



University Council

February 7, 2025

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2024-2025

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Undergraduate Student Representative – Ella Colker

Graduate Student Representative – William Walker

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Mary Frances Early College of Education to offer the existing major in Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) online will be an agenda item for the February 14, 2025, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR AN ONLINE PROGRAM

Date: November 6, 2024

College/School: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department/Division: Educational Theory and Practice

Program: Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.)

CIP: 13120303

Proposed Start Date: Summer 2025

1. Assessment

The Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Middle Grades Education leads to initial certification for students who hold undergraduate degrees in other fields and who do not hold a teacher certification. The curriculum includes required courses and applied research individualized to the student's teaching interests in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies, allowing students to gain advanced content knowledge and pedagogical skills in educating young adolescents.

One of the purposes of gaining approval as a fully online M.A.T. program is to increase the attractiveness of the program to teachers who are working on Georgia Professional Standards Commission-issued provisional certificates and who need to be enrolled in a teacher certification program to earn full certification. In spring 2024, the Georgia Department of Education reported that there were more than 295 middle grades teachers in the five largest school districts in Georgia who were teaching on provisional certificates. Additionally, the Middle Grades Education program has offered a Master of Education (M.Ed.) online since 2016. The online Middle Grades (M.Ed.) degree does not lead to initial certification. However, of the hundreds of inquiries about the online Middle Grades Education (M.Ed.) since the program launched in 2016, more than 60% of prospective students inquiring about the online Middle Grades Education (M.Ed.) degree want to pursue a fully online master's degree program that will lead to initial teacher certification.

2. Admission Requirements

All requirements for admission to the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) will be the same as those for the existing on-campus Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.).

Students who meet all of the following requirements are eligible to apply:

- Professional preparation: Earned, or will have earned, a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution before the date of enrollment at the University of Georgia
- GPA: Minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.50 for all courses taken

- TOEFL: Foreign applicants will also need to score a minimum of 20 points each on the Speaking and Writing sections of the TOEFL, with an overall minimum score of 80. Test scores must be within 5 years from the date of application.

Georgia's teacher certification agency, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, requires that all candidates have a minimum 2.5 GPA on undergraduate or previous graduate work.

In addition to the Graduate School application, applicants will also submit:

1. *Statement of Purpose*: two-page, single-spaced statement of purpose outlining teaching philosophy, experience, and career goals.
2. *Resume/CV*
3. *Three Letters of Recommendation*

Applicants will be admitted based on the faculty's evaluation of undergraduate GPA and, if relevant, TOEFL scores, quality of the essay, letters of recommendation, and resume.

3. Program Content

The curriculum of the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) will be equivalent to the curriculum of the existing on-campus Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.).

The program of study requires a minimum of 36 credit hours of coursework.

- EDMG 7010E, Community Contexts in Middle Grades Education (3 hours)
- EDMG 7020E, Educating Young Adolescents (3 hours)
- EDMG 7020L, Educating Young Adolescents Laboratory (1 hour)
- EDMG 7035E, The Middle Grades Curriculum (3 hours)
- EDMG 7035L, Middle Grades Curriculum Laboratory (1-3 hours)
- EDMG 7040E, Teaching in the Middle Grades (3 hours)
- EDMG 7460, Student Teaching in the Middle Grades (1-3 hours)
- EDSE 6030E, Inclusion of Students with Special Needs: Grades 6-12 (3 hours)
- ETAP 7610E, Classroom Management in Culturally Responsive Classrooms (3 hours)
- LLED 6060E, Content Area Literacies (3 hours)
- LLED 7630E, ESOL Grades P-12 (3 hours)
- Electives (9 hours)

4. Student Support Services

Advising services will be provided by Middle Grades Education program faculty. Each student will be assigned a faculty advisor, and they will meet regularly with that advisor using virtual meeting platforms. Additionally, each graduate student in the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) program will have access to technological services and supports through the Office of Instructional Technology within the Mary Frances Early College of Education (MFECOE). The MFECOE Office of Academic Programs will provide resources to assist students with career development. Like all students at the university, students will have access to university resources such as the Office of Student Financial Aid, Student Care and Outreach, CAPS, libraries, and the Disability Resource Center.

5. Resident Requirements

Residence requirements for students in the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) will be identical to those established for students in the existing on-campus Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.).

6. Program Management

The Middle Grades Education Program Coordinator will serve to maintain program processes and procedures. Additionally, Middle Grades Education faculty serving as advisors to students in the online program will provide support for program maintenance. Middle Grades Education faculty who are serving as instructors of online course offerings will maintain curricular and instructional quality. Monthly program meetings allow faculty to collaborate and continuously evaluate program needs. Annual review of Student Learning Outcomes will allow faculty to further assess student success and program effectiveness. The deadline for applying to the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) is April 1st, and students will matriculate in the summer semester. The duration of the 36-credit hour program is four semesters, and the anticipated start semester is Summer 2026.

Timetable for the first iteration of the degree program:

Spring 2025: Advertise and carry out admission procedures for Summer 2025 cohort. Compile data, complete request for substantive change by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), complete applications for approval from the GaPSC and University, complete advertisement (e.g., video) for the program.

Spring 2025: Upon approval, conduct informational and recruitment sessions (e.g., school recruitment fairs).

Summer 2025: Begin the first cohort.

7. Library and Laboratory Resources

Online UGA library resources already exist that are adequate to support this program. No laboratory is needed.

8. Budget

There are no foreseeable start-up costs to establishing a fully online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) as an additional offering to the existing on-campus Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.). Many of the required courses in the existing on-campus Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) are currently offered in an online format, and those courses are generally operating below full capacity. New students entering the online Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) would register for the already offered online versions of those required courses. There are no projected expenses for the first cycle of students due to these factors. Additional costs that may be associated with future cycles of students would be dependent upon student enrollment. If future student enrollment exceeds the current capacity in existing courses, future costs would include funds for the hiring of

part-time instructors to cover increased course demand. These funds are available annually through the college's instructional support request process.

9. Program Costs Assessed to Students

Costs for students to complete the online Masters of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Middle Grades Education would be consistent with the established fee structure for the university.

10. E-Rate

The faculty are not requesting e-rate for this program.

11. Accreditation: The online Masters of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Middle Grades Education will be subject to approval by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC). The program will submit a request to the GaPSC for an addition in modality offering.

12. Application and Matriculation: Students will apply for admission for this program in the same way they would apply for on-campus programs. The only difference will be their intention to complete the program entirely online and indication that they have the technological capacity to participate in the program. Applications will be reviewed with the schedule that is established by the Graduate School. All applications will be considered for a summer start in the appropriate year.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Proposal to offer the existing major in Middle Grades Education (M.A.T.) online

College: Mary Frances Early College of Education

Department: Educational Theory and Practice

Proposed Effective Term: Summer 2025

School/College:

- Mary Frances Early College of Education Associate Dean, Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, 1/13/2025
- Department of Educational Theory and Practice, Dr. Julie Kittleson, 1/13/2025
- Graduate School Associate Dean, Dr. Anne Shaffer, 1/15/2025