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# Mississippi Teacher Corps

## Participant Handbook

Last updated: 08/30/2022

## MTC Contact Information

### **Dr. Joe Sweeney**

Director, Mississippi Teacher Corps  
Email: [jsweeney@olemiss.edu](mailto:jsweeney@olemiss.edu)  
Office: 662-915-2616  
Office Location: Guyton 227

*Contact for issues regarding:*

- *Academics (after making contact with the professor)*
- *Placement*
- *General classroom advice*
- *Summer workshops*
- *Role-play workshops*
- *Portfolios*

### **Dr. Sally Quong**

Program Coordinator  
Email: [sjbooth1@olemiss.edu](mailto:sjbooth1@olemiss.edu)  
Office: 662-915-7352  
Office Location: Guyton Annex 3115

*Contact for issues regarding:*

- *Calendar schedule*
- *Summer housing*
- *Hotel accommodations*
- *Admissions*
- *Graduation*
- *Financial aid*
- *Account holds*
- *Registration*
- *Licensure application*
- *Mentoring*
- *Counseling*
- *Blogs*
- *Observations/Evaluations in the field*
- *Recruitment*
- *Technology*
- *General classroom advice*

### **Dr. Alina Harges**

Instructor  
Email: [amharges@olemiss.edu](mailto:amharges@olemiss.edu)  
Office: 662-915-2163  
Office Location: Guyton 233

*Contact for issues regarding:*

- *Initial summer coursework*
- *Initial summer teaching*
- *Observations/Evaluations in the field*
- *General classroom advice*

### **Program Mailing Address:**

Mississippi Teacher Corps  
School of Education  
PO Box 1848  
University, MS 38677-1848

**Program Website:** [mtc.olemiss.edu](http://mtc.olemiss.edu)

### **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/MississippiTeacherCorps>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/mtcorps>

## **University of Mississippi/Other Contact Information**

### **Counseling Center:**

Office Location: <http://counseling.olemiss.edu/location/>

Website: <http://counseling.olemiss.edu/>

### **Health Center:**

Office: 662-915-7274

Hours: 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Friday.

Website: <http://healthcenter.olemiss.edu/>

### **Licensure:**

#### **Whitney Webb**

Certification Officer, School of Education

Email: [whitdt@olemiss.edu](mailto:whitdt@olemiss.edu)

Office: 662-915-7906

Fax: 662-915-7249

Office Location: Guyton Annex (SAFE office)

*Contact for issues regarding:*

- *Upgrading license*
- *If you already hold a master's degree, you can apply for a AA license at the end of your first year of teaching. Contact MTC administration if you fit this criteria.*

### **Mississippi State Department of Education Office of Licensure**

Office: 601-359-3513

Fax: 601-359-2778

To view/print a copy of your teaching license: <https://sso.mde.k12.ms.us/Login/Login.aspx>

## **Behaviors That Will Improve Your MTC Experience**

Your time in MTC will most likely be one of the most unique experiences of your life. Teaching is difficult work, and teaching in critical shortage areas makes the task that much harder. The following suggestions will help put yourself in a position to succeed:

1. Be on time
2. Listen
3. Prove you are here to help your students
4. Demonstrate the core values of MTC: Kindness, Gratitude, and Excellence
5. Improve everyday
6. Look for the positives, but stay realistic
7. Try your best
8. Respond promptly to all requests from the MTC administration

Being a member of MTC is a privilege, and attitudes and behaviors should be reflective of this.

## **Participant Requirements**

*Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in dismissal from the program.*

- You are required to be employed and teach for two years in the critical-needs school where you are placed.
- Completed, official transcripts from your undergraduate institution must be submitted to the University of Mississippi Graduate School as soon as possible following acceptance, or if you are a recent college graduate, official transcripts must be submitted as soon as possible following graduation. This is crucial to your status as a graduate student.
- Meet the minimum score on all indicators on the Teacher Intern Assessment Instrument (TIAI). Participants are evaluated several times throughout the two-year program. Failure to meet the minimum indicators on the TIAI evaluation may result in dismissal from the program.
- Maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and make a "C" or better in all graduate school coursework.
  - If you make below a "C" in any course, you will not receive credit for that course. Also, you may be dismissed from the program.
  - You cannot receive your degree if you have below a 3.0 overall GPA.
- Complete and submit your Mississippi Licensure Application in late June.
- Maintain a valid Mississippi teaching license.
- Maintain continuous employment at your school district throughout the school year.
- Accept your scholarship awards within five business days of the awards being posted.
- Pay any late fees that accrued through your negligence within five business days of being notified.
- Clear any holds within five business days of being notified and at the end of each semester (check the dates under "Holds" in the "Explanations").
- Maintain your living observation document; update the document with any schedule changes that may occur throughout the school year.
- Attend all classes and meetings on time, and stay for the full duration of the class or meeting. If you need to be absent from class, you must communicate directly with your course instructor(s) and the MTC administration. Since classes meet only seven times per semester, absences will only be approved for extenuating circumstances.

