



Sacred Heart
UNIVERSITY

A woman with curly hair, wearing a white V-neck sweater and a dark skirt, stands in a classroom, smiling and gesturing with her hands. In the background, there are educational posters on the wall, including "The Social Contract", "Quarter III", "Character Learning Targets", "Academic Learning Targets", and "Daily". Students are seated at desks in the foreground, partially visible.

HOW TO BECOME AN EDUCATOR IN CT: ***EARNING YOUR MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING AND CT TEACHER CERTIFICATION***

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1 About this Resource

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

In an increasingly fast-paced and demanding society and workforce, many graduates and professionals are left wanting more from a 9 to 5 job. The desire to have a meaningful and authentic impact in daily work leads many to pursue a career in teaching. Our hope is that this resource will inform future educators of the value of a master's degree in the field and provide information about the requirements for teaching in Connecticut. It will also highlight the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with Initial Teacher Certification program at Sacred Heart University (SHU) and offer tools to help future educators discern whether pursuing a graduate degree is the right step for them.

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2

Teaching in the
Twenty-First
Century

Students can tell when a teacher loves what they do. There is a certain authenticity about them that is contagious and creates buy-in with their students, which in turn, leads to better outcomes in the classroom. If you have a strong desire to help others, we invite you to consider channeling it into a professional teaching career. With the assistance of a graduate degree and the tools and training that come with completing a state certification program, you'll be well on your way to making a real and lasting impact on your future students.

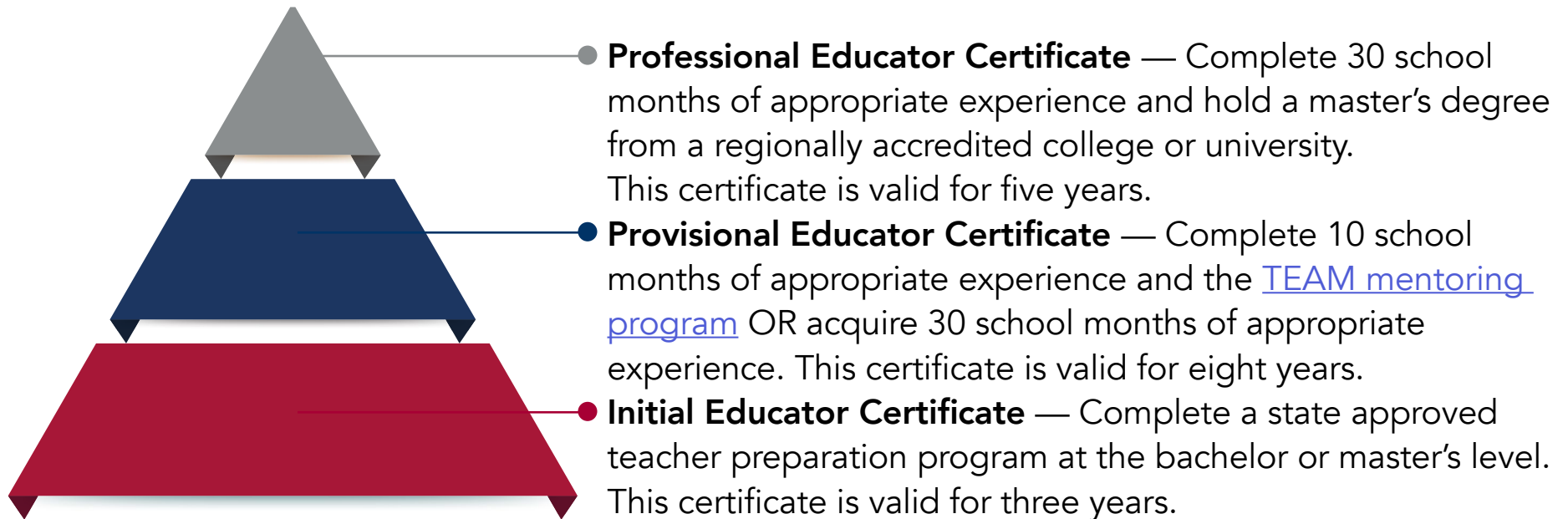
Sound like your personal and professional dreams? Then let's dive in and explore what it takes to become a teacher in Connecticut.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS AND PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

