MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING (MAT) -
Public Elementary (grades K-6)
MINI-PLACEMENT FIELD HANDBOOK

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION PROGRAM
WALTHAM, MA 02454

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Welcome

Welcome to the Brandeis Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) –Public Elementary 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](http://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 students 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:** Skilled 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 Brandeis Elementary MAT Field Experience

The Public Elementary School Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) is a full time, cohort model 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. There is also the opportunity for an additional certification in teaching students with moderate disabilities.

Each public elementary school MAT student is assigned to an experienced cooperating teacher for an eight-month internship: in-school pre-practicum two days a week in the fall; and full time practicum during the spring semester.

MAT students are reassigned to a “mini-placement” beginning in mid-May and ending in mid-June, during which most MAT students whose practicum has been in an urban school move to a suburban placement, and those who have been in a suburban school move to an urban school. Students completing their dual certification in moderate special needs are assigned to an experienced special educator during their mini-placement.

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.

Professional Expectations

Interns are expected to act and look professionally, which means that they respect the confidentiality of their students in public places inside or outside of school as well as the experience and expertise of faculty colleagues. We also expect our Interns to dress professionally, adhering to their school placement’s expectations. If there are problems in communication or understanding between the interns and professional educators in the school, it is important and helpful to consult with the field instructor and/or MAT faculty leader.

The Moderate Special Needs Mini-Placement

During the final five weeks of school, MAT interns are placed with experienced special educators who guide them through the many aspects of special education. During this time, MAT interns are expected to work directly with students as well as take on tasks his/her cooperating teacher assigns. Such tasks include modifying lesson plans, attending meetings, reading essential texts on special needs pedagogy, and attending general education classes with assigned students, designing activities to supplement general education class lesson plans, and providing instruction and assessment that take into account the diverse learning needs of students. The cooperating teacher, field instructor, and MAT faculty leader work together with the interns to help make this an outstanding learning opportunity for our MAT cohort.

Updated 5/2014
Interns need to learn to apply theories and practices that build productive teaching and learning relationships with students. We expect them to do the following in their mini-placement:

- Attend a variety of IEP meetings
- Observe a couple of students while they are being tested
- Observe/work with students with IEPS in small groups
- Observe/work with students in an inclusive setting
- Read as many IEPs and 504s as s/he can
- Read evaluation reports
- Shadow a couple of students with IEPs for a day – focus on electives, related services, etc., following them to places in which s/he wouldn’t normally interact with these students
- Attend Child Study Team or Teacher Assistance Team (may be called something different)
- Take advantage of opportunities to engage in the RTI process
- Ask both special education and general education teachers questions about the processes they use to differentiate and meet students’ needs
- Note the organizational systems teachers use to keep track of paperwork, data, etc.
- Pay special attention to classroom management strategies used

**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. Interns are best served by seeing their role as that of increasing responsibility for student learning in the classroom in which they are placed.

**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

**Cooperating teachers and school personnel** can help interns establish classroom routines, expectations, and control. Four starting points are:

- Make sure 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
- Review students’ Individual Education Plans and the implications for any behavior or instructional modifications
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.

The Cooperating Teacher’s Role

Cooperating teachers can take on many roles for an 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 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 expect that cooperating teachers will:

- Actively demonstrate a belief that all students can learn
- Actively demonstrate self-reflection in teaching and analysis of teaching effectiveness
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in guiding intern teachers to develop their own best strategies of teaching, including the flexibility to allow an intern to employ a wide variety of approaches to teaching

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
- Review the process of designing, implementing and evaluating Individual Educational Plans (IEP’s)
- Demonstrate ways to modify the general education curriculum to meet IEP requirements
- Introduce interns to a variety of instructional materials with which to modify lessons plans
- 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 evaluate assessments and modify lesson based on the results
- Observe and provide constructive feedback to interns
- Meet one time with the intern and field instructor to discuss progress and plan future strategies that support the intern’s development
- Complete the log of practicum hours documenting the number of hours the intern’s hours in the field.

Cooperating teachers need to prepare a strategy to help intern teachers grow throughout the mini-placement 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 the cooperating teacher review and give feedback to the intern?
- 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 among your caseload?
- 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 elementary school teaching. As remuneration for hosting an intern for a mini-placement, our cooperating teachers are offered a Brandeis course voucher, valued over $5,000.

**The Field Instructor’s Role**

The field instructor is an experienced teacher who is the Brandeis representative on-site. S/he is also an important resource whose responsibilities include:

- supporting the intern during the placement
- observing the intern one time site and providing feedback
- giving feedback and recommendations about how the intern can improve teaching and learning
- recommending whether the intern is ready to become a teacher at the end of the practicum

The field instructor collaborates with the cooperating teacher to support the growth and development of the intern. S/he can serve, as necessary, as an intermediary and advocate for the intern if problems occur between the intern and cooperating teacher. His/her primary role is to support the intern in having a positive teaching experience.

**The Building Principal as Resource**

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
Brandeis Resources

Professor Marya Levenson (mlevenso@brandeis.edu), is the Education Program Director. She is available for questions and conversation at 781-736-2001.

Professor Danielle Igra (digra@brandeis.edu), the Director of Teacher Education, is the faculty leader of the Secondary School MAT Program. Her office number is 781-736-8519.

Rachel Kramer Theodorou (mailto:rbkramer@brandeis.edu) is the Faculty Leader of Elementary Education and coordinates the public elementary placements. Her office number is 781-736-2023.

Manuel Tuan (tuan@brandeis.edu) is the MAT Coordinator. His office number is 781-736-2022.

Eileen Kell (ekell@brandeis.edu) is the Senior Department Coordinator and assistant to Prof. LevensonHer office number is 781-736-2002.

Marjorie Margolis (marjoriemargolis@brandeis.edu) is the Teaching Education Specialist who coordinates the public secondary placements. Her office number is 781-737-2050.

2016 Mini-Placement Time Table

Monday, May 9, 2016: Mini-placement begins

Tuesday, May 23—Friday, June 3, 2016: Field Instructor visits and meets with cooperating teacher and MAT intern

Friday, June 10, 2016: Final day of mini-placement

Friday, June 17, 2016… Submission due date for log of practicum hours
LOG OF PRACTICUM HOURS

Part I – To be completed by the Applicant

Applicant’s name: ________________________________

Social Security number: _____________Or  MA Educator License number ______

Sponsoring Organization: ________________________________

Practicum Site: ________________________________

License field/grade level: Moderate Disabilities (K-8)

Supervising teacher: ________________________________

Part II – To be completed by the Program Supervisor

Name: (print) Dr, Marya Levenson  Position/Title: Director of Education

Signature: ________________________________

The Applicant completed a practicum/equivalent designed by the Sponsoring organization, in preparation for the following license:

Applicant’s License Field: Moderate Disabilities__

Grade Level: ________________________________

Part III – To be completed by the Supervising Practitioner

Name: (print) ________________________________ Position: _____

School System: ________________________________

License: Initial (# yrs. experience): _____ or  Professional: ________________________________

Updated 5/2014
Massachusetts License #: ______________________________________

Field(s) and Grade Level ______________________________________

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<tr>
<th>TOPIC/ACTIVITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation and evaluation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design or modification of curriculum, instructional materials, and general</td>
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<td>education classroom environments for students with moderate disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ways to prepare and maintain students with disabilities for general education</td>
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<td>classrooms</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL HOURS</strong></td>
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SIGNATURE of Supervising Practitioner ______________________________________

SIGNATURE of Director of Education ______________________________________