The Elementary Education Program  
Brandeis University  
Waltham, MA 02454

The Brandeis Education Program seeks to prepare teachers with a strong liberal arts background who possess the knowledge, point of view, and aptitude to be leaders in creating effective teaching and learning environments.

Four themes define the 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.

**Program Options**

*Elementary Education Program:* Undergraduate students can complete a minor in education in which they specialize in either elementary (grades 1-6), middle school (grades 5-8), or secondary (grades 9-12) education. Undergraduate students, particularly students interested in teaching in elementary schools, should consult with the Education Program as early as possible in their time at Brandeis so that they can plan to complete the course requirements for teaching licensure. Students can officially declare a minor in education in their sophomore year.
**Education Studies:**  The Education Studies minor is designed for students seeking an understanding of some of the diverse issues related to education in the United States and other societies. The minor’s interdisciplinary approach will enable students to examine the impact of political, historic, psychological, economic, and social forces that shape education and public expectations for schools. This minor is suitable for students interested in the broad social and cultural contexts of education and for those interested in educational careers. Please note, however, that the Education Studies minor does not lead to a teaching license.

Graduate students can complete a *Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)* in elementary or secondary education. In the MAT - Elementary Program, students select a concentration in either public school teaching or teaching in Jewish day schools. Students in the MAT - Secondary Program concentrate in History, English, Biology, or Bible Studies. (See [www.brandeis.edu/programs/mat/](http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/mat/) for more information about the MAT program.)

**DECLARING A MINOR IN THE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Students may declare a minor in education as early as the fall of the sophomore year by meeting with an Education Program advisor. All students are encouraged to schedule a meeting as soon as they believe they are interested in teaching, so that the advisor can assist students in planning coursework that meets licensure requirements. Students who wish to declare an education minor should be enrolled in or have completed ED 100a and should contact the Education Program office for an appointment.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Education Courses Required for Elementary Initial Licensure**

Undergraduate elementary education minors must complete the following Education courses with a grade of B- or better:

1) ED 100a: Exploring Teaching - Elementary
2) PSYC 33a: Developmental Psychology
3) ED 101a&b: Elementary School Curriculum & Teaching: Literacy and Social Studies
4) ED 105a: Elementary School Curriculum & Teaching: Math and Science
5) ED 107a: Teaching and Learning Reading in Elementary Schools
6) ED 111e: Practice Teaching: Elementary School.

**General Distribution Courses Required for Elementary Licensure**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all teaching licensure candidates successfully complete courses or provide evidence of an AP score of 3 or greater in:

1) One course in American history (e.g., HIST 51a or 51b),
2) One course in American government, including study of the founding documents (Constitution, Declaration of Independence) (e.g., HIST 51a or AMST 100a)
3) One course in world history (e.g., HIST 52b, 56b, 71a or 80a)
4) One course in American literature (e.g., ENG 6a, ENG 7a, or AMST 100a)
5) One course in world literature, including study of British literature (e.g., ENG 10a or 33a)
6) One course in economics (e.g., ECON course or HS 110a)
7) One course in mathematics at the level of MATH 3a or above
8) One course in science that includes a laboratory (e.g., PHYS 22a)
9) One course in child development (PSYC 33a)
10) One course in composition (e.g., first year seminar, USEM).

State requirements also call for study in geography; this coursework is included in ED 101a & b.

Students should consult an Education Program advisor to determine whether a specific course satisfies any one of these requirements. In some cases, one course may fill the requirements for more than one area.

Planning Coursework

In planning coursework, students should consider several aspects of the Education Program curriculum including course prerequisites and whether field work is required (field observations generally require a block of 2-3 hours of time outside the scheduled class time), plus other commitments of time. Careful planning is usually necessary to fit in everything students want to accomplish. As a general guideline, we suggest the following schedule for Education courses:

- Sophomore year, fall semester: ED 100a: Exploring Teaching - Elementary
- Sophomore or Junior year, spring semester: ED 107a: Teaching of Elementary Reading (Students who study abroad in their junior year should take ED 107a in the sophomore year.)
- Senior year, fall semester: ED 101a: School Curriculum and Teaching - Literacy and Social Studies, and ED 105a: School Curriculum and Teaching - Math and Science
- Senior year, spring semester: ED 101b: School Curriculum and Teaching - Literacy and Social Studies, and ED 111e: Practice Teaching (Elementary)

This is the student teaching field experience. Students should not take any other courses in this spring semester, as student teaching is a full-time commitment.

Education Program Advisors

Students are encouraged to contact their Education Program advisor directly with any questions or concerns. In general, the Director of the Education Program serves as primary advisor for all secondary education students and the Assistant Director serves as primary advisor for elementary education students.
Obtaining Elementary Teaching Licensure

Qualifying for a teaching license requires more than passing grades in required courses. Students must complete two required classroom observation/field experiences in ED 100a and ED 107a, receiving positive evaluations from the instructors and cooperating teachers. Students also must pass the MTEL Communication and Literacy Skills test and be accepted to student teach prior to the spring semester of the senior year. This acceptance is based on both coursework and an interview with the Education Program advisor.

