Program Approval Standards and Review Criteria
2012 Program Approval Standards
(2) **Program Approval Standards.** Each sponsoring organization seeking approval of its preparation program(s) shall provide evidence addressing the following Program Approval Standards, in accordance with the Guidelines for Program Approval.

(a) Continuous Improvement: Conduct an annual evaluation to assess program compliance, effectiveness, and impact using an evidence-based system to ensure continuous improvement.

(b) Collaboration and Program Impact: Collaborate with school districts to ensure positive impact in meeting the needs of the districts.

(c) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.

(d) Subject Matter Knowledge:
1. Initial License - Subject Matter Knowledge: Ensure that program completers have content mastery based on the subject matter knowledge requirements; 603 CMR 7.06, 7.07, 7.09, and 7.11, at the level of an initially licensed educator.
2. Professional License - Advanced Subject Matter Knowledge: Ensure that program completers have advanced content mastery based on the subject matter knowledge requirements; 603 CMR 7.06 and 7.07, at the level of a professionally licensed educator.

(e) Professional Standards for Teachers:
1. Initial License - Professional Standards for Teachers: Ensure that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Teachers at the level of an initially licensed teacher.
2. Professional License - Advanced Professional Standards for Teachers: Ensure that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Teachers at the level of a professionally licensed teacher.

(f) Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership: Ensure that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership at the level of an initially licensed administrator.

(g) Educator Effectiveness: Analyze and use: aggregate evaluation ratings data of program completers, employment data on program completers employed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, results of survey data, and other available data to improve program effectiveness.

One of the main purposes of these *Guidelines* is to make increasingly clear and concrete ESE's expectations relative to these standards. Accordingly, ESE has organized expectations into six thematic categories, called Domains, under which similar criteria can be grouped together. The domains are: The Organization, Partnerships, Continuous Improvement, The Candidate, Field-Based Experiences, and Instruction.

Criteria in each domain are derived directly from the Program Approval Standards and are designed to distill high-level concepts into a set of concrete, actionable criteria. By grouping these criteria into broader domains, ESE can ensure that criteria that cross-cut two or more standards (i.e. Standard A – Continuous Improvement and Standard G – Program Impact have a significant amount of overlap) are listed (and therefore evaluated) only once. This reorganization of the standards provides full coverage of the standards while also ensuring that providers prepare, are reviewed and evaluated efficiently without duplication of efforts and findings.
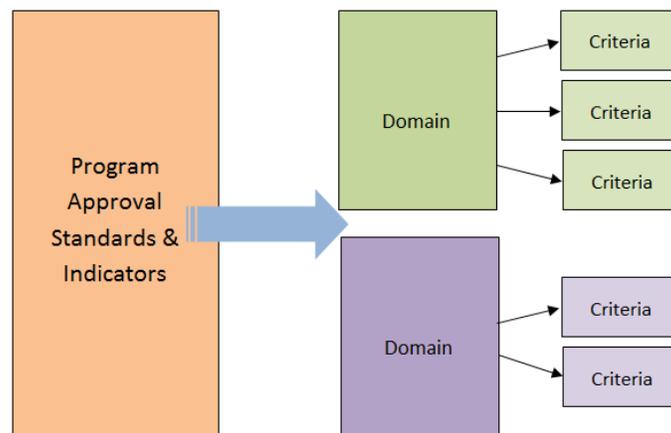
For a crosswalk of the standards to domains, see [Appendix C](#). This set of criteria drive program reviews and evaluation. These criteria replace what were previously referred to as the "effectiveness indicators." Criteria were intentionally developed to be descriptive of expectations, not prescriptive of approaches or strategies. The criteria have been revised for increased clarity since the first set was released in January 2014.

Review Criteria

Domain: The Organization (ORG)

1. Organization demonstrates sufficient capacity and authority to effectively support and sustain effective educator preparation programs.

2. Systems/structures support collaboration within departments and across disciplines and improve candidate preparation.

3. Budgets support ongoing educator preparation program sustainability and allocate resources according to the Sponsoring Organization's goals.

4. All candidates, regardless of program or delivery model, have equitable and consistent access to resources.

5. Recruitment, selection, and evaluation processes result in the hiring and retention of effective faculty/instructors and staff.

6. Faculty/instructors and staff engage in professional development or work in the field that has a positive impact on the quality of preparation provided to candidates.

