MAT in Middle Grades Handbook

Terms in this Handbook:

Admissions
Advising
Bookends
Capstone
Call Back Days
Changing your Name
Clemson’s Culture of Integrity
Cohort
Computer Requirement
Financial Aid
Good Standing/Academic Probation
GS 2 Form
GS 4 Form (Intent to Graduate)
Honor Ceremony
Honor Societies
Orientation
Practicum
Praxis Policy
Professional Development Opportunities
Program Graduation Requirements
Reasons for Dismissal
Admissions: Admissions are run through the program coordinator. All potential MAT students must have their undergraduate transcripts (and any graduate work that may be relevant to admission) evaluated by the coordinator and content faculty. This will determine if the potential student should apply for admission. An interview is also required. In most cases this should be scheduled for Greenville, but out-of-state students may set up a phone interview.

Starting with Cohort 13, 2016 graduates, the MAT requires the GRE or the Miller Analogy Test for admissions purposes. There is no minimum score requirement. If applicants are unable to produce scores before their desired start date, applicants may apply as non-degree students, filing a separate non-degree application, and take up to 12 hours before producing scores IF they would otherwise be accepted based on transcript analysis, GPA, and interview.

Although most MAT students are career changers, a few students may be accepted directly out of undergraduate programs. These students must provide the office of graduate admissions proof of a bachelor’s degree before they can begin MAT classes.

Advising: Advisers are assigned by content area at MAT Orientation. Until orientation, students should consider the program coordinator their primary adviser.

Bookends: The bookend is a period each spring semester before students begin student teaching and the one-two week period following student teaching before the Honors Ceremony and graduation. Some courses are “front loaded” so that they meet only every other week during student teaching. Students will meet from 9-12 and 1-4 at the University Center during the bookend weeks. Sessions will include methods classes, other classes, and enrichment lecturers/activities. This arrangement is only offered in the spring when the vast majority of candidates student teach, and fall student teachers must take classes on the normal weekly schedule.

Call Back Days: During spring student teaching, students return to the University Center on alternate weeks for one 3-hour session (1-4 p.m.). This has typically been on Tuesdays. These sessions are used for the methods class and for pre-graduation activities
such as setting up on-line job applications, preparing resumes, ordering caps and gowns, and other items.

**Capstone:** As a practitioners’ program, the MAT does not require a master’s thesis or a comprehensive exam for graduation. All students who complete student teaching are required to give a Capstone Presentation at the end of the semester in which they student teach. These are given in front of peers and MAT faculty and may be either a review of research done during the MAT or a poster session, depending on the cohort. The Capstone is reviewed in the Bookend Session.

**Changing your Name:** If you marry while you are in the MAT or you attended Clemson as an undergraduate and have since changed your name legally, you will need to file a Change of Name form and provide evidence of this change. Until you do this, you will appear on class rolls under your previous/maiden name and that is the name under which you will be assigned a Clemson e-mail address.

**Clemson’s Culture of Integrity:** The MAT abides by the following statement, common to all its courses’ syllabi: As members of the Clemson University Community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson’s vision of the institution as a “high seminary of learning.” Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.” The College of Education Graduate Coordinator traditionally provides a presentation on Academic Integrity during summer session I in Greenville.

**Cohort:** A cohort is defined as a group of students who go through the MAT together and graduate in the same calendar year. Students in any given cohort may begin the program in either January or May/June (first summer session). These students will then graduate the following May, August, or December. Any deviation from this schedule (illness, pregnancy, low GPA, family emergency) must be cleared with the coordinator and may result in being assigned to the next cohort. As spaces are competitive and content-specific, there is no guarantee of continued enrollment once a place is forfeited.

**Computer Requirement:** Students must have access to a personal computer to complete the program successfully. A laptop or tablet is highly recommended, as this allows full portability and the ability to take notes and work on projects in class. The University Center has a Media Center stocked with desk top computers, but the Media Center is not open 24 hours a day as are some main campus university computer labs. Therefore, the long and unusual hours of a teacher preparation program require access to a personal computer.

**Financial Aid:** There is no aid available through the MAT. The SC Student Loan Corporation (phone: 803-798-0916) can provide information on the Career Changer Loan (up to $15,000 for those who have worked for at least three years; forgiven 20% a year if one teaches middle school in SC) or the Teacher’s Loan (up to $5,000 for those who have
graduated within the last 3 years; forgiven 20% a year in one teaches middle school in SC) or the Stafford Loan. Students can also borrow and consolidate up to $13,000 in Stafford Loans that will also be forgiven as part of a teacher training program.

Note: all financial aid forms (red forms) are signed on main campus in the HEHD (Health, Education and Human Development) Advising Center in 309 Edwards Hall. The program coordinator cannot sign these.

**Good Standing/Academic Probation:** An MAT student must maintain a 3.0 GPA on all MAT graduate hours taken at Clemson to remain in good standing with the Graduate School. Students must be in good standing to be placed in the schools for practicum or to student teach and must have a 3.0 to graduate. If students fall below a 3.0, they may be allowed to remain in the program, at the discretion of the MAT faculty. A student on Academic Probation must meet with the MAT faculty to plan how he/she will meet the graduation GPA requirement. Repetition of classes and/or extra classes may be necessary to bring GPA up to 3.0. A student is given only one semester to raise his or her GPA to an acceptable level.

