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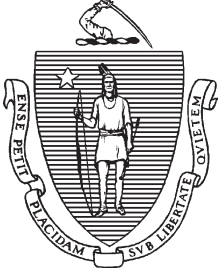
# Guidelines for Professional Development Providers



*February 2000*

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# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Telephone: (781) 338-3000

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education

February 2000

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest in assisting in the professional development of Massachusetts educators. In October of 1999 the Massachusetts Board of Education approved amendments to the regulations for educator recertification, which have been in effect since December 1, 1999. These regulations will help to strengthen the ongoing professional development of Massachusetts educators and align individual professional development plans more effectively with school and district improvement goals.

As before, educators will continue to obtain professional development through a variety of activities, including college courses, programs organized by the Department of Education or local school districts, mentoring, and seminars. Eligible activities are described in the *Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators*. ([www.doe.mass.edu/recert](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert))

The amended *Recertification Regulations* establishes a new online register for Professional Development Providers. By June 1, 2000, providers other than school districts, educational collaboratives, colleges and universities must register online with the Department to be eligible to award professional development points (PDPs). All providers that were previously registered with the Department must re-register online by June 1, 2000. Any provider that wishes to register after June 1 can do so online at: [www.doe.mass.edu/recert](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert). Attached you will find *Guidelines for Professional Development Providers*, which includes a "Questions and Answers" section. These *Guidelines* will give you detailed instructions on registering as a provider.

The online registry will be of great benefit to educators and providers. The registry will enable registered providers to maintain up-to-date and widely accessible contact information, course offerings, times and dates of classes, and registration information. Educators will search the registry to locate professional development offerings that best meet their needs and districts and schools will actively use the registry to identify potential professional development providers and offerings. The online registry will be widely publicized to schools, districts, collaboratives, and individual educators, 30,000 of whom have active Mased.net accounts with the Department. In the future, the Department will provide reliable aggregate data on the professional development needs of educators. With this data, providers will be able to better address the professional development needs of educators and districts.

If your programs are to be successful in attracting Massachusetts educators, the professional development opportunities you offer will need to focus on the content and skills outlined in the learning standards of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. The frameworks are available on our website listed below or by calling the Department at 781-338-6767. The Department also has a *State Plan for Professional Development* that offers useful information for providers and outlines our Education Reform priorities. You can obtain relevant publications by visiting our website at [www.doe.mass.edu/recert/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert/).

Thank you for your continued commitment to improving our educator workforce in Massachusetts. If you have further questions, please contact the Department staff at 781-338-3324. We will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll  
Commissioner of Education



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# *Guidelines for Professional Development Providers*

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The Professional Development Provider system is a key element in the recertification of educators in Massachusetts. This system depends on the many organizations—districts, schools, collaboratives, educational associations and organizations, colleges and universities, educational firms, and others—that provide educational offerings for educators. It brings these organizations into a cohesive statewide network for professional development.

The Commonwealth's new recertification regulations, which became effective December 1, 1999, will help to strengthen the ongoing professional development of Massachusetts educators and align individual professional development plans more effectively with school and district improvement goals. The new regulations raise the standards for knowledge in the content area; provide an incentive for educators to engage in advanced academic study; enable greater decision-making at the school and district level; retain some flexibility in the kinds of activities that are eligible for professional development points for recertification; create options for new ways to assess teacher skills and knowledge; and establish a registry of professional development providers.

By June 1, 2000, the following organizations must register online with the Department in order to award professional development points (PDPs): non-public schools; not-for-profit organizations; private, for-profit organizations and individuals; education partnerships and corporations; and educational agencies and associations. Colleges and universities, public school districts, charter schools, and educational collaboratives are not required to register with the Department. The Department is currently developing online registration forms that will be posted on our website by April 1, 2000 at: [www.doe.mass.edu/recert/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert/). Providers may continue to award PDPs without Department registration until June 1, 2000.

## I. OVERVIEW

### A. Basic Assumptions of the Professional Development Provider System

The Professional Development Provider system is built upon two key assumptions:

- Educators are conscientious professionals who are committed to quality professional development and professional growth.
- Professional Development Providers are committed to delivering quality offerings that reflect the most effective approaches to adult learning and professional growth.

### B. Who is a Provider?

The term "Professional Development Provider," as used by the Department of Education, refers to all of the following who provide a professional development activity to teachers, school administrators, and other educators:

- Public school districts, including Charter Schools
- Educational Collaboratives
- Non-public schools
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Governmental agencies
- Colleges and universities
- Educational organizations and associations
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Private, for-profit organizations and individuals
- Museums, cultural institutions, and related others
- Educational firms

Professional Development Providers (Providers) generally sponsor, organize, promote, and coordinate professional development activities for educators in schools, colleges, and other settings.