Upon completion of student teaching, the Education Program will decide whether to make a recommendation to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the student to become licensed. A positive recommendation is dependent upon the evaluations of student teaching by the classroom cooperating teacher, field instructor, and Education Program advisor.

In addition to fulfilling the Brandeis Program requirements, an applicant for Massachusetts licensure to teach in grades 1-6 must pass three tests administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

- The Communication and Literacy Skills Test must be passed prior to beginning student teaching.
- The General Curriculum (elementary school subject matter) and Foundations of Reading tests should be completed during the student teaching semester or shortly thereafter.

Preparatory materials for these tests are available from the MTEL website (www.mtel.nesinc.com) and the Education Program office. Classes to assist students in preparing for the tests are offered at some other universities; contact the Education Program for more information.

Massachusetts has reciprocal agreements with 44 states (exclusions: Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Iowa and Missouri), the District of Columbia, Guam, and Puerto Rico whereby preparation that meets licensure requirements within Massachusetts is accepted by the other states or territories. In some instances, teacher candidates must complete short-term additional coursework to meet a specific requirement of another state. Students interested in teaching in a state other than Massachusetts should refer to the website for the department of education for the state of interest to determine what, if any, additional applications must be filed with that state.

Students interested in licensure for teaching in preschool or kindergarten should contact Dr. Howard Baker (baker@brandeis.edu), Director of the Lemberg Children’s Center, for information.
The Brandeis Education Program is accredited by the State of Massachusetts, and is committed to developing teachers who meet the Professional Standards for Teachers as outlined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A copy of these standards is included in the addendum to this handbook.

FIELD WORK

You will learn much in your observations and student teaching placements. These field experiences will help you to know students as learners, understand the challenges and joy of teaching, and decide whether you want to become a teacher.

Field Observations

Students begin their elementary pre-practicum field experiences in two education courses: 30 hours in ED 100a (Exploring Teaching-Elementary) and 20 hours in ED 107a (Teaching of Elementary Reading); they complete their pre-practicum in the beginning of their student teaching. In these courses, students work in classrooms as participant observers. A primary task of classroom observers is to work actively to know students as individuals, learners, and members of families and communities. Brandeis instructors also may have specific tasks for students to perform within these observation periods. Depending on the class, student observers may complete small research projects, tutor individual students, teach small groups of students, and reflect on what is observed.

The Education Program has partnerships with several schools in and around the Waltham area, and Program personnel make arrangements for students to be placed in specific teachers’ classrooms in those schools. It is strongly encouraged that students complete their pre-practicum hours in more than one grade level and that one field experience be in an urban school and the second field experience be in a suburban school.

Please remember that when a teacher welcomes you into his or her classroom, the teacher is going to be focused on teaching students. Please be courteous and respectful; be on time, dress professionally, and reserve your judgment on what is occurring in the classroom. If you are going to be absent due to illness, please contact the school so that the secretary can notify your teacher that you will not be in class that day.

Cooperating teachers file written evaluations of students’ field experiences. Brandeis instructors will discuss specific criteria for such evaluations, but in general, students are evaluated on their attitude toward elementary students, their willingness to participate in the class, and their maturity and professionalism.

Student Teaching or Internship

Student teaching is one of the most critical times for development of a future teacher. It can be an exciting and exhausting time. Students are best prepared by perceiving student teaching as full-time work, rather than as a course, and seeing their role as that of sharing responsibility for student learning in the classroom in which they are placed.
Therefore, we recommend that Education Program students take only ED 111e and ED 101b during their internship. The cooperating teacher, field instructor, and student teacher work closely together to determine the pace and level at which the student teacher assumes more responsibilities.

Student Teachers 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 their 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 supervisor;
- 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 or student teaching placements are made carefully with these ideas in mind to ensure that student teachers have the opportunity for practical experience and for thoughtful self-reflection and professional growth.

**Selection of Schools**

The Education Program works with Brandeis students to make good observation and student teacher placements. We attempt to place student teachers into schools as a cohort, with two or three students completing their practicum in the same school. We seek a variety of placement opportunities, including urban and suburban schools, for each student teacher. We strongly encourage students to do their student teaching in a location that is different from the one in which they completed their pre-practicum observations, and we advise students to do their internship at a grade level different from one in which they observed. Thus, it is good planning for a student who believes she or he wishes to be a student teacher at a specific grade level to observe in a higher or lower grade level classroom.
Reflective Teaching Seminar

Student teachers attend a weekly seminar throughout their field experience. This seminar is designed to build skills, add to the awareness of community resources, and encourage student teachers to reflect on their teaching experience. The reflective teaching seminar includes time for sharing concerns and successes as well as formal information on specific topic areas.