The most common reason for a low GPA is receiving an Incomplete in one or more classes. An “I” is averaged in as an F until the grade is redeemed. Students are encouraged NOT to take incompletes unless there is a documented emergency (and professors are under no obligation to give them under any circumstances).

In addition, the MAT Faculty has voted that MAT students may only have one C in an MAT class on their transcript. This C may not be in a methods class. Starting with Cohort 13, students may be dropped from the MAT for this academic reason. This is in response to CAEP’s academic selectivity standards.

**GS 2 Form:** The GS 2 form, found on-line, by going through the Graduate School’s web site, must be filled out the semester before graduation (fall for May graduates; spring for August graduates; summer for December graduates). The GS 2 is a listing of the 12 courses that are counted in the master’s degree. Other classes should not be listed, as these will count towards the master’s plus 30, which is the next step in the SC teacher’s pay scale. No class listed on the GS 2 may be used towards the master’s plus 30. Transfer work may be included, but must be approved by the program coordinator and an original transcript must be provided to the graduate school. See Transfer Credit.

**GS 4 Form:** The GS 4 form (intend to graduate) is found on-line through the Graduate School’s web site. This form must be filled out early in the semester in which one will graduate. Failure to file this form in a timely manner will lead to fines reaching up to $500. This form asks students if they will walk at graduation and what name should be on the diploma. There is a fee for mailing one’s diploma. Diplomas can be picked up on campus at Sikes Hall after graduation. This is a no-cost option.

**Honors Ceremony:** After the final spring bookend, the MAT program sponsors an Honors Ceremony at the University Center of Greenville auditorium for cohort members,
their family, and friends. This is held between the end of classes and graduation. The day and date are determined by facility availability.

**Honor Societies:** There are two primary academic honor societies that MAT students may join during their program of study. Kappa Delta Pi, an international honor society in education, may be joined by students who have at least 12 hours and a 3.75 GPA. Most MAT students join KDPi in the fall. In the spring, any student with a 4.0 GPA will be nominated for membership in Phi Kappa Phi, an interdisciplinary honor society. This is the highest academic honor available to MAT graduate students. A cord may be purchased for each society and may be worn at graduation.

**Orientation:** MAT orientation is usually held in early-mid March at the University Center of Greenville. A number of important time-sensitive activities occur at this session and students who miss it and do not make arrangements with the program coordinator may forfeit their places in the in-coming cohort.

The primary purpose of orientation is to fill out the paperwork for the state-mandated SLED security check all candidates must pass before they are allowed to student teach or apply for a teaching license in South Carolina. Students who miss the deadline to file this paperwork cannot be admitted to the schools and cannot begin their practicum. Other orientation paperwork: pictures are taken for Tiger Stripe cards; sign-up for summer classes; practicum and student teaching requests are filed; photograph release form is signed; Memorandum of Understanding is signed; liability insurance is discussed; MAT ID badge is purchased ($10.00) and ordered.

**Practicum:** The MAT practicum is a MW F plus two week M-F public school field experience. Most students will enroll in practicum in the fall semester. The practicum is the 0 hour lab for the first methods class (EDML 8110, 8120, 8130, 8140). The Practicum Handbook, up-dated each year and distributed in the summer, provides additional details. A Practicum Orientation is held at the end of summer school.

**Praxis Policy:** When registering for PRAXIS/PLT tests, candidates must request that scores be sent to both Clemson University (code 5111) and to the South Carolina State Department of Education (code 8108). When registering a candidate must enter his/her correct social security number and Clemson record first and last name. If an incorrect social security number is entered or omitted on the registration form, scores will not be sent to the South Carolina State Department of Education.

If for some reason score reports are not sent to Clemson University by ETS, the candidate must contact ETS and request scores be sent to Clemson. Clemson University’s Office of Field Experiences will not process and sign off on licensure until the candidate has requested that ETS send scores to Clemson, scores have been received by Clemson, and scores have been uploaded into Clemson’s student database.
Professional Development Requirement: All MAT students are required to attend a minimum of one professional conference during their enrollment in the MAT. MAT faculty members usually attend SCAMLE (SC Association of Middle Level Educators) the first weekend in March, in Myrtle Beach, and many MAT students both attend and present at this conference. Opportunities to attend other content-related conferences such as GeoFest and SCCTM (SC Council for Teachers of Mathematics) are also available.

Program Graduation Requirements: To graduate from the MAT and be recommended for initial teacher certification in South Carolina, candidates must meet the following requirements: complete 36 graduate hours (a minimum of 24 at Clemson; 24 core hours in education and 12 in content area[s]) with a 3.0 GPA; complete a successful practicum and student teaching placement (with a grade no lower than B); pass the Praxis II content exam in certification area(s); pass the middle grades PLT exam. It is possible to graduate from the MAT and not be recommended for certification. Students with late PLT scores cannot be recommended for certification until their scores are received.

