



Educator Preparation Program Guide for Students

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Brief Program Description

This program prepares undergraduate and graduate students to teach foreign languages at the middle and high school levels. The end result of the course of study is an Initial License to teach grades 5-12.

Who May Apply

There are three main categories of students who generally apply to this program; they include Undergraduates, Post-Baccalaureate students who seek only licensure, and graduate students, most often those enrolled in the Master of Arts in Teaching program. At this particular time, this program has been established for students of French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese although, in time, other languages may wish to participate in this program as well. The Department of Asian Studies has a separate program for those wishing to teach Chinese at the secondary level.

Getting Started

Students interested in teaching French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese may contact either the Director of Foreign Language Teacher Training located in the Dept. of French and Italian Studies at Herter Hall or may go directly to the Educator Information Office in the School of Education in 121 Furcolo Hall. Most students interested in this program have spent a semester or an academic year in an overseas setting where the target language is spoken. Residence abroad contributes a great deal to the candidate's fluency. Although undergraduates are usually majors in the language they wish to teach, occasionally students in other fields apply to the program because of their extensive background in a particular language, literature and culture. Undergraduates must have passed the Communication & Literacy Skills portion of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure (MTEL) and in the subject matter test in order to qualify for this program and must have a 3.0 grade point average on a four-point scale.

Admission Process and Criteria

Those interested in applying to the program of foreign language teacher training may pick up applications at the Educator Information Office in 121 Furcolo Hall in the School of Education. Completed application forms are due in the Teacher Education & Curriculum Studies office, 117 Furcolo Hall, by March 1. Acceptance to the program is

based on the following criteria: personal statement, grade point average, letters of recommendation, results on the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure, and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The OPI is mandatory for admission to the foreign language licensure pathways at the baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, and MAT levels.

Program of Study

Undergraduates can complete the program within a four-year period, but, more often than not, take an extra semester in order to do so. They often graduate and then complete their student teaching through the Division of Continuing Education.

Post-Baccalaureate students are those who have completed their bachelor's degree and who wish to teach as soon as possible, normally within the period of one year. They generally complete their course work and a pre-practicum field experience during the first semester and student teach during the second. One normally completes this program either through the Division of Continuing Education or as a non-degree graduate student.

Master of Arts in Teaching candidates apply to the foreign language department offering this degree – that is, either the Department of French and Italian or the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. These Departments admit students to the MAT program and offer teaching assistantships if they are available. Those receiving an assistantship pay no tuition and earn approximately \$13,000 per year in return for which they teach three classes per year – generally one in the first semester and two in the following. The MAT programs entail work in the language, literature and culture of the major field and in the area of professional education. They require up to 46 semester hours including course work and practica and generally take 2-3 years to complete. MAT students do not need to apply to the STEP program for admission. Those who are accepted as graduate students are automatically enrolled in the STEP program. Once they have been accepted, they must complete the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure in Communication and Literacy and in their teaching language during their first semester in residence.

All students need to present strength in their teaching language. They are expected to satisfy standards relating to the language, literature and culture of

their field of study. This is generally done by completing courses in their foreign language major and by studying abroad. Students must also have taken courses in either linguistics or language acquisition.

Students in all three categories mentioned above must complete The Work of Middle and High School Teachers, Educational Psychology, Social Issues, Tutoring in the Schools, and Methods of Teaching.

In our experience, the best indication of success in language teaching is the student's performance in the foreign language methods class and in the pre-practicum experience. Successful completion of these, as well as in the various courses in the program, allows students to embark on the student teaching experience. This is certainly the best and most predictive evidence of success as language teacher.

Advising

Students receive initial advice from the Educator Information Office in 121 Furcolo or from the Director of Foreign Language Teacher Training at Herter Hall. The foreign language adviser becomes very familiar with the teaching candidates in the methods course and is in a good position to recommend the student for student teaching and suggest various schools for consideration. Students also learn of practicum opportunities in the Education 524 course since they visit schools, observe classes and make professional contacts as part of their educational program.

Career Opportunities & Job Placement

The University facility that helps students find employment upon graduation is Career Services. Students complete an information packet and maintain various documents and letters of recommendation in a file that is sent free of charge to prospective employers requesting them. In past years, this University also has organized a job fair that has brought prospective employers and teacher candidates together for interviews. Many offers have been made as a result of this highly successful fair.

Program Specific Information

Complete details on the program of foreign language teacher training are available at the Educator Information Office at 121 Furcolo Hall in the School of Education.

For further information, please contact:

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LICENSURE INFORMATION AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL): The MTEL is required for licensure by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The test has two parts: the Communication and Literacy Skills (C&LS) test and the Subject area test(s). The University's policy is that:

- Undergraduates must achieve a passing score on the C&LS test as a prerequisite for admission.
- Post-baccalaureate and graduate students must achieve a passing score on the C&LS test in their first semester of study.
- All students must pass the Subject test(s) (if one has been developed for that licensure field) before enrolling in the practicum.

Licensure Application Process: The Educator Licensure Office (ELO) in the School of Education coordinates the licensure application process for all University Educator Preparation program students who have completed all licensing requirements. The ELO provides information to guide students in using the Electronic Licensure and Recruitment system (ELAR), a system in which students apply for educator licenses online. The ELAR system requires a student to apply for his/her license online (including the payment of license fees) and send an official copy of his/her transcript to the ELO in Room 130 Furcolo Hall (being sure that the transcript includes the "Institutional Recommendation for Educator Licensure"). After individuals have applied online, the TEO endorses/recommends candidates for licensure via ELAR. The University Licensure Officer also assists students in completing applications for licensure in other states, as necessary.

Career and Job Search Assistance: The School of Education, in collaboration with Career Services, sponsors a Job Fair for prospective educators. The Job Fair draws school districts from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. In addition, Career Services provides information and registration for the Massachusetts Educational Recruiting Consortium (MERC), a recruitment fair attended by school districts from across the nation.

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