- Arrive on time at all official MTC functions (excluding socials). Two tardies in one semester will result in a disposition infraction. Being tardy is defined as arriving between .001 and 15 minutes after the scheduled start time.
- RSVP within 5 business days to any event invitations.
- Complete the hotel room request form by the given deadline. If you do not request a room for class weekends by the deadline, you will not have a room reserved for you.
- Maintain professional dress at the MTC Extended School Year Summer Program and in your school district.
- Check your University of Mississippi email daily, and **respond to requests from MTC immediately**. This is the official method for relaying all important information.
- Keep current with the online Google Calendar.
- Have a written lesson plan in your classroom every day.
- Complete a Diploma Application & GS8 form, and send requested measurements for your cap and gown in the spring of your second year.

*Continued failure to adhere to these requirements will result in a disposition infraction and/or potential dismissal from the program.*

## **Second-Year Expectations and Requirements**

- Serve as a mentor in your second year.
- During second summer, submit a copy of lesson plans and accompanying documents to your Team teacher and first year teachers before each lesson taught.
- During second summer, you are allowed one absence. Report absences to MTC administrators, summer school administrators, your Team teacher, and the other classroom teachers. If you miss a day you are scheduled to teach, be sure that you complete a lesson plan or reschedule the teaching period with another teacher.
- You are responsible for teaching at least three lessons a week and supporting and modeling appropriate behavior, dress, and professionalism for first year teachers.
- Complete a peer evaluation for all lessons taught in your classroom for which you are present.
- Assist first-years with lesson planning, classroom management, resource-finding, and content knowledge.
- Be at your duty post at the assigned times throughout the day, including lunch, before and after school, and during breaks in between classes.
- Aid first-years in proper IEP accommodations and data analysis.
- Present your second year classroom management plan to the Team teachers and first year teachers.
- Create a club curriculum. Be sure all first-year teachers are aware of the club curriculum. Create a teaching schedule similar to the one present in each summer school classroom. Attend club meetings each day they are offered.
- Attend all subject-area meetings and bring helpful suggestions to each meeting.
- Report all problems and concerns to the Assistant Principal.

## **Resignation Policy**

Although Teacher Corps endeavors to retain all of the teachers who make the two year commitment to the program, occasionally there are extenuating circumstances that require a teacher to resign. In the event one of these extenuating circumstances results in your need to resign from the Teacher Corps, you must contact the Director immediately to

schedule a resignation meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to have a candid discussion about your reasons for exiting the program. You should bring the following to the meeting:

1. A signed resignation letter.
2. Your notebook computer (if loaned one), cleared of all personal files.
3. Any other university property you may have.

## **Timing**

If you are compelled to resign from the program, we ask that you consider the following before scheduling your exit interview:

1. In your first summer, the end of June is the best time to resign. July 1st provides enough advance notice for your placement school's administration to hire a replacement.
2. If the school year has already started, we prefer you to remain at the school until the end of the first year after school is dismissed for the summer.
3. The worst time to leave is in the middle of the school year. At this point, the district will not be able to find a replacement, and a substitute teacher will be appointed to teach the students for the remainder of the school year.

Few actions are more damaging to the professional reputation of MTC, and more importantly the students in your classroom, than the decision of a teacher to resign in the middle of a school year.

## **Communication**

MTC prides itself on offering support to our teachers in the field. We like to keep up with how things are going in the classroom and want to make sure our participants have what they need to be successful. If you are seriously considering quitting the program, please relay this to the program administration.

## **Resignation Repercussions**

The decision to quit in the middle of a year has adverse effects on all of the following:

### **Students**

Your students will receive either a long-term substitute or a hastily hired replacement and will suffer academically.

### **Administration**

Your administration must search for another teacher at an inconvenient time of the year in an area that already suffers from a teacher shortage.

### **The Mississippi Teacher Corps**

We strive to place highly qualified teachers in public school districts for a minimum of two years. The relationship between MTC and the local school districts is damaged when an MTC teacher resigns prior to the end of the two-year commitment. As a result, the school district may decide not to allow MTC to place teachers within that district again.