Domain: Partnerships (PAR)

1. Sponsoring Organization responds to the needs of PK-12 districts/schools.

2. PK-12 partners make contributions that inform Sponsoring Organization's continuous improvement efforts.

3. Partnerships improve experience for preparation candidates.

4. Partnerships positively impact the outcomes of PK-12 students.

5. Sponsoring Organization evaluates partnerships on an ongoing basis, sustains those that are effective, and takes steps to improve those that are not.

Domain: Continuous Improvement (CI)

1. Sponsoring Organization monitors individual program efficacy and ensures that candidates who complete the program are prepared to be effective in the licensure role.

2. The consistent and ongoing use of internal and external evidence, including ESE data, informs strategic decisions that impact the Sponsoring Organization, education programs, candidates, and employing schools/districts.

3. Sponsoring Organization acts on feedback solicited from internal and external stakeholders (including candidates, graduates, district and school personnel, and employers) in continuous improvement efforts.

4. Goals articulated in the State Annual Report yield improvements to the Sponsoring Organization's educator preparation programs.

Domain: The Candidate (CAN)

1. Systems to recruit and admit candidates result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce.

2. Admission criteria and processes are rigorous such that those admitted demonstrate success in the program and during employment in the licensure role.

3. Candidates receive effective advising throughout the program (including, but not limited to, being knowledgeable about licensure requirements and career development and placement services that contribute to employment upon completion).

4. Candidates at risk of not meeting standards are identified throughout the program (in pre-practicum, during coursework, and while in practicum) and receive necessary supports and guidance to improve or exit the program.

5. Waiver policy ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

Domain: Field-Based Experiences (FBE)

1. Practicum hours meet regulatory requirements as per [603 CMR 7.04 (4)](#)

2. District partners are involved in the design, implementation, and assessment of field-based experiences.

3. Field-based experiences are fully embedded in program coursework such that connections between theory and practice are explicit.

4. Responsibilities in pre-practicum and practicum experiences build to candidate readiness for full responsibility in licensure role.

5. Sponsoring Organization secures and/or verifies placement(s) that meet regulatory requirements and the SO's expectations for a high-quality placement for all candidates.

6. Candidates participate in field-based experiences that cover the full academic year.

7. Field-based experiences are in settings with diverse learners (e.g., students from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic, and exceptional groups).

8. Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements set forth in [603 CMR 7.02](#) and in [Guidelines for Program Approval.](#)

9. Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors receive training, support and development from the SO that impacts candidate effectiveness.

10. Candidates receive high-quality, targeted feedback during field-based experiences that improves their practice.

11. Sponsoring Organization ensures that Program Supervisors and Supervising Practitioners are measurably contributing to and effectively evaluating the readiness of candidates.

12. Candidate readiness for the licensure role is measured using a performance assessment (e.g. Candidate Assessment of Performance) that is implemented consistently across/within programs and rigorously such that only candidates who are ready to make a positive impact for PK-12 students in the licensure role complete the program.

Domain: Instruction (INS)

Sponsoring Organizations must monitor individual program efficacy (see CI Domain). For purposes of review, ESE will evaluate the quality of instruction with aggregated evidence for the following programs types: Initial Teacher – Baccalaureate, Initial Teacher – Post-Baccalaureate, Initial Teacher Specialist (e.g., Reading Specialist), Professional, Professional Support Personnel, and Administrative Leadership.

Outcome Criteria:

1. Completers have the content knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role. *For Professional licensure programs:* Completers have deeper content knowledge that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

2. Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSAL) to be effective in the licensure role. *For Professional licensure programs:* Completers have increased pedagogical skill that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

3. Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. *For Professional licensure programs:* Completers have an increasingly positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.

Supporting (Input) Criteria:

a) Program(s) of Study is sequenced to support the increased depth of skills and knowledge acquired and applied over time.

b) Program design results in a coherent program of study such that connections among and between courses are evident.

c) Content is differentiated by subject area and level of licensure.

d) Content delivery is calibrated for consistency within programs (e.g. different instructors of same course, in satellites, online, etc.).

e) Faculty/instructors model effective pedagogical and content practices of discipline (including strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners).

f) Faculty/instructors use formative and summative assessment data to target areas of candidate need.

g) Candidates receive targeted feedback from faculty/instructors in coursework that improves their practice.

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i) Candidates receive targeted feedback from faculty/instructors in coursework that improves their practice.

There are several areas covered by the criteria for which ESE has additional policy. These areas are referenced specifically in 603 CMR 7.00 and point to the *Guidelines* for further explanation about ESE expectation. Those areas are outlined further in the sections that follow:

- Field-Based Experiences
- Performance Assessments
- Waivers
- Annual Reporting
- Public Reporting