|  |
| --- |
| DESE logo |
|  | Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval |
|  |
| Draft for Public Comment, Winter 2023 |
| Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370www.doe.mass.edu |
|  |  |

Table of Contents

[Context and Purpose 2](#_Toc125575601)

[Program Approval Standards and Review Criteria 5](#_Toc125575602)

[The Organization Domain 7](#_Toc125575603)

[The Continuous Improvement Domain 8](#_Toc125575605)

[The Candidate Domain 10](#_Toc125575607)

[Implementation of Waivers in Approved Programs 11](#_Toc125575609)

[The Partnerships Domain 13](#_Toc125575610)

[The Field-Based Experiences Domain 16](#_Toc125575613)

[Performance Assessments during Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences 19](#_Toc125575617)

[The Instruction Domain 22](#_Toc125575621)

[Program Approval Overview and DESE Role 26](#_Toc125575627)

[The Review Process 28](#_Toc125575630)

[Informal Review 28](#_Toc125575631)

[Interim Review of Approved Programs 30](#_Toc125575632)

[Formal Review 32](#_Toc125575633)

[Approval Determinations 39](#_Toc125575637)

[Low Performing and At-Risk Status Designations  41](#_Toc125575638)

[Annual Reporting 46](#_Toc125575643)

[Public Reporting 48](#_Toc125575644)

[National Accreditation & State Program Approval 50](#_Toc125575645)

[Appendix A: Regulations Governing Program Approval 51](#_Toc125575646)

[Appendix B: Program Approval Standards and Domain Crosswalk 56](#_Toc125575649)

[Appendix C: Program Approval Criteria 58](#_Toc125575650)

[Appendix D: Curriculum Literacy 64](#_Toc125575651)

[Appendix E:  Massachusetts-based Off-Campus/Satellite Programs, Hybrid (online and face-to-face) and Online Delivery Models 68](#_Toc125575652)

[Appendix F: List of Supporting Guidelines 69](#_Toc125575653)

[Appendix H: Glossary of Terms 70](#_Toc125575654)

# Context and Purpose

The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have made educator effectiveness a priority in order to ensure that all students in every school and classroom have access to excellent educators. While the focus on excellent educators has contributed to continued achievement for students in Massachusetts overall, disparities in experiences and outcomes resulting from existing and historical policies and practices [persist](https://number1forsome.org/), in particular for Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial students.

To disrupt these systemic inequities and provide an equitable[[1]](#footnote-2) and effective education for all[[2]](#footnote-3) students in the Commonwealth, DESE has committed to strengthening its expectations for educator preparation programs to ensure that all educators are prepared to be effective, meaning they support students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds to:

* **Attain academic knowledge and skills**: achieve in a comprehensive and diverse range of subjects and apply their competencies in relevant, real-world contexts;
* **Understand and value themselves**: know their own strengths, interests, and areas of growth, be self-aware, be a self-advocate, and make responsible decisions;
* **Understand and value others**: understand differences and multiple perspectives, empathize with others, and build connections with peers and adults;
* **Engage with the world**: understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action;
* **Be curious and creative**: find joy in learning and pursue their interests; use innovative thinking to approach opportunities and solve challenges, including those previously unseen;
* **Shape their path**: determine and be well-prepared to thrive in life, college, and/or career;
* **Feel connected**: see themselves as valuable and involved members of their communities, and be aware of their independence and interdependence;
* **Be empowered**: play a role in advocating for equity, justice, and liberty in their communities and beyond.

Educator preparation programs are a key part of achieving this educational vision, with Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) needing to prepare prospective educators to be effective on day one. These Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval detail the standards for educator preparation that lead to endorsement for licensure in the Commonwealth, andhave been updated to set expectations and create processes for educator preparation program approval grounded in the following emphases:

**Anti-Racism** – Furthering DESE’s educational vision requires centering anti-racist practices that enable teachers, administrators, specialists, and school support personnel to well-serve *all* students from day one. [Data show](https://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/gradrates/) that we continue to underserve Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial students, as well as English Learners and students with disabilities[[3]](#footnote-4). This is especially true for students with intersecting underserved identities[[4]](#footnote-5),[[5]](#footnote-6). Enacting steps towards racial equity in education means (1) working to identify and dismantle educational policies, practices, conditions, and cultures that perpetuate inequities at every level of public education, including within DESE and educator preparation programs, (2) supporting all educators and educator preparation personnel to better understand how their identity influences their practice, and (3) preparing all educators to enact anti-racist, [culturally and linguistically sustaining practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/default.html) that well-serve each and every student in their schools and classrooms. By centering anti-racism in the work of preparing educators, we establish the foundation upon which all educators’ anti-racist practices are developed and reinforced.

**Instructional Programming & Evidence-Based Practice -** Building upon expectations for Sponsoring Organizations to create systems and structures to support effective preparation at the organization level, a central approach in the previous iteration, these Guidelines more deeply examine individual programs within the Sponsoring Organization. This deeper focus at the program level aligns with the updated expectations DESE put in place for content knowledge and pedagogical skills over the past eight years, as well as increased prioritization of evidence-based instructional practices, particularly in the areas of [early literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/), [curriculum literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/), and [administrator preparation.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/leadership-guide.pdf)

Building anti-racist educational systems is critical and urgent to create the experiences and outcomes all students in the Commonwealth deserve and will require a commitment to anti-racism paired with effective instruction and evidence-based practices. DESE is committed to collaborating around how to deconstruct generations of policies and practices that have perpetuated systemic racism, and reconstructing equitable, anti-racist educational systems in partnership with Sponsoring Organizations. Sponsoring Organizations may not need to completely change the systems and structures put into place to meet previous DESE expectations. Rather, there will be opportunities for learning and growth at every stage as organizations interrogate how those systems have contributed to inequity and identify areas of strength upon which to build. Sponsoring Organizations will need to take action to disrupt inequities and repair harm, within a program approval process that prioritizes evidence of increased equity in access related to teaching and learning, decreased disproportionality, and improved learning outcomes for all.

The Office of Educator Effectiveness commits to taking the same approach to continuous learning and improvement driven by our vision to create the conditions that support the preparation, development, and retention of a diverse and effective educator workforce so that all students thrive. As such, the Office of Educator Effectiveness will have ongoing opportunities for feedback and engagement with the field, including PK-12 educators, families, and educator preparation programs on these topics.

# Program Approval Standards and Review Criteria

DESE’s expectations of Sponsoring Organizations are based in state regulations (found in [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Regulations)). These Guidelines provide information for Sponsoring Organizations on how the expectations in the regulations are measured in the DESE program approval process.

Expectations in the Guidelines are organized into six domains, under which similar criteria are grouped together: The Organization, Partnerships, Continuous Improvement, The Candidate, Field-Based Experiences, and Instruction.

Criteria in each domain are derived directly from the [Program Approval Standards](#_Appendix_B:_Program) and are designed to distill high-level concepts into a set of concrete, actionable expectations. By grouping these criteria into broader domains, DESE can ensure that criteria that apply to two or more standards (e.g., Standard A – Continuous Improvement and Standard G – Program Impact, which have a significant amount of overlap) are listed, and therefore evaluated, only once. This provides full coverage of the standards while also ensuring that providers are reviewed and evaluated efficiently without duplication of efforts and findings.



While each domain is evaluated independently, practices within each Sponsoring Organization may intersect multiple domains. For example, the Partnerships domain sets expectations for strong, collaborative partnerships between Sponsoring Organizations and schools/districts. Aspects of effective partnerships also appear in several other domains throughout these Guidelines, underscoring their importance for the preparation of effective educators. For example, in the Continuous Improvement domain, partnerships both inform and drive organizational improvements; in the Field-Based Experiences domain, strong partnerships inform the quality and implementation of supportive field-based experiences for candidates and Supervising Practitioners; and in the Instruction domain, effective partnerships shape program development. For a crosswalk of the standards to domains, see [Appendix B: Program Approval Standards and Domain Crosswalk](#_Appendix_B:_Program).

Program criteria drive program reviews and evaluation. Criteria are intentionally crafted to be descriptive of expectations, not prescriptive of approaches or strategies. Updates to program approval criteria, as reflected in these Guidelines, reflect a multi-step process of initial stakeholder engagement, internal drafting, and multiple rounds of stakeholder feedback on the drafted language. During the initial stakeholder engagement stage, DESE staff and external vendors engaged with families, students, educators, and educator preparation personnel to learn about their desired outcomes of the program approval criteria. During the internal drafting stage, members of the DESE Educator Preparation team used feedback from initial stakeholder engagement to draft the revised criteria. Finally, after criteria were drafted, stakeholder groups, including the Principal and Teacher Advisory Council, the Educator Preparation Advisory Group, and the Education Personnel Advisory Council provided multiple rounds of feedback.

