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Updated 5/2014
Welcome

Welcome to the Brandeis Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) – Secondary School Program. For information about the Brandeis Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, see the “Accepted Students” information on the GSAS website www.brandeis.edu/gsas/accepted/index.html

This small, personalized program is designed to challenge and prepare graduate students to become thoughtful, caring teachers who:

- Have strong and flexible knowledge of the content they teach;
- Honor their students’ strengths, holding themselves responsible for powerful learning for all children in their care;
- Are committed to teaching for understanding;
- Work to build constructive relationships with families;
- Learn in and from their own experience as teachers;
- See themselves as advocates for children and social justice;
- Take part in informed discussion, debate, and long term improvement of education.

Four themes define the Brandeis Education Program courses and philosophy:

**Inquiry:** Effective teachers continually assess and reflect on their own teaching practices and stay aware of current resources and information related to teaching and learning. Teachers need to have a firm grounding in educational research, theory and practice, and understand the ways in which inquiry and reflection on research, including their own classroom research, can inform practice.

**Teaching for Understanding:** Good teachers communicate high standards and expectations for student learning, and draw on an exploration of rich content and a repertoire of approaches, using instructional strategies to make knowledge accessible and interesting to diverse learners. Effective educators build on and extend students’ ideas, monitor their students’ intellectual engagement, and take steps to challenge or re-engage each student in learning.

**Knowing Students as Learners:** Good teachers work actively to know their students as individuals and learners. They use their knowledge of child development and learning, and their knowledge of individual students, to inform their planning and teaching.

**Social Justice:** Issues of social justice and injustice affect schools. Effective teachers strive to narrow the achievement gap between students through their use of standards-based, learning-centered curricula. Teachers need to work toward greater equity and access to knowledge for all students, while creating multicultural, democratic classrooms that celebrate respect and diversity.
The Structure and Themes of the Brandeis MAT

The Secondary and Middle School Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) is a cohorted, full time program that meets from June in the first year through July in the second year, leading to the MAT degree and the initial Massachusetts teaching license for those in biology, chemistry, Chinese, English, history, math, or physics. There is also a non-licensure MAT – Tanakh concentration.

The program is structured as follows:

• Secondary school MAT students further their knowledge of their specific subject matter in four Brandeis courses, while also learning about pedagogy and practice with Brandeis professors and master teachers in our affiliated secondary schools.

Five essential questions provide the framework for our Education courses: *What does it mean to learn and what does it mean to teach? What does it mean to know? What gives you the right to teach someone else’s child? Are we teaching for now or later? Can education be democratic?*

• Formal coursework and guided practice in schools are integrated.

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* Subject matter I
  ENG 21a Adolescent Literature (ENG concentration)
  HIST 215b Teaching World History (HIST concentration)
  BIOL 101a Molecular Biotechnology (science concentrations)
  CHIN 200a Chinese Foundation: Pronunciation & Grammar
  approved course appropriate to concentration (math, Tanakh)

** Subject matter II and III
  approved courses appropriate to concentration (all concentrations)

*** Subject matter IV
  ENG 221b Teaching Writing (ENG concentration)
  HIST 202b Modern American History from Global Perspective (HIST concentration)
  CHIN 202b Pedagogy II (Chinese Concentration)
  approved course appropriate to concentration (math, sciences,Tanakh)

MAT students also meet in a monthly advisory seminar.
• Each secondary school MAT student is placed in a middle or high school and assigned an experienced mentor teacher for a year-long internship: in-school pre-practicum two days a week in the fall; full time practicum during the spring semester. From mid-May to mid-June, most MAT students whose practicum has been in a middle school move to a high school placement, and those who have been in a high school move to a middle school.

• Partnership schools (public urban or suburban, Jewish day school or charter) serve diverse populations. Together we examine the similarities and differences between teaching in these diverse schools.

**Academic Standards**

Brandeis MAT students must earn a B- or better in every class in order to successfully complete the MAT degree. Students experiencing academic difficulties should contact both the instructor of the course and their Brandeis advisor as soon as possible so that we may provide support and guidance.

**Pre-Practicum**

During the fall semester, MAT students spend two days per week in the school in which they will teach in the spring term. The cooperating teacher should introduce the student intern to the class on the first day, clearly identifying the student intern as a person who has the status of a teacher.

Although much of the pre-practicum during the fall semester will be in the cooperating teacher’s classroom, MAT students are expected to observe other teachers as well. This is an opportunity to observe how different teachers address teaching and learning.