The first step to becoming a teacher in Connecticut is to pursue a state-approved teacher preparation program that is comprised of general education and professional coursework. To earn an initial certification at the graduate level, candidates must have completed undergraduate coursework relevant to the content area they are looking to teach. When considering a Master of Arts in Teaching program with certification, it is recommended to reach out to the program or the CT State Department of Education to learn about the prerequisite coursework required for your desired certification.

Connecticut has a three-tiered certification system that encourages ongoing professional development among its teachers:



Holding a master's degree in teaching or in an education-related field is often listed as a preferred qualification and offers a number of benefits to those who pursue these advanced degrees. Aside from earning higher salaries and having greater job security, a master's degree empowers teachers to meet the challenges of today's classroom and to offer their students the best possible education.

As [Teach.com](https://www.teach.com) says, "it is no longer enough to just have years of experience in teaching. After No Child Left Behind and other academic quantification measures, the careers of teachers increasingly depend on their results in the classroom. A master's degree in the field of education can give you more educational theory and classroom skills, as well as more hands-on student teaching experience with a mentor. After a master's program, you will be able to achieve better results in the classroom and have more job security and higher pay."





3 Job Outlook for Teaching Professionals

Teaching jobs are generally divided into two categories: elementary education (grades 1-6) and secondary education (grades 7-12). Within the arena of secondary education, teachers can choose to specialize in a particular subject such as English, Math, or a foreign language, etc.

The grade level you choose to teach will largely affect your salary, but across the board, teachers experience high levels of job security and job satisfaction. In fact, [many studies have found](#) that teachers ranked in the **top 15 most satisfying careers** in the United States.



Teachers are compensated differently based on the grade level they teach, their professional experience, and their level of education. On average a teacher with a master's degree makes [\\$4,000 more annually](#) than those who only hold a bachelor's. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, here are the median annual wages for educators in the United States:

- [Elementary School](#) — \$58,230
- [Middle School](#) — \$58,600
- [High School](#) — \$60,320

[Educators in Connecticut](#) are generally **paid higher than the national averages** with elementary school teachers making \$76,740 on average and secondary school teachers earning \$78,810 on average each year.