For the complete list of review criteria, see [Appendix C: Program Approval Criteria](#_Appendix_C:_Program).Appendix C: Program Approval Criteria

# The Organization Domain

***Sponsoring Organizations are committed to achieving equitable outcomes for candidates and PK-12 students and have systems and structures in place to realize those outcomes.***

The Organization domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization has the capacity and authority to make strategic data-informed decisions, including budget allocations and staffing decisions, that sustain effective and equitable preparation programs. The delivery and effectiveness of educator preparation programs should not rest solely on one department or individual in an organization. The equitable experiences of candidates and effectiveness of completers is the responsibility of all who are involved in the recruitment, admission, support, and delivery of educator preparation programs. To ensure a cohesive and equitable experience for all candidates, it is essential that there is ongoing communication and collaboration amongst all personnel that support a candidate’s experience from recruitment through completion and employment. For institutions of higher education, this would include personnel from admissions, arts and sciences, student services, and other departments, together with personnel from the education department.

The commitment and capacity to prepare effective anti-racist and culturally responsive educators, on the part of all personnel, is integral to ensuring candidates’ success. This requires Sponsoring Organizations to have systems in place to ensure all personnel continually improve in their ability to prepare candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds, and to prepare their candidates to provide equitable learning experiences for their students. It requires Sponsoring Organizations to have equitable practices in place to support the recruitment, hiring, evaluation, retention, and advancement of effective and racially diverse personnel.

## The Organization (ORG) Criteria:

ORG 1: The Sponsoring Organization has the capacity and authority to make strategic decisions that sustain effective and equitable preparation programs.

ORG 2: The Sponsoring Organization’s budget allocation is strategic and data-informed, with a focus on sustainable and equitable program experiences and candidate outcomes.

ORG 3: The Sponsoring Organization has systems and structures that support clear communication and collaboration across all personnel (including those involved in coursework, fieldwork, and candidate support), leading to cohesive and equitable program experiences.

ORG 4: The Sponsoring Organization gathers data to inform recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement practices in order to cultivate a racially and ethnically diverse personnel.

ORG 5: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that all personnel are effective and continually improve in their ability to equitably support and prepare all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) for full responsibility in the licensure role.

# The Continuous Improvement Domain

***Sponsoring Organizations engage in continuous improvement efforts that drive toward improved experiences and equitable outcomes for all candidates and the PK-12 students they serve.***

The Continuous Improvement domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization has a comprehensive system for collecting and analyzing data related to program implementation and efficacy on a regular basis in order to ensure equitable experiences that prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators. Data should reflect the multiple viewpoints and experiences across all stages of preparation, and the Sponsoring Organization should disaggregate data across programs to understand the experiences and outcomes of candidates within and across identity groups. For many Sponsoring Organizations, this may not mean collecting additional data, but rather analyzing the data to answer different questions to better identify and understand the source of variable or inequitable experiences.

A Sponsoring Organization is also responsible for ensuring that they are meeting the needs of PK-12 schools and districts through partnerships (See [Partnerships domain](#_The_Partnerships_Domain)) that support increasingly equitable learning experiences for PK-12 students and by ensuring only those educators ready to have a positive impact on PK-12 student outcomes are endorsed for licensure. At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization must collect and analyze evidence of completers’ and PK-12 school/district partnerships’ impacts on PK-12 student outcomes. The Sponsoring Organization shall use this evidence to take aligned actions, building upon strengths and addressing areas of growth to ensure they are well-serving PK-12 students.

A Sponsoring Organization is responsible for using a variety of evidence sources, including available state-collected data, stakeholder feedback, and Sponsoring Organization-collected evidence of impact on PK-12 students, to target areas for additional focus. The Sponsoring Organization should incorporate multiple viewpoints in these analyses to ensure they make evidence-informed, equity-centered decisions, including setting annual goals, that improve experiences and outcomes. To complete the continuous improvement cycle, the Sponsoring Organization should then monitor whether those decisions are having a positive impact and make adjustments to the action plan as needed.

Constructing equitable, anti-racist preparation programs will require time and attention; only through a comprehensive and inclusive continuous improvement system can the Sponsoring Organization ensure decisions are having the intended impact with increasingly equitable experiences and outcomes for both candidates and PK-12 students.

## The Continuous Improvement (CI) Domain Criteria:

CI 1: The Sponsoring Organization’s continuous improvement efforts are intentionally designed to involve multiple viewpoints in decision-making, ensure equitable program experiences, and improve candidate outcomes.

CI 2: At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization collects and analyzes evidence from a variety of sources (including available state-collected data and stakeholder feedback) in order to understand the experiences and outcomes of candidates within and across identity groups and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

CI 3: The Sponsoring Organization makes evidence-informed, equity-centered decisions that lead to improved experiences and outcomes of candidates.

CI 4: At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization collects and analyzes evidence of completers’ and PK-12 school/district partnerships’ impacts on PK-12 student outcomes and takes aligned actions to ensure positive impacts.

# The Candidate Domain

***All candidates are supported through recruitment, admission, and completion of their program to ensure that completers are well-prepared to create anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining learning environments for all students.***

The Candidate domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization provide all candidates with the information and resources necessary to complete their program of study, foster candidates’ well-being, and effectively prepare them for the experience of working in their licensure role.

Ensuring appropriate and comprehensive support for all candidates, including those within and across identity groups and backgrounds, and with particular focus on those who have been systematically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, requires the Sponsoring Organization to continually examine recruitment, admissions, and retention data to identify and remove barriers that contribute to inequitable access to and/or success in the preparation program. Resources and supports may include:

* Transparency about the costs and commitments of the program, including a clear waiver policy
* Academic advising to ensure success in the program of study
* Resources to navigate higher education and PK-12 school/district systems
* Opportunities to build authentic relationships and communities of support with program personnel and other candidates
* Career counseling to ensure a clear understanding of the licensure role and employment opportunities

Within any preparation program, there will be candidates who need additional, differentiated interventions in coursework, fieldwork, or for their general well-being. The Sponsoring Organization must create policies and processes to identify candidates at risk of not meeting expectations or in need of additional support, provide them with appropriate interventions, and monitor their progress. Candidates who, despite receiving differentiated interventions, demonstrate that they will not be ready to well-serve all students with anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, should be counseled out of the licensure program. The Sponsoring Organization is responsible for determining candidates’ readiness for endorsement and, in turn, opportunity to impact PK-12 students from all races, identities, and backgrounds in the licensure role. As such, the Sponsoring Organization should both hold high expectations and provide comprehensive support for all candidates.

## The Candidate (CAN) Domain Criteria:

CAN 1: The Sponsoring Organization continually examines recruitment, admissions, and retention data and adjusts policies and processes to remove systemically inequitable barriers to entry and completion, resulting in the increased racial diversity of completers.

CAN 2: The Sponsoring Organization selects candidates for admission who demonstrate a commitment to educating all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds).

CAN 3: The Sponsoring Organization positions all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) to be successful in their program, licensure, and career through effective guidance and comprehensive support systems.

CAN 4: The Sponsoring Organization identifies and provides differentiated interventions for candidates who need additional support in coursework, fieldwork, or for their general well-being, leading all completers (including completers from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) to be prepared to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators.

CAN 5: The Sponsoring Organization’s waiver policy equitably ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

## Implementation of Waivers in Approved Programs

Based on the [Regulations Governing Program Approval](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=03) (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 DESE, documentation of a waiver is required. Waivers are designed to exempt individual candidates from certain requirements based on extenuating circumstances; they are not a mechanism for lowering the expectations required to complete an approved program. A Sponsoring Organization may not design a program dependent upon a waiver. In each decision to issue a waiver, a Sponsoring Organization must weigh the benefits of waiving a requirement against the value of that requirement in relation to ensuring that a candidate is ready to make a positive impact on PK-12 students in Massachusetts.

When preparing candidates, a Sponsoring Organization has the authority to review each candidate’s prior coursework and/or work experience and waive otherwise required coursework and/or field-based experiences, including up to half of the practicum or practicum equivalent. Implementing an equitable policy for granting 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 DESE.

A Sponsoring Organization has the authority to extend the following types of waivers, when appropriate for a specific candidate, based on a specific candidate’s experiences:

* Individual 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)
* Supervising Practitioner requirements (appropriate license, years of experience, and/or educator evaluation rating)

A Sponsoring Organization must have a clearly written waiver policy that is equitably communicated and applied. Waiver policies cannot allow broadly issued waivers; programs should limit waivers to exceptional cases. A Sponsoring Organization may choose to institute a no-waiver policy as its written policy. Written waiver policies must be available for review by DESE.

