

## FAQs: Advising for MAT Special Education (Initial Licensure)

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
<b>Where can I get current program documents including information about student teaching, etc.?</b>	Information about your program, course schedule, student teaching, etc., may be found in the online Advising Guide on the following website <a href="http://www.liberty.edu/advisingguide">www.liberty.edu/advisingguide</a> .
<b>How do I find out who my advisor is?</b>	All School of Education candidates share a group of LUO advisors who work together to give you consistent answers about your program. You can contact your LUO advisor by phone or email: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-800-424-9595</li> <li>• <a href="mailto:LUOAdvising@liberty.edu">LUOAdvising@liberty.edu</a></li> </ul>
<b>Is previous teaching experience or education coursework required for the special education program?</b>	The MAT Special Education is an INITIAL licensure program. No previous teaching experience or education coursework is required.
<b>What content competencies are required for the special education program?</b>	Content Competencies are NOT required for special education licensure. NOTE: Adding a content endorsement (elementary and/or secondary) is STRONGLY recommended. A content endorsement is required in some states for special education license or to be “highly qualified.”  Must take courses listed below, meet content competencies, and pass Praxis II Elementary Education Additional courses for dual endorsement: EDUC 531, 556, 632, 599 *Secondary Education Additional courses for dual endorsement: EDUC 535, 673, 695, 599 * VDOE: An individual who holds a teaching license may add an additional endorsement to the license by passing Praxis II. This testing option does not apply to individuals who are seeking an elementary education endorsement.
<b>Is an on-campus residence required for the MAT Special Education?</b>	While optional intensives are available, candidates are able to complete all required graduate courses in the online format (practicums will be required in certain courses, and the MAT degree culminates in a 300-hour student teaching semester).

<p><b>Can student teaching be waived? Must I quit my job to do student teaching?</b></p>	<p>Student teaching cannot be waived, but there are two options to complete the degree at Liberty:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Register for EDUC 590/592 and fulfill student teaching requirements for licensure. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. If you are currently employed as a full-time contractual special education teacher in a public school or in an accredited private school, your current position may serve as your student teaching. You will enroll in EDUC 591/593 (Student Teaching in Your Own Classroom) and complete all of the student teaching course assignments under the supervision of an on-site mentor. Additionally, you will need to complete 50 observation/teaching hours in the setting opposite of your current position. For licensure purposes, these hours need to be logged on your <a href="#">Field Experience Summary</a>.</li> <li>b. If your employment is not in an accredited school, you should make arrangements to complete the student teaching in an accredited school, perhaps through a leave of absence or in a year-round school during the summer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. If a leave of absence or placement in a year-round school during the summer cannot be arranged, you may register for EDUC 696 and complete the degree without licensure (“opt out”). We can verify that you completed the coursework but did not complete the student teaching under Liberty University supervision. It is possible to earn licensure at a later date by completing the student teaching requirement (within a 5 year time period).</li> <li>3. <i>Note:</i> All MAT Special Education degree requirements must be completed, including three intensives on campus. Otherwise the candidate must change to the M.Ed. in Curriculum &amp; Instruction (<b>non-licensure</b>).</li> </ol>
<p><b>How long must student teaching be?</b></p>	<p>Minimum of the following documented field experience hours required for special education student teachers: 300 hours of with 150 hours of direct teaching</p> <p><b>“Early field experiences”</b> are experiential learning opportunities throughout the program to give candidates short practical experiences as special education teachers. These might have been accumulated as the candidate completed course benchmark assignments in collaboration with schools before the formal student teaching and may be deducted from the 300-hour total. Whatever the balance is must be completed during the formal student teaching.</p> <p>The <b>student teaching</b> is more structured than the early field experiences, requiring specified projects and a competency-based portfolio. A MINIMUM of 300 cumulative field experience hours is required. The formal student teaching is concentrated into 15 weeks (7 ½ weeks at the elementary level and 7 ½ weeks at the secondary level).</p>
<p><b>Who will supervise my student teaching?</b></p>	<p>Student Teaching Supervisors must be licensed and experienced teachers (minimum of 3 years) with a graduate degree. You will work with two supervisors in your student teaching. Your Onsite Supervisor will assist you in your school setting. Your Online Supervisor will grade student teaching assignments that you submit through Blackboard and LiveText.</p>
<p><b>I already have a master’s degree and don’t want another one. Can I just take the courses I lack for licensure as a special education teacher?</b></p>	<p><b>FOR LIBERTY GRADUATES:</b> If you have already earned an MAT degree from Liberty University, you may take just the courses needed for licensure, and Liberty will process the licensure documents for you. However, we strongly encourage you to earn the additional degree as the coursework will be the equivalent or nearly the equivalent of an additional degree.</p> <p><b>FOR ALL OTHERS:</b> Enroll in the Ed.S. in Curriculum &amp; Instruction and complete the additional licensure requirements listed at the bottom of the Degree Completion Plan. This provides a twofold benefit to you: (1) you will most likely be paid a higher salary because of the Ed.S. degree, and (2) you will have obtained the license for special education teachers.</p>

<p><b>After completing this program, are there any other requirements necessary before I can work in a school system?</b></p>	<p>Upon completion of the degree requirements, including student teaching and licensure tests, you will submit licensure paperwork and fees as explained during the student teaching course. All licensure paperwork is submitted to: Liberty University, School of Education, Licensure Office, 1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24515 E-mail: <a href="mailto:teacher@liberty.edu">teacher@liberty.edu</a></p>
<p><b>My state requires a “certificate.” How does this compare to the VA “license” as a special education teacher?</b></p>	<p>Liberty’s MAT Special Education program is approved for a VA license. Virginia uses the term “license,” but it is the same credential as a “certificate.”</p>
<p><b>Will my license be valid in other states?</b></p>	<p>You have two choices to apply for licensure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You may submit the licensure application for your state (usually available on your state’s Department of Education website). Our Licensure Office will prepare the verification that you have completed a state- approved program. In most states, there are no other requirements for licensure. In some states you will need to take a state-specific test. There may also be a state-specific course to be completed during your first year of employment.</li> <li>2. You may submit the application for Virginia licensure and then apply for licensure in your state. This is the recommended route if you are not sure where you will be teaching.</li> </ol>
<p><b>What are the exact licensure requirements for my program?</b></p>	<p>Go to the following website and look under the Special Education program requirements: <a href="http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/licensure_regs.pdf">http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/licensure_regs.pdf</a> The main aspects of these requirements are provided below.</p> <p><b>(FOR NON-VIRGINIANS:</b> Our licensure programs are approved by the state of Virginia and are reciprocated by other states. Some of our non-Virginia candidates choose to apply directly for their own state’s license. After your student teaching is complete, you may submit your own state’s application for licensure to LU’s licensure office.</p>