

Master of Arts in Teaching Proposal

Description

Program Purpose

The Master of Arts in Teaching is a degree intended to prepare students to teach at the secondary (grades 6-12) level in a single certification area (either Science, English, or Mathematics). The program is designed for students who already have a firm grounding in their content discipline and uses an intense, field-rich series of courses and experiences to certify students for initial teaching licensure in one calendar year.

Program Organization

The program is proposed to be housed completely within the School of Education in the College of Education and Public Policy (CEPP). There will be a single program Coordinator who will supervise all the concentration areas, liaise with school teachers and administrators, and assemble any reports needed for accreditation. The Coordinator will be assisted by a concentration coordinator from each concentration area (although the program Coordinator may also take on the Concentration Coordinator's duties in the area they represent). The Concentration Coordinator will handle advising students in the concentration, assist the Program Coordinator in developing area standards, and assure that concentration courses are available in a timely manner.

The core faculty (from each concentration area) who have signed letters of intent have all committed to supporting the program by advising, coordinating, and teaching appropriate courses, as needed to support the program.

Learning Outcomes

The successful Masters of Arts in Teaching graduate will:

- a. Understand basic concepts of development, cognition, learning, and curriculum that affect the practice of teaching.
- b. Have basic skills in classroom management, lesson planning, assessment, and time management necessary to be a successful teacher.
- c. Possess specialized knowledge about the specific challenges in curriculum and teaching relevant to their area of licensure.
- d. Be able to prepare, modify, and teach lessons that enable students of multiple backgrounds, ability levels, and prior understandings to truly engage with the material they are responsible for teaching.
- e. Develop a professional disposition toward reflection, self-improvement, and life-long learning that will help them improve over time as they teach.

Assessment and Benchmarks for Success

Outcomes (a) – (d) will be assessed by successful completion of required coursework, as well as performance on the Praxis I and Praxis II entrance examinations. Outcomes (d) and (e) will be assessed by a collection of fieldwork experiences and the student's own teaching portfolio.

Halfway through the student's program (during Winter Session), the students progress will be reviewed to determine if he or she is ready for student teaching and completing the program. The students coursework and recommendations from cooperating teachers will be evaluated in order to make this determination.

Program Rationale and Demand

Institutional Factors

Compatibility with Academic Priorities of the University

This program relates to multiple strands of the University's Strategic Action Plan, specifically the "College-Community Partnerships" strand and the "Leadership in Education" strand. By focusing on developing a strong relationship with local schools and school teachers, we will help develop not only a new generation of highly-qualified and well-prepared teachers through the MAT program, we will be helping the cooperating teachers see their own practice in a new way. These partnerships with schools will help participating teachers develop best practices for their own classroom while helping our teacher candidate students learn those practices.

Planning Process

This proposal is the result of an extensive collaboration of faculty already involved in the post-graduate teacher preparation programs in the School of Education (the existing M.Ed in Science Education and Mathematics Education both offer secondary certification options) as well as other School of Education faculty and administration. An ad hoc committee was formed of area faculty, chaired by Dr. Eric Eslinger. We reviewed current paths a student could travel in order to gain a teaching credential and worked out a much more streamlined and generalizable program that afforded parallelism and course-sharing between the content areas.

During the planning process, the committee reviewed our own internal programs as well as regional and national programs for single-subject teaching credentials. We drew on a white paper report prepared by Dr. Danielle Ford that outlined potential paths toward a "teacher residency" program modeled by the Stanford University School of Education's program. While we did not completely implement such a residency program (it would have required too many radical changes to our existing course offerings and pedagogical infrastructure), we did create a program that fits the State of Delaware's definition of a "residency" program for teachers.

Impact of Proposed Curricula on Other Programs Of The University

The proposed program builds mainly on existing courses already regularly offered within the School of Education. The new and modified offerings have been designed in consultation with the area faculty who would be teaching those courses.

Student Demand

We anticipate an enrollment of 6-10 students in each content area each academic year. These numbers were derived by analyzing the commitments of the area faculty for capacity as well as the requests for information about and applications to our existing M.Ed programs in secondary education. Because this proposed program is significantly shorter and much more field-intensive than the M.Ed programs, we anticipate much higher enrollment numbers than we currently have in our M.Ed programs.

The program will be attractive to both recent graduates and career-changers. Recent graduates from undergraduate institutions without a secondary education program (or who did not realize that they wanted to become a teacher until too late) would be able to gain a teaching credential in one year after their Bachelor's degree, minimizing the amount of time they spend in a postgraduate program. Similarly, career changers who are exiting a profession in a secondary content area can gain valuable experience, training, and a teaching credential in less time than any other comparable program offered regionally.

Transferability

We do not expect students to transfer into the program from any other UD program or from other universities.

Access to Graduate and Professional Programs

A graduate from this program would have many different paths to continue their education, all of which would only be appropriate after some time in the field as a practicing teacher. The School of Education offers a Masters of Instruction degree aimed at teachers who are preparing to become Master Teachers through National Board certification, a doctorate (Ed.D) which is appropriate for teachers who show a very strong leadership potential and wish to move into a department chair position (or are just interested in carrying out extensive research into their own practice), another doctorate (Ed.D) in School Administration that is linked to a Principal's license, as well as numerous courses of study that are designed to support a teacher's continuing education.

Demand and Employment Factors

This program is designed to prepare single-subject secondary school teachers. Demand for teachers varies by subject area, certain disciplines are in very high demand, while others are not. We expect our enrollment applications to potentially reflect this distribution (especially in Science and Mathematics).