# The Partnerships Domain

***All Sponsoring Organizations establish intentional and collaborative partnerships with PK-12 schools and districts that support strong pipelines and cultivate anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences for candidates and PK-12 students.***

Effective partnerships between school districts and a Sponsoring Organization can support the recruitment, preparation, and development of Massachusetts teachers in a manner that strengthens student learning and the long-term sustainability of the educator workforce.

Building a strong educator workforce that meets the needs of its students is a shared responsibility of preparation providers, schools, and districts. High-quality partnerships between these organizations are those that are designed around the effective preparation and strategic recruitment, hiring, and ongoing development of Massachusetts educators in order to improve both student learning and the long-term sustainability of the educator pipeline.[[6]](#footnote-7) Effective partnerships go beyond mere transactional relationships (i.e., field-based experience placements only) to mutually beneficial, institutionally sustainable relationships built upon open lines of communication, data sharing, and collaborative decision making, such that they remain consistently responsive to PK-12 district/school needs.

Furthermore, strong partnerships are essential for building an anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educator workforce. In order to gain skills in anti-racist teaching and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, even the best classroom teaching about theoretical frameworks of these topics will be insufficient for day one readiness. Candidates must have in-person opportunities through their field-based experiences to observe and practice these skills. School districts and Sponsoring Organizations should collaborate in order to create these opportunities.

A collaborative partnership that meets the expectations of these Guidelines is mutually beneficial. Examples of ways in which a Sponsoring Organization meets the needs of schools/districts could include:

* Creating a new program or pathway to meet a district hiring need and diversify the district hiring pipeline (e.g., paraeducator pathways to licensure, pathways for current educators to advance their license or earn an additional license, etc.)
* Collaboratively designing coursework or field-based experiences in order to fulfill the unique needs of the district (e.g., onsite coursework, supporting field-based experiences to align with the school or district calendar, etc.)
* Providing professional development based on needs reported by the district
* Collaboratively identifying and selecting candidates for programs to address local pipeline needs (e.g., high school to licensure pathways, etc.)
* Providing opportunities for exemplary PK-12 educators to teach in preparation programs
* Providing feedback to the district if/when the district does not fulfill the expectations for high-quality placements and providing opportunities for growth

Examples of ways in which schools/districts might support Sponsoring Organizations could include:

* Consistently and openly sharing data, such as: number and type of district employment openings or data addressing completers’ impact on PK-12 students
* Identifying and supporting effective Supervising Practitioners and/or host teachers, and collaborating on placement decisions
* Integrating practicum candidates into the life of the school; providing opportunities such as attending curriculum nights, professional development, and participating in parent/teacher conferences

The above does not represent a comprehensive list, but rather aims to describe some ways that a Sponsoring Organization and partner schools/district(s) may consider collaborating to meet the expectations of the Guidelines and improve learning experiences for candidates and PK-12 students.

## Supporting Alignment and Coherence for PK-12 and Educator Preparation

DESE has made a concerted effort to align expectations and initiatives that center anti-racist practices to enable streamlined adoption for schools/districts and Sponsoring Organizations. The list below reflects these efforts and should serve as a foundation upon which to build strong, coherent partnerships:

* **Content Knowledge:** Alignment of [Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/) and [MA Curriculum Frameworks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html)
* **School and District Leadership Practices:** Alignment of [Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/), the [Model Principal Induction & Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html), and the [Model Administrator Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/)
* **Pedagogical Skills:** Alignment of [Model Educator Evaluation Rubrics for Teachers and Leaders](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/) and the preparation standards articulated in the [Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)[[7]](#footnote-8) and the [Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)
* **Evaluation, Feedback, and Goal Setting:** Alignment of the [Educator Evaluation Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/default.html) and the [Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/cap/2020-21guidelines.docx)[[8]](#footnote-9)

## The Partnerships (PAR) Domain Criteria:

PAR 1: The Sponsoring Organization establishes, evaluates, and sustains partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts to ensure that all partnerships are meeting the needs of candidates and improves or discontinues those that are not meeting candidates’ needs.

PAR 2: The Sponsoring Organization collaborates with partner schools/districts to understand and respond to their needs, leading to increasingly equitable learning experiences for the students the school/district serves (e.g., expanding pathways to licensure, professional development offerings, services for students).

PAR 3: The Sponsoring Organization solicits input from PK-12 partners to identify its strengths and areas for growth and takes actions (e.g., aligning preparation curriculum, strengthening field-based experiences) to improve candidate experiences and outcomes within the context of the partnership.

# The Field-Based Experiences Domain

***All candidates for Initial licensure engage in high-quality school- or classroom-based experiences that prepare them to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators for all students.***
The Field-Based Experiences domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization intentionally designs and integrates into programs opportunities for candidates to observe, practice, and demonstrate culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy, evidence-based practices, and subject matter knowledge in practice. Candidates should also use these experiences to reflect on their identities, biases, and practices while in the role. In order to meet these objectives, field-based experiences should aim to include settings that afford candidates access to an anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school culture, effective Supervising Practitioners, high-quality curricular materials, racially, socioeconomically, and linguistically diverse students and those of diverse abilities, and opportunities to participate in all components of the school community. If a setting does not have all these aspects in place, it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to directly support the candidate in interrogating gap(s) within the specific setting and providing additional resources in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review. Sponsoring Organizations should design these experiences to build to candidate readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

Field-based experiences encompass both the pre-practicum experiences and the practicum placement. Guidance pertaining to each is outlined in greater detail below. The Sponsoring Organization is encouraged to supplement the minimum requirements described below with additional expectations in support of effectively preparing candidates for the role.

## Pre-Practicum Experiences

The pre-practicum is a critical time for candidates to apply learning from coursework into authentic observation and practice opportunities in PK-12 settings with appropriate support, supervision, and feedback. Meaningful and robust pre-practicum field-based experiences position candidates to successfully demonstrate their abilities in the practicum and enter employment ready to positively impact all students’ learning from day one.

Pre-practicum experiences must begin early in candidates’ preparation, include opportunities to work with students from diverse identities and backgrounds, and be integrated into the courses or seminars that address the Professional Standards for Teachers or the Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership. Pre-practicum experiences should not occur as isolated assignments that are disconnected from programs of study.

For more information about the expectations for pre-practicum for Teacher candidates, see the [Guidelines for Pre-Practicum for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/field-based/pre-practicum.docx).

## Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences

According to state regulations (see [Appendix A](#_Appendix_A:_Regulations)), practicum/practicum equivalent experiences must be:

* completed within a Massachusetts public school, approved private special education school, Massachusetts Department of Early Education Care-approved preschool, educational collaborative, or a school that requires Massachusetts educator licensure; and
* supervised jointly by the supervisor from the preparation program (i.e., Program Supervisor) in which the candidate is enrolled and the qualified Supervising Practitioner.

All individuals in educator preparation programs shall assume full responsibility of the classroom for a minimum of 100 hours. For classroom-based practitioners, full responsibility requires that candidates:

* assume full control of all classroom duties regularly fulfilled by the Supervising Practitioner; and
* oversee responsibilities related to the education of all students on the classroom roster.

For educators not based in a classroom (e.g., administrative leadership roles, professional support personnel), full responsibility requires that candidates assume full control of all duties regularly fulfilled by the Supervising Practitioner.

The 100 hours of full responsibility do not have to be consecutive. The intent of this requirement is to mirror the experience of being a full-time educator. The Sponsoring Organization should keep this intent in mind when developing additional guidance around expectations for candidates’ practicum experience.

Practicum/Practicum Equivalent requirements are as follows ([603 CMR 7.04 (4)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=04)):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Early Childhood (100 hours in PreK-K, 200 hours in 1-2; at least one setting must include children with disabilities) | 300 hours |
| Teacher, Grades 1-6 | 300 hours |
| Teacher, Grades 5-8 | 300 hours |
| Teacher, Grades 8-12 | 300 hours |
| Teacher, Grades PreK-6 or PreK-8 | 300 hours |
| Teacher, Grades 5-12 | 300 hours |
| Teacher, All (150 hours each at any two of the following levels: PreK-6, 5-8, 8-12) | 300 hours |
| Teacher of Students with Moderate Disabilities (For PreK-8, 300 hours in an inclusive general education setting or 75 hours in an inclusive general education setting and 225 hours in a separate or substantially separate setting for students with moderate disabilities; for 5-12, 300 hours in an inclusive general education classroom or 150 hours in an inclusive general education classroom and 150 hours in a separate or substantially separate setting for students with moderate disabilities) | 300 hours |
| Teacher of Students with Severe Disabilities (at least 75 hours in an inclusive general education classroom at any level, and at least 150 hours in a setting with students with severe disabilities; the remaining 75 hours may be in either setting) | 300 hours |
| Specialist (unless otherwise indicated) | 150 hours |
| Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent | 500 hours |
| Principal/Assistant Principal | 500 hours |
| Supervisor/Director | 300 hours |
| Special Education Administrator | 500 hours |
| School Business Administrator | 300 hours |

## Placements and Supervision during Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences

The Sponsoring Organization is responsible for identifying effective practicum placements for their candidates. This is best accomplished through the development of intentional and collaborative partnerships with local schools/ districts. The Sponsoring Organization should select, support, and monitor Supervising Practitioners to ensure that all candidates receive robust supervision and mentorship in an appropriate placement. A Supervising Practitioner must:

* have at least three full years of experience under an appropriate[[9]](#footnote-10) Initial or Professional license and have received a rating of proficient or higher on their most recent summative evaluation;
* effectively support candidates of all races, identity groups, and backgrounds;
* provide candidates with high-quality feedback and evaluation that prepares them to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization’s expectations of the role.

