
Implementation of Waivers in Approved Programs

Based on the [Regulations Governing Program Approval](#) (603 CMR 7.03 (1) (b)), any time a candidate's participation in a state-approved educator preparation program deviates from the design and/or requirements of the program submitted to and approved by ESE, documentation of a waiver is required. Waivers are designed to exempt individual candidates from certain requirements based extenuating circumstances; they are not a mechanism for reducing the expectations required to complete an approved program. As a result, Sponsoring Organizations may not design or build a program dependent upon a waiver. In each decision to issue a waiver, SO's must weigh the benefits of waiving requirements against the value of those requirements in relation to ensuring that candidates are ready to make impact in the Massachusetts public schools.

Sponsoring Organizations with approved preparation programs have the authority to review prior course work and work experience of their candidates and waive otherwise required course work, including the first half of the practicum or practicum equivalent, when designing individualized plans for candidates' preparation. Granting such waivers is the official responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization. Records of candidates for whom coursework or other program requirements have been waived, including the rationale/justification that warrants the waiver, must be available for review by ESE.

All state-approved educator preparation-programs have the authority to extend the following types of waivers, when appropriate for a specific candidate, based on program needs and a specific candidate's experiences:

- Course Waivers
- Pre-Practicum Waivers
- Up to ½ Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Waivers
- Practicum Setting requirements with the exception of:
 - The use of the MA Curriculum Frameworks

All Sponsoring Organizations must have a clearly articulated written waiver policy. Waiver policies should not allow broadly issued waivers; programs should limit waivers to exceptional cases. A Sponsoring Organization may choose to institute a no-waiver policy as its policy. Waiver policies must also be available for review by ESE.