

WHAT'S MY NEXT STEP?

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I would like to begin classes as a non-degree-seeking student, what are my next steps?

- **Enrollment Form.** If you would like to begin taking MATS courses while your full application is in process, you complete the enrollment form found [here](#) as a non-degree-seeking student. There is a \$30.00 application fee due at the time of the application.
- **Application Form.** The next step is to complete the full MATS [application for admission](#), also found on the MATS webpage. Along with the completed form, you will need to have official transcripts sent from each school you have attended [bachelor's level and higher]. You will also need to have three people send a reference: your pastor or Director of Missions [if you are a pastor], and two other people. Please do not ask family members to submit references for you. A church endorsement form must also be completed by the church where you are currently a member.

After we receive all the necessary documents, your application will be processed and you will be notified of your admission status. It is necessary to be fully enrolled as a degree-seeking student in order to qualify for financial aid.

If you have questions regarding admissions, please contact the Admissions office at admissions@mbts.edu or toll-free by phone to 1-800-944-6287.

- If you registered for courses as a non-degree-seeking student on the enrollment form, then you should be ready to begin your studies on the first day of the course. Now read *“How do I prepare for the courses in which I am enrolled?”*

I have been accepted into the MATS program, how do I enroll in a course?

- **Enrollment Form.** To enroll in a MATS course, complete the [enrollment form](#) found on the MATS webpage. If you would like to enroll in multiple courses over different terms, please fill out a separate enrollment form for each term.

The deadline to enroll is the Monday one week prior to the start of the term. If you have questions regarding enrollment or need help registering for a course, please contact the Registrar’s office at registrar@mbts.edu or toll-free by phone to 1-877-414-3700.

Payment for tuition is due on or before the Monday one week prior to the start of the term. For questions about FACTS payment plan, payments, or your student account, please contact the Business office at businessoffice@mbts.edu or toll-free at 1-877-414-3700.

After you have been enrolled in the course(s), you are ready to begin your studies on the first day of the course. Now read *“How do I prepare for the courses in which I am enrolled?”*

How do I prepare for the courses in which I am enrolled?

- **Student Portal.** When you enroll in your first course, you will receive an e-mail containing your username and password to the student portal. In the student portal, you will find information on your financial account, your grades, courses you have taken and are currently enrolled in, any financial aid you have been approved for, etc.

Make sure the courses listed in your student portal are the correct courses you intend to complete. If not, contact the Registrar’s office at registrar@mbts.edu or toll-free at 1-877-414-3700.

- **Blackboard.** Blackboard is the program Midwestern uses to deliver individual courses online. You access your courses in Blackboard by going to <http://online.mbts.edu>. The first time you access Blackboard, your username and password will be the same as that used for the student portal. After you enter your Blackboard account, you may change your password.

In Blackboard, you will have a link to each of the courses in which you are enrolled for the current term. In each course you will find the course calendar, syllabus, lecture notes, reading assignments, quizzes, exams, discussion questions, and other course elements. Completing the course in Blackboard requires you to open each document or tool and complete the assignment as given. Be sure to read the syllabus in its entirety before the course begins. It will be important to keep up-to-date with your assignments as the course will move along quickly.

- **Textbooks.** The next step is to purchase your textbooks for the course. Many textbooks are eligible for a 20% student discount from Midwestern's LifeWay Campus Store: Ph. (816) 455-3925 or e-mail: mbtstextbooks4686@lifeway.com.

You may pay for the books using Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, or use the House Charge set up by your church. You may also pay by check, made out to LifeWay. There will be a nominal shipping charge added to the order.

Order books at least two weeks before the start date of the course. If needed, the bookstore offers expedited shipping as well. Purchases made at the bookstore help to support the ministry of Midwestern and the Cooperative Program.

How does an online course through Blackboard function?

- **Course Material.** All of your course learning material and assignments have been prepared and uploaded into the course. Some instructors may choose to make all the materials available to you at the beginning of the course. Others may choose to allow access on a week-by-week basis. In any case, you will want to work through the material in sequential order.
- **Course Assignments.** The heart of online learning is to read assigned material and/or complete an assigned learning task and then take time to process the information and its implications for your ministry. After you have read the material, you may be asked to participate in some group discussion questions with the instructor and the other students. This is all done through Blackboard. Your contributions to these threaded discussions can be done on your schedule, but you must keep up with any posted due dates. Your comments may be commented upon by another student, who adds an idea, to which you respond and so on. If done well, it develops into a lively 'classroom' discussion period. It is through this

analysis and discussion of the previously read material that your best learning will take place.

The instructor will also plan for you to complete online quizzes and exams. These will be accessed through the Blackboard course. Generally, after you open a quiz or test you must complete it at that time. You will have a set time limit in which to complete the exam. Depending on the type of questions, it may be graded for you immediately. Essay questions will be graded by the instructor.

- **Course Communication.** Primary communication from your instructor and Midwestern will be through your student email account. Student email accounts are created for each Midwestern student. The account uses the same username and password as your Portal and Blackboard login ID. For example, the email account would be username@student.mbts.edu.

Student mail accounts can be accessed at: <http://mail.student.mbts.edu>. If you desire to utilize a secondary email address (i.e. an established personal email account), you can login to your student email account and forward your mail to the appropriate account.

- If you are having difficulty using Blackboard, it is not functioning properly, or if you need help accessing your student email account, please contact the Midwestern I.T. helpdesk at (816) 414-3763 or helpdesk@mbts.edu.

How can I succeed in an online course?

- Read the course syllabus and all course instructions carefully. Ask the instructor to clarify anything you do not understand. Remember, he will not be able to see that you don't understand.
- Start early and read all assignments carefully. Complete any learning assignments with attention to each part of the assignment. The only basis your instructor will have to grade you on is your written work.
- Participate in the discussion questions by posting thoughtful [and polite] responses to the question and to other students' comments. This is an important part of your learning.
- Log-in to the course on a daily basis. Logging in is how you 'attend' the course.

- Save your written work on your hard disk, but also in a flash disk or CD. When writing a research paper, save the document frequently. This prevents disaster in case your computer crashes.
- Do your own work. Plagiarism is illegal and immoral. Read, understand, and then write your thoughts in your paper. An online course has the same high academic standards as any on-campus course.
- In preparing for exams and quizzes, it is better to start early and review the material more often for shorter periods than to try to ingest all the material in one rushed setting.
- Timed exams may make you nervous at first; remember the instructor has allowed adequate time to complete the questions.

What happens at the end of the course?

- Each MATS course is seven weeks in length. At the end of the course, you will complete a final exam or other final assignment. Grades for each assignment will have been collected by the instructor. After the course is completed, your final grade will be given in the student portal, not Blackboard.
- You will find that you no longer have access to the course after the end date. So be sure to preserve your assignments carefully in case you need to address a question with the instructor.
- If you plan to enroll in courses for the second seven-week term, you will need to do so early in the first term. This will allow you time to purchase your books and other needed materials.