

## Formal Review

Periodic program review ensures continued growth, improvement, and educator preparation program effectiveness beyond the initial approval. Sponsoring Organizations with currently approved educator preparation programs who are nearing the end of the seven-year approval window and would like to continue operating programs are required to have those programs reviewed. Currently approved educator preparation programs in formal review may continue operating, even beyond the seven-year approval window, until ESE has conducted the formal review process, unless the Sponsoring Organization does not submit required materials for review. If an SO fails to meet one or more deadlines associated with review, program(s) will expire on the established expiration date of approval.

In designing the review process, ESE’s goal is to implement an effective, efficient, and consistent review process that provides a solid evidence base for decision-making. The formal review of currently approved programs is a multi-step process, and the timeline for this process is centered on the formal, onsite review.

The table below describes the steps in the general framework for review which is characterized by four main phases: initiation, offsite, onsite and determination. Supporting resources for each of the phases can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/toolkit/>.

| Time Relative to Onsite Visit | Stage/Step                          | Description of Activities   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 12 months prior               | <b>Initiation: Launch</b>           | <p>Sponsoring Organizations whose programs are nearing the end of their approval period will be contacted by ESE and notified of the need for an onsite formal approval visit. This notification will occur at the beginning of the sixth year of approval.</p> <p>ESE will host all SO’s under review at an in-person launch meeting to outline the details of the process specific to upcoming review.</p>  |
| 10 months Prior               | <b>Initiation: Needs Assessment</b> | <p>At the point of formal review, ESE requires that SO’s assess the breadth and depth of their program offerings. Specifically, ESE will identify programs that have had zero completers or low-completion rates in the last three years. The threshold for low enrollment is determined by ESE annually and takes into account state-level completer data. In the case of low-enrollment programs, SO’s must demonstrate state-specific need for the program as well as the ability to meet the demand or choose to expire the program. In the case of zero-completer programs over the past three years, with the exception of STEM programs because of the ongoing shortage of teachers in this area (these programs will be eligible to continue to</p> |

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|                               |   | operate with an affidavit), ESE will expire these programs. Sponsoring Organizations may put forward new programs during this phase. Only programs for which need is demonstrated will be considered as part of the formal review.   |
| 6 months prior                | <b>Offsite: Initial Submission</b>                    | The Sponsoring Organization prepares documents demonstrating how the program meets the formal review criteria (See <a href="#">Appendix B: Formal Review Criteria</a> ). Required documents must be submitted to ESE electronically.   |
| 5 months prior                | <b>Offsite: Completeness Check</b>                    | An initial completeness check of the submitted documentation is conducted by ESE to ensure required materials are submitted. ESE does not evaluate the quality of the content included in the submission. The completeness check simply serves to ensure that reviewers receive a complete package of materials consistent with the way they were trained. If the documentation is insufficient, the Sponsoring Organization will be asked to address the insufficiencies. If the documentation is complete, no further action is required but the SO may choose to revise the submission and resubmit until the final due date. |
| 4 months prior                | <b>Offsite: Final Submission &amp; Offsite Review</b> | The Sponsoring Organization prepares documents incorporating changes based on feedback from the Initial Review. All required documents are submitted to ESE and then shared with reviewers who conduct an offsite review. Additionally, ESE will survey PK-12 partners regarding their experience with the SO.   |
| 2 months prior                | <b>Onsite: Pre-Visit Call</b>                         | A pre-visit call will occur approximately two months prior to the formal onsite visit. ESE will use this call to coordinate with the Sponsoring Organization the logistics and expectations for the formal onsite visit.   |

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|---|---|--|
|   | <b>Onsite: Site Visit</b>                                     | <p>The formal onsite visit typically lasts three days. The state team consists of a minimum of one ESE staff member and a team of external reviewers. It is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to pay the cost of travel, lodging, and meal expenses for reviewers.</p> <p>At the end of the formal onsite visit, an exit meeting is held and next steps are discussed. Final decisions are not shared with the SO in this exit meeting.</p>  |
| 90 days post-onsite   | <b>Determination: Factual Accuracy Report</b>                 | ESE will issue a report summarizing commendations, findings, and a recommended approval determination within 90 days of the onsite visit.  |
| 10 business days from receipt of report                       | <b>Determination: Factual Accuracy Response</b>               | Upon receiving the final report, Sponsoring Organizations will review the document for factual accuracy. During factual accuracy, the SO should communicate with ESE regarding factual errors or omissions in the report. Given the substantive nature of the review and calibration checkpoints built into the process, SO's may submit corrections relevant to mistakes in the report but should not refute conclusions or judgments made by the review team. An organization will be asked to take corrective action to address the findings outlined in the report after the factual accuracy window. The Sponsoring Organization will return the report within 10 business days. ESE will review the response to Factual Accuracy carefully and amend the report as deemed appropriate. |
| 4 months following onsite visit                               | <b>Determination: Notification of Approval Determination</b>  | As a result of the review, ESE will notify the Sponsoring Organization of its approval determination. The Sponsoring Organization will work with ESE to determine timelines and next steps in response to findings requiring action. The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will notify Sponsoring Organizations of approval status in writing.  |
| 30 days from receipt of Final Report & Approval Determination | <b>Determination: Rejoinder Response and Hearing Requests</b> | Any SO with an approval determination of Approved With Conditions, Probationary Approval, or Not Approved may contest judgments or decisions reflected in the report by submitting a rejoinder response within 30 days of receipt of the final report and approval letter. The rejoinder response must be submitted using the ESE  |

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|   |  | <p>provided template. ESE will review the rejoinder response and the Commissioner may modify the report and determinations solely at his/her discretion.</p> <p>Upon receiving a notice of an approval determination of Not Approved, the SO shall have all rights of review required by G.L. c. 30A,s. 13 and 801 CMR 1.00. All requests for hearings, where hearings are provided by statute, shall be in writing, addressed to the Commissioner, and must be received within 30 days of receipt by the Sponsoring Organization of the notice of approval determination. At such hearing, the SO shall bear the burden of proof and present its case first.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>August 31</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Determination: Approval Determinations updated on Profiles</b></p> | <p>ESE will publish the approval determinations for each Sponsoring Organization on the Public Profiles.</p>  |