**As the fall semester begins, the intern’s responsibilities include:**

- Sharing his/her background with the cooperating teacher and field instructor, including work experience, school experience, academic preparation (specific education courses completed), and experience working with individual children or groups of children;
- Asking about and preparing for the first day of the field experience; and
- Observing in the classroom and learning about the students.
- Teaching a few lessons so that s/he can explore teaching a lesson or mini-unit.

**The cooperating teacher’s role includes:**

- Creating a work space for the intern within the classroom or department office;
- Introducing the intern to school personnel, including the principal, other teachers, specialists, librarians, school nurse, and custodians;
- Providing an orientation to the school and a tour of school facilities (including teachers’ room, adult lavatories, main office, classroom supply storage, A/V and computer equipment, and copy machine instruction);
- Providing an orientation to the classroom set-up and basic record-keeping procedures;
- Discussing his/her philosophy of teaching, discipline, class rules and procedures, individual students, class atmosphere, and goals for the year;
• Discussing expectations for the intern, including initial responsibilities and a plan for when the student will become responsible for the class or co-teaching; and
• Arranging regular meeting times with the intern.
• Attending three cooperating teacher meetings at Brandeis.

Dress and Decorum

Graduate interns are expected to dress professionally (which means no jeans). They must also act professionally, which means that interns will not talk about their students in public places inside or outside of school. Respect the experience and expertise of faculty colleagues. If there are problems in communication or understanding between the interns and adults in the school, it is important and helpful to consult with the field instructor and/or MAT faculty leader. Even when outside of school, remember that your students perceive you as their teacher.

Some Helpful Resources

The Cooperating Teacher

The Cooperating Teacher is a tremendous resource for the graduate intern. During the pre-practicum, the intern will be able to learn how the cooperating teacher sets the classroom norms and culture in the beginning of the year. As the year progresses, the intern will be able to learn from the cooperating teacher about the curriculum, instruction, and how the school functions. For more information about the cooperating teacher, see page 12.

The Field Instructor

The Field Instructor, who is the Brandeis representative on-site, is a tremendous resource. The Field Instructor has several different responsibilities: 1) to support the intern during the placement; 2) to give feedback and recommendations about how the intern can improve teaching and learning, and 3) to recommend whether the intern is ready to become a teacher at the end of the practicum. For more information, see page 13.

The Building Principal

Principals are experienced observers of teaching and teachers. MAT students are urged to make an appointment to talk to the school principal to discuss:
• The principal’s perspectives on teaching;
• The school’s culture, challenges, and improvement plan; and
• Additional school resources the graduate intern may investigate.

The Department Head

In middle and high schools, the Department Head is usually one of the most knowledgeable people about the curriculum and instruction in your subject. MAT students are urged to view the Department Head as a resource who can advise them about:
• Teachers in the building whom student teachers might observe;
• Curricular materials and books that are available; and
• Job search resources or tips.
Brandeis Resources

Professor Marya Levenson (mlevenso@brandeis.edu), the Education Program Director, is the faculty leader of the Secondary School MAT Program. In addition to teaching the Foundations Course, she holds a monthly advisory session with the secondary MAT cohort. She also meets regularly with the MAT faculty. She is available for questions and conversation at 781-736-2001.

Marjorie Margolis is the Teacher Education Specialist who coordinates field placements and teaches Fundamentals of Teaching.

Manuel Tuan (tuan@brandeis.edu) is the MAT Coordinator. He assists in the administration of all aspects of the public elementary, secondary, and Jewish Day School-DeLeT concentrations. His office number is 781-736-2022.

Eileen Kell (ekell@brandeis.edu) is the Senior Department Coordinator and assistant to Prof. Levenson. She also helps MAT students with registration, eportfolios and licensure. Her office number is 781-736-2002.

The Practicum

During the spring semester, MAT interns teach and co-teach with experienced teachers, design curriculum through carefully constructed lesson plans, and provide instruction and assessment that take into account diverse students. The cooperating teacher, field instructor, and MAT faculty leader will work together to make this an outstanding learning opportunity for interns.

The practicum provides an opportunity for a future teacher to become integrally involved in the daily life of a secondary school. At all times, however, the focus of the practicum must be on the development of classroom teaching skills.

Interns need to learn to apply theories and practices that build productive teaching and learning relationships with students. They must learn to:

- Be a part of a learning community;
- Work actively to know students as individuals, learners, and members of families and communities;
- Use their knowledge of child development and learning, and their knowledge of particular students, to inform their teaching;
- Use information in Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to modify instruction and integrate students with disabilities into the classroom;
- Respect diversity in the cultures and backgrounds of students and their families;
- Work with the cooperating teacher to keep families informed about students’ academic and social progress;
- Treat families as partners in students’ learning;
- Understand what it means to be a colleague;
- Seek constructive feedback from a mentor or field instructor;
- Plan for student learning; and
- Actively seek to expand their repertoire of teaching strategies.

