (3 credits)	EDUC 57X <i>Content Pedagogy</i> (20 Field Hours) (3 credits) Or PHED 531 <i>Secondary PE Methods</i> (4 credits)	Music 522 <i>Instrumental Music Pedagogy</i> (2 credits) (15 Field Hours)
		Music 525 <i>Choral Music Pedagogy</i> (15 Field Hours) (3 credits)
		Music 526 <i>General Music Pedagogy and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology</i> (15 Field Hours) (3 credits)
EDUC 500 <i>Advancing Use of Technology in the Classroom</i> (3 credits)		
Graduate Elective (Any approved graduate level course) (3 credits)		Graduate Elective (Any approved grad level course) (3 Credits)
Graduate Elective (3 Credits except PE=1 credit) (Any approved graduate level course) EDUC 590 <i>Student Teaching Seminar Recommended</i> (1-3 credits)		
Student Teaching (14 Week Full-time Field Experience) (6 credits)		
39 Credits	39 Credits	39 Credits

Note: Any graduate course cross listed with a similar undergraduate course will include additional graduate components.

### Specialization Coursework

In addition to graduate level professional studies courses, MAT candidates must complete all courses, other requirements in a specialization, and pass the state-designated content exam(s) for that specialization prior to student teaching.

### Required Graduate Coursework

A MAT student who has taken and received an 'A' in the undergraduate equivalent of a required MAT course, with the program coordinator's approval, may elect to substitute an alternative graduate level course for that requirement. (EPPC Approved 9/23/2020)

### Graduate Electives

MAT candidates should work with their advisor to choose electives that best meet their professional development needs and goals. Approved electives may include courses in education or content areas.

### Teacher Performance Assessment

September 2025

As per state policy, all student teachers must pass a teacher performance assessment during student teaching for program completion. The WV Department of Education has approved Shepherd University's use of the edTPA to fulfill this requirement. Passing scores are found in the WV Licensure Testing Directory.

## MAT COORDINATOR

- A. Serves as student advisor and as such maintains records on advisees containing at a minimum
  - 1. curriculum checklist of courses
  - 2. program progress checklist
  - 3. semester grade reports
  - 4. scores and results on pertinent tests
  - 5. qualitative evaluations necessary for program progress decisions
  - 6. results of Admission and Retention reviews.
  
- B. Determines whether eligibility requirements are met and makes recommendations at Admission, Retention and Certification reviews. Works with the Certification Analyst and Specialization Coordinators, as needed, to ensure required documentation is available to the School of Education for verification of certification eligibility.
  
- C. Monitors advisee's records to determine continuing eligibility for retention in the Educator Preparation Program based on established policies and procedures.
  
- D. Other duties:
  - 1. Attend Open Houses and Graduate Fairs to market the program.
  - 2. Develop courses and program as needed to meet state requirements.
  - 3. Attend Graduate Council meetings to advise Council on the program.
  - 4. Coordinate accreditation research and documents.
  - 5. Provide advice to Enrollment Management so they can advertise the program. *(Approved by VPAA and Dean GS&CE, 7/29/2009.)*

## MAT COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Course instructors for MAT classes, must have approved graduate faculty status.

Instructors teaching MAT classes that are being offered in a cross listed format with undergraduate classes, must clearly designate course components specific to graduate students in the syllabus. These course components should represent rigorous content and expectations in keeping with graduate level expectations.