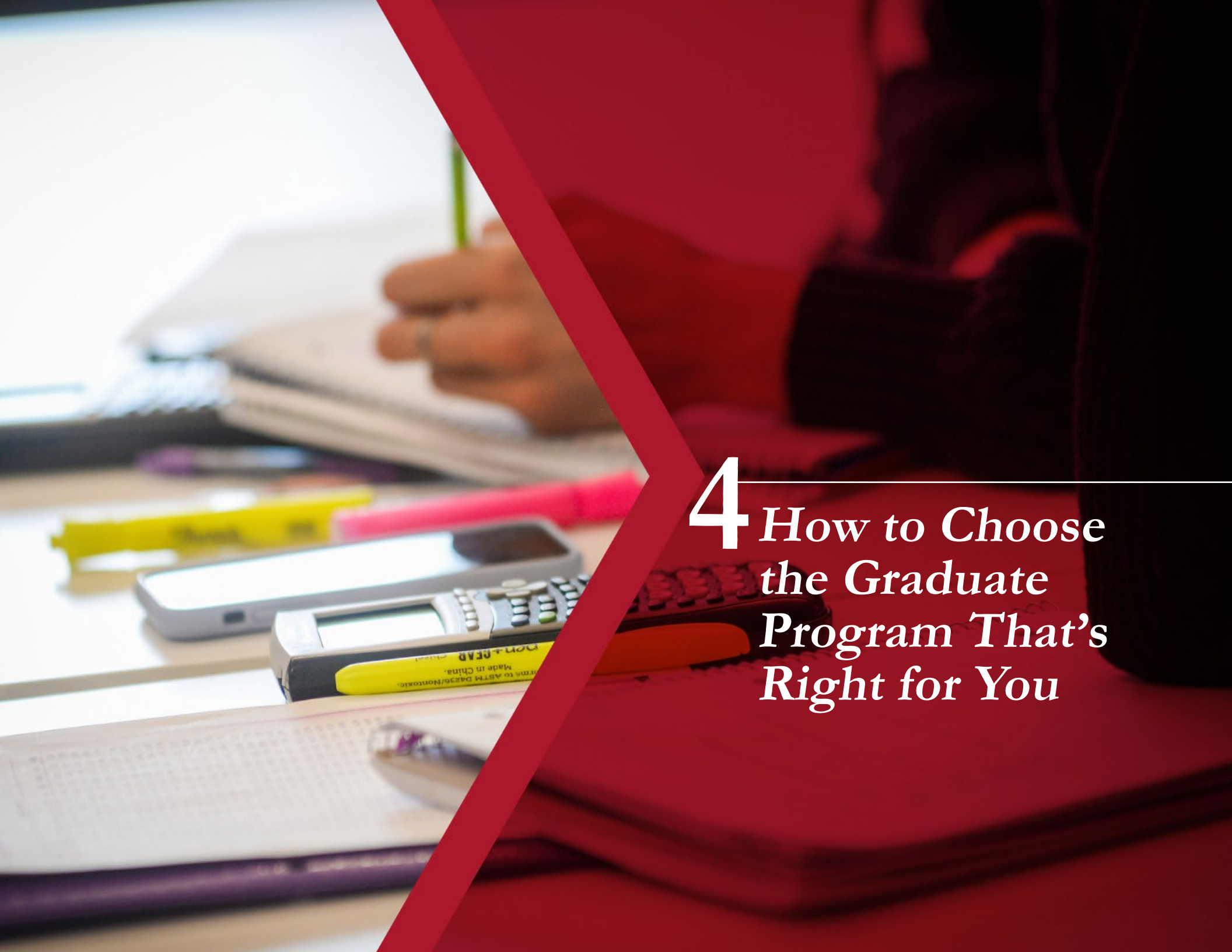
Because of the universality of their trade, teachers have the distinct advantage of being able to work anywhere in the nation, or even the world, provided they meet the state or territory's specific licensing requirements. Passionate, highly-qualified teachers are always needed and by earning your Master of Arts in Teaching, you will demonstrate to any future employer that you are exactly what they need to add expertise to their school.

3 BENEFITS OF CHOOSING TEACHING AS A CAREER

A teacher's work is full of purpose. Teachers hold a unique position in a child or young adult's life. They have weekly, sometimes daily, interactions with their students, which gives them the opportunity to gain their students' trust and impact their lives for the better. No matter what subject teachers are sharing in the classroom, there is always the opportunity to call their students to a higher standard and to accompany them as they work to become the best versions of themselves.

No two days in the classroom are the same. Not only does the curriculum change from day to day, but so do the challenges teachers face. Each day, their students bring something new to the table, both good and bad. It is a teacher's job to draw out, highlight, and expound upon the good each student contributes and help navigate through any struggles.

You can become a subject matter expert. If you have a passion for a particular subject and love sharing your knowledge and expertise about the discipline, you'll really enjoy using this personal connection to reach your students. There are also often opportunities for continuing education, meaning you'll get to take courses and study in greater depth the subject you love.