## II. EXPECTATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS

### A. Professional Development Activities

Professional Development Providers are expected to:

- Know the content of the relevant state Curriculum Frameworks
- Plan professional development with clear objectives, relevant learning activities, and conclusions
- Incorporate technology tools and appropriate media
- Build on educators' prior knowledge and experience
- Use principles of adult learning theory to engage educators in professional growth
- Employ a variety of teaching techniques such as direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue, and research projects
- Provide many and varied opportunities for educators to incorporate new knowledge and skills into classroom practice or school and district management
- Assess proficiency through an appropriate end-of-course assessment

### B. Assignment of Professional Development Points (PDPs)

For the majority of activities, schools, districts, collaborators, and registered Providers may award 1 PDP per clock hour. Registered Providers may award the PDPs only when the educators have demonstrated proficiency based on a minimum of 10 course hours. Proficiency may be demonstrated through either a product or pre- and post- assessments. School districts and education collaboratives are encouraged to offer educators at least 10 hours of professional development on a given topic.

A Provider may award 1.5 PDPs with Department approval for an Advanced Academic Course of Study. School districts\*, collaboratives, museums, scientific institutes, cultural institutions and other providers may apply for the Department's approval of PDPs for equivalent Advanced Academic Courses of Study by submitting the attached application (Appendix A—from the *Recertification Guidelines*) and necessary documents to the Department of Education.

One hour of eligible activity = 1 PDP

One academic credit = 15 hours = 1.5 CEUs = 15 PDPs

Upper-level or lower-level undergraduate course or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 15 PDPs

Upper-level undergraduate course (when substantially new to the educator) or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 22.5 PDPs

Graduate-level course or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 22.5 PDPs

Audits of undergraduate or graduate course or approved equivalent = 1 semester hour = 7.5 PDPs

\*School districts partnering with institutions of higher education do not need to obtain Department of Education approval for an equivalent course of study.

### C. Certificates of Completion

Professional Development Providers may define their practices regarding the signatures on Certificates of Completion. Certificates may be signed by any individual who is designated by the Provider. Certificates do not need to have “original” signatures.

## III. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS

### A. Registration

Professional Development Providers, other than school districts, educational collaboratives, colleges and universities, are required to:

- Register as a Provider with the Department of Education by June 1, 2000.
- Maintain and update course offerings on the Department’s website.

### B. Accountability System

Professional Development Providers must develop a system of accountability that address policies regarding attendance, end-of-course assessment, issuance of Certificates of Completion, and other related matters. Providers have the authority to employ other educators, consultants, trainers, or others to provide professional development activities for educators. These “subcontractors” do not need to be approved by the Department of Education, nor do they need to become registered Professional Development Providers. The Department of Education expects Providers to uphold and maintain standards of quality in their selection of “subcontractors.”

### C. Appropriate End-of-Course Assessment

Registered Professional Development Providers are required to:

- Award PDPs only after an educator has demonstrated proficiency in a relevant subject area. Courses, seminars, or institutes that strengthen content knowledge must include an appropriate end-of-course assessment. In most cases this will mean a written exam.
- Award PDPs only after an educator has demonstrated proficiency in a professional skill. Courses, seminars, or institutes related to classroom work or school and district administrative issues must include an appropriate end-of-course assessment. In most instances, this will mean an observable demonstration of learning that could include a written product or other documentable product.

All end-of-course assessments must assess at least 10 hours of professional development on a given topic.

### D. Records on Participants

Providers must keep records of brochures, announcements, attendance, end-of-course assessments, and participant evaluation forms for five years from the date of the offering. The Department will audit approximately 5% of Providers per year.

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# *Some Questions and Answers for Providers*

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## **Who can be a Professional Development Provider?**

- Public school districts, including Charter Schools
- Educational Collaboratives
- Non-public schools
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Governmental Agencies
- Colleges and Universities
- Educational organizations and associations
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Private, for-profit organizations and individuals
- Museums, cultural institutions, and related others
- Educational firms

## **How do you register to be a Professional Development Provider and what is the deadline?**

Professional Development Providers, other than school districts, educational collaboratives, colleges and universities, need to register with the Department by June 1, 2000. The online address is: [www.doe.mass.edu/recert/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert/)

## **What happens if you do not register online with the Department of Education?**

You may still offer professional development, but you cannot award professional development points until you register.

## **What happens if you wish to become a Provider after June 1, 2000?**

You will need to register online with the Department of Education in order to award Professional Development Points. Prospective providers should initiate the registration process online at [www.doe.mass.edu/recert/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert/)

## **What is the End-of-Course Assessment requirement?**

Registered Professional Development Providers are required to:

- Award PDPs only after an educator has demonstrated proficiency in a relevant subject area. Courses, seminars, or institutes that strengthen content knowledge must include an appropriate end-of-course assessment. In most cases this would mean a written exam.
- Award PDPs only after an educator has demonstrated proficiency in a professional skill. Courses, seminars, or institutes related to classroom work or school and district management issues must include an appropriate end-of-course assessment. In most instances, this will mean an observable demonstration of learning that could include a written product or other documentable product.

