



## Frequently Asked Questions UNL NSF Noyce Science MTF Program

**Q: During this program, are participants paying for credit hours? If so, how much are courses per credit hour?**

**A:** If selected to become a Noyce MTF, one must commit to teaching full-time for 5 years. For each of these 5 years, one would receive \$11,000 as a “salary supplement” each year, for a total of \$55,000. Out of these funds, one would pay for the tuition and fees for the Ed.S. degree.

The current rate of graduate in-state tuition is \$341 per credit hour, so 66 credit hours = \$22,506 + fees. However, UNL is providing a 20% discount on up to 52 credit hours (a \$3,546.40 potential savings).

We also will review graduate coursework from graduate degree(s) and allow up to 24 credit hours to be put toward the minimum 66 credit hours, which is another way to decrease the cost of the program.

[https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/graduate-tuition#ay\\_res\\_block](https://studentaccounts.unl.edu/graduate-tuition#ay_res_block)

**Q: Are there any forgivable loans available?**

**A:** Teachers can apply to the state annually in the spring for professional development funds (which has typically been \$3,000 per year), if they are enrolled in a graduate program. This loan forgiveness program is called EETP: <https://www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/eetp-current-teachers/>

**Q: How old can transfer credits be?**

**A:** Any graduate coursework has ideally been completed within the last 10 years to be considered for transfer credit hours toward the program of study for all MTF Ed.S. degree-seeking students. One’s committee can consider approving older coursework.

**Q: If I don’t have credit hours to bring into the program, how would that affect my ability to earn the Ed.S.?**

**A:** You can still apply to the program. It is not required that you have graduate credit hours that can be transferred.

**Q: My master’s degree is in curriculum and instruction. Would that degree meet the requirements?**

**A:** An MS/MA in curriculum and instruction is fine. NSF prefers to see that teachers also have strong science content knowledge, which could be a BS or an MS in an area of science.



If an applicant doesn't already have one, the NSF Noyce program guidelines also allow for people to complete their (in-process, nearly-completed) master's degree within the first year of becoming a Noyce MTF.

**Q: What qualifies as a high-need school?**

**A:** Priority will be given to teachers who teach in high-need/Title I schools, and this translates into middle schools with at least 50% FRL and high schools with at least 40% FRL. If your school does not meet the criteria of FRL rate, a school can also be categorized as high-need if there has been a 3-year 15% average teacher turn-over rate or out-of-field teaching rate. Talk with your school's administration to find out what could be submitted for evidence of meeting one of these three high-need definitions.

**Q: What if my school is not classified as high-need?**

**A:** If your school is close, but slightly under the high-need classification, your school district should have an average of 40% or more FRL and have at least one school that is high-need within it. This would classify your district as high need.

**Q: What if I'm not selected as an MTF? Can I still participate in the degree program?**

**A:** Yes, if you are not selected as a Noyce MTF, there is an opportunity to apply for the graduate program itself and pursue an Ed.S. (or Ed.D.) degree as a practitioner-scholar to advance your professional knowledge. This academic program is a unique opportunity to be in a cohort of only science teachers to pursue an advanced graduate degree of this type.

**Q: What is the timeline for the Noyce MTF Ed. S. degree program?**

**A:** The start date of the program for Cohort 2 will be January 2023. The graduate degree program, National Board Certification, and professional development strand activities are designed to stretch across the required 5 years of service, but the degree program itself may only take 4 years depending upon how much transfer coursework is accepted.

**Q: What is the course load for this program?**

**A:** There will be about 12-18 credit hours of coursework each year (1-2 courses each spring, summer, and fall). Courses during the school year will be in the evening as distance courses to support inclusion of teachers across Nebraska. Some summer courses may be in-person at UNL and most of those will be scheduled for during the day.

**Q: What are the required components of the fellowship?**

**A:** There are several components to the program. First, the Educational Specialist degree (66 credit hours minimum) focusing on science education with a certificate in education leadership. Second, Noyce MTFs are required to do National Board Certification. The grant will fund PD



support workshops for this purpose. However, we will also open it up for others who are just interested in National Board Certification, and for that they need to have taught for a minimum of 3 years. Finally, the science teachers who are selected to be Noyce MTFs will be required to design collaborative equity-focused teacher-leadership projects to strengthen the existing Nebraska science teacher network and teacher professional development opportunities.

**Q: What if I quit teaching before completing 5 years of full-time teaching?**

**A:** If a MTF stops teaching at any point before the 5 years of required service is completed, for example after 3 years, then they must repay half of the Noyce funding. The service is not complete until 5 years of classroom teaching is finished.

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**Q: Can I shift my Ed.S. degree into a doctoral program? What is the difference between the two degrees?**

**A:** You can choose to apply to Ed.D. degree (90 credit hours minimum) program in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education after completing the first year of the Ed.S. degree; all coursework taken in the Ed.S. degree program as a MTF will transfer to a new Ed.D. program of studies.

Essentially, the Ed.S. degree is most of the coursework that one would take for an Ed.D. While there will be a leadership project and report, it does not require a formal dissertation (or a comprehensive exam that the Ed.D. also has). People who want to work at a school district office as a science curriculum specialist would benefit from earning the Ed.S. degree, but employment requirements vary from district to district.

The Ed.S. degree focuses on science education with a certificate in education leadership. An Ed.D. requires more coursework in research methods and a minimum of 12 credit hours for designing, carrying out a research project, and writing a formal dissertation with a defense. The Ed.D. dissertation is practitioner-oriented and therefore graduate students in this program need to have an educational setting in which to do this type of research.

Note: Regarding the Ph.D. program, usually only full-time graduate students enroll in the Ph.D. program in the UNL Department of Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education, as it is designed for people who seek to become future faculty in higher education. Consequently, there are critical mentoring and apprenticeship aspects of this program (e.g., research assistantships, teaching internships, writing for conferences and publication, etc.) that require full-time graduate student status that this Noyce MTF program does not support.