## **Absences**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and workshops. During the first summer, one absence is excused if a student needs to meet with his or her school district to sign a contract and/or complete other mandatory tasks (e.g. background check). During the fall and spring, each graduate class instructor will set his or her own attendance policy.

However, during the fall and spring, a student who misses more than two class meetings will automatically fail the course and be dismissed from MTC. During the second summer, a participant who misses more than two days (whether class, meetings, or summer school) will be dismissed from MTC.

## **Alcohol**

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed anywhere on campus. If any staff member or professor suspects a participant has been drinking immediately before class, during class, or during lunch break, the participant will be given a disposition infraction.

## **Transfer Policy**

You are expected to stay at the school of placement for the two-year experience. We will consider allowing a change of schools only in rare and extenuating circumstances. When schools accept participants, they are expecting to get a teacher for at least the next two years. If you switch schools, a consultation with the MTC administration is required.

**Rare and extenuating circumstances.** The program will evaluate any reported extenuating circumstances. If you feel that there are circumstances at your school that are rare and/or extenuating (e.g. a threat to your safety and/or wellbeing), you need to report this, in writing, to all of the MTC administrators. Please be very specific with details, dates, and times. We will investigate your report and reach a decision regarding your claim.

In investigating any claim, we can take any suggestions you have into consideration, but realize that suggestions (such as requesting that we not ask questions of the principal and/or talk with others at the school), may hinder our investigation. In instances where we are looking into safety, we may have an obligation to inform certain people.

**Non-renewal.** Non-renewal occurs when a district decides not to renew a contract of a teacher. In Mississippi, a first-year teacher can be non-renewed without reason or explanation. Common reasons for non-renewal include inability to manage a classroom, insubordination, and/or failure to fulfill teaching duties (chronic absences and/or tardies, not turning in lesson plans, etc.). The program takes non-renewal very seriously and in most instances, we have found that the non-renewal is warranted. When a teacher is non-renewed, the program administration will evaluate the reasons and decide if the participant should stay in the program. If the participant is allowed to remain in the program, a change of placement school needs to be coordinated with MTC administration. The participant may be required to find a new placement on their own.

## **Awards and Distinctions**

At the completion of the two years, MTC gives out several awards. These awards include:

Andrew P. Mullins Jr. Award

- Voted by the class for the participant who best represents the ideals and values of MTC (however participants choose to define those ideals and values)
- Comes with a monetary award

Class Speaker

- Voted by the class. Gives a speech at the final banquet.

Nancy H. Brown Fellow

- State Representative Cecil Brown has donated his legislative salary to MTC. The award is named for his wife, Nancy, who is a K-12 teacher.
- Given to the outstanding MTC teacher in the Jackson-area
- Includes a dinner with MTC staff, Representative Cecil Brown, and Mrs. Nancy Brown

#### Outstanding Academic Achievement

- Voted by the professors

#### Outstanding Portfolio

- Voted by the professors

#### Germain McConnell Alumni Award

- This award will be given to a distinguished alum of the MTC who is still involved in the field of education for the children of Mississippi.

You can see the list of all award winners here:

<http://www.olemiss.edu/programs/mtc/participants/awards>

### **Background Checks**

Participants must obtain a background check before they are allowed to work at the Holly Springs summer school. This should be completed before arriving for the first official MTC event. These background checks are paid for by MTC and are separate from any background check required by your school district.

### **Bursar**

At the beginning and end of each academic semester, it is your responsibility to check your Bursar account online (<http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/bursar/>) and see if you have any holds. You must pay any fees and clear any holds that have accrued before the end of each school semester. If you think a fee has been assessed in error, contact the Program Coordinator to see what the fee is for and why it was charged to your account. Most fees are a result of signing your award letter late. Before you can be registered for classes, holds must be cleared.

Failure to clear your hold within five business days of being notified may result in you not being able to continue with MTC classes.

### **Calendar**

MTC keeps an online Google Calendar for each cohort and for summer school. It will be shared with your University of Mississippi email account.

The University of Mississippi Academic Calendar is online here:

<http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/registrar/acal.html>

### **Counseling Center**

Teaching is a stressful career. Many MTC teachers have found the counseling center to be of great assistance during their two years in the program. As a student at the university you are eligible for free counseling sessions. To make an appointment call 662-915-3784 or [visit the center's website](#). After an initial meeting, the center can make referrals to a counselor closer to your placement.



## Coursework

During your two years in MTC you will complete a Master of Arts Degree in Curriculum and Instruction (MACI). The following is a list of the courses you will complete. Please note that changes may occur to both the schedule and courses you take.

