
Informal Review

The [informal review process](#) allows Sponsoring Organizations to develop and put forth for approval new programs and to undergo review outside of the formal, typical approval cycle. It also provides a mechanism for those entities seeking approval as a new Sponsoring Organization. ESE will accept requests for informal reviews beginning February 1 through May 31 annually. ESE will not accept requests for informal review of programs within a two-year window leading up to or after the formal approval cycle. Sponsoring Organizations designated as Approved with Distinction may put forward new programs at any time inside the informal review window; the two-year moratorium does not apply to organizations with this designation.

The submission and approval of a new program is a multi-step process.

- 1. Intent.** A Sponsoring Organization wishing to offer one or more new educator preparation programs must inform ESE of their intention to be reviewed. Requests to offer one or more new educator preparation programs can be sent to: edprep@doe.mass.edu. The purpose of providing advance notification of intent is so that ESE can offer guidance and plan for a timely review.
- 2. Needs Assessment.** Needs assessments ensure that ESE and Sponsoring Organizations only engage in a review, outside of the formal review process, in areas of demonstrated need. As programs seek to demonstrate need, ESE will consider multiple sources of evidence, including evidence that links to the following categories of need: programs addressing a Massachusetts-specific need for educators in a specific subject area, district need for the proposed program, candidate interest in the proposed program, and/or demonstrated impact/ effectiveness of completers in similar programs. If the completed needs assessment supports the need for the proposed educator preparation program as determined by ESE, the Sponsoring Organization may put forth the program for informal review. If need is not confirmed, organizations may wish to reconsider the program and submit additional evidence of need in the next cycle. For more information, please see the [Needs Assessment Advisory](#).

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- 3. Informal Submission.** If need is confirmed, ESE will provide each organization with a list of documents that are required for the informal submission. Submission requirements vary depending on the context of the review. Typically, ESE requires SO's to submit responses to tailored worksheet prompts, programs of study, and associated standard matrices. Sponsoring Organizations should refer to the [Educator Preparation Review Toolkit](#) for specifics associated with each informal review cycle.

Individuals who complete informally approved programs will be eligible to receive licensure in Massachusetts, but may not enjoy full reciprocity benefits for licensure in other states that have signed the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement with Massachusetts. Full reciprocity benefits are available after formal program approval has been granted.

- 4. Notification of Approval Determination.** As a result of the review, ESE will notify the Sponsoring Organization of its approval determination. Sponsoring Organizations will be notified about approval decisions within three to six months from the close of the informal review window.

For new Sponsoring Organizations (those putting forth programs for the first time), formal approval will be granted only after the successful completion of a formal review. For Sponsoring Organizations with currently approved programs, formal approval is granted after the successful completion of one year of operation.

After the first year of operation and each subsequent year, the Sponsoring Organization must submit an annual report to ESE in accordance with 603 CMR 7.03 (4).

For more information, templates, and submission worksheets, see the [Informal Review Toolkit](#).