4 How to Choose the Graduate Program That's Right for You

Choosing the right graduate program can present several challenges and several questions. To start, many find themselves asking — *what exactly makes any given Master of Arts in Teaching program great?*

This is an important question and while many prospective graduate students will approach their search with a list of their individualized needs and wants, here are four things we believe are must-haves or non-negotiables when it comes to choosing the program that is right for you:

1. Supports its students and has an established, respected reputation
2. Has faculty members with real-world experience
3. Combines the graduate degree and state certification into one program
4. Offers hands-on experiences

Let's briefly dive into each of these elements that are found in exemplary MAT programs and find out why they are so important for your graduate school success.



A great MAT program supports its students and has an established, respected reputation. Its graduate students are the central focus of the program, and training and equipping them to succeed in the classroom is priority #1. What graduates and the education community at large say about the program is generally a good indicator of the quality of the degree. [Hear what SHU's recent graduates have to say](#) about their time in the Isabelle Farrington College of Education.

A great MAT program has faculty members with real-world experience. SHU's faculty have taught in a variety of K-12 settings, with specialties that include educational technology, literacy, elementary education, special education, and all of the secondary content specialties that the program offers. You will learn what the textbook says, but also what your professor has to offer based on their years of experience. Additionally, many of our faculty members continue to advance the field of education and teacher preparation by working on research grants. [You can learn more about our faculty members here!](#)



A great MAT program combines the graduate degree and state certification. If you are taking the time and making the effort to go back to graduate school to earn a degree, it's important that this endeavor is the best use of your time. This is why Sacred Heart University combines their MAT degree with the Connecticut Initial Teacher Certification — so that when you complete your coursework and graduate, you are ready to immediately jump into the field.

A great MAT program offers hands-on experiences. There's no better way to learn how to teach than by actually getting into classroom settings and learning through trial, error, and experience. If a MAT program doesn't offer its students the opportunity to step into a classroom during their graduate program, they aren't preparing you well enough. At SHU, our MAT degree incorporates a class-based practicum model. As part of the degree, students are required to gain student teaching experience. To fulfill this, they have the option to work in classrooms and learn through school-based experience, or complete the Graduate Teacher Internship Option (read below to learn more about this option!).





5 SHU Faculty Experts Share Their Teaching Experience

DR. ANTOINETTE BRUCIATI, PH.D., CHAIR OF THE FARRINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Please tell me about the graduate programs and the courses you teach at SHU.

The Department of Teacher Preparation includes programs leading to initial teacher certification in Elementary Education (Grades 1-6) and Secondary Education (Grades 7-12) in a number of different content areas. My responsibilities have included the development and instruction of campus-based and online graduate-level courses in classroom technology integration, teaching foundations, and educational research since 1998.



How long have you been in the field of teaching? Why are you passionate about this field?

I am a certified educator with more than 25 years of experience in PK-12 education and am also a certified school administrator. Teaching has always enabled me to be creative when delivering subject area content. The use of technology provides endless opportunities for developing digital learning activities that target a variety of student learning styles.

From your personal experience, why do you think earning an MAT is the best choice for those who want to teach?

A master's degree enables individuals with little to no teaching experience to enter the teaching profession within approximately two years. In addition to teaching in public and private schools, a MAT degree leads to additional career opportunities in fields such as instructional design, post-secondary education, corporate training, and early childcare, among others.

What's unique about SHU's MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program?

Research indicates that teacher quality is one of the most important factors for student academic success. At Sacred Heart University, candidates learn from experienced teacher-scholars who are actively engaged in the profession.



How does SHU's program help prepare graduates to succeed as teachers?

Embedded course activities and clinical experiences enable graduates to connect theory to practice. Courses are offered on-campus, through a blended format, or online to meet the needs of a busy working adult.

What changes do you see happening in the field of teaching? How are you incorporating these developments in the courses you teach?

During the past two decades, there has been increasing interest in the area of "social and emotional learning," or SEL. A variety of technology-based activities are incorporated into my coursework that foster SEL pre-service teaching competencies such as responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Tell me about your research interests and achievements.

