



**Media inquiries:** Michael Walker, American Museum of Natural History  
212-769-5766; walker@amnh.org  
www.amnh.org

---

December 2011

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
FIRST TO OFFER MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING PROGRAM**

**PIONEERING PILOT PROGRAM ADDRESSES CRISIS IN STEM EDUCATION;  
INAUGURAL CLASS MATRICULATES IN JUNE 2012**

The American Museum of Natural History is now accepting applications for its pioneering Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program, authorized by the New York State Department of Education as part of a pilot initiative to help address a critical shortage of qualified teachers in New York State, particularly in high-needs schools. The program will model and test new approaches that can be replicated across New York State and nationally.

“The Museum is proud to be the first museum in the United States to offer a standalone master’s degree program to prepare science teachers,” said Ellen V. Futter, President of the American Museum of Natural History. “Our new Master of Arts in Teaching program extends the Museum’s formal roles both in improving the teaching of science and addressing the national crisis in science education. It’s an important new component of the Museum’s graduate training, including, most notably, the Richard Gilder Graduate School—the only museum-based, Ph.D.-granting program in the country.”

Drawing on the Museum’s unique resources and long history of teacher professional development, the 15-month MAT program is a unique full-time, fully paid teaching fellowship with benefits and stipend that will offer coursework with specialization in teaching Earth science for grades 7 through 12 and real-world classroom experience through partnerships with five schools: Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers in Manhattan; the Queens Vocational and Technical High School in Queens; the Thomas C. Giordano Middle School in the Bronx; Roosevelt High School and Gorton High School in Yonkers. Earth science is an area of particular need in the public schools, according to the New York State Education Department: During the 2008-09 school year, 39 percent of New York City Earth science teachers were not certified to teach in that area.

Candidates in the MAT program will spend a full academic year in a partner school and, in a feature unique to the Museum's program, one summer working with Museum educators and one summer working with Museum scientists in a science practicum residency. The MAT program is co-directed by Maritza Macdonald, Ed.D., the Museum's senior director of education policy, and Rosamond Kinzler, Ph.D., senior director of science education at the Museum, and supported by curators and scientists from the Museum's Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Department of Astrophysics, and Division of Paleontology. All program coursework will be taught by doctoral-level Museum scientists and educators.

In addition, alumni of the Museum's MAT program will be offered a two-year, early-career professional development program focused on classroom management and curriculum development, a critical element of support for new teachers that directly addresses the high attrition rate and specific challenges of teaching in high-needs schools.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must have a bachelor's degree (30 credits) in Earth science or related discipline such as geology, meteorology, oceanography, or space science, or a bachelor's degree with a minimum of 24 credits in Earth science plus additional credits in physics, chemistry, environmental science, or biology; a minimum GPA of 3.0; a signed agreement to seek employment as a teacher in a high-needs New York State public school for at least four years upon graduation; and U.S. citizenship or legal residency status. Those with a previous graduate degree in education or teacher certification are not eligible for this program.

The Museum began accepting applications for the MAT program on October 31 and has held two Open House sessions for prospective students. A final Open House is scheduled for **Saturday, January 7, from 12 to 4 pm**. Faculty and staff will be answering questions and leading behind-the-scenes tours of the Museum campus. Interested candidates should apply online at [www.amnh.org/mat](http://www.amnh.org/mat). Applications are due on January 31.

The Museum's MAT program is supported in part by funding from the New York State Education Department and the National Science Foundation's Discovery Research K-12 program.