

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES and RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

MAT Program

The Education Department offers a curriculum designed to academically prepare individuals for the teaching profession. In addition to curriculum and testing requirements, all teacher candidates in the OLLU MAT Teacher Certification Cohort are expected to demonstrate professional dispositions that demonstrate that they are prepared to teach children and youth. This preparation results from the combination of successful completion of university coursework and the demonstration of important intra- and interpersonal characteristics and dispositions that all effective teachers should possess.

Academic Expectations and Requirements

Academic Requirements

- An earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution,
- a minimum overall G.P.A. of 2.75 for admission,
- a minimum of 12 semester hours of subject specific content for certification in EC-6 or English 7-12, and a minimum of 15 semester hours of subject specific content is required for certification in Science 7-12,
- scholastic integrity, and
- all graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA and can earn no more than 2 C's in the program to remain in good standing academically.

All candidates admitted into the teacher certification program will be engaged in a rich learning experience.

Our interdisciplinary curriculum includes the following instructional foundations:

- reading and writing across the curriculum;
- integration of technology as a tool for learning;
- inclusion of relevant TEKS, including the English Language Proficiency Standards in instruction and planning;
- reading instruction, including instruction that improves students' content-area literacy;
- appreciation of diversity;
- value differentiated instruction;
- creating a positive and productive classroom environment;
- implementing effective and responsive instruction and assessment to promote student learning; and
- understanding and adhering to legal and ethical requirements for educators.

Through their course work, field experiences and assessments students are expected to demonstrate mastery of the skills and competencies captured in the Texas teacher standards, as indicated in Chapter 149 of the Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards, which include:

- instructional planning and delivery;
- knowledge of students and student learning;
- content knowledge and expertise;
- learning environment;
- data-driven practice; and
- professional practices and responsibilities.

Competency in Oral, Written and Digital Communication

The Master of Arts teacher candidate knows the importance of clear, accurate communication – oral, digital and written.

- A. The Master of Arts teacher candidate communicates clearly, accurately and with appropriate level of detail orally, in writing and through electronic communication. Teacher candidates speak in a manner appropriate to the context of the classroom. Teacher candidates refrain from inappropriate electronic communication; and
- B. Scholastic Integrity - OLLU Master of Arts teacher candidates are expected to adhere the guidelines for scholastic integrity, honesty and ethical behavior as stated in this OLLU MAT Handbook. Master of Arts teacher candidates demonstrate honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; completing one's own work; attributing proper credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

Positive Work Habits, Communication and Interactions

As a member of the teaching profession, it is important for Master of Arts teacher candidates to model positive work habits, responsibility, dependability, honesty and commitment to the profession. The Master of Arts teacher candidate:

- A. attends all classes as expected. Exhibits preparedness for class, engagement, and punctuality,
- B. demonstrates enthusiasm and a positive attitude towards the teaching profession and learners,
- C. dresses appropriately for the professional context and demonstrates positive personal hygiene habits; and
- D. demonstrates honesty and integrity by providing true statements regarding background, experiences, and qualifications; submitting one's own work; attributing proper credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

Cognitive Dispositions

The Master of Arts teacher candidate is required to:

- A. think analytically about educational issues,
- B. be thoughtfully reflective about their practice,
- C. be flexible, open to new ideas, and willing and able to modify their beliefs and practices,
- D. question and test their assumptions about teaching and schooling,
- E. demonstrate content knowledge appropriate for the level of certification they are seeking,
- F. demonstrate the effective utilization of technology for instructional purposes,
- G. demonstrate and utilize a wide variety of effective teaching practices,
- H. use formal and informal assessments to evaluate learners and teaching practices and utilizes the findings in instructional planning,
- I. recognize students' unique prior knowledge, life experiences and interests as part of the context for learning,
- J. promote achievement of students at all levels by providing equitable learning opportunities,
- K. apply effective planning and classroom organization as tools in maximizing instructional and learning time,

- L. make a positive contribution to the cooperating school community and school services; and
- M. demonstrate a commitment to continued professional growth – reflect on their own strengths and professional learning needs.

Respect for Diversity and Individual Differences

The Master of Arts teacher candidate, in preparation for responsible teaching, understands the importance of creating a learning environment in which diversity and individual differences are respected and is required to:

- A. interact with others in ways that reflect support and show respect for all students and colleagues,
- B. exhibits acceptance of and addresses the needs of exceptional learners; and
- C. understands and appreciates the value of diversity and pursues cultural competency.