My research interests include educational robotics, STEM Education (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics), online learning environments, and academic advising. In 2007, I was recognized by the Connecticut Technology Council as one of the top state Women of Innovation in the category of Academic Innovation and Leadership. I received Sacred Heart University's Excellence in Digital Pedagogy Award in 2019.

What advice do you have for prospective students thinking about enrolling in the MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program?

Communication is the key to success. Building ongoing relationships with your classmates, advisor, and faculty will provide you with important sources of information that will take you through graduation and beyond.

Is there anything else you'd like to add or any advice you'd like to give to a prospective student?

I'm looking forward to welcoming you to our scholarly community and invite you to learn more about the innovative programs that we offer through the Isabelle Farrington College of Education.

DR. RENE ROSELLE, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF TEACHER PREPARATION

Please tell me about the graduate programs and the courses you teach at SHU.

Students enrolled in the MAT with Initial Certification will take coursework that prepares them to plan and deliver high-quality instruction, assess student progress, and reflect on the teaching and learning cycle. Students in the MAT program will become a professional member of a school community and complete their student teaching experience, while having 30 credits of the degree paid for by the host school district.



I teach the student teaching seminar where students apply all the learning they have done in coursework. This class is designed to support students during a very formative and important part of the program.

How long have you been in the field of teaching? Why are you passionate about this field?

I have been in the field of education for over 20 years and have only become more passionate about teaching and teacher education as new research and societal concerns have emerged. There is no profession more important than teaching. It is the profession that makes all the others.

From your personal experience, why do you think earning an MAT is the best choice for those who want to teach?

An MAT allows a candidate to really dive in and focus on teaching as an art and a science. Students in the program will be able to explore teaching as a craft they can refine over time and be curious about throughout their life.

What's unique about SHU's MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program?

SHU has very close relationships with the school districts where students are placed. The districts we partner with are committed to SHU graduates and have been for a very long time. Their investment is evidenced by their willingness to fund part of students' graduate degrees but also by the longevity of the relationships.



How does SHU's program help prepare graduates to succeed as teachers?

The careful combination of rigorous coursework, rich school-based clinical experiences, and a caring faculty position graduates to succeed as new teachers.

What changes do you see happening in the field of teaching? How are you incorporating these developments in the courses you teach?

There are many interesting and challenging things happening in teaching and teacher education right now. The public and the profession are recognizing the complex nature of knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be an effective teacher. Our courses are designed to coach students along a developmental continuum in acquiring the specific practices they need to be successful in the classroom, and positivity impact student learning.

Tell me about your research interests and achievements.

One of my greatest achievements was winning a Teaching Scholar award. I consider teaching one of the most important aspects of my position and it was a great honor to be recognized in that way. My research interests center on how to develop clinically-rich teacher preparation programs and strong school/university partnerships.

What advice do you have for prospective students thinking about enrolling in the MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program?

If you are a curious and caring person who wants an impactful profession that will continue to challenge and inspire you, the MAT with initial teacher certification is a great choice.

Is there anything else you'd like to add or any advice you'd like to give to a prospective student?

The field of education is rich with opportunities to serve in a variety of ways in public schools. Whether you are interested in being a teacher, administrator, curriculum coach, or another role in education, the MAT with initial teacher certification will set you on a path where doors will continue to open for you.



6 *SHU's Master of Arts in Teaching with Initial Teacher Certification*



The Isabelle Farrington College
of Education is Connecticut's
engine of innovation in teacher training.

The **Master of Arts in Teaching with Initial Teacher Certification** degree offered through the [Farrington College of Education](#) at Sacred Heart University is research-validated, student-focused, and nationally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). This advanced degree offers every student an education of the highest standard, backed by expert faculty, and built on clinical experiences.

Sacred Heart's College of Education offers opportunities for educators to pursue [advanced degrees and certifications](#) as well. Students who hold initial certification and a master's degree can complete academic programs to earn administrator, literacy, and superintendent licensure, as well as a variety of 6th year (post-master's) degrees, and an educational doctorate.