Both the Program Supervisor and the Supervising Practitioner are also expected to model anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. If a candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that models anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to directly support the candidate with additional resources or support in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review.

The Supervising Practitioner and the Program Supervisor will evaluate the candidate together using a performance assessment appropriate for the licensure program. Disagreement between the Supervising Practitioner and the Program Supervisor will be resolved by the decision of a third person chosen jointly by them.

## Performance Assessments during Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences

The Sponsoring Organization must implement performance assessments consistently within and across programs to improve practice and ensure only candidates who are ready for full responsibility in the licensure role complete the program.

### Initial Teacher Licenses

All Initial Teacher licensure candidates are required to successfully complete the Massachusetts Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) and be deemed “Ready to Teach” prior to endorsement for licensure. CAP is designed to assess the overall readiness of teacher candidates. Through CAP, the Sponsoring Organization ensures that teacher candidates have the skills and knowledge necessary to be effective teachers on day one.

CAP creates an intentional bridge from training to employment by aligning the expectations and process to the [Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/default.html)[[10]](#footnote-11). CAP intentionally mirrors the experience of educators engaged in the Massachusetts Model Educator Evaluation Framework. Components of the evaluation experience have been modified so that they are appropriate for the context of preparation and focused on essential elements of practice for novice teachers. For more information about CAP, see the [Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/cap/).

Specialist Teacher and School Support Personnel Licenses
CAP does not apply to Specialist Teacher or School Support Personnel programs. The Sponsoring Organization is expected to assess candidates during their practicum/practicum equivalent experience with a performance assessment that provides candidates with feedback to improve their practice and ensures completers are ready on day one. It is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to develop and consistently implement a performance assessment appropriate for each Specialist Teacher and School Support Personnel program.

Administrator Licenses
For each Administrator preparation program, Sponsoring Organizations are expected to use a performance assessment to assess candidate readiness for the licensure role relative to the role-specific Indicators for the [Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/). The primary focus of the performance assessment should be providing feedback to improve practice on those Indicators at the ‘Demonstrate’ level. Candidates should have multiple opportunities for practice in their field-based experiences, receive feedback to improve, and demonstrate consistency and proficiency within the Indicator in order to meet the expectations of the performance assessment.

***Note: The Massachusetts Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) does not fulfill this expectation for principal preparation programs.*** As an assessment for Initial licensure, PAL ensures all applicants for Principal/Assistant Principal licensure provide evidence of their readiness to be effective in the role. PAL does not cover all Indicators at the ‘Demonstrate’ level for Principal/Assistant Principal licensure, however, and candidates do not have the opportunity to receive feedback to improve their practice through PAL. A performance assessment to assess candidate readiness for the licensure role relative to the role-specific Indicators remains necessary. There are ways in which a Sponsoring Organization’s performance assessment could work in tandem with PAL within the guidelines and expectations for PAL support outlined in the PAL Administrative Field Guide[[11]](#footnote-12).

## Field-Based Experiences (FBE) Criteria:

FBE 1: The Sponsoring Organization ensures all candidates are placed in settings for pre-practicum and practicum which prepare them to become effective educators, through which candidates are exposed to a range of settings, including those with[[12]](#footnote-13):

* Access to high-quality curricular materials.
* Diversity of students (including racial, socioeconomic, linguistic diversity, and diversity of ability).
* Opportunities to integrate candidates into all components of the school community (e.g., staff meetings, professional development, family engagement opportunities).
* Anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school culture.

FBE 2: The Sponsoring Organization selects and matches Supervising Practitioners with individual candidates to ensure that all candidates’ (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) placements are appropriate and supportive by identifying Supervising Practitioners who:

* Model anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices[[13]](#footnote-14).
* Effectively support candidates of all races, identity groups, and backgrounds.
* Commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization’s expectations of the role.

FBE 3: The Sponsoring Organization supports and monitors all Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors to ensure that all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) receive robust supervision and mentorship in their licensure field, including high-quality feedback[[14]](#footnote-15) and evaluation that prepare candidates to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators.

FBE 4: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that candidates’ pre-practicum and practicum experiences cover the full academic year and are structured to build to readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

FBE 5: Performance assessments, such as the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP), are implemented consistently within and across programs to improve practice and ensure only candidates who are ready for full responsibility in the licensure role complete the program. For programs that do not use the CAP, performance assessments are regularly evaluated to ensure assessments are effective.

FBE 6: Field-based experiences meet regulatory requirements:

1. Practicum hours, including hours of full responsibility in the licensure role, meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4);
2. Placement(s) meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4); and
3. Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.02.

# The Instruction Domain

***All Sponsoring Organizations ensure that each program prepares candidates with deep content knowledge, curricular literacy, anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogical skills, and the ability to continuously reflect on their identities, biases, and practices.***The Instruction domain articulates the expectation that all candidates across educator preparation programs be prepared with deep content knowledge, curricular literacy, anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogical skills, and the capacity to continuously reflect on their identities, biases, and practices to ensure readiness for the licensure role. In order to meet these objectives, programs of study should provide all candidates with access to effective instruction in relevant subjective matter knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)); evidence-based, anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices; and curriculum literacy (see [Appendix D: Curriculum Literacy](#_Appendix_D:_Curriculum)). The criteria in the Instruction domain are differentiated to reflect these expectations and responsibilities of Teacher, Specialist Teacher, School Support Personnel, and Administrator roles. Within this domain, each program or grouping of similar programs is evaluated independently, rather than at the organization level as with the other domains. DESE reserves the authority to engage in more detailed reviews of specific programs within or across those groupings to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices.

Sponsoring Organizations should intentionally design and routinely update programs of study and their associated coursework to ensure they are designed to prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators and are aligned with current evidence-based practices. All programs should embed field-based experiences into coursework to provide candidates with opportunities to observe and apply theories in practice in the relevant school or classroom setting.

## Instruction (INS) Domain Criteria:

### Teacher Programs:

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.[[15]](#footnote-16)

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.

*For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop expert content knowledge that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the pedagogical skills (as articulated in the [Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)[[16]](#footnote-17)) to be effective educators for all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) in the licensure role.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills (as articulated in [Appendix D: Curricular Literacy](#_Appendix_D:_Curriculum)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of and skillfully use curricular materials, including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

### Specialist Teacher Programs:

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.[[17]](#footnote-18)

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.

*For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop expert content knowledge that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

INS 3: n/a

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills (as articulated in [Appendix D: Curricular Literacy](#_Appendix_D:_Curriculum)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of and skillfully use curricular materials, including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

### School Support Personnel Programs:

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.[[18]](#footnote-19)

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.

*For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop expert content knowledge that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

INS 3: n/a

INS 4: n/a

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

### Administrator Programs:

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Strengthen candidates’ commitment to and use of anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.[[19]](#footnote-20)

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role. *(Applicable only for School Business Administrator programs)*

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the leadership skills (as articulated in the [Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be effective educators for all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) in the licensure role.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates are prepared to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, support, and conditions to develop curriculum literacy (as articulated in [Appendix D: Curricular Literacy](#_Appendix_D:_Curriculum)), including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices.

# Program Approval Overview and DESE Role

Program approval refers to the processes through which Sponsoring Organizations obtain and maintain authority to operate educator preparation programs in the Commonwealth. A Sponsoring Organization *must* receive approval from DESE *before* enrolling candidates into any educator preparation program. Programs must be approved by DESE in order to endorse candidates for licensure[[20]](#footnote-21).