Facilitation of Cooperation and Productivity.

The Master of Arts teacher candidate, is expected to:

- A. work cooperatively and collegially in groups, which includes interactions with fellow students, faculty, teachers, staff, parents and administrators.
- B. understands and appreciates the value of diversity and looks beyond self in interactions with others; respects differences of race, ethnicity, religion, and social class, national allegiance, and cultural heritage. Master of Arts Teacher candidates do not impose personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on others.

Collaboration and Interactions with Colleagues

The Master of Arts teacher candidate is expected to:

- A. collaborate with colleagues; is self-aware of their interpersonal interactions and is open to constructive feedback from peers, faculty and administrators,
- B. seeks out feedback and demonstrates the ability to accept and act on reasonable criticism,
- C. maintains supportive and cooperative relationships with fellow students,
- D. engages in collaborative decision-making; and,
- E. understands others' perspectives' and is open to new and innovative ideas about teaching.

Models Ethical and Respectful Behaviors

The Master of Arts teacher candidate is expected to:

- A. maintain appropriate professional educator-student relationship and boundaries based on a reasonably prudent educator standards,
- B. demonstrate compliance with all laws, regulations, OLLU University Policies, The Texas Administrative Code of

Ethics and Standards for Texas Educators, as well as the TEA professional program standards,

- C. maintain appropriate confidentiality at all times – including,
- D. confidential information concerning students unless disclosure serves professional purposes or is required by law,
- E. maintain a professional teacher-student relationships and teacher-parent relationships; and,
- F. serve as an advocate; demonstrates the disposition to act always for the benefit for all students.

Maintains Composure and Self Control

The Master of Arts teacher candidate is required to:

- A. follow appropriate channels of communication and authority,
- B. reacts/acts professionally when under stressful situation,
- C. respond with flexibility to various situation; and,
- D. uses sound judgment, emotional and self-control, and self-determination in personal interactions.

Maintains Proper Emotional and Physical Dispositions

The Master of Arts teacher candidate is required to:

- A. Stress Management-demonstrate the ability to deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. He or she handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
- B. Emotional and Mental Capabilities – use sound judgment, emotional and social self-control, and self-determination in personal interactions; and demonstrate the emotional and mental health required to function effectively as a teacher.
- C. exhibit motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and field placements, with or without accommodations as recommended by the OLLU Disability Coordinator.

Note:

No otherwise qualified Master of Arts teacher candidate shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the Master of Arts initial teacher certification program. A Master of Arts teacher candidate with a disability may be protected by Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and be eligible for a reasonable accommodation that will provide an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance. Any otherwise qualified teacher candidate with a qualified disability who requests a reasonable accommodation must notify the Accessibility Services

FIELD EXPERIENCE, CLINICAL TEACHING, and INTERNSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Field Experience:

In accordance with the State Board of Education the Educator Certification the (TEACH) Program at OLLU offers a wide variety of ongoing and relevant of field-based experiences for our students (Rule §228.35). Students will complete at least 30 clock hours of observation/field experience prior to student teaching. Master of Arts teacher candidates will have the opportunity to observe instruction by content certified teachers. In addition, candidates, under supervision, will be actively engaged in instructional activities in authentic school settings in a public school accredited by the TEA for an additional 15 clock hours. Master of Arts teacher candidate will work with actual students in classrooms/instructional settings and they will critically reflect on their observation experiences. (§228.35e1AB) Students will be required to keep a log of their field experience hours and activities and engage in thoughtful written reflection about what they have observed.

Background Check Requirements:

In accordance with Texas Education Code §22.0835, each school district will complete a criminal background check on all Master of Arts teacher candidates placed in their classrooms prior to participation in any field-based coursework including student/clinical teaching and practicums. School districts usually request a social security number and/or a driver's license number for all candidates in order to process background checks according to their procedures. Students are responsible for submitting all of the required background check information in the right format at the right time to the Director of Field Experience. School districts may deny placements to students with a criminal background. Please reference the Criminal Background Check/Criminal History Policy Form.

