

Master of Arts in Teaching Program Handbook

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Overview of program

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program is designed for bachelor's degree holders who are knowledgeable in their content area and who wish to earn teacher certification at the same time as earning a master's degree. The MAT is a 36-39 hour degree designed to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to engage students in meaningful learning, build positive relationships with students and families, and continuously improve as an educator.

Upon completion of the Master of Arts in Teaching program, students will:

- 1) Understand the dynamics and vicissitudes of modern students, including the developmental, cultural, social, emotional and physical influences on their learning.
- 2) Understand that schooling occurs within a social and political context, and is subject to local, state, national and global influences.
- 3) Recognize various factors that influence students' motivation, and appropriately adjust such factors to improve students' motivation to meet high standards of learning.
- 4) Design, plan and deliver instruction that is relevant to students, addresses learning objectives for all students, and facilitates multiple levels of learning.
- 5) Utilize content knowledge to design, plan and deliver lessons/units that are accessible and meaningful for learners.
- 6) Utilize content knowledge to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity and collaborative problem solving.
- 7) Apply a variety of classroom management theories and techniques that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.
- 8) Use multiple methods of formative and summative assessment to evaluate students' performance and inform instruction.
- 9) Thoughtfully demonstrate habits of a lifelong devotion to learning through engagement in professional development and reflection.
- 10) Initiate collaborations with colleagues, families, other school professionals and community agencies to enhance student learning.
- 11) Use technology to plan and deliver and differentiate instruction that addresses learning objectives for all students, and facilitates multiple levels of learning.

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Graduate policies

The primary reference for rules, policies, and procedures concerning graduate education at Northern Kentucky University is the [Graduate Catalog](#) published by the Graduate School. The policies detailed in this program handbook are specific to MAT students, but MAT students must also comply with the policies that apply to all NKU graduate students. Please familiarize yourself with these policies and ask questions as needed.

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Definitions

Candidate: to prevent confusion, the term *candidate* applies to the person enrolled in the MAT program and seeking certification concurrent with a master's degree. They are the candidate for certification. Please see [Responsibilities of candidates](#) and [Roles in field, clinical, and professional lab experience](#) for further information.

Student: to prevent confusion, the term *student* refers to a person in grades preschool through 12 (PK-12).

Field experience: the 200 hours a candidate completes in the MAT program prior to enrolling in either clinical or professional lab experience. Please see [Field experience and Option 6](#) for further information.

Clinical experience: a minimum of 70 full days of immersion in a PK-12 CE's classroom, along with all associated tasks of that placement, to complete the culminating experience of the MAT program. Please see [Field experience and Option 6](#) for further information.

Professional lab experience: a minimum of 70 full days of immersion in the candidate's own classroom, along with all associated tasks of that placement, to complete the culminating experience of the MAT program. Please see [Field experience and Option 6](#) for further information.

PK-12 CE: a certified teacher in a grades preschool-12 classroom with whom a candidate is paired to complete field experience and/or clinical experience; stands for Preschool-12 Clinical Educator. Please see [Roles in field, clinical, and professional lab experience](#) for further information.

UCE: a person selected by the university who supervises a candidate in a field, clinical, and/or professional lab experience; stands for University Clinical Educator. Please see [Roles in field, clinical, and professional lab experience](#) for further information.

Option 6: a teacher certification offered by Kentucky for MAT candidates who have received an offer of employment in a Kentucky school to teach the content in which the candidate is seeking certification for at least 50% of the school day. Please [see EPSB's website](#) for further information.

Building mentor: a certified teacher in a grades preschool-12 classroom and named in a candidate's Option 6 mentorship plan with whom an Option 6 candidate is paired to provide mentorship during the school year. Whenever possible, the MAT program attempts to create a more cohesive experience by asking a building mentor to also serve as PK-12 CE for a candidate.

University mentor: a person selected by the university and named in a candidate's Option 6 mentorship plan with whom an Option 6 candidate is paired to provide mentorship during the school year. Whenever possible, the MAT program attempts to create a more cohesive experience by asking a university mentor to also serve as UCE for a candidate.