There are three types of reviews leading to approval for preparation programs: informal, interim, and formal. Each type of review is outlined in the chart below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Initiated by | Form of Review | Term of Approval | Purpose |
| Informal Review | Sponsoring Organization | Offsite document review only | 3 years for newly approved Sponsoring Organizations, until next formal review for new programs  | For new entities seeking to become a Sponsoring Organization or currently approved Sponsoring Organizations proposing new programs |
| Interim Review | Sponsoring Organization and/or DESE | As needed, will be articulated in writing when review is initiated | Varies by Approval Determination | For currently approved Sponsoring Organizations on an as-needed basis |
| Formal Review | DESE | Offsite document review and stakeholder engagement | Varies by Approval Determination, typically 7 years | For currently approved Sponsoring Organizations seeking continued approval at the end of current approval window |

## DESE’s Role in Review

To support Sponsoring Organizations during the review process, DESE provides technical assistance to each SO through information sessions, phone or virtual meetings, and timely responses to emailed questions or concerns. This technical assistance includes setting clear expectations and requirements for the review process, providing templates of required documents, and sharing resources to explain requirements and options for the review. These resources are adjusted routinely based on feedback from Sponsoring Organizations, external reviewers, and DESE staff. The most current resources can be found in the [program approval toolkits](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/) for formal and informal review. *(Note: The resources on these pages currently reflect the 2016 expectations and processes. They will be updated to reflect the 2023 version in the coming months.)*

In order to uphold the integrity of the process and ensure consistency and fairness across reviews, DESE provides limited feedback or advice about the content of submissions while a review process is underway. DESE may work with a contracted vendor and/or external reviewers to support the review process. Ultimately, the Commissioner maintains full discretion over all review determinations.

### Timeline and Notice of Reviews

DESE works to establish timelines that allow Sponsoring Organizations sufficient time to collect and submit evidence aligned with expectations and to plan for the logistics of an efficient review. Consistent with the criteria around continuous improvement, it is the expectation that organizations are actively engaged in monitoring their own efficacy through regular data collection and analysis. Given this, DESE reserves the right to extend approvals beyond the seven-year period in extenuating circumstances. If/when approval periods are amended, DESE will provide at least six months prior notice before initiating a new review.

# The Review Process

For all types of review, DESE has intentional processes that seek to build an evidence base on which decisions can be made. This evidence-based model values the professional judgment of carefully selected and trained reviewers and relies on the triangulation of information from multiple sources. The review process takes into consideration plans for improvement and organizational inputs but weighs evidence of impact most heavily.[[21]](#footnote-22) Tools and resources to guide the review process are available in the [program approval toolkits](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/) for formal and informal review on the DESE website. Sponsoring Organizations are always encouraged to communicate with DESE prior to initiating work associated with a review to ensure that the organization has the most up-to-date information for the specific context of the program area or review year.

The following sections provide an overview of the processes for informal, interim, and formal reviews. DESE is committed to continuous improvement and will continue to refine the review process in line with growing experience with the process and expectations.

## Informal Review

The [Informal Review process](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/informal/) allows new Sponsoring Organizations and new programs within approved Sponsoring Organizations to apply for approval outside of the formal review cycle and timeline. DESE accepts requests for informal reviews beginning February 1 through May 31 annually. DESE does not accept requests from approved Sponsoring Organizations for informal review of new programs within a two-year window leading up to a formal approval. Sponsoring Organizations designated as Approved with Distinction may put forward new programs at any time; the two-year moratorium does not apply to organizations with this designation.

The steps to submit a new organization or program for approval are:

1. **Intent.** A new Sponsoring Organization or a Sponsoring Organization seeking to offer new educator preparation program(s) must inform DESE of their intention to be reviewed by completing the Intent to Submit worksheet. The Intent to Submit worksheet asks for basic information about the program(s) the Sponsoring Organization intends to submit, including a needs assessment and information about the Sponsoring Organization’s candidate recruitment strategy.

**Needs Assessment.** Needs assessments ensure that if a Sponsoring Organization proposes a program that is outside of the DESE-determined **statewide** [**high need areas**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/informal/), the Sponsoring Organization is able to demonstrate that there is need in the licensure area based on at least one of the following:

* Local need
* Candidate interest
* Diversity in the workforce
* Impact/Effectiveness of completers (as demonstrated by organizations that are Approved with Distinction)

If the completed Intent to Submit worksheet suggests both need for the proposed educator preparation program(s) and the Sponsoring Organization’s ability to recruit candidates, the Sponsoring Organization may put forth the program(s) for informal review. If need is not confirmed, DESE will not consider the proposed program(s) for informal approval.

1. **Informal Submission.** DESE provides a list of required documents for the informal submission. Submission requirements vary depending on the context of the review, and typically include both responses to tailored worksheet prompts and the submission of program materials that demonstrate programmatic alignment with DESE expectations. The Sponsoring Organization should refer to the [program approval toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/) for informal review for specific requirements associated with an informal review submission.

1. **Notification of Approval Determination.** Based on the review of the informal submission, DESE notifies the Sponsoring Organization of its approval determination 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), informal approval is granted for a three-year period. Formal approval is granted only after the successful completion of a formal review, which typically occurs during the three-year approval period.

After the first year of operation and each subsequent year, the Sponsoring Organization must submit an annual report to DESE in accordance with [603 CMR 7.03 (4).](#_Appendix_A:_Regulations)

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.

For more information, templates, and submission worksheets, see the [program approval toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/) for informal review.

## Interim Review of Approved Programs

DESE conducts interim reviews to determine whether an approved preparation program continues to meet the standards and benchmarks set forth in [603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=03) and these Guidelines.

DESE may initiate an interim review at any point during a Sponsoring Organization’s approval period on an as-needed basis. Situations that may warrant an interim review include, though are not limited to:

* A Sponsoring Organization seeks a change in their approval determination (e.g., from Approved to Approved with Distinction).
* Statewide outcome data (see [Public Reporting](#_Public_Reporting_1) and [Annual Reporting](#_Annual_Reporting) below) that suggests concerns about novice educator readiness in specific licensure roles, subject areas, grade spans, and/or with specific populations of students.
* Downward trends in the outcomes of specific Sponsoring Organizations and/or programs.
* A Sponsoring Organization or program(s) with an at-risk or low-performing status designation.
* Significant concerns or complaints elevated to DESE by candidates, completers, supervising practitioners, PK12 partners, and/or other stakeholders about practices that are inconsistent with state expectations.

Interim reviews may be conducted for an entire Sponsoring Organization or targeted to specific expectation(s) or program(s). As such, each interim review is differentiated based on the context of the concern. Upon initiating an interim review, DESE will provide the following information in writing to the impacted Sponsoring Organization(s):

* Scope of the interim review, including:
* Targeted domains, criteria, and/or specific programs
* Rationale for the interim review, including:
* Current standing and recent review history
* Data and/or evidence that activated interim review
* Details about the process for the interim review, including:
* A timeline for key dates (e.g., evidence submission date, onsite visit dates, report date)
* Evidence collection expectations
* Role of external reviewers and/or entities, if any
* Clear criteria, benchmarks, and expectations

Following feedback and dialogue with the impacted Sponsoring Organization(s), DESE reserves the right to update and revise these details before finalizing and beginning the interim review process.

Depending on the scale and depth of concerns, interim review periods may be as brief as three months but should not exceed 18 months in duration. During the period of interim review, Sponsoring Organizations maintain the approval status they had prior to the start of the review.

For interim reviews, DESE may engage external reviewers and/or entities to support the collection and analysis of evidence. DESE is responsible for identifying, vetting, and/or training reviewers. The number, background, and responsibilities of reviewers will vary based on the needs of the review. Decisions about changes to approval status or actions to be taken following an interim review remain the sole authority of the Commissioner.

An interim review could result in any of the following:

* Feedback for improvement
* Conditions on continued approval
* Change to an approval status (e.g., Approved to Approved with Distinction)
* The addition or removal of an at-risk or low-performing status designation
* Limited or restricted candidate enrollment
* Other required actions as determined by DESE

A Sponsoring Organization may contest judgments or decisions made as a result of the interim review by submitting a rejoinder response within 30 days of receipt of the report. The rejoinder response must be submitted using a DESE-provided template to be provided upon request. DESE will review the rejoinder response and the Commissioner may modify the report and determinations solely at his/her/their discretion.

If, in the most extreme cases, an interim review results in a Not Approved determination, the Sponsoring Organization shall have all rights of review required by [G.L. c. 30A, s. 13](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter30A/Section13) and [801 CMR 1.00](https://www.mass.gov/doc/801-cmr-1-standard-adjudicatory-rules/download). 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 a hearing, the Sponsoring Organization shall bear the burden of proof and present its case first.

## Formal Review

Sponsoring Organizations with currently approved educator preparation programs nearing the end of their approval window that would like to continue operating programs are required to undergo a formal review[[22]](#footnote-23). A periodic formal review ensures educator preparation programs’ continued growth and effectiveness beyond their initial approval. Sponsoring Organizations undergoing formal review are grouped by cohort in accordance with their review cycle.