Clinical Teaching and Internship:

The purpose of the clinical teaching and internship experience is to support the transition from college student to becoming a professional educator. As they experience the day-to-day routine of the classroom teacher, the clinical teacher or intern will gain a better understanding of the inter-relationships and dynamics of classrooms and schools in TEA approved school sites. This course provides for the opportunity for the clinical teacher or intern to benefit from the professional guidance of an experienced teacher and group of colleagues. Through this, the clinical teacher or intern will gain confidence in assuming their role of the teacher and grow professionally. Clinical Teaching and Internships must take place in the field and grade-level for which a candidate is seeking certification and will include a full range of experience that includes the start of the school year (defined as the first 15 instructional days of the school year)

Clinical Teaching and Internship is the culminating experience of the OLLU MAT teacher preparation program. Clinical Teachers will be placed with an experienced certified cooperating teacher. Clinical teachers must complete 14 weeks and no less than 70 full days; full-time (100% of the school day) supervised clinical teaching in their certification area. Internship must be for a

minimum of one full school year for the classroom teacher assignment or assignments that match the certification category or categories for which the candidate is prepared by the EPP and require an intern certificate. Interns will be placed with experienced certified mentor teachers. During Clinical Teaching and Internship students demonstrate their ability to effectively plan and teach developmentally appropriate lessons, implement effective classroom management strategies, and the application of a variety of evaluation methods and assessments to their instruction. Clinical teachers and Interns will be assessed on these important elements of teaching and their professional dispositions through observations completed by their university supervisor(s) and cooperating teachers or mentor teachers.

CLINICAL TEACHING

A full-time, one semester (6 credit hours) unpaid professional practicum in a TEA approved school site where the candidate can demonstrate proficiency in the educator standards applicable to their assignment

- Full day teaching assignment (100% of the school day)/no less than 4 hours)
- Minimum teaching all day for 14 weeks/no fewer than 70 full days in a classroom
- Not the teacher of record; but gradually assume more responsibility for classroom instruction and management from cooperating teacher
- Under the direct supervision of a campus assigned cooperating teacher (certified /qualified)
- Supported and observed by university assigned field supervisor (ongoing)
- Placement is arranged by the University
- Unpaid
- Master of Arts teacher candidate must demonstrate readiness on all TExES content exams prior to clinical teaching
- Complete all program coursework

INTERNSHIP

A full-time, two-semester internship (6 credit hours/semester) in a TEA approved school site where the Master of Arts teacher candidate is employed and paid as the teacher of record where the candidate will demonstrate proficiency in the educator standards applicable to their assignment subject to TAC §230.36

- Full day teaching assignment (100% of the school day)/no less than 4 hours)
- Minimum teaching all day for one full school year in a classroom
- Teacher of record: employed by the school district
- Under the supervision of a campus assigned mentor teacher (certified /qualified) and campus supervisor
- Supported and observed by university assigned field supervisor (ongoing)
- Placement is NOT arranged by the University; candidate must attain their own district placement
- Paid as teacher of record by district; candidate is a district employee
- Requires an Intern Certificate

- Candidate must pass all TExES content exams and supplementals PRIOR to beginning internship and attaining Intern Certificate
- Complete all program coursework
- Note: If candidate fails to complete full internship due to withdrawing or release from the university OR resigning, discharge, or termination by the district, the intern certificate will be deactivated

CRIMINAL HISTORY POLICY: Criminal Background Check and Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation

Texas Certification seeking applicants/candidates must read and sign this acknowledgement form

Pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §22.083, Master of Arts teacher candidates seeking certification must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator and pursuant to TEC, §22.0835, prior to clinical teaching.

OLLU's Texas certification/educator preparation program requires that applicants and Master of Arts teacher candidates have a clear criminal history background check (nationwide) PRIOR to admittance into the educator preparation program

or a favorable Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation letter from TEA about their potential eligibility for educator certification. Applicants with certain criminal convictions or deferred adjudications may not be eligible for placement and thus not able to pursue certification. For more information candidates may review Texas Occupation Code, Chapter 53, Section 53.001-53.105 and/or [Texas Administrative Code Chp. 249, Subchapter B §249.16](#).

Applicants and/or Master of Arts teacher candidates of the OLLU educator preparation program should be aware of the following:

1) Having a criminal history might prevent applicants from attaining a placement and/or completing their clinical teaching or becoming certified educators based on the following factors:

- the nature and seriousness of the crime;
- the relationship of the crime to the purposes that certification is required to become a professional educator;
- the extent to which certification might offer an opportunity to engage in further criminal activity of the same type as that in which the person previously had been involved;
- the relationship of the crime to the ability, capacity, or fitness required to perform the duties of a professional educator;
- the extent of the applicant's past criminal activity;
- the age of the person when the crime was committed;
- the amount of time that has elapsed since the person's last criminal activity;
- the conduct and work activity of the person before and after the criminal activity;
- if the person has completed the terms of their probation or deferred adjudication;
- the evidence of rehabilitation; and
- other evidence, including letters of recommendation.

