

UT MS Track I Degree Program

Follow-up Survey

June 2006

In the spring of 2006 a follow-up survey of individuals who had completed Track I MS degrees at the University of Tennessee in the previous three years (2003-2005) was conducted. Sixty-six individuals were identified to be included in the survey. Questionnaires were initially sent by email to individuals who had email addresses on file, by the postal service to individuals who did not have email addresses. When email addresses proved invalid, the individuals were sent questionnaires by regular mail. Of this number, all attempts (email and regular mail) failed to reach eight of the individuals reducing the population to 58. One follow-up was sent, resulting in 9 email returns and 22 regular mail returns for a total of 31 (53.4%).

Participant Demographics

The largest number of participants completed their Track I MS in the field of Special Education, as shown below.

Participants	N	%
MS major field of study		
Special Education	10	32.2
English as a Second Language	6	9.4
Deaf Education	3	9.7
Elementary (includes 1 Elementary/reading specialist)	3	9.7
Reading	2	6.4
Science	2	6.4
Mathematics	2	6.4
Foreign Language	2	6.4
Social Science	1	3.2
Already licensed to teach when they enrolled in the MS program		
Yes	22	71.0
No	9	29.0

Participants Already Licensed to Teach Before Entering the MS Program

All but one of the 22 survey respondents who were already licensed to teach were licensed in Tennessee, and one third received their initial licensure from UT. There was considerable variation in the areas in which they were already licensed. Teaching experience ranged from none to over 18 years, with a mean of 5 and a median of 3.75.

Background	n
State in which licensed	
Tennessee	16
Tennessee (Alt C)	1
Tennessee & and another state (California, (Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina)	4
Virginia	1
Institution granting initial licensure	
University of Tennessee	8
Maryville College	2
Other Tennessee (East Tennessee State University, UT Chattanooga, Peabody, Carson Newman, Lambuth, Lincoln Memorial)	6
University of Virginia	2
Other out of state (Clemson, University of Mississippi, Berea College, Murray State)	4
Licensure/content area in which initially licensed	
Elementary	4
Special education	3
Math	2
Health education/elementary	1
Secondary history and elementary	1
Early childhood	1
Business/special education	1
History, sociology, special education	1
English/special education	1
History, government, special education	1
Biology and earth science	1
Deaf education	1
Music	1
Physical education and health	1
Spanish	1
Social Studies	1
Years Teaching Experience Prior to Beginning MS Program	
None or one half	3
One	1
Two – two and a half	4
Three – three and one half	3
Four	2
Five	1
Six	1
Seven	1
Eight	1
Nine	3
Eleven	1
Eighteen +	1
Mean	5
Median	3.75

Survey Results

A list of seven possible goals or objectives that might have motivated individuals to pursue a MS degree at UT was provided, and a place was included for them to add other reasons. Participants were asked to rank the items in order of importance to them, ranking only items that were relevant for them.

Goals/objectives	Times Ranked	Times Ranked First
Add to their knowledge	23	7
Higher pay	19	3
Earn additional endorsement(s)	13	4
Become licensed to teach	10	7
Obtain a teaching position	10	1
Retain a teaching position	5	1
Fulfill requirements for an Alternative C license already in place	2	0
Other	6 ^a	2

^a “Return to work after years at home with children”

“Pursue another career route from what I am doing currently”

“Join Peace Corps specifically to teach”

“I was able to take classes in my field and education unlike many programs.”

“It was the only MS program where I could learn sign language as I became a deaf educator. Most programs you needed to have ASL before you could be admitted into the program.”

When comparing the goals or objectives participants had for enrolling in the MS program with the ones they achieved, it is clear that participants often achieved more than they originally sought.

Goals/objectives	Sought	Achieved
Add to their knowledge	23	26
Higher pay	19	23
Earn additional endorsement(s)	13	12
Become licensed to teach	10	12
Obtain a teaching position	10	11
Retain a teaching position	5	4
Fulfill requirements for an Alternative C license already in place	2	1
Other	6	4

The majority of respondents were either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with services they received in the program.

Services	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The advising you received “Dr. Wooten is excellent. She has the practical experience blended with the Ph.D. to teach content that is applicable ‘on the ground.’ Give her a raise!”	21	6	3	1
The selection of courses available	15	12	4	0
Scheduling/availability of the courses you needed “Masters of Ed courses are all in the evening, which is understandable; however for those on sabbatical it would be very convenient to offer some daytime courses.”	14	12	3	1

When asked, “How, if at all, has your employment situation changed as a result of completing your MS degree?” responses varied. Five individuals reported it had no effect, with one person stating that “it changed, but not because of the degree.” Another teacher wrote, “It hasn’t changed much. Without the certification K-12 in Spanish, public schools won’t hire me.”

Other individuals reported various changes in their employment.

“I have a teaching position in science at “Fulton High School.”

“I was able to leave music education and become a regular classroom teacher.”

“Moved from classroom to reading coach”

“Am currently working 10 hours a week in my new career path while maintaining my full-time job in another field”

“Employed by different school system as department head”

“I returned to teaching after five years off.”

Six individuals indicated they had received pay raises. One of them wrote, “I enjoy my job and am very happy I became a teacher. With a MS my salary significantly increased.” Not everyone benefited financially. A different individual replied, “I am now employed part-time as an ESL teacher, bur prior to my MS I was paid more.

Two respondents commented about their increase in knowledge and its effect. “More updated knowledge regarding my area of study and application of that information.” “I feel it has influenced my career by allowing my knowledge of teaching to be greater. I have more confidence about my teaching.”

Some became teachers (completing an Alt. C license, obtained and retained a full-time teaching position, obtained the person's first teaching job as ESL teacher for Dayton City School – and also taught a course as an adjunct instructor for a local college). One individual was more specific about multiple ways the program has been beneficial. “The teaching experience combined with a Berea College undergrad degree really helped me land the job with Oak Ridge. I started teaching in their summer school program, and after completing the MS they were eager to hire me. In fact, I met one of their teachers through the MS program, and she referred me to the principals and pushed for the interview. I earn more money, and I use the tools, lesson plans, and textbooks from the MS program on a regular basis at ORHS.”