DESE’s goal is to implement a formal review process that is effective, efficient, consistent, and equity-driven. The process is designed to recognize Sponsoring Organizations’ varied contexts and structures, elevate stakeholder perspectives, gather a comprehensive evidence base for decision-making, and drive toward increasingly positive experiences and outcomes for all preparation candidates and the PK-12 students they impact as educators.

The formal review is a multi-step process characterized by four main stages: Launch, Initial Inquiry, Follow-Up Inquiry, and Determination. Over the course of these stages, each Sponsoring Organization has multiple opportunities to tell its story – providing initial evidence as well as follow-up examples and context. Each formal review is led by a team consisting of a minimum of one DESE staff member and a group of external reviewers from both educator preparation and PK-12 schools/districts.

The table below outlines the high-level steps included in each stage of the process. Additional details about each step and supporting resources for organizations undergoing review are available within [the program approval toolkit for Formal review](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/toolkit/). Between cohorts, DESE takes necessary pauses for self-reflection and equity, solicits feedback, and makes shifts to the formal review toolkit as needed to ensure that the formal review process is effective, efficient, consistent, and equity-driven. *(Please note, the resources on this webpage are not yet reflective of the 2023 Guidelines. They will be updated prior to the launch of reviews).*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Stage | Step | Timing[[23]](#footnote-24) | Description of Activities |
| Launch | Initiation | One year before launch | Sponsoring Organizations whose programs are nearing the end of their approval period are contacted by DESE and notified of the need for a formal review[[24]](#footnote-25). This communication formally launches the review and includes a timeline and overview of the process. |
| Launch | Review Cohort Launch Session |  Month 1 | DESE hosts a full-day launch session for all Sponsoring Organizations undergoing review. The session provides a more detailed overview of the review process, timeline, evidence sources, and guidance for the initial submission materials. |
| Launch | Launch Worksheet | Month 1 (two weeks to complete) | The Sponsoring Organization completes a brief worksheet to provide foundational context about its programs, which enables DESE to adjust surveys, focus groups, and interviews based on the organization’s unique structure. **Existing Programs Under Review.** DESE provides the Sponsoring Organization with a list of programs with a low number of completers over the three years preceding review. The Sponsoring Organization may complete a Needs Assessment for these licensure programs to confirm there is need and the Sponsoring Organization has the capacity to fill that need, despite low enrollment in recent years. If the Sponsoring Organization chooses not to complete a Needs Assessment or if insufficient need or capacity is demonstrated for any of these programs, DESE expires them at the conclusion of the formal review, with the exception of programs identified as “high-needs” by DESE (these programs are eligible to continue to operate with an affidavit). **Proposed New Programs.** The Sponsoring Organization can decide to put forward new programs at this time. Sponsoring Organizations must complete a Needs Assessment for all new programs, with the exception of those identified as “high-needs” by DESE. Only programs for which need is demonstrated are considered for approval. |
| Launch | Support Call | Month 2  | DESE leads a call with the Sponsoring Organization to discuss details in the launch worksheet, including results of the Needs Assessment, and provides support for the upcoming Program Overview and Candidate Artifacts submission. |
| Launch | Program Overview and Artifacts Submission | Months 2-5 (four months to complete) | The Sponsoring Organization compiles candidate artifacts and completes a worksheet providing high-level information for each domain and each program grouping within the Instruction domain. This information is used to orient the review team to the organization’s approach to educator preparation prior to speaking with stakeholders. |
| Initial Inquiry  | Support Call |  Month 3 | DESE provides written guidance outlining the next stage of the review and leads a call to confirm understanding of key requirements and logistics for surveys, focus groups, and interviews. |
| Initial Inquiry  | Survey Completion/ Focus Group and Interview Recruitment | Months 3-6 (four months to complete) | DESE shares survey links with the Sponsoring Organization for distribution to each relevant stakeholder group.The Sponsoring Organization recruits relevant internal and external stakeholders to complete surveys and sign up to participate in scheduled focus groups. Surveys and focus groups are distinct steps in the review process and are not duplicative of each other. All stakeholders from the most recent three years should be encouraged to participate in both aspects, as focus groups are designed to build off and further explore survey results. |
| Initial Inquiry  | Stakeholder Engagement (Welcome Meeting, Leadership Interview, and Focus Groups)  | Month 7 | Stakeholder engagement is conducted over the course of one week and is scheduled in collaboration with the Sponsoring Organization based on stakeholder availability. The week includes a welcome meeting, interview with educator preparation leadership, and focus groups with internal and external stakeholders. The week may also include onsite course observations for some or all program groupings. Focus groups and interviews are typically hosted in a virtual format to support accessibility and increased participation, though in-person focus groups may occur when specific context makes them preferable.  |
| Follow-Up Inquiry  | Support Call | Month 8 | DESE provides written guidance outlining the Follow-Up Inquiry stage and leads a call to preview the Sponsoring Organization’s Targeted Submission worksheets. |
| Follow-Up Inquiry  | Targeted Submission | Months 8-12 (five months to complete) | The Sponsoring Organization completes Targeted Submission worksheets for each domain. Prompts within each worksheet are determined based on evidence gathered in prior stages of the review and provide the Sponsoring Organization the opportunity to elevate strengths that could lead to a commendation and address gaps and/or inconsistencies in the evidence already collected. Organizations review summaries of key evidence collected during the Launch and Initial Inquiry stages and respond with additional examples, data, and context.  |
| Determination | Reviewer Work Time | Months 13-15 | DESE works with the review team and engages in calibration and equity pauses to [determine criterion and domain ratings](#_Decision-Making). DESE drafts a written report summarizing these decisions. An internal DESE team vets the content to ensure decisions are evidence-based and consistent across organizations. |
| Determination | Factual Accuracy Report Shared | Month 17 | DESE shares a Factual Accuracy draft report with the Sponsoring Organization, outlining the criterion- and domain-level ratings and the key evidence on which those decisions were made. |
| Determination | Factual Accuracy Response | 10 business days to complete from receipt of report | Upon receiving the draft, the Sponsoring Organization reviews the document for factual errors. Given the substantive nature of the review and calibration checkpoints built into the process, organizations may submit corrections to factual mistakes in the report but may not refute conclusions or judgments made by the review team at this time. DESE reviews the response carefully and amends the report as deemed appropriate. |
| Determination | Notification of Approval Determination | 30 days after receipt of factual accuracy response  | DESE notifies the Sponsoring Organization of its [approval determination](#_Approval_Determinations), including any program-specific approval determinations, in writing. If the Sponsoring Organization receives an approval determination of Approved with Conditions or Probationary Approval, the review designee works with DESE to determine timelines and next steps in response to findings requiring action.  |
| Determination | Rejoinder Response and Hearing Requests | Within 30 days of receipt of approval determination | Any Sponsoring Organization 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 DESE’s provided template. DESE reviews the rejoinder response and the Commissioner may modify the report and determinations solely at his/her discretion. Upon receiving a notice of an approval determination of Not Approved, the Sponsoring Organization shall have all rights of review required by [G.L. c. 30A,s. 13](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter30A/Section13) and [801 CMR 1.00](https://www.mass.gov/regulations/801-CMR-100-standard-adjudicatory-rules-of-practice-and-procedure). 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 Sponsoring Organization shall bear the burden of proof and present its case first. |
| Determination | Approval Determination Updated on Profiles | 60 days after notification of approval determination | DESE publishes the Sponsoring Organization’s approval determination on Public Profiles. |

### Decision-Making

For each formal review, DESE works with a team of external reviewers to triangulate all available evidence carefully and to make ratings that are calibrated within the team. An internal DESE vetting panel reviews all ratings recommended by the external review team and has the authority to change ratings recommended by the review team to ensure they are grounded in evidence, aligned with regulatory requirements, and set consistent expectations across reviews. There are various levels of decision-making that occur, with each level informing the next:

1. **Criterion Ratings:** DESE and the external review team first analyze all evidence collected from each phase of the formal review process at the criterion-level to inform criterion ratings. The criteria are the focus of evidence collection throughout the review and will be the level at which most specific feedback is shared back to Sponsoring Organizations in the formal review report.
2. **Domain Ratings:** DESE and the external review team then consider all criteria within each domain to inform each domain rating.
3. **Approval Determinations:** Finally, DESE uses the domain ratings to determine the Sponsoring Organization’s Approval Determination.

#### Criterion Ratings

When making criterion rating recommendations, DESE and the review team consider all evidence submitted by a Sponsoring Organization or collected by DESE holistically, and weigh evidence of impact more heavily than descriptions of or plans for inputs. To allow Sponsoring Organizations sufficient time to collect evidence of impact relative to the revised 2023 Program Approval Criteria, DESE has amended criterion ratings for formal reviews through the 2026-2027 academic year as described below.