(Thanks to the DeLeT Handbook for some of this language.)

**Intern’s Role**

The practicum is one of the most critical times for development of a future teacher. It can be an exciting and exhausting time. Graduate interns are best served by seeing their role as that of increasing responsibility for student learning in the classroom in which they are placed.

The key to a successful practicum experience is planning. Interns must attend to creating lesson plans far enough in advance that they can share them with their cooperating teacher. Likewise, cooperating teachers and field instructors must plan for the progress of the student teacher.

**Planning**

Planning for classroom lessons and activities includes a wide number of tasks that can appear daunting to new teachers, including finding resources, estimating how long an activity will take, figuring how difficult a concept will appear to students, and calculating how to engage students’ interest and enthusiasm. Putting all these factors into a written plan may even feel risky, as comparing a written plan with what actually happens during a lesson may feel threatening. Yet planning is critical to good teaching, and intern teachers are required to share these plans with their cooperating teachers, pedagogy instructors, and field instructors.

Learning how to plan is difficult, and each teacher may have an individual approach. Some focus on process; some on content; some plan in great detail; some jot notes. Some can’t explain how they plan; some know their own processes very well.

During the practicum experience, interns must write detailed lesson plans, including references to the state standards. This helps both the intern and the cooperating teacher analyze the plan in advance and reflect on the success or needed improvements after students work with the lesson. Brandeis interns practice planning lessons in preparatory courses. Both cooperating teachers and field instructors also work with interns to develop a sound strategy for planning effective lessons. Providing detailed lesson plans in advance is a key aspect of a successful practicum. *Lessons must be planned sufficiently ahead of time so that cooperating teachers have time to provide feedback and suggest revisions.*
Other Intern Responsibilities

- Know and abide by policies of the school, including teacher arrival and departure times and other teachers’ responsibilities, as well as expectations for student attendance and behavior;
- Keep open communication with the cooperating teacher: inform the teacher of illness if missing a day of school is unavoidable (depending on the intern teaching calendar, missed days may need to be made up by extending the intern teaching period) and provide lesson plans for any teaching scheduled for that day;
- Participate in all teacher planning meetings, parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, in-service and committee meetings in which the cooperating teacher participates;
- Assist with extra-class responsibilities, such as lunch supervision or after school activities, as needed;
- Plan lessons consistent with principles learned in Brandeis education courses; and
- Understand that, although the intern is expected to plan lessons and teach as if s/he were the actual teacher, the class is still officially the responsibility of the cooperating teacher. Interns must obtain the approval of the cooperating teacher for their activities and lessons. While interns need to have freedom and flexibility in planning their lessons, the cooperating teacher has both the right and the responsibility to make decisions s/he believes are in the best interest of the students.

Gaining Authority

Graduate interns often feel the need to be liked by their students. As legitimate as this feeling may be, it can complicate an intern’s role and authority in the classroom. Thus, it is often more productive to delay the idea that students should like the graduate intern until after the students have come to know the intern. A professional attitude that is both businesslike and pleasant can provide a solid base for rapport and the positive, productive atmosphere that all student teachers hope to build with their students. Interns also benefit from having specific tasks and doing some exploratory teaching during the pre-practicum that help communicate to students that the intern has authority in the classroom.

Discipline

Discipline in a classroom is a complex process. Learning precisely where and when to draw the line with individual students and with an entire class frequently requires some trial and error. This can be a difficult learning process.

Cooperating teachers and school personnel can help interns establish classroom control. Three starting points are:

- Make sure the graduate interns are aware of school rules and discipline procedures.
- Make sure interns are equally aware of the cooperating teacher’s rules and expectations about student behavior. Help interns understand the reasons behind the rules.
- Give interns time and space to absorb all the pieces involved in effective classroom discipline, so that they adopt or adapt procedures and become their own kind of responsive and caring teachers. Review any behavior or instructional modifications specified in your students’ Individual Education Plans.
Graduate interns can also take steps to become more confident in front of a classroom. Four starting points during the pre-practicum are:

- Pay close attention to what occurs throughout the day. Write down things that are unexpected, your response, and your assessment of how your response worked.
- Share these notes with your cooperating teacher to find out how they respond to similar circumstances.
- Understand the modifications and alternative teaching strategies specified in the Individual Education Plans for your students with disabilities.
- Identify (with the help of your cooperating teacher) as many alternative strategies as possible so that you can decide what, if anything, you will do differently in a similar situation. Plan to learn from your experience.