2) Applicants may request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE) prior to admission into the educator preparation program;

- TEA will provide an evaluation for a non-refundable online fee of \$50
- The evaluation will give TEA's written opinion about the individual's eligibility for certification and is based on the individual's self-reported criminal history
- The evaluation is voluntary and non-binding
- Master of Arts teacher candidates may request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE) only if:
 - enrolled or planning to enroll in an educator preparation program or planning to take a certification exam for initial educator certification, and
 - there is reason to believe that the Master of Arts teacher candidate may be ineligible for educator certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

Requesting a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE):

Effective October 1, 2018, requests for a PCHE must be submitted online

1. Read all [FAQs](#) to ensure that the eligibility criteria for a preliminary criminal history evaluation is met. Do not submit a PCHE request or make payment if eligibility criteria is not met.
2. Gather the following information, which TEA will require to complete the evaluation. To prevent delay in the agency's response, be prepared to submit all documentation with the request:
 - All offenses which may make you ineligible for a teaching certification,
 - A statement about the circumstances upon which your arrest(s) were based,
 - All court documentation showing the formal disposition of each offense and related charges. To obtain such documentation, contact the clerk in the jurisdiction (typically a County) in which you were arrested.
3. [Provide payment through Texas Online](#). Retain the Local Reference Number, which is your payment confirmation that will be included in your request. Please be aware that the fee is non-refundable.
4. Complete the online [Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation](#) request form. Upon your submission, you will receive a confirmation email that includes a copy of the information you entered.

Once the request and documentation are received, TEA staff will begin evaluation of your criminal history. Within 90 calendar days, staff will send you an evaluation letter by email that provides you with the agency's opinion about your potential eligibility for educator certification. The evaluation will be based on the information you provided as part of your request. Should you need to submit additional information during the review, you can do so by responding to your request confirmation email or faxing to 512-936-8247.

Note to applicants/Master of Arts teacher candidates: If during the program of study, a person becomes ineligible for placement as a result of a certain criminal conviction he/she may have to

withdraw from the course and/or program of study and may not be able to complete their course, certification and/or degree requirements. In addition, if upon successful completion of an educational program a candidate is convicted of certain offenses, they may become ineligible for certification/certification examination. Please refer to Texas Occupation Code, Chapter 53, Section 53.001-53.105 and/or [Texas Administrative Code Chp. 249, Subchapter B §249.16](#) for further clarification of offenses leading to ineligibility of certification.

MAINTAINING ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

This policy was developed as a support to Education candidate development as a professional. Therefore, any behaviors that are contrary to those described in the PPRA will be addressed immediately and a support plan will be developed.

1. Faculty will call a meeting with the Master of Arts teacher candidate; the faculty member will complete the PPRA form and identify the behavior or academic area that needs addressing by the student. The purpose of this meeting is for the student and faculty member to explore ways in which the student can better meet the expectations for professional behaviors or academic requirements in the classroom and to develop a support plan. Both the student and professor will sign the completed PPRA form; a copy will be provided the student and the second copy will be maintained in the student's departmental file.
2. If a second infraction occurs, the same procedure described above will be employed. In addition, the department chair will participate in the meeting and explain the university responsibility as gatekeeper to the profession. As a professional program, the Education Department reserves the right to recommend or deny the Master of Arts teacher candidate for certification. If all criteria are not met satisfactorily, Master of Art teacher candidates may be denied full acceptance into the MAT initial certification program and/or denied the opportunity to complete clinical teaching/internship.
3. A third infraction may lead to removal from the program. Without unconditional acceptance into the MAT initial certification program and successful completion of all course work, fieldwork, and clinical teaching/internships or its equivalent, the university does not recommend MAT candidates for Texas teacher certification. All Master of Arts teacher candidates referred for review are expected to participate in the process. Refusal to participate will not terminate or invalidate the process.

I _____, have read and understand the academic and professional disposition requirements for my admission and continuation in the MAT program at Our Lady of the Lake University. I agree to adhere to the expectations included in this document.

Student Signature

Date

Updated: 05/2021