MATS – Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: July 18, 2012.

1. ***Is this degree really "Totally Online?"*** Yes, the class delivery is 100% online. You will take tests, complete readings and other assignments, but you will not be required to come to the campus.

2. ***Is the program accredited?*** Yes, The MATS is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, the same agency that approves schools such as The University of Minnesota, Kansas State, Southwest Baptist and Wheaton College.

3. ***What is the purpose of the MATS degree?*** The MATS degree is designed to provide foundational studies in the areas of theology and the Bible. It does not replace more comprehensive programs such as the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts in Christian Education offered through the seminary.

4. ***What is the schedule for the program?*** Courses in the MATS degree will be offered in eight-week terms. There will be two terms each semester. Students are considered full-time when enrolled in nine or more credit hours during the semester.

5. ***How long does the program take to complete?*** That is up to you. For example, if a student takes six hours (that is, two 3-hour courses) every 8-week term, with there being six terms per year, the degree would be completed in one and a half years. A student may take longer to complete the degree if needed.

6. ***How do I enroll in the program?*** You can enroll in your first MATS course as a "MATS Non-Degree-Seeking Student" in a matter of minutes. To be accepted to the MATS program, you will need to complete the MATS application and meet the requirements for admission to Midwestern Baptist College, SBC. The application and course enrollment form can be found on the MATS web page here.

7. ***What is the tuition? How will I make payments for courses?*** Tuition is $275per credit hour. Each MATS course is 3 credit hours, so each course is $825. There is also a

one-time application fee of $50. **Unlike many programs, there are no "hidden charges" such as registration fees, technology fees or testing fees for the MATS program. This makes the Midwestern MATS degree an even better value!**

Payment of all charges for MATS online courses is due in full by the Monday one week prior to the term start date. Payment options are:

- Mail your check to MBTS, Attn: Business Office, 5001 N Oak Trfy, Kansas City, MO 64118
- Pay in person (cash, check or credit card) at the Business Office in the Administration Building. Office Hours are 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. CST Monday through Friday.
- Pay in monthly installments through e-Cashier: Arrange for monthly payments by automatic draft from a checking or savings account. The course enrollment period *must* agree to the payment plan term (e.g. you must take courses in the next 6 online terms to setup a 12 month plan). No payment plan may extend beyond the month of final course enrollment and such plans are subject to modification by the Business Office. There is an enrollment fee based on your plan selection. Payments can be deducted from your account on the 5th or 20th of each month. To sign up for the tuition payment plan for online study, visit the e-cashier website here. For questions about the e-Cashier payment plan, contact the Business Office at (816) 414-3718.
- Pay in full by credit card. Simply make your payment through the student portal. Click the *Make Payment* button on the *My Ledger* page and follow the prompts.

8. ***What types of financial aid are available?*** Types of aid available include:

LOANS:

Applicants must be fully admitted to the MATS degree program and enrolled in a minimum of six hours before loans can be disbursed.

- **Complete FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at www.fafsa.gov. **MBTS School Code= 002485**
- **Generate** DL Master Promissory Note (MPN) **at www.studentloans.gov. (Not PLUS)**
- **Complete** DL Entrance Counseling at **www.studentloans.gov. (Not PLUS)**
- **Loan Types Available:** Subsidized, Unsubsidized, and Graduate Plus. Most graduate students will be eligible for the Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans which offer the best rates and terms
- **Open** the **MATS Cost of Attendance** form found on the MBTS website or obtained from the Financial Aid office (financialaid@mbts.edu). The MATS form is only for those taking the on-line program, Master of Theological Studies.

Fill out form at least through line 6 and the four Yes/No questions at bottom.
Date & Electronically Sign by clicking on the signature field. Fields on the form outlined in red are required.