Preservice Performance Assessment (PPA)

Graduate interns, cooperating teachers, and field instructors will document on the PPA evidence of whether and how the MAT student meets Massachusetts teaching standards. Students must earn a rating of “2” or “3” in order to be recommended for the Initial Teaching License. See a copy of the PPA on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

Teaching Load

Interns are expected to follow the calendar of the school in which they are placed. They are expected to be in the school full time from the beginning of January when school reconvenes through the spring semester until the second week of May. Interns who have been in a high school spend the remaining time until mid-June in a middle school, or vice versa.

Middle or high school graduate interns are expected to assume responsibility for teaching one subject beginning in January. When the cooperating teacher and the field instructor believe that the student teacher is ready, s/he will assume responsibility for teaching a second class with a different preparation.

Non-Classroom Duties

Interns should not be assigned several regular supervisory duties (such as lunchroom, bus, or recess supervision). They should, however, be exposed to these duties, participating in them to gain the experience.

Substitute Teaching

Brandeis interns may serve as substitute teachers (teachers of record) in their host school if 1) they do not count the substituting day as a student teaching day, and 2) they are officially designated the teacher of record and receive regular district compensation for their work.

We have developed this policy because we want students to have a full practicum experience. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an intern teacher is under supervision by an officially designated cooperating teacher, a teacher of record. Thus, if a Brandeis student, in the role of intern teacher, were to accept responsibility for a day or two as a substitute teacher, we would have a person who is sanctioned to work without supervision while,
in fact, s/he is supposed to be supervised. Moreover, if the Brandeis intern agrees to substitute in the school, s/he should be compensated as would any other substitute teacher.

**Becoming a Reflective Teacher**

**Creating an ePortfolio**

All interns are required to create a professional electronic portfolio that documents their practicum experience. This eportfolio is a collection of artifacts with commentary that demonstrates progress and accomplishments in teaching. It is a visible manifestation of work as a teacher, an exhibit of teaching style and interests.

Portfolios should include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
- Statement of teaching philosophy*
- Resume
- Unit and lesson plan(s)
- Examples that illustrate values and beliefs of practice
- Samples of student work (remove identifying names from student work.)
- Photos or other artifacts of classroom experiences

* A statement of teaching philosophy is a written expression of core values and ideas about teaching. Generally, interns develop a philosophy statement prior to the pre-practicum and then refine it throughout their practicum experience. It is a challenge to craft this statement so that it is both concise and articulate. Additional guidelines for developing a statement of teaching philosophy are provided within education coursework.

**A Reflective Journal**

Interns are required to keep a regular journal, written three or more times per week, that includes their reflections. These journals provide a very good means of raising questions and concerns. The journals are submitted to the field instructor every two weeks. This form of communication helps field instructors to more easily recognize the concerns and questions of interns and offers interns a forum to raise questions on an ongoing basis.

Portfolios and journals are reviewed by field instructors and the university advisor during practicum and are required for successful completion of the practicum.

**Videos**

Each MAT student will make a ten minute video of his or her teaching during the practicum. These video clips will be shared with the cohort as part of the reflective seminar. Please familiarize yourself with the Brandeis policy and the school’s policy about taping students.
The Cooperating Teacher’s Role

Cooperating teachers can take on many roles for a MAT intern: mentor, leader, partner, role model, guide, critical friend, trusted colleague. Building a productive relationship depends on planning, thoughtful communication, and regular feedback. We understand that interns are at the beginning of a long continuum, and we appreciate the willingness of cooperating teachers to mentor and teach interns. A cooperating teacher assumes a significant role in helping a student become a confident and creative teacher.

We hope that cooperating teachers will:
- Actively demonstrate a belief that all students can learn;
- Actively demonstrate self-reflection in teaching and analysis of teaching effectiveness; and
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in guiding intern teachers to develop their own best strategies of teaching, including the flexibility to allow an intern to teach with a style that differs from the cooperating teacher or to explore alternative approaches to curriculum.