MAT program facilitator: the university representative tasked with managing the MAT program. Typically the MAT program facilitator serves as the advisor for all candidates in the program. The MAT program facilitator coordinates the field, clinical, and professional lab experiences. Supervision of the field, clinical, and professional lab experience courses may be delegated to another faculty member. Please see [Roles in field, clinical, and professional lab experience](#) for further information.

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Required coursework

Candidates progress through the MAT program in a planned program, laid out in a curriculum contract. Your curriculum contract lays out which courses to take in each term. Do not deviate from this sequence without first consulting with the MAT program facilitator.

To earn the MAT degree, candidates are required to complete a core curriculum of 19 credit hours, methods courses of between 3-6 credit hours (depending on area of certification), and field and clinical or professional lab experiences totaling 14 credit hours, for a total of 36-39 credit hours.

Core curriculum (19 credit hours):

- EDMT 610 Foundation of American Schooling (2 credits)
- EDMT 611 Studies of the Learners (2 credits)
- EDMT 612 Classroom Management (2 credits)
- EDMT 621 Students with Exceptionalities in the Middle/Secondary Classrooms (3 credits)
- EDMT 622 Cultural Identity in Schooling (2 credits)
- EDMT 632 Curriculum Design and Assessment (3 credits)
- EDMT 641 Technology in Middle/Secondary Classrooms (2 credits)
- EDU 530 Reading in Junior and Senior High School (3 credits)

Methods courses (3-6 credit hours):

- Candidates seeking certification in any certification area except secondary English must take one 3-credit hour methods course.
- Secondary English candidates are required to take two 3-credit hour methods courses.
- Candidates pursuing two content areas are required to take a methods course in each area.

Field and clinical experiences (14 credit hours):

- EDMT 693 Field Experience (5 credits total; taken across multiple semesters)
- Either
 - EDMT 695 and EDMT 697 Clinical Experience (9 credits) OR
 - EDMT 696 and EDMT 698 Professional Lab Experience (9 credits)

Total hours: 36-39

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Responsibilities of candidates

As a candidate in the MAT program, you are simultaneously fulfilling two roles: one is as a learner in NKU classrooms and the other is as a candidate for certification in PK-12 classrooms. These dual roles mean that you must maintain awareness of the standards that you must meet: everything aimed at NKU students (including the [Graduate Catalog](#), [Graduate Student Honor Code and Appeals Process](#), [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)) as well as those aimed at Kentucky educators ([KYEPSB Code of Ethics](#)) and candidates ([College of Education's Code of Ethics](#)).

It is the responsibility of the candidate to immediately notify the MAT program facilitator if they are arrested, charged, or convicted of a crime (other than a moving vehicle violation) while in the program. This may result in the candidate being removed from a field, clinical, or professional lab experience placement at the discretion of the MAT program facilitator or their designee.

Candidates are also responsible for receiving and responding to communication sent to their NKU emails. Make a habit of checking that email daily for correspondence.

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Field experience and Option 6

Candidates are eligible for employment in a Kentucky school under a Temporary Provisional Certificate (through Kentucky's Option 6 alternative certification pathway). The MAT program does not secure employment for interested candidates. Upon being hired in a Kentucky school to teach the content for which a candidate is seeking certification at least 50% of the school day, the candidate notifies the MAT program and applies for Kentucky teacher certification. **Substitute teaching (long or short term) does not count toward field, clinical, or professional lab experience.**

Field experience:

All candidates complete 200 hours of field experience prior to being eligible for clinical experience or professional lab experience. These 200 field hours are accomplished through the EDMT 693 field experience courses. There are only two options for placement:

1. Candidates who are employed on an Option 6 teaching certificate can use their own classroom as their field experience classroom.
2. Candidates who are not employed on an Option 6 teaching certificate will be paired with a certified teacher and will complete their hours in that teacher's classroom.

Clinical Experience or Professional Lab Experience:

All candidates complete a minimum of 70 full days of either clinical experience or professional lab experience as the culminating experience of the MAT program. These full days are accomplished through either the EDMT 695 and 697 courses or the EDMT 696 and 698 courses. There are only two options for placement:

1. Candidates who are employed on an Option 6 teaching certificate will use their own classroom to complete EDMT 696 and 698 (professional lab experience).
2. Candidates who are not employed on an Option 6 teaching certificate will be paired with a certified teacher and will complete EDMT 695 and 697 (clinical experience) in that teacher's classroom.