Save the form to your hard drive with your name that includes "your LastName-FirstName (MATS) 2010-11", for example "Smith-John MATS 2010-11"
Send saved file to financialaid@mbts.edu

For those using MACS to fill out online forms: Be sure you are using Adobe Acrobat Reader to open and fill out the forms. If you use the preview program that comes with the MAC, it will not allow you to save the filled out document.

TUITION ASSISTANCE AND VA/MILITARY BENEFITS:

Tuition Assistance

If your employer or other agency (like Vocational Rehabilitation) is going to assist you in paying for all or a portion of your education, you will need to follow these steps:

- Obtain and send a copy of your Tuition Voucher to the Financial Aid Office.
- Enroll in classes
- Send a copy of your class schedule to the Financial Aid Office each semester you wish to receive benefits.
- Notify the Financial Aid office if there is any change.

Veterans/Military Benefits

Midwestern participates in the VA/Military Education programs. If you believe that you qualify for benefits, you can apply and check your eligibility at www.gibill.va.gov.
Once you are granted benefits, do the following:

- Send a copy of your Certificate of Eligibility or NOBE to the Financial Aid Office
- Enroll in class
- Send a copy of your class schedule to the Financial Aid Office each semester you wish to receive benefits.
- Notify the Financial Aid office if there is any change.

The Financial Aid Office will certify your enrollment. Payments will be sent to MBTS or you.

9. ***What type of computer and software must I have?*** The learning environment is compatible with Windows versions XP, Vista, and Windows 7 as well as Mac OS 10.5 through 10.7.

Minimum Recommended System Requirements:

	Windows	Macintosh
Operating System	Windows XP SP2 (or higher)	OS X 10.2 (or higher)
Processor	1 GHz (or higher)	G3 800 MHz (or higher)
RAM	256 MB (or higher)	256 MB (or higher)

Compatible browsers include Internet Explorer7 and Internet Explorer 8 where supported within the Windows operating systems (Windows 7 does not support Internet Explorer 7). For the MAC OS the compatible browsers are Safari® 4.0, 3.2 and Firefox 3.6, 3.5 and 3.0.

For more information see Blackboard Release 9.1 SP6 Supported Browsers and Operating Systems. Of course you must have a reliable internet connection. Students should have Microsoft Office 2003 or later [or the Mac equivalent].

10. ***I have completed some Master's level courses at MBTS. Will any of them transfer into the MBC, SBC MATS degree?*** All equivalent courses (both in subject and credit hours) will transfer. For example, the 3-hour History of Christianity I course taken on campus will transfer seamlessly into the MATS program.
However, four of the courses in the MATS program:
    - Apologetics course (3 hrs)
    - Hermeneutics (3 hrs)
    - Church Administration (3 hrs)
    - Spiritual Disciplines (3 hrs)

    are one credit hour longer than those taken on campus, and thus, must be taken through the MATS program. Currently, 33 of the 45 required hours have the potential to transfer seamlessly into the MATS program.

11. ***What if I want to complete a Master of Divinity after completing my MATS degree?*** Great! We hope you will want to continue your education. The Association of Theological Schools will only allow up to 21 hours of the MATS to transfer into the M.Div. if you want to have both degrees. However, if you are willing to surrender the MATS degree prior to graduation, and only have a Master of Divinity degree, you may use all 45 hours from the MATS program. The MATS diploma would have to be returned and the MATS degree would be removed from the student's transcript.

12. ***What if I want to complete another master's degree at Midwestern after completing my MATS degree?*** No more than half of the credits required for a degree may be transferred, and no more than half of the hours required for the other degree may be transferred. Seven courses – 21 hours – may be transferred from the MATS degree into

another degree program at Midwestern.

13. ***I want to transfer hours from another school's graduate program in theology. How many courses from my previous work can be transferred into the MATS program?*** You may transfer up to seven courses (21 hours) of work that matches the MATS curriculum from recognized accredited colleges or seminaries. No substitutions will be allowed.

14. ***Can I test out of a MATS course through Advanced Standing examinations?*** No. Advanced standing is not available for the MATS program.