Planning for Additional Education Experience

A good way to prepare for a teaching career is to gain as much experience as possible working with children, either as a volunteer or in a part-time or summer job. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available through Brandeis service groups, including The Waltham Group, an on-campus student group that tutors Waltham area elementary and secondary students. Students may also apply to work at Lemberg Children’s Center, the on-campus preschool facility. Summer or part-time jobs with recreation programs, camps, or after-school programs are also possible. Such experiences help students examine their attitude toward teaching and offer opportunities to gain experience interacting with and observing young people.
Addendum

7.08: Professional Standards for Teachers

http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=08

(a) Plans Curriculum and Instruction.
   1. Draws on content standards of the relevant curriculum frameworks to plan sequential units of study, individual lessons, and learning activities that make learning cumulative and advance students' level of content knowledge.
   2. Draws on results of formal and informal assessments as well as knowledge of human development to identify teaching strategies and learning activities appropriate to the specific discipline, age, level of English language proficiency, and range of cognitive levels being taught.
   3. Identifies appropriate reading materials, other resources, and writing activities for promoting further learning by the full range of students within the classroom.
   4. Identifies prerequisite skills, concepts, and vocabulary needed for the learning activities.
   5. Plans lessons with clear objectives and relevant measurable outcomes.
   6. Draws on resources from colleagues, families, and the community to enhance learning.
   7. Incorporates appropriate technology and media in lesson planning.
   8. Uses information in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to plan strategies for integrating students with disabilities into general education classrooms.

(b) Delivers Effective Instruction.
   1. Communicates high standards and expectations when beginning the lesson:
      1. Makes learning objectives clear to students.
      2. Communicates clearly in writing and speaking.
      3. Uses engaging ways to begin a new unit of study or lesson.
      4. Builds on students' prior knowledge and experience.
   2. Communicates high standards and expectations when carrying out the lesson:
      1. Uses a balanced approach to teaching skills and concepts of elementary reading and writing.
      2. Employs a variety of content-based and content-oriented teaching techniques from more teacher-directed strategies such as direct instruction, practice, and Socratic dialogue, to less teacher-directed approaches such as discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, and research projects (among others).
      3. Demonstrates an adequate knowledge of and approach to the academic content of lessons.
      4. Employs a variety of reading and writing strategies for addressing learning objectives.
      5. Uses questioning to stimulate thinking and encourages all students to respond.
      6. Uses instructional technology appropriately.
      7. Employs appropriate sheltered English or subject matter strategies for English learners.
3. Communicates high standards and expectations when extending and completing the lesson:
   1. Assigns homework or practice that furthers student learning and checks it.
   2. Provides regular and frequent feedback to students on their progress.
   3. Provides many and varied opportunities for students to achieve competence.
4. Communicates high standards and expectations when evaluating student learning:
   1. Accurately measures student achievement of, and progress toward, the learning objectives with a variety of formal and informal assessments, and uses results to plan further instruction.
   2. Translates evaluations of student work into records that accurately convey the level of student achievement to students, parents or guardians, and school personnel.

(c) Manages Classroom Climate and Operation.
   1. Creates an environment that is conducive to learning.
   2. Creates a physical environment appropriate to a range of learning activities.
   3. Maintains appropriate standards of behavior, mutual respect, and safety.
   4. Manages classroom routines and procedures without loss of significant instructional time.

(d) Promotes Equity.
   1. Encourages all students to believe that effort is a key to achievement.
   2. Works to promote achievement by all students without exception.
   3. Assesses the significance of student differences in home experiences, background knowledge, learning skills, learning pace, and proficiency in the English language for learning the curriculum at hand and uses professional judgment to determine if instructional adjustments are necessary.
   4. Helps all students to understand American civic culture, its underlying ideals, founding political principles and political institutions, and to see themselves as members of a local, state, national, and international civic community.

(e) Meets Professional Responsibilities.
   1. Understands his or her legal and moral responsibilities.
   2. Conveys knowledge of and enthusiasm for his/her academic discipline to students.
   3. Maintains interest in current theory, research, and developments in the academic discipline and exercises judgment in accepting implications or findings as valid for application in classroom practice.
   4. Collaborates with colleagues to improve instruction, assessment, and student achievement.
   5. Works actively to involve parents in their child's academic activities and performance, and communicates clearly with them.
   6. Reflects critically upon his or her teaching experience, identifies areas for further professional development as part of a professional development plan that is linked to grade level, school, and district goals, and is receptive to suggestions for growth.
   7. Understands legal and ethical issues as they apply to responsible and acceptable use of the Internet and other resources.