Reasons for Dismissal: Students can be dismissed from the MAT for the following reasons: not maintaining a 3.0 GPA; receiving less than a B in either methods I or methods II; receiving more than one C in MAT classes; leaving the program for a semester or more without consulting with the program coordinator; being found guilty of an academic integrity violation such as, but not limited to, sexual harassment or plagiarism.

Research Opportunities: All MAT students are encouraged to take advantage of research opportunities such as publishing, presenting, and participating in poster sessions, both on and off campus. MAT faculty members are willing to work with students in any of these areas. It is recommended that students identify areas of research interest as early as possible, such as in the summer sessions, and begin to formulate plans to publish or present with fellow students or faculty. The SCAMLE deadline to submit a proposal is usually in October.

Scheduling of Classes: MAT students who start taking classes in January and continuing students signing up for fall classes will sign up on-line through iROAR starting in November. All students signing up for summer and fall classes do so at MAT Orientation.

South Carolina Code of Conduct: For Field and Clinical Experiences, the principal of a school is legally responsible for all that takes place within the school, and the classroom teacher is responsible to the principal. The education program candidate must fit into the organizational framework of the school and is an ambassador for Clemson University and a guest in the schools. For this reason, the policies of the school must be obtained and followed in addition to the following:

- Candidates will arrive to school on time and check in at the main office.
• Candidates are assigned to a school based on a cooperative relationship with Clemson University. The school determines all aspects of the educational programs and policies within the school.

• Candidates are to conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with expectations for faculty members in the school.

• Candidates will maintain a professional appearance according to the standards for faculty members of the school. It is the candidate’s responsibility to know these standards.

• If a candidate must be late or absent, the candidate must call the school 24 hours in advance or as soon as possible in an emergency. If in senior year field and clinical practice, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor must also be contacted immediately.

• Candidates should not become personally involved with students in social activities not sponsored by the school.

College of education teacher candidates can be removed from the field or clinical experiences at the request of the University Supervisor, the Classroom Teacher, the Cooperating School, the Cooperating School District and/or the Coordinator, Office of Field Experiences for violations of the College of Education Policy for Field and Clinical Experiences. Removal from field or clinical experiences can result in the failure of courses requiring field or clinical experiences.

SC STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATORS

Student teachers must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with professional, moral and ethical standards including the College of Education code of conduct, the SC ADEPT teaching standards (including ADEPT 10-Professionalism), and the SC Code of Conduct for South Carolina teachers [http://ed.sc.gov/agency/ee/Educator-Services/Licensure/documents/standardsofconduct.pdf]

Student Teaching: The MAT student teaching experience is a 14-week M-F public school field experience. Most students will enroll in student teaching in the spring semester before they graduate. Student teaching is the 0 hour lab for the second methods class (EDML 8210, 8220, 8230, 8240). The Student Teaching Handbook, up-dated each year and distributed in the late fall, provides additional details. There is a Student Teaching Orientation during the January Bookend. Starting with Cohort 13, a student must have filed a passing Praxis II score with the program coordinator before he/she can student teach.
**Teacher Professionalism:** In response to CAEP’s selectivity standards and emphasis on developing desirable teacher dispositions, the MAT will institute a Teacher Professionalism Matrix (TPM) starting with Cohort 13, beginning with summer classes (when the entire cohort has been accepted). This will be gone over in detail at each cohort’s orientation.

Students will receive points for objective lapses in professionalism such as being late to class, being absent from class, turning in assignments late, turning in required paperwork late (such as proof of a TB shot, required for placement in the schools).

As future educators, it is extremely important that you communicate effectively and professionally. During the program, you are expected to communicate with your peers, CT, instructors, supervisors, and students in a professional and productive way. This includes e-mail, internet (FaceBook and social media), phone, and face to face personal communication.

Points will also be recorded for documented unprofessional and disrespectful communication. This includes but is not limited to profane language, yelling/raising of voice in a professional context (school, MAT classroom), and not responding to e-mails that specify a required response within a stated time limit. This is to encourage students to maintain the proper habits of mind and behaviors necessary for a successful career in public school teaching.

If a student accrues more than 10 points and/or has not filed a passing Praxis II score by the end of fall semester, he or she will not be allowed to student teach in the spring.

At the end of October, students who are close to the 10 point limit will be contacted by their content advisors and a meeting will be scheduled. Any student reaching 10 points before the end of October will be contacted immediately. Points will be tallied at the end of each summer session and at the monthly unit meetings.

Students who accrue over 10 points will not be able to student teach in any subsequent semester. Those who pass Praxis II at a later date will be able to student teaching in a subsequent semester.

**Transfer Credit:** Students may transfer in up to 12 graduate hours to the MAT. These hours must fit within either the 24-hour core in education or the 12 hours of content. Hours must be approved by the program coordinator and hours must have been taken within 5 years of the date of graduation from the MAT to count. A sealed transcript from each transfer university must be provided to the program coordinator for the graduate school and the GS 2 form must reflect these hours. As per Clemson Graduate School requirements, only courses in which the student received a B or better are eligible for transfer.

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