Audience for the Program

As discussed above, this program is targeted at both young, recent graduates with a Bachelor's degree in their area of licensure and older career-changers who are likely moving from industry into teaching.

Unique Career Paths

This program is highly focused toward preparing single-subject teachers in secondary education (grades 6-12).

Regional, State, and National Factors

Comparable Programs in the state/region

The University of Delaware currently offers undergraduate majors in all of these secondary education fields through the College of Arts and Sciences. These majors, however, are four-year program targeting fresh undergraduates, whom we would not be recruiting. There are a number of other post-graduate teacher preparation programs in the region, but nearly all of them have a two-year duration, and do not have the same level of intensive, rigorous field experience that our programs require.

Influences on the Proposed Curriculum

The program would be potentially subject to accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), provided that the UD continues to participate in the voluntary NCATE program. The NCATE board is currently debating how to deal with programs such as this proposed one, whether they should be overseen by their component content areas or by a different central committee specializing in post-graduate programs. In either event, this program has been developed by faculty who have coordinated other NCATE-accredited programs on campus, and we are confident that the program will receive accreditation when needed.

Other Strengths

The University of Delaware is uniquely situated to provide this kind of program to the region. There are quite a few liberal arts undergraduate institutions in the region that graduate highly-qualified students in a variety of content areas, but do not have a teacher education program themselves. With active regional recruitment, we should be able to create a pipeline of students from these programs directly into ours. Furthermore, especially within the Science and Mathematics concentrations, there are a large number of funding opportunities (both public and private) that are targeted at improving Science and Mathematics teacher education – such funding could not only support students in the Science and Mathematics concentrations, but also support portions of the other concentrations by secondary effects (such as providing support for a Program Coordinator position which would help coordinate all the content areas).

Enrollment, Admissions and Financial Aid

Enrollment

The program will be effective as of the 10-11 academic year, starting a cohort of students in the Summer 2010 term, and recruitment starting in Fall 2009. Enrollments in the first year may be limited based on faculty availability for the first term summer courses – we predict potentially smaller starting classes leading toward a "ramping up" to full course capacity as we finalize teaching workload in the program.

Admissions Requirements

The admissions criteria for the program have been generated to select only students who are truly prepared for this kind of intensive teacher preparation. If the student does not yet have a sufficient command of their content area, this program will not prepare them to teach.

Specifically, the requirements are:

1. Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university in the concentration area the student is applying to. Please see Appendix I for specific course requirements.
2. An undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher.
3. An officially reported minimum TOEFL score of 600 (paper-based test) or 100 (iBT).
4. Passing scores in all categories of the Praxis I (pre-professional skills) test.
5. Passing score on the Praxis II (content knowledge) test relevant to the student's concentration/specialization area, listed below:
 - a. English:10041
 - b. Mathematics: 10061
 - c. Science-Chemistry: 20245
 - d. Science-Physics: 10261
 - e. Science-Biology: 20235
 - f. Science-Earth Science: 20571
 - g. Science-Physical Science: 20481
 - h. Science-Integrated Science: 10435
 - i. Please note that it is possible to receive certification in multiple science specialization areas, provided the candidate meets the admission requirements for all specialization areas (including coursework and Praxis II scores).

Curriculum Specifics

Institutional Factors

This program will award a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree and an institutional recommendation for initial teaching licensure within the student's

concentration area. This is an appropriate degree because the program focuses on a combination of theoretical and practical approaches to teaching as well as an extensive field-based internship in a classroom.

Curriculum

The program requires the student to complete a minimum of 33 credits. The curriculum includes (a) core educational theory and practice courses common to all concentrations (18 credits) (b) concentration area courses in both curriculum and teaching methods (9 credits) and (c) a field internship course (6 credits).

To participate in the program, each student will undergo extensive field experiences, starting with observation and participation in the fall and extending to a full student teaching experience later.

Resources Available

Personnel Resources: See Appendix X for a full description and qualifications of the core faculty.

Resources Required

Personnel Resources: No new faculty positions are required at this time. However, should the program meet with a great deal of success, it is possible that enrollment in the content areas could support additional faculty.

External Funding: At the current time we are pursuing options to generate scholarship funding for students, especially in the Mathematics and Science fields through granting agencies both public and private. If successful, we will be able to provide funding for a number of our students, but likely not all.

Budgetary Needs: Because the program relies heavily on courses that are already being offered, the program has low budgetary requirements. New course development will be the responsibility of the acting Program Coordinator, Dr. Eric Eslinger, until a regular Program Coordinator can be determined. The Program Coordinator position is not a new faculty position, rather something that would likely warrant a one-course release for whichever faculty member was serving in that capacity. Other coordination (such as Concentration Coordinators) would be part of regular faculty workload.

Implementation and Evaluation

Implementation Plan: The content area courses that require development (the advanced methods courses, EDUC 751-754) will be developed by appropriate area faculty who have experience teaching both secondary methods courses and advanced middle-school methods for the Elementary Teacher Education (ETE) program. Other concentration-area courses are either already being taught, or have

been taught recently, and only need slight modification to fit the new program. The core professional and theory courses are all already being taught for other programs, and faculty associated with those courses have agreed to accept MAT students into those courses.

Assessment Plan: The assessment plan will be developed in more detail by core faculty once the program is approved; this plan will necessarily serve to provide assessment data for NCATE accreditation.