The review team, under the guidance of DESE, analyzes the evidence for each criterion to inform applicable criterion ratings, and must work towards agreement for each rating of met, finding, and/or commendation cited in the report. Rating recommendations result in one of the following for each criterion:

* *Commendation*: Evidence, including clear evidence of positive impact, indicates exceptional, innovative practices that exceed the expectations set in the Program Approval Criteria.
* *Met:* Evidence sufficiently demonstrates that the Sponsoring Organization is meeting expectations as described.
	+ *Provisionally Met:* This rating is available for use through the 2026-2027 academic year (review cohorts A – B) in acknowledgment of the time needed for Sponsoring Organizations to implement policies, practices, or systems designed to meet new expectations described in the 2023 Program Approval Criteria. Evidence (including, but not limited to, the data and/or process used to inform these changes) should suggest the Sponsoring Organization is on track to demonstrate positive impact by the 2026-2027 academic year.
* *Finding*: Evidence indicates areas of concern or inconsistencies that require action for the Sponsoring Organization to meet expectations.

In addition, the review team may append Professional Suggestions to any criterion or domain, independent of the rating awarded. Professional Suggestions serve as recommendations for continuous improvement based on the knowledge and experience of the review team. They do not require a response.

DESE differentiates findings into one of two categories: conditional findings and non-conditional findings. Although all findings require action, DESE may determine that there are some findings, above others, that require immediate and significant action as they are directly related to major concerns identified through the review. More specifically:

* **Conditional findings**: Conditional findings correspond to criteria where evidence indicates areas of concern that impact candidates’ experiences or outcomes, inconsistent or concerning evidence of impact, and significant areas that must be addressed for the Sponsoring Organization to be found to meet all state standards. A conditional finding results in an [approval determination](#_Approval_Determinations) of Approved with Conditions, Probationary Approval, or Not Approved for the Sponsoring Organization or, in some cases, for individual programs/program groupings. By addressing concerns outlined in conditional findings, the Sponsoring Organization is likely to see improvement in key areas, giving DESE the assurances needed to grant a Sponsoring Organization full formal approval. Conditional findings may exist across all programs and/or for individual programs/program groupings.
* **Non-Conditional findings**: Non-conditional findings are still crucial for effective and/or equitable preparation, but, within the context of the review, are smaller in scale and scope and are not having a significant negative impact on the quality of candidates’ preparation or experiences.

When a Sponsoring Organization has one or more conditional findings, DESE works with the individual Sponsoring Organization to address findings resulting from the formal review. The timeline and actions associated with conditional findings are determined on a case-by-case basis specific to the overall approval designation and improvement plan.

#### Domain Ratings

Once the review team has rated all criteria in each domain, the team will make an overall domain rating recommendation weighing the cumulative impact and significance of the criterion ratings within that domain. Each domain receives one of the following ratings:

* *Exemplary*: The Exemplary level represents the highest level of performance. It exceeds the already high standard of Proficient. A rating of Exemplary is reserved for performance on a domain of such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the organization, state, or nation.
* *Proficient*: Proficient is the expected, rigorous level of performance for Sponsoring Organizations. It is a demanding but attainable level of performance.
* *Needs Improvement*: Sponsoring Organizations whose performance on a domain is rated as Needs Improvement may demonstrate inconsistencies in implementation or weaknesses in a few key areas that negatively impact candidate experiences and outcomes. They may not yet have fully developed systems to provide preparation in an effective and equitable way.
* *Unsatisfactory*: Sponsoring Organizations whose performance on a domain is rated as Unsatisfactory are significantly underperforming as compared to expectations.

# Approval Determinations

Each review results in an approval determination. There are five potential approval determinations associated with the outcomes of a review. These levels of approval differentiate performance within the Commonwealth following a robust, comprehensive evaluation. The approval determinations are:

* Approved with Distinction
* Approved
* Approved with Conditions
* Probationary Approval
* Not Approved

An approval determination reflects the cumulative impact of judgments made throughout the review and are meant to signal to a Sponsoring Organization and external stakeholders the overall results of the evidence-based review and the general status of preparation within an organization. A Sponsoring Organization’s approval determination is typically granted to the organization overall. However, DESE maintains the authority to identify a separate approval status for individual programs within the organization. Regardless of the approval determination, DESE will continue to monitor individual program and provider efficacy and reserves the right to revisit conditions or engage in an interim review.

Each approval determination has specific implications pertaining to the conditions of approval being granted. Details of each are outlined below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Determination |  Definition and Indicators | Implications |
| Approved with Distinction | Approved with Distinction is the highest level of approval. A Sponsoring Organization granted approval with distinction has formal review domain and criteria ratings that have exceeded the already high bar for approval, demonstrating exemplary performance and compelling evidence of impact. The Sponsoring Organization is operating at such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the state or nation. | * Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits
* Full term of approval (estimated to be 7 years), unless program ceases to meet requirements or DESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards
* Sponsoring Organization is granted additional autonomy in making substantial program changes
* Sponsoring Organization may submit new programs for informal review at any time following review; the two-year moratorium does not apply
* Should opportunities arise, Sponsoring Organizations that are approved with distinction will be afforded preference in DESE-funded initiatives
 |
| Approved | A Sponsoring Organization or program that has been granted full approval is recognized by the state to have met state standards for preparing effective educators in Massachusetts. An approved determination signals that candidates are well-served by this organization, findings do not significantly impact candidate preparation, and they receive a high-quality preparation experience. | * Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits
* Full term of approval (estimated to be 7 years), unless program ceases to meet requirements or DESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards
 |
| 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 substantial findings in a report.Conditional approval signals areas of concern or inconsistencies that negatively impact candidates’ experiences and significant areas that must be addressed in order for the Sponsoring Organization to be found to meet all state standards. PK-12 students, however, may not be at risk of receiving an ineffective education as a result of these findings. | * Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure
* Candidates may not enjoy full reciprocity benefits outside of Massachusetts
* Full term of approval (estimated to be 7 years), unless program ceases to meet requirements or DESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards
* DESE will impose conditions specific to the organization and will describe the timeline to meet those conditions
* Approval status and improvement plan must be publicly posted on Sponsoring Organization’s website
 |
| Probationary Approval | A Sponsoring Organization or program that is granted probationary approval has insufficiently met state standards.Probationary approval signals that candidates’ experience in the program and/or completer efficacy is not consistently assured to be high-quality, significant areas that must be addressed in order for the Sponsoring Organization to be found to meet state standards, and preparation is placing PK-12 students at risk of receiving an ineffective education. | * Program is authorized to endorse candidates for licensure; enrollment may be restricted
* Completers may not enjoy full reciprocity benefits outside of Massachusetts
* 3-year term of approval, unless program ceases to meet requirements or DESE finds insufficient evidence of meeting standards or program is also designated “low performing”
* DESE will impose conditions specific to the organization and will describe the timeline to meet those conditions
* Status designation as At-Risk or Low Performing
* Approval status and improvement plan must be publicly posted on Sponsoring Organization’s website
 |
| Not Approved | A Sponsoring Organization or program that is determined to be not approved has not met state standards. Not Approved denotes deep and substantial findings and significant deficiencies relative to state standards. The Sponsoring Organization is lacking compelling evidence of impact relative to effectively preparing candidates for the licensure role. DESE has evidence that PK-12 students taught by program completers are/will be at risk of an ineffective education.New Sponsoring Organizations or programs submitted through informal review may not be approved if evidence indicates the program(s) will not meet DESE expectations. Sponsoring Organizations will have the option to resubmit for informal approval within a timeline determined by DESE.  | * Sponsoring Organizations are not allowed to recruit, prepare, or endorse candidates for licensure
* DESE will work with individual Sponsoring Organizations to develop a teach-out plan for affected program areas and hold candidates harmless to the extent possible
 |

# Low Performing and At-Risk Status Designations

As required by Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA), each state must determine the criteria for assessing educator preparation programs and identifying educator preparation programs that are Low Performing or At-Risk of Becoming Low Performing.

Status designations are associated with Probationary Approval. If following a formal or interim review an approved Sponsoring Organization fails to meet the requirements and benchmarks set forth in the Program Approval Standards, and receives Probationary Approval, it shall receive a designation of at-risk or low performing. An at-risk designation results in a three-year term of approval within which the Sponsoring Organization must demonstrate improvement; a low performing designation results in a one-year term of approval. Following such a designation, the Sponsoring Organization shall submit an improvement plan to DESE that addresses the criteria, domain(s), and/or program(s) contributing to the designation of at-risk or low performing within the approval period. The Department will monitor the Sponsoring Organization’s progress in meeting the goals of the improvement plan. If, after three years under an at-risk determination, the Sponsoring Organization has not made satisfactory progress, DESE may shift its designation to low performing. If, after one year under a low performing designation, the Sponsoring Organization has not made satisfactory progress, its approval may be revoked, in accordance with [G.L. c. 30A,s. 13](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleIII/Chapter30A/Section13). The burden of improvement rests solely with the Sponsoring Organization.