15. ***Can I take courses offered in the MATS program as part of my M.Div. degree program?*** Students seeking only a M.Div. degree can take up to 60 credit hours of courses online. These online courses may include those offered in the MATS program. One year (30 credit hours) of the 90-credit hour M.Div. degree must be completed at the Kansas City campus. Students living on-campus must take 9 hours on-campus before enrolling in online courses.

16. ***What if I want to enroll in a Doctor of Ministry [D.Min.] program after completing the MATS?*** In addition to the GPA and other doctoral requirements, to enroll in a D.Min. program, you must first complete the M.Div. equivalency. Currently, the M.Div. equivalency is a total of 72 hours. This would include the 45 hours from the MATS degree. The 72 hours must include six hours of either Principles of Preaching/Expository Preaching or Principles of Teaching I and II. To qualify for the Ph.D., 18 hours or more of additional language studies are required. For more information, e-mail docstudies@mbts.edu.

17. ***How will the course material, tests, etc. be delivered?*** MBC, SBC will be using Blackboard to manage the delivery of all course material. After enrolling in a class, you will have access to the course syllabus, lecture notes, videos, and other teaching material as designated by the professor. You will participate in discussion of significant issues and questions, all online. Quizzes and exams will be completed and graded online. There will be no need to travel to the campus for any instruction.

18. ***What is an online course like?*** The online course is a very new and rewarding way of learning. You study on your time schedule and at your pace. You may be "in class" with students from many parts of the world. This brings a rich perspective on issues. At the same time, you still have the opportunity to interact with students and the instructor through e-mail and the discussion board.

19. ***How much time will each class take?*** Anticipate spending a minimum of 12 hours per week per class to complete readings, assignments and class participation.

20. ***How will I purchase books and other learning material for a course?*** Books with student discounts may be purchased from our on-campus LifeWay store. To order call: (816) 455-3925.

21. ***How do I order books if I live overseas?*** LifeWay will send textbooks by US postal service, but will not guarantee arrival time. You will need to plan adequate time for this task and arrival of the books.

22. ***What is the level of English language proficiency?*** All international students (i.e., students with F-1, J-1, or R-1 visas) whose native language is not English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL score submitted to Midwestern must be from a test taken within two years of the applicant's anticipated first date of attendance. To be official, the applicant's TOEFL score report must be sent directly to Midwestern by the Educational Testing Service. Only official score reports will be considered; applicants are not to send copies of their personal score reports. The minimum TOEFL score for admission to Midwestern is a total score of: 80 on the Internet-based test, 213 on the computer-based test, and 550 on the paper-based test.

23. ***Are there any course requirements for beginning the program?*** All master's level students entering Midwestern for the first time are required to demonstrate mastery of written communication skills by achieving a combined grade point average of 2.5 or higher in a minimum of six semester hours of undergraduate English composition or its equivalent. Any student below this 2.5 GPA average or any student with less than six hours of undergraduate English composition will be required to take U-GE102 English Composition II or its equivalent at Midwestern or at a college or university approved by Midwestern within one year of the student's initial enrollment. MATS Students not completing this requirement after twenty-one credit hours are suspended from enrolling until it has been satisfied. The level of English competency will be determined by an analysis of undergraduate transcripts. Those students required to take U-GE102 English Composition II or its equivalent will receive notification from the Registrar's Office.

24. ***How do I know if online studies are right for me?*** Online studies are different from the face-to-face in-class experience. You will not have physical access to your professor nor will you hear discussion and questions from other students. However, most classes will involve greater interaction with the instructor and other students through the Discussion Forum. Therefore, you must consistently take initiative in planning and

completing your studies. You must set aside time each week to complete assignments. You should be able to work alone, without the social interaction provided by an in-class experience.

25. ***How can I find out more about the MATS program?*** E-mail us at MATS@mbts.edu.