Specifically, we ask that cooperating teachers:
- Provide an orientation to the school and introduction to school personnel;
- Plan, model, and discuss daily lessons with the intern as well as plan long-range class objectives;
- Introduce interns to school curriculum materials and plans to address state frameworks;
- Model and discuss a variety of student evaluation strategies;
- Be willing to assist interns as they learn and implement classroom management techniques;
- Help the interns develop appropriate assessments in a standards-based environment; and
- Observe and provide constructive feedback to interns;
- Meet five or more times during the spring practicum semester with the intern and field instructor to discuss progress and plan future strategies that support the intern’s development.
- Attend 2-3 meetings for cooperating teachers at Brandeis.

Cooperating teachers need to prepare a strategy to help intern teachers grow throughout the pre-practicum and practicum experience. It may be helpful to consider the following questions:
- How will the intern learn about the students, their families and community? How will he or she learn about the school’s culture?
- How will you introduce the intern during the pre-practicum so that your students will understand that s/he will become the teacher in January?
- What specific teaching responsibilities will the intern initially have? How will he or she be able to teach some lessons during the fall semester? How will those responsibilities change?
- How will the cooperating teacher review and give feedback on the intern’s plans?
- How and when will the cooperating teacher observe the intern?
- How will the cooperating teacher and intern discuss and share some ideas about instructional challenges in your classroom?
- How will the cooperating teacher provide needed positive feedback and constructive criticism?
- How will problems be handled?
- How will successes be celebrated?
Cooperating teachers commit their energy, time, and professional insights to helping intern teachers develop effective teaching practices and strategies. In conjunction with the field instructor, they are the primary coach for the intern as they wade into the waters of secondary school teaching.

The Field Instructor’s Role

The field instructor is an experienced former teacher who visits interns in their classrooms to observe, support, instruct, and evaluate their progress. Field instructors meet with the intern and cooperating teacher twice during the pre-practicum. They formally observe interns a minimum of five times during the practicum, meeting each time with the intern to provide feedback and discuss the field experience. They collaborate with the cooperating teacher to support the growth and development of the intern. Field instructors also facilitate three or more meetings during the practicum--one each at the beginning, middle, and conclusion of the teaching practicum--in which the field instructor, cooperating teacher, and intern reflect on the field experience together. Field instructors also review the eportfolios and the reflective journals interns are required to complete for their practicum.

The field instructor can serve, as necessary, as an intermediary and advocate for the intern if problems occur between the intern and cooperating teacher. The field instructor’s primary role is to support the student teacher in having a positive teaching experience.

Preparing for the Future

Licensure

Everyone who successfully completes the Education Program at Brandeis, no matter what plans he or she might have, should complete the licensure process. In order to earn licensure, MAT students must successfully complete their practicum and pass two Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure, MTEL: 1) Communication and Literacy Skills Test, and 2) a test in the subject matter. We recommend that MAT students take the Communications and Literacy Skills Test in the summer or September at the latest, and the content test sometime between January and March. For more information about MTEL test dates, go to [www.mtel.nesinc.com](http://www.mtel.nesinc.com) We encourage all MAT secondary students to apply for a preliminary license as soon as they have passed their MTELs since they will not be eligible for their initial license until they complete the MAT program in August. Details about applying for the preliminary and initial teaching licenses are on the website at [www.brandeis.edu/programs/education/licensure/index.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/education/licensure/index.html)

You should also obtain written recommendations from your cooperating teacher and field instructor. Broach the subject several weeks before the end of the practicum.
Looking for a Teaching Position

The Education Program sponsors a program in January called “Conducting a Job Search in Education.” Plan to attend this helpful evening session where you will learn about applying for a job: resume, transcript, and recommendations. There are also mock interviews that evening. Graduate students should also take advantage of the GSAS job search resources at www.brandeis.edu/gsas/career/index.html Sue Levine, Assistant Director of Career Services, and Rachel Dreilinger, Career Services Specialist, can assist MAT students with resume and cover letter review and with interviewing strategies.

The Education Program website www.brandeis.edu/programs/education lists job opportunities on its Employment page www.brandeis.edu/programs/education/jobs.html

Brandeis also belongs to several organizations that can be of help in the search for a teaching job. The Massachusetts Education Recruiting Consortium (MERC), a consortium of 40 colleges and universities, holds a job fair in Boston during April school vacation week which brings together students and graduates of the member colleges and recruiters from school systems nationwide. Information is made available to Education Program and MAT students in late February.

Induction

We at Brandeis consider teacher education preparation to be part of a continuum toward becoming a fine teacher. We know that the first year teacher has two tasks: teaching and learning how to teach.

Because we know that any teacher education program can only do so much to prepare you for the challenges of teaching, the Brandeis Education program offers induction support to beginning teachers in the Boston area. Information about the induction program will be shared during the spring semester.