Any Sponsoring Organization with a status designation of at-risk or low performing may contest the designation by submitting a rejoinder response within 15 days of notification of the status designation. The rejoinder response must be submitted using the DESE-provided template. DESE will review the rejoinder response, and the Commissioner may modify the status designation solely at their discretion.

## Communication Concerning a Low Performing Designation with Stakeholders

Given the heightened stakes around a low performing designation, there are several considerations to be aware of in terms of communicating the designation as well as its potential impact on candidates.

### Sponsoring Organization Communication

The Sponsoring Organization must communicate a low performing designation with all stakeholders, including current and prospective candidates. The purpose of these communications is to ensure all stakeholders are informed that the Sponsoring Organization’s authority to endorse candidates for licensure beyond the approval date is in jeopardy. Notification must occur within 15 days of the conferred status. This includes:

* Written documentation to all currently enrolled candidates
* Updated website/marketing materials available to prospective candidates
* Written documentation to all faculty/instructors and Program Supervisors
* The term “low performing” must be present in the communication.
* The communication must make clear that the Sponsoring Organization’s authority to endorse candidates for licensure beyond the current approval date is in jeopardy.
* The Sponsoring Organization should indicate that DESE will engage in ongoing monitoring during the upcoming academic year and that candidates, faculty, and supervisors may be subject to participation in the Department’s efforts to assess progress.
* The Sponsoring Organization should communicate the low performing designation to any other stakeholder or entity potentially affected by the status. For example, the Sponsoring Organization should not enter into or renew a formal partnership agreement with a school/district without fully disclosing the designation.

The Sponsoring Organization must provide DESE with copies of communications sent to stakeholders as well as verification that the website and all other associated informational materials have been updated accordingly.  Evidence of communication should be submitted with or before the Improvement Plan. The Sponsoring Organization may use language from the approval letter, Final Report, these Guidelines, and/or regulations to communicate the designation status.

Note: Should a challenge of the low performing designation extend beyond the current date of expiration for programs, the Sponsoring Organization must publicly post and communicate with candidates (current and prospective) that approval of programs leading to licensure are pending re-approval by DESE.

### DESE Communication

DESE will communicate the low performing designation as required by state and federal requirements. In DESE’s communication of the designation:

* DESE will publicly post the low performing designation on [a Sponsoring Organization’s public profile](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238) three days after notifying the Sponsoring Organization of the status.
* DESE does not publicly post the formal review Report provided to the SO; it is, however, considered a public document and is subject to release in accordance with the Public Records Law to interested parties upon request. DESE will notify the Sponsoring Organization if such requests are made.
* DESE will share the designation and accompanying documents with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, colleagues in the Department of Higher Education, and the Executive Office of Education, as deemed appropriate.
* The designation will be shared, along with the outcomes of other Formal Reviews, in the annual Formal Review Summary report.
* DESE reserves the right, as deemed necessary, to communicate directly with schools/districts significantly impacted by the provider’s low performing designation.
* As required under Title II of the Higher Education Act, DESE will report the low performing designation in the state’s annual report due October 30th of each year. State reports typically post to the federal Title II website: <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx> around December.
* If contacted by individual candidates, prospective candidates, faculty, or partners of the SO, DESE will use language from the approval letter, these Guidelines, and/or regulations in order to communicate the designation status.

## Impact on Current & Future Candidates

A low performing designation indicates that there are serious concerns about the quality of preparation being provided to candidates within an organization. Providers with deficiencies that warrant the low performing designation threaten to undermine the quality of instruction and leadership in Massachusetts schools and therefore put student learning at risk. It is because of this that DESE requires deliberate and swift action to be taken in cases where the low performing designation is conferred.

It is important to note that a Sponsoring Organization’s low performing status is a reflection on the quality of preparation provided by the organization, not necessarily the skills and abilities of individual educators enrolled in or previously endorsed through the program.

Ultimately, DESE hopes the most significant impact of the low performing designation on current or future candidates will be the dramatically improved quality of preparation provided by the Sponsoring Organization.

A low performing designation may not interfere with a provider’s ability to enroll or endorse candidates for licensure programs. Additionally, there are no current state or federal regulatory implications for the funding or certification of candidates enrolled in the program. Under the federal Higher Education Act, Section 207 and 208, funding eligibility for a Sponsoring Organization is only impacted if the state revokes approval:

(b) TERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY – Any institution of higher education that offers a program of teacher preparation in which the State has withdrawn the State’s approval or terminated the State’s financial support due to the low performance of the institution’s teacher preparation program based upon the State assessment described in subsection (a)—

(1) shall be ineligible for any funding for professional development activities awarded by the Department of Education; and

(2) shall not be permitted to accept or enroll any student that receives aid under title IV of this Act in the institution’s teacher preparation program. 3

In the event that a Sponsoring Organization’s approval is ultimately revoked, DESE will work with the Sponsoring Organization on closure procedures that, to the extent possible, hold candidates harmless. In previous situations, where concerns about the quality of preparation were minimal or the quantity of affected candidates small, DESE has afforded providers the opportunity to “teach out” the remaining cohort of candidates. Teach-out plans rarely extend beyond one year from the date of expiration. Provisions of closure for individual Sponsoring Organizations, if approval is revoked, will be determined at that point in time. Given this, a Sponsoring Organization cannot assure candidate endorsement beyond the current approval date.

If candidates wish to transfer to other providers in the state, the extent to which other providers choose to waive or accept credits/coursework from the low performing programs is at the sole discretion of individual Sponsoring Organizations.

# Annual Reporting

All Sponsoring Organizations with approved educator preparation programs are required to complete an annual submission of the State Annual Report (SAR) ([603 CMR 7.03 (4)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=03)). The period for each annual report mirrors the federal reporting year under Title II of the Higher Education Act: September 1 through August 31 of the year preceding the report (Example: SAR/Title II reporting year 2023 = program year 2021-22).

In addition, Sponsoring Organizations who offer educator preparation programs that lead to a candidate’s first Initial teaching license are required to submit data for Title II HEA federal reporting requirements. Title II Reporting Requirements, technical assistance information, and previously submitted State Reports can be found on the [Title II Higher Education Act website](https://title2.ed.gov/). As of 2023, Sponsoring Organizations will submit Federal Title II HEA data using the USDE required reporting system.

Reporting requirements may change as required by state and federal regulations. DESE uses Sponsoring Organization data submitted through Early ID/ELAR for SAR/Title II reporting and [Public Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/). As a result, Sponsoring Organizations need to provide accurate and timely data to DESE using the Early ID/ELAR system.

In addition to candidate enrollment and completion data, Sponsoring Organizations are required to submit the following information as part of the State Annual Report:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Data Category | Specific Data Collected |
| Substantial Changes to Program | Substantial Changes to courses or seminars, field-based experiences requirements, personnel, or any other significant changes in the substance of the program. |
| Candidate Data | 1. Number and list of candidates enrolled
2. Number and list of candidates completing all coursework, except the practicum/practicum equivalent
3. Number and list of program completers
4. Demographics:
	1. Race
	2. Ethnicity
	3. Gender
 |
| Faculty Data | 1. Number of full-time equivalents
2. Number of part-time equivalents
3. Demographics:
	1. Race
	2. Ethnicity
	3. Gender
 |
| Continuous Improvement Activities | 1. List of what data is being collected on a regular basis, including but not limited to stakeholder feedback, state collected data, and evidence of completers’ and partnerships’ positive impact on PK-12 student outcomes
2. Actions that have been taken in response to this data.
 |
| Annual Goals and Attainment | Prior year goals, progress on prior year goals, and current year goals |
| Program with Zero Completers | 1. Reasons for zero program completers
2. Plans for increasing enrollment and number of program completers
 |
| Types of District Partnerships and Collaborations | List of partner districts, description of the partnership(s) |
| Update on Review Findings | Provide a brief summary of progress made in relation to the findings issued as a result of the last formal/interim review.  |

# Public Reporting

DESE publicly reports educator preparation data in [Public Profiles](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238) on DESE’s website.

Much of the data collected in Early ID/ELAR and through the State Annual Report and Federal Title II HEA reporting are published on the DESE website. Additionally, DESE links data provided by Sponsoring Organization to employment and performance data associated with completers who are employed in Massachusetts public schools. In this way, many reporting requirements focus on the impact of preparation programs. Such data include:

* Assessment data including MTEL pass rates
* Employment and retention