### *Summer, First Year (9 hours):*

- EDCI 610: Assessing Student Learning
- EDCI 611: Effective Teaching & Learning Classroom Practices
- EDCI 615: Classroom Facilitation & Management
- Summer Internship (MTC Summer School)

### *Fall, First Year (6 hours):*

- EDCI 600: Advanced Methods
- EDCI 612: Diversity & the Adolescent Learner

### *Spring, First Year (6 hours):*

- EDSE 610: National & State Issues in Education
- EDCI 602: Curriculum Construction

### *Summer, Second Year (3 hours):*

- EDLT 605: Content Area Literacy
- Summer Internship (MTC Summer School)

### *Fall, Second Year (6 hours):*

- EDLD 614: Teachers as Leaders
- EDRS 605: Educational Research 1

### *Spring, Second Year (6 hours):*

- EDLD 641: Law & Ethics of Education
- EDSE 651: Advanced Individual Study

*Total Program Hours: 36 hours*

## Dispositions

Dispositions are defined by The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth.

Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice.

**Disposition evaluation:** Each participant is evaluated using the disposition evaluation form, [found at this link](#).

**Disposition infraction:** If a participant exhibits behavior that does not conform to these dispositions, they will be given a disposition infraction. If a disposition infraction is given to a participant, an automatic meeting with the program administration must occur. Depending on the results of the meeting, the participant may be dismissed from the program. The template for the disposition infraction can be [found at this link](#).

## **Dress Code**

*Dress Code for Summer School:*

- Business casual. No t-shirts or spaghetti straps.
- Dress should err on the side of professionalism. Keep in mind that you're working with children.

*Dress Code for class and socials:*

- Casual. Shorts, jeans, t-shirts are fine for class and most socials.

## **Professionalism**

*Expectations for Virtual Summer School*

- Utilize a clean, standardized background during virtual meetings and lessons
- Cameras must be fixed/stationary unless movement is necessary for the lesson. They must be turned on at all times.
- You may drink beverages from a personal mug or cup during the lesson. Please do not get up during instructional time and remain engaged as a silent observer.
- Keep microphone turned off if you are observing.

## **Email**

The University of Mississippi provides students with email addresses. These email addresses are associated with Gmail. All official university business and MTC business is channeled through this email, including calendars. You are responsible for keeping up with this account. It is possible to forward your email to another email address. Instructions for doing so can be found here: <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/10957?hl=en>

You can access your Ole Miss email through [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com). Be sure to include @go.olemiss.edu at the end of your user name.

## **Graduate School**

Once you are accepted to MTC you must apply online to the Graduate School ([http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/graduate\\_school/](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/graduate_school/)). The Graduate School requires that you provide them with a final undergraduate transcript showing that you have graduated from a four-year undergraduate institution. It is your responsibility to acquire and send this document.

## **Health Forms**

You will need to submit [a Certificate of Compliance immunization form](#) to Student Health Services (the linked page will say that you need to submit a Medical History Form, as well, but this is optional). This shows that you have received measles immunization and will need to be signed by a health care provider (your school's health services center should have this on file already, or your local doctor should be able to do this). If you do not have proof of measles immunization, you will need to get a measles shot and then have the form completed.

## Health Services

As a student at the university you can go to the [Student Health Services](#) center on-campus. They are open 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Friday.

If you have a life-threatening condition go immediately to the emergency room at Baptist Memorial Hospital on South Lamar Boulevard, just south of Highway 6.

The emergency room is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The phone number is 662-232-8100

Urgent Care Clinic also provides extended hours. The clinic is located at 1487 Belk Boulevard (map [here](#)).

Urgent Care Clinic Hours:

Monday–Friday: 8 a.m.– 7 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

## Hold

A hold can be placed on your student account by the university for a variety of reasons, including (but not limited to):

- Health forms have not been turned in
- Speeding/parking ticket has not been paid
- Library books have not been returned
- Printing charges have not been paid
- You have a unpaid late fee because you did not accept your scholarship award in a timely manner

A hold will prevent MTC from registering you for class and posting your scholarship. It is your responsibility to check your student account and make sure that you do not have any holds. If you do have a hold it is your responsibility to clear that hold. If you do not clear your hold in a timely manner and MTC is not able to register you for classes, you may be dismissed from the program.

To check holds:

- 1) Go to <https://my.olemiss.edu/irj/portal>
- 2) Click on the search box on the right, and search for "Check Holds."