**All end-of-course assessments must assess at least 10 hours of professional development on a given topic.**

### **What is expected of a Professional Development Provider?**

Professional Development Providers are expected to:

- Know the content of the relevant state Curriculum Frameworks
- Plan professional development with clear objectives, relevant learning activities, and conclusions
- Incorporate technology tools and appropriate media
- Build on educators' prior knowledge and experience
- Use principles of adult learning theory to engage educators in professional growth
- Employ a variety of teaching techniques such as direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue, and research projects
- Provide many and varied opportunities for educators to incorporate new knowledge and skills into classroom practice or school and district management
- Assess proficiency through an appropriate end-of-course assessment

### **What can Professional Development Providers expect from the Massachusetts Department of Education?**

The Department of Education will:

- Maintain a database of Registered Providers
- Provide technical assistance and information on the Massachusetts recertification program and on meeting the professional development needs of educators
- Provide access to the most current copy of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* via its website

### **What quality assurance steps will the Department of Education undertake?**

In order to ensure that educators are receiving quality professional development opportunities the Department of Education may:

- Audit at least 5% of Providers each year
- Request to see the promotional materials that announce recertification offerings
- Request copies of assessment tools
- Request selected copies of educators' evaluations of offerings within one year of the date of offering
- Request attendance records

### **Is there a registration fee to become a Registered Professional Development Provider?**

No.

### **Can Providers award PDPs to courses offered online?**

Yes. Providers may offer professional development points for such courses if the Provider is registered with the Department of Education.

### **Can a Registered Provider award PDPs for a 2-hour workshop?**

No. A Registered Provider must provide and assess at least 10 hours of professional development on a given topic in order to award PDPs. Providers may divide sessions into blocks of time, over a period of time, to total the 10-hour minimum.

**What is an Advanced Academic Course of Study, or an equivalent?**

A graduate-level course of study or its approved equivalent in the content area (addressing topics listed under subject matter knowledge for the certificate) or an upper-level undergraduate course or its approved equivalent when the content is substantially new to the educator may be considered Advanced Academic Study.

**What is the procedure to obtain DOE approval for the equivalent of an Advanced Academic Course of Study?**

Applications are available in the Recertification Guidelines (page 20) at [www.doe.mass.edu/recert](http://www.doe.mass.edu/recert). Submit the application and materials to: The Office of Academic Affairs and Planning, Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148.

**How do Providers apply to offer CEUs?**

Courses provided by the Professional Development Providers that meet specific standards are often measured in Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as defined and approved by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training. You can reach this organization at 202-857-1122 or visit its website at [www.iacet.org](http://www.iacet.org).

One CEU = 10 PDPs

**Do Providers need to submit the end-of-course assessment results to the Department of Education?**

The results of the end-of-course assessment are given *only* to the educator. Registered Providers are not authorized to share or publish individual participants' assessment results. These providers are also required to hold onto these results for five years.

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# Appendix A

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## Application for Department Approval of PDPs for Equivalent Course of Study (Graduate or Upper-level Undergraduate Courses)

Eligibility: School districts, collaboratives, museums, scientific institutes, cultural institutions and other providers may apply for Department approval of PDPs for equivalent courses of study by submitting this cover page and necessary documents to the Department of Education. Instructors of equivalent courses must hold a graduate-level degree in the content area of the course offering. In order to receive consideration for graduate-level status, providers must include a one-paragraph justification as to why the proposed course is equivalent to a graduate-level course. All equivalent courses are required to administer a formal assessment, which may include a major paper or a series of papers.

Upper-level undergraduate course \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate-level course \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Provider: \_\_\_\_\_

School District\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Targeted Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Course Hours (minimum of 30 hours): \_\_\_\_\_

Prerequisites for Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit the following documents:

Specific Course Requirements (no more than 1 page)

- Course Syllabus (no more than 2 pages)
- Course Bibliography (no more than 2 pages with required readings highlighted)
- Qualification(s) of Instructor(s) (no more than 2 pages; include degrees, years of experience, major publication and presentations relevant to the proposed course)
- Proposed Participant Evaluation Form (no more than 2 pages)
- For consideration for graduate-level status, please include a justification as to why the proposed course is equivalent to a graduate-level course. (no more than 1 paragraph)

***\*School districts partnering with institutions of higher education do not need to obtain Department of Education approval for an equivalent course of study.***

*Please submit the application and materials to:* The Office of Academic Affairs and Planning,  
Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148

**PLEASE ALLOW 4–6 WEEKS FOR NOTIFICATION OF APPROVAL.**

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education.  
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**<http://doe.mass.edu/recert/>**

