
Approval Determinations

Each review results in an approval determination. Overall determinations reflect the cumulative impact of all other judgments made throughout the review. Approval determinations are meant to signal to Sponsoring Organizations and external stakeholders the overall results of the evidence-based review and the general status of preparation within an organization. Each determination has specific implications pertaining to the conditions of approval being granted. Approval determinations are granted at both the organizational as well as the program level. A Sponsoring Organization's approval determination is closely associated with the various program-level determinations but may differ (e.g., the organization may be "approved" and the math 5-8 program may be "approved with distinction").

Regardless of the approval determination, ESE will continue to monitor individual program and provider efficacy and reserves the right to revisit conditions or engage in an interim review.

There are five potential approval determinations associated with the outcomes of a review. ESE has expanded the levels of approval in order to differentiate performance appropriately within the Commonwealth following a robust, comprehensive evaluation. The approval determinations are:

- Approved with Distinction
- Approved
- Approved with Conditions
- Probationary Approval
- Not Approved

Details of each are outlined below.

Determination	Definition	Indicators	Implications
Approved with Distinction	Approval with Distinction is the highest level of approval. A Sponsoring Organization or program granted approval with distinction has exceeded the already high bar for approval, demonstrating exemplary performance. The Sponsoring Organization or program is operating at such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the state or nation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain/ Criteria Ratings, which could include specifically the depth and substance of commendations resulting from formal review • Compelling nature of evidence of impact provided in support of criteria being met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits • 7-year term of approval, unless program ceases to meet requirements or ESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards • SO is granted additional autonomy in making substantial program changes • Should opportunities arise, SO's that are approved with distinction will be afforded preference in ESE-funded initiatives • ESE will waive the Needs Assessment requirement if SO is interested in putting forth new programs • Possible Status Designation as High performing
Approved	A Sponsoring Organization or program that has been granted full approval is recognized by the state to have met all standards for preparing effective educators in Massachusetts. An approved determination signals that candidates are well-served by this organization or program and receive a high-quality preparation experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting formal review criteria • Findings in a report, if any, do not significantly impact candidate preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits • 7-year term of approval, unless program ceases to meet requirements or ESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards

Determination	Definition	Indicators	Implications
Approved with Conditions	A Sponsoring Organization or program that is approved with conditions has demonstrated overall program readiness for impact and a commitment to improvement, despite findings in a report. Conditional approval signals that there are significant areas that must be addressed in order for the SO/program to be found to meet state standards. Findings indicate that areas of concern impact candidates. Candidates are not, however, at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain/ Criteria Ratings, including specifically the depth and substance of findings resulting from formal review • Sufficiency of evidence that speaks to candidate/ completer efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure • Candidates may not enjoy full reciprocity benefits outside of Massachusetts • 7-year term of approval, unless program ceases to meet requirements or ESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards • ESE will impose conditions specific to the organization and will describe the timeline to meet those conditions
Probationary Approval	A Sponsoring Organization or program that is granted probationary approval has insufficiently met state standards. Probationary approval signals that there are significant areas that must be addressed and candidate efficacy and/or experience in the program is not consistently assured to be high quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain/ Criteria Ratings, including specifically the depth and substance of findings resulting from formal review • Insufficient nature of evidence of impact provided in support of criteria being met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure; enrollment may be restricted • Candidates may not enjoy full reciprocity benefits outside of Massachusetts • ESE will impose conditions specific to the organization and will describe the timeline to meet those conditions • 3-year term of approval, unless program ceases to meet requirements or ESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards • Possible status designation as At-Risk or Low Performing

Determination	Definition	Indicators	Implications
Not Approved	A Sponsoring Organization or program that is determined to be not approved has demonstrated significant deficiencies relative to state standards and is not effectively preparing candidates for the licensure role. ESE has concerns that PK-12 students taught by program completers will be at risk due to ineffective preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domain/ Criteria Ratings, including specifically the depth and substance of findings • Compelling nature of evidence of impact provided in support of findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs are not allowed to recruit, prepare, or endorse candidates for licensure • ESE will work with individual SO's to develop a teach-out plan for affected program areas and hold candidates harmless to the extent possible • Programs denied approval have the option, within a timeframe determined by ESE, to resubmit the program(s) for a new review • Status designation of low performing