Candidates who are not employed on an Option 6 teaching certificate need to know that field and clinical experiences are non-paid teaching experiences and require significant time and energy at the assigned school, preparing lesson plans, grading student work, and participating in the school community. Candidates must understand it would be very difficult to be employed full time during clinical experience.

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Field experience activities

Whether accomplished through placement in a certified teacher's classroom or in your own classroom through Option 6 employment, the following activities may count toward the 200 field experience hours required in the program:

- planning for instruction with your PK-12 CE, UCE, and/or other teachers
- working with students in your classroom or in another certified teacher's classroom
- collaborating with your PK-12 CE, UCE, and/or other teachers about previous instruction
- participating in grade-level, team, or whole-school meetings or professional development sessions
- participating in meetings with student families or other community members
- student tutoring
- observations in related agencies such as Family Resource Centers or Youth Service Centers
- attending school board meetings
- attending school-based council meetings

Other activities may be deemed appropriate at the discretion of the MAT program facilitator or their designee. Please consult with your UCE to determine if other activities may be applied toward your field experience hours.

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Roles in field, clinical, and professional lab experience

Field, clinical, and professional lab experiences are dependent upon at least four parties working together with one another. In addition to the parties laid out here, school personnel (including school principals) also influence the field, clinical, and professional lab experiences.

MAT program facilitator

The MAT program facilitator is responsible for ensuring that candidates have field, clinical, and professional lab placements appropriate to the field, clinical, or professional experience being completed. Specific duties include:

- determining if a candidate will complete a particular field placement in the candidate's own classroom (via Option 6 employment) or through pairing with a certified teacher.
- pairing candidates with a certified teacher in consultation with school personnel including school principal.
- communicating placement details with UCEs.
- maintaining open communication with UCEs, PK-12 CEs, and other school personnel to support field, clinical, and professional experiences.
- assigning course grades for field, clinical, and professional experiences (this duty may be delegated to another faculty member serving as a course instructor).
- writing improvement and remediation plans.
- making decisions related to removal and termination of placements.

University Clinical Educator (UCE)

The UCE provides direct supervision to candidates in all field, clinical, and professional lab experiences. Specific duties include:

- becoming acquainted with the background, special interests, and educational experiences of the candidate.
- helping candidates, PK-12 CEs, and other school personnel understand the requirements of field, clinical, and professional lab experiences.
- visiting and observing the candidate and evaluating each formal observation.
- conferencing with the candidate and PK-12 CE after each formal observation to discuss the progress and performance of the candidate.
- evaluating the candidate's Foliotek submissions in a timely manner.
- serving as an intermediary to solve problems arising between the candidate and the PK-12 CE or other school personnel.
- contacting the MAT program facilitator if there are concerns.

Preschool-12 Clinical Educator (PK-12 CE)

The primary responsibility of the PK-12 CE is the well-being of the students with whom they work. The decision to accept the placement of a candidate will have an impact on these

students since the PK-12 CE will also be supporting the growth and development of the candidate.

The PK-12 CE provides supervision to the candidate and agrees to host the candidate for the amount of time required by the field or clinical experience. Specific duties include:

- becoming acquainted with the background, special interests, and educational experiences of the candidate.
- Preparing the students in advance so they will view the candidate as a co-teacher whose decisions will be supported by the PK-12 CE.
- orienting the candidate to school and classroom procedures and policies.
- making the candidate feel useful, comfortable, and an integral part of the school staff.
- providing the candidate with instructional materials, access to student records, and appropriate technology resources.
- co-planning and co-teaching of lesson plans, while conferring daily to analyze performance and plan future instruction.
- observing the candidate and evaluating each formal observation.
- conferencing with the candidate and UCE to discuss the progress and performance of the candidate.
- submitting evaluations on Foliotek.
- contacting the UCE if there are concerns.
- encouraging students to consult the candidate concerning their class work. The students' acceptance of the candidate depends upon the PK-12 CE's ability to endorse the candidate's authority and legitimacy in the classroom.
- allowing the candidate to bring different perspectives to lessons which reflect the candidate's originality and creativity as well as solid pedagogical grounding.
- giving the candidate increasing responsibility in the classroom.