DEGREE AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

SHU's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree is completed in conjunction with the graduate teacher certification program. The program consists of 48 credits total, 36 of which comprise the certification curriculum, and an additional 12 to complete the MAT degree.

This program is designed to meet the needs of those who hold a bachelor's degree, are pursuing initial teacher certification, and are seeking to enhance their professional skill-set to assist them in the classroom. The MAT program has the following four components that build on the applicant's prior academic and school experience:

- Foundations of Education
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Elective Coursework
- Culminating Experience



Students can choose to specialize in one of the following areas — elementary education (grades 1-6) or secondary education (grades 7-12). Within the field of secondary education, SHU students can choose from Biology, Chemistry, English, General Science, Mathematics, Social Studies/History, and Spanish.

Upon completion of the MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program, you will:

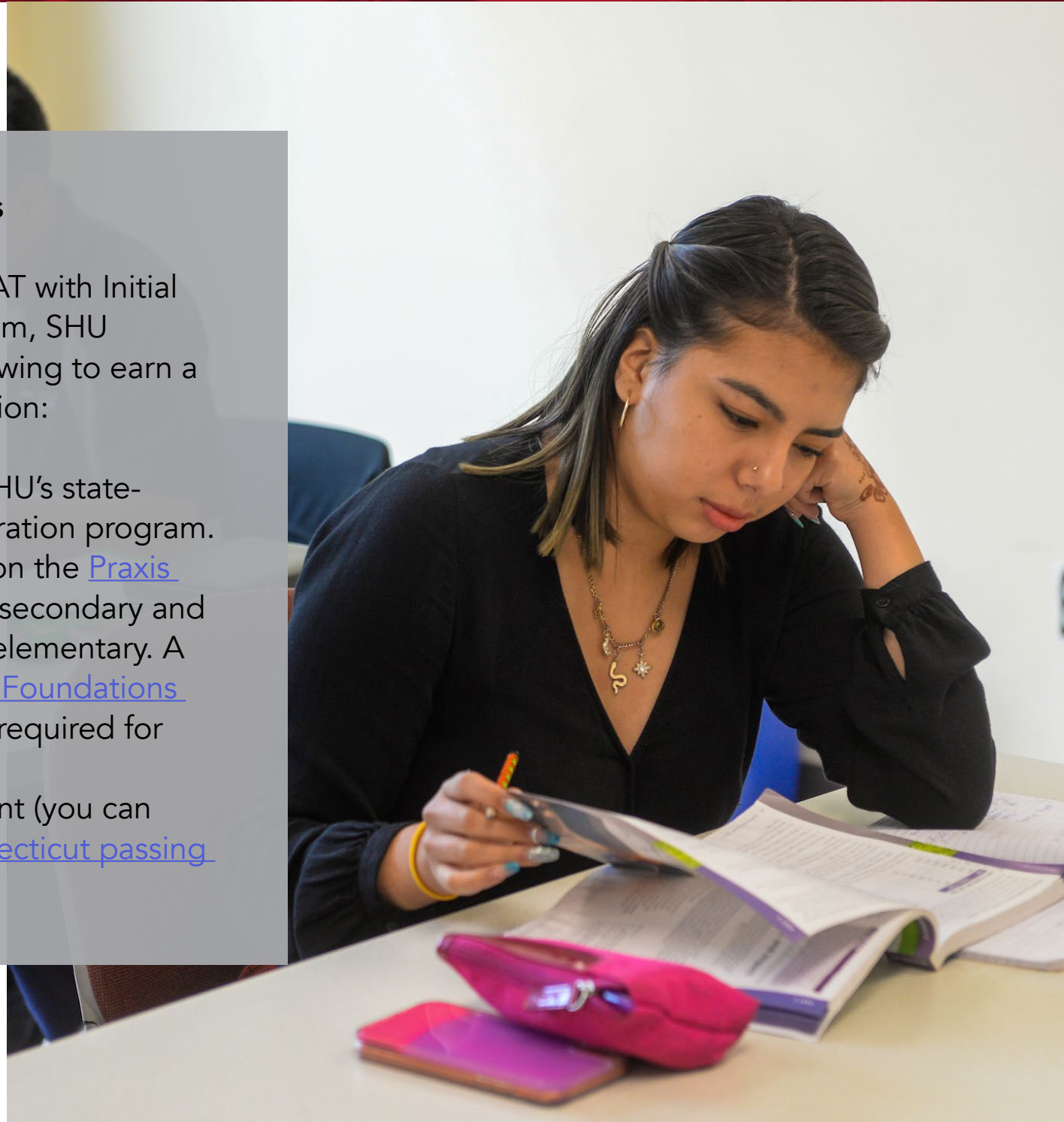
- Understand how to create and mold unique learning environments to meet the needs of your students.
- Thoroughly grasp content knowledge and how to apply this knowledge in a classroom setting.
- Be familiar with multiple assessment tools and how to effectively implement them.
- Have proficient experience in planning and instruction.
- Have gathered hands-on experience with various instructional strategies.
- Be prepared to take on leadership roles and collaborate with others in the field.



Certification Requirements

As part of the combined MAT with Initial Teacher Certification program, SHU students complete the following to earn a Connecticut State Certification:

- Successfully complete SHU's state-approved teacher preparation program.
- Achieve passing scores on the [Praxis II exam](#): subject area for secondary and elementary subjects for elementary. A passing score on the [CT Foundations of Reading Exam](#) is also required for elementary certification.
- Submit edTPA assessment (you can find the [edTPA for Connecticut passing scores here](#)).



GRADUATE TEACHER INTERNSHIP OPTION

Recognizing the importance of hands-on, in-classroom experience as an integral part of teacher preparation, the Farrington College of Education has offered our [school-based experience, or internship](#), to pre-service teachers for over 25 years.

This graduate teacher internship is commonly thought of as a year-long interview. In this role, candidates provide instructional assistance through tasks such as:

- Substitute teaching
- Grade level assistance
- Tutoring
- Guiding small instructional groups
- Chaperoning field trips
- Leading school projects based on personal talents and expertise
- Conducting remediation lessons as recommended in learning plans

Working closely with an academic advisor, MAT candidates will create a schedule that accommodates their program coursework, application to and enrollment in the graduate teacher internship, student teaching, and the required exams. Those who choose to participate in this internship will earn 30 credits toward the completion of their MAT degree.



7 MAT Admissions Requirements

Submitting an application for Sacred Heart University's Master of Arts in Teaching program is simple. To help you get started, below is a list of everything you'll need to collect. Of course, if you have any questions or need help, [contact a member of our admissions team](#) and we'd be happy to assist you.

- [Online application link](#)
- Official transcripts from all undergraduate institutions
- Non-refundable application fee
- Essay (1-2 pages) discussing a recent experience interacting with children and/or youth and how this experience relates to your expectations for a teaching career
- Praxis Core Academic Skills score report (or qualifying SAT or ACT results)
- Plan of Study Interview: Once you have submitted official transcripts and the essay, you may complete the plan of study requirement with the help of a faculty advisor
- Documentation of 100 child-related service hours
- Signed Applicant Statement of Understanding
- The address to which all documents can be sent is:

Sacred Heart University
Office of Graduate Admissions
5151 Park Avenue
Fairfield, CT 06825



8 Connect with
Us Today!

The road to becoming a highly respected and effective teacher in Connecticut is straightforward, thanks to Sacred Heart University's combined MAT with Initial Teacher Certification degree program. If you have any questions about how this degree can enable your professional dreams to come to life, we invite you to [reach out to a member of our admissions team](#). We are excited to hear from you, and wish you all the best on your graduate school journey!

[Explore Programs](#)[Apply Today](#)[Schedule a Visit](#)