## Lesson Plans

The lesson plan is the basis of your instruction. Teaching in a critical-needs school district is a challenge. However, not having a written lesson plan is inexcusable. The lesson plan does not have to follow any specific format but it must show that you have thought out and organized what you intend to do in a given class period, including a set, closure and assessment. Your lesson plan must include an estimate of time for each activity and section. Your lesson plan must include the current date. Your lesson plan must be available to any MTC staff member when they visit your classroom, whether that visit is announced or unannounced. Some MTC participants have a folder taped near the door or an observation desk with the day's lesson plan for any visitor to see. It is recommended that you do this. Failure to provide a current lesson plan to MTC staff or an attempt to use a previous day's

lesson plan is considered a disposition infraction and may result in dismissal from the program.

## **Licensure**

Once you complete the initial summer training you must apply for teacher licensure. The State Department requires four items for licensure:

1. Completed undergraduate transcript showing proof of graduation
2. Transcript from the University of Mississippi showing completion of the initial summer coursework
3. Institutional Verification Form
4. Completed Application

Although the Program Coordinator will prepare your licensure application, it is ultimately your responsibility to collect and submit all necessary documents.

After your two years in MTC, and successful completion of your Master's Degree, you are eligible to upgrade your license to a five-year AA license. You can apply for the upgrade here: <https://sso.mde.k12.ms.us/Login/Login.aspx>

## **Mentors**

All first-years will be assigned a mentor. Guidelines for mentoring will be provided at the appropriate time.

## **Notebook Computers**

MTC loans MacBook computers to participants. Upon completion of the program, the MacBook will be given to you. If you leave or are dismissed from the program, the MacBook remains University of Mississippi property and must be returned.

If you have any technical issues with your MacBook you are responsible for repairing it. The MacBook comes with a 90-day warranty. To take advantage of this warranty you must contact Apple directly. MTC does not assist with technical problems. If your MacBook needs repair, it may be possible to temporarily exchange it for a working one. Please contact the Program Coordinator for assistance with this process.

## **Observations**

All first-years will be required to complete a living observation document that will be shared on the Google Drive. This is where you will list school and schedule details so the MTC administration can plan field observations and/or evaluations and give you adequate advance notice of a visit. You will be responsible for making changes/updates to the observation doc should your school or daily schedule change throughout your two years in the program (this includes listing school holidays, teacher work days, testing days if applicable, and so on). Failure to do so may result in a disposition infraction.

## **Placement**

First-year placement is handled by MTC. Due to the dynamic nature of placements, we cannot allow our participants a choice in this matter. You are expected to stay at your placement for the duration of your two years in MTC.

## **Portfolios**

The portfolio is the final assignment for MTC and is a requirement of EDSE 651. You will create an electronic portfolio using an appropriate platform (e.g. Weebly, Google Sites). You should start collecting material for your portfolio during the initial summer. The following website has been created concerning the portfolio criteria and includes links to examples from previous years: <http://teachercorpsportfolios.weebly.com/>

## **Scholarships**

Once MTC has posted your scholarship you will be notified, via email, that you have a scholarship award.

Instructions for Signing Award Letter\*:

- 1) Go online to the Financial Aid office ([http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/financial\\_aid/](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/financial_aid/))
- 2) Click on "Check your Status"
- 3) Complete the online forms

*\*The process for doing this may change, and this handbook is updated with the most up-to-date information.*

- Note that during the initial summer training you are enrolled for 9 hours
- During the fall and spring semesters of your first year you are enrolled for 6 hours
- During the summer of your second year you are enrolled for 3 hours
- During the fall and spring of your second year you are enrolled for 6 hours
- You will still receive the scholarships for each term even though you are not enrolled full time.

## **Hotel Policy**

By 5:00pm on any Friday before an MTC class weekend, every first and second year MTC teacher must contact the Program Coordinator if they are going to need a room for the class weekend. The Program Coordinator will make appropriate room pairings and assignments and contact the hotel with final arrangements. Most nights MTC teachers will be staying in the Holiday Inn Express at 112 Heritage Drive, Oxford, 662-236-2500. When the Holiday Inn cannot accommodate the large group, MTC teachers will stay in the Hampton Inn Oxford West, next to the Holiday Inn Express at 110 Heritage Drive, 662-232-2442.

When checking in, let them know you are with the Mississippi Teacher Corps. Both hotels provide a complimentary breakfast every morning from 6:30-10:30 and a fitness center and have a check in time of 3pm and a check out time of noon. The rooms will be directly billed to MTC.

If there is a change in your plans and you need to cancel a room request, please contact the Program Coordinator AND the hotel directly about the change.

If you reserve a room, you are expected to attend class. Failure to notify the MTC program coordinator of non-emergency cancellations, or an issue with staying at the hotel but not attending class, can result in this benefit being revoked and your future hotel accommodations being canceled.