Candidate

Candidates should represent Northern Kentucky University in a positive manner, while serving as a guest in a field or clinical experience classroom. This includes demonstrating the performances, integrity, character, dispositions, attitudes, and responsibilities of a professional. Candidates must demonstrate behaviors and attitudes in accordance with the [College of Education's Code of Ethics](#) and the [KYEPSB Code of Ethics](#), signed by all students in their first field experience.

The candidate must demonstrate appropriate personal conduct consistent with professional behavior. This includes accepting constructive criticism, being present and on time, demonstrating appropriate behavior in dealing with conflict, and developing appropriate relationships with students, parents, faculty, or supervisors. Professional conduct can also be extended to personal dress, speech, and written communications (especially emails and texts).

The candidate must demonstrate respect for all students, parents, colleagues, supervisors, and faculty. This includes trying to demonstrate and value differences and similarities in all people.

Specific duties include:

- satisfactorily completing all assignments associated with the field, clinical, or professional lab experience as assigned.
- seeking constructive criticism from both the PK-12 CE and UCE and utilizing their suggestions for improvement.
- seeking assistance from the UCE as early as possible if problems arise within the placement and cannot be directly resolved with the PK-12 CE.
- accessing email on a regular basis, outside of class times, and communication with UCEs, PK-12 CEs, and the MAT program facilitator in a timely manner.
- building a Foliotek portfolio and submitting artifacts at the required time. All requirements must be met in 3 or fewer attempts using the Foliotek rubric.
- being present when scheduled to be in field, clinical, or professional lab experience. All absences must be communicated to the UCE and PK-12 CE as early in the morning as requested by the UCE and PK-12 CE. If a school is closed for previously-unscheduled reasons, the field, clinical, or professional lab experience time must be made up.
- keeping accurate records on a time log of absences and tardiness, with signatures of the UCE and PK-12 CE. Falsification of time logs or other attendance documents may result in failure of the course or immediate dismissal from the program.
- knowing and adhering to all school rules, policies, and procedures.
- communicating with school personnel in a professional, tactful manner.
- exhibiting ethics and confidentiality concerning students, families, and professional colleagues.
- developing positive relationships with students, families, and school personnel appropriate to your role as a professional.
- assuming full responsibility for all materials borrowed from the school district, university, or other sources.

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Legal status of candidates

Several opinions have been issued by the Attorney General regarding the legal status of candidates. Although a candidate may be competent and skillful, the law clearly states that a candidate is not a teacher within the meaning of the law (the exception in the MAT program is a candidate who is employed in a Kentucky school on Option 6 certification). Based on this information, candidates may not legally take charge of a classroom in the absence of a certified teacher. The following policy statements will guide candidates:

- A candidate may not be used as a substitute for a certified teacher or for their PK-12 CE.
- A candidate has no legal authority as a certified teacher in or out of the classroom. It is necessary for the PK-12 CE to be physically present in the classroom at all times.
- The candidate may not legally assume responsibility for any activities (such as field trips, debate contests, etc.) that occur away from the assigned school.
- A candidate has a responsibility to perform their duties in a responsible manner. Therefore, a candidate may be held liable for negligent acts or omissions. For this reason, the university provides **Internship and Professional Liability** insurance coverage through United Educators. This claims-made insurance policy provides 1M/3M coverage for claims made against covered candidates while working in their capacity as student teachers. Candidates who are employed in a Kentucky school on Option 6 certification are covered by their employer and not the university's policy.
- Candidates participating in the COST international student teaching program should confirm insurance coverage with the MAT Program prior to beginning student teaching.
- Candidates are also able to purchase educator's liability insurance (KEA or KAPE) or other private policies at their choosing. Some home owners' policies provide coverage for work related liability. It is the candidate's responsibility to understand the liability coverage that may be provided by these private/individual policies.
- A candidate cannot be employed by the local board of education or receive compensation from said board for field or clinical experience services.
- In accordance with the Kentucky School Personnel Code of Ethics, candidates "...shall keep in confidence all information about students..." Candidates need to uphold this commitment to confidentiality.
- Candidates are forbidden to transport students to or from school, field trips, or other activities involving automobiles belonging to or driven by a candidate.

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Removal of a candidate from a field, clinical, or professional lab experience

If challenges arise in a field, clinical, or professional lab experience, face-to-face discussion between the involved parties (PK-12 CE, UCE, and/or the candidate) should take place within two business days of the challenge. The MAT program facilitator should be notified via email by all involved parties of the conflict and discussion within 24 hours of the discussion. Upon notification, the MAT program facilitator can make one of three decisions:

1. no further intervention is needed at this time;
2. a written remediation plan is needed at this time;
3. the placement needs to be immediately terminated.

Written remediation plan

In consultation with the PK-12 CE, UCE and/or school principal, the MAT program facilitator may create a written remediation plan for the candidate. The remediation plan will include specific outcomes the candidate must achieve and deadlines by which those outcomes must be achieved. The remediation plan will be signed by the candidate, PK-12 CE, UCE, and MAT program facilitator. The candidate, PK-12 CE, UCE, and MAT program facilitator will receive a copy.

The plan will be monitored by the UCE who will send notifications of progress to the MAT program facilitator on a regular basis.

If the outcomes of the remediation plan are achieved by the deadlines established on the remediation plan, the UCE will formally close the remediation plan by sending an email to the candidate, PK-12 CE, and MAT program facilitator.

If the outcomes of the remediation plan are not achieved by the deadlines established on the remediation plan, within two business days of the outcomes not being achieved by the stated deadlines, the UCE will formally notify the candidate, PK-12 CE, and MAT program facilitator via email that the remediation plan has not been met.

Upon receiving notification that a remediation plan has not been met, the MAT program facilitator will schedule a meeting with the candidate. This meeting will occur within 3 business days of the notification. Prior to this meeting, the MAT program facilitator may gather additional information from the candidate, PK-12 CE, UCE, other faculty, and/or other school personnel. At this meeting, the MAT program facilitator may choose one or more of the following options:

- remove the candidate from the field, clinical, or professional lab placement (note: in cases where the candidate is employed on an Option 6 certificate, the MAT program facilitator cannot terminate employment but may decide that the candidate may not continue using their own classroom for field, clinical, or professional lab experience).
- attempt to locate an alternative field, clinical, or professional lab experience placement for the remainder of the term.

- not attempt to locate an alternative field, clinical, or professional lab experience placement for the remainder of the term.
- assign a grade of F for the field, clinical, or professional lab experience.
- recommend the dismissal of the candidate from the MAT program.

Immediate termination of the placement

Upon the written recommendation of the PK-12 CE, UCE, or principal, and acceptance of that recommendation by the MAT program facilitator, a candidate's placement may be terminated without a remediation plan. Upon receiving notification of such a request, the MAT program facilitator will schedule a meeting with the candidate. This meeting will occur within 3 business days of the notification. Prior to this meeting, the MAT program facilitator may gather additional information from the candidate, PK-12 CE, UCE, other faculty, and/or other school personnel. At this meeting, the MAT program facilitator may choose one or more of the following options:

- remove the candidate from the field, clinical, or professional lab placement (note: in cases where the candidate is employed on an Option 6 certificate, the MAT program facilitator cannot terminate employment but may decide that the candidate may not continue using their own classroom for field, clinical, or professional lab experience).
- attempt to locate an alternative field, clinical, or professional lab experience placement for the remainder of the term.
- not attempt to locate an alternative field, clinical, or professional lab experience placement for the remainder of the term.
- assign a grade of F for the field, clinical, or professional lab experience.
- recommend the dismissal of the candidate from the MAT program.

If a candidate quits, walks out, or leaves a placement on their own decision, they will not be given an alternative placement for that term.

Please note that the timeframes indicated in this section are necessary to ensure concerns raised are addressed promptly. In some instances the MAT program facilitator may permit extensions of time for good cause so long as the extensions do not negatively affect students.

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Assessments in the program

Candidates make progress through the MAT program by earning passing grades in their core and methods courses, field experience courses, and clinical or professional lab experience courses. Core and methods courses are passed based on the individual course syllabi established by individual course instructors. Field, clinical, and professional lab experience courses are passed based on their syllabi and also meeting minimum standards in dispositions and professional behaviors, lesson planning, and reflection.

Click on the title below to learn more about the minimum standards in each area:

- [dispositions and professional behaviors](#)
- [lesson planning](#)
- [field, clinical, and professional lab reflection](#)

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Dispositions and professional behaviors

As candidates proceed through the MAT program, it is important to monitor, guide, and support their growth in dispositions and professional behaviors associated with effective teaching. Toward this end, a candidate's dispositions and professional behaviors are reviewed during each field, clinical, and professional lab experience by their PK-12 CE and UCE, and may also be evaluated in their coursework by their course instructors.

If a candidate receives a negative rating related to a field, clinical, or professional lab experience, the UCE and/or MAT program facilitator will schedule a meeting with the candidate within 3 business days of learning of that negative rating and develop an improvement plan with the candidate's input. The improvement plan will follow the same process as the written remediation plan delineated in [Removal of a candidate from a field, clinical, or professional lab experience](#) in this handbook.

If a candidate receives a negative rating related to a core or methods course, the course instructor will schedule a meeting with the candidate within 3 business days of learning of that negative rating and develop an improvement plan with the candidate's input. The MAT program facilitator may be invited to participate in this process by the course instructor and/or the candidate. The improvement plan will include specific outcomes the candidate must achieve and deadlines by which those outcomes must be achieved. The remediation plan will be signed by the candidate, course instructor, and (if invited to participate in the process), MAT program facilitator. The candidate, course instructor, and MAT program facilitator will receive a copy.

The plan will be monitored by the course instructor who will send notifications of progress to the MAT program facilitator on a regular basis.

If the outcomes of the improvement plan are achieved by the deadlines established on the improvement plan, the course instructor will formally close the improvement plan by sending an email to the candidate and MAT program facilitator.

If the outcomes of the improvement plan are not achieved by the deadlines established on the improvement plan, within two business days of the outcomes not being achieved by the stated deadlines, the course instructor will formally notify the candidate and MAT program facilitator via email that the improvement plan has not been met. At this point, the improvement plan will follow the same process as the written remediation plan whose outcomes were not achieved delineated in [Removal of a candidate from a field, clinical, or professional lab experience](#) in this handbook.

Please note that the timeframes indicated in this section are necessary to ensure concerns raised are addressed promptly. In some instances the MAT program facilitator may permit extensions of time for good cause so long as the extensions do not negatively affect students.

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Lesson planning

As candidates proceed through the MAT program, there is an increasing expectation of their ability to plan, conduct, assess, and reflect upon instruction. Candidates will be instructed in these abilities through the program core and methods courses as well as field experience courses.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in specific areas of planning, conducting, assessing, and reflecting upon instruction associated with each of the 1st through 4th hours of field experience. Candidates who do not demonstrate proficiency on the specific areas of a given hour of field experience may not be able to progress to further hours of field experience at the discretion of the MAT program facilitator or their designee.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate proficiency in all areas of planning, conducting, assessing, and reflecting upon instruction in the 5th hour of field experience. Candidates who do not demonstrate proficiency in all areas in the 5th hour of field experience may not be able to progress to clinical or professional lab experience coursework at the discretion of the MAT program facilitator or their designee.

A candidate's abilities to plan, conduct, assess, and reflect upon instruction are assessed during each field, clinical, and professional lab experience course through formal observations by both PK-12 CEs and UCEs. These abilities may also be evaluated in coursework by their course instructors.

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Field, Clinical, and Professional Lab Reflection

At the end of each field experience course, candidates will be asked to submit a reflection documenting their growth and proficiency over the past term. Specific expectations are given for each hour of field experience. In a term where a candidate completes multiple hours of field experience concurrently, that candidate will need to demonstrate the expectations for the more advanced of the hours in which they are enrolled. Candidates must achieve a score of met in 3 or fewer attempts using the Foliotek rubric. Candidates who do not achieve a score of met in 3 or fewer attempts will not pass the given field experience and may not be able to progress to further hours of field experience at the discretion of the MAT program facilitator or their designee. Please see the Field Experience Reflection template available on Foliotek and Canvas for specific expectations.

At the end of clinical and professional lab experience, candidates will be asked to submit a reflection documenting their proficiency over the full clinical or professional lab experience. Candidates must achieve a score of met in 3 or fewer attempts using the Foliotek rubric. Candidates who do not achieve a score of met in 3 or fewer attempts will not pass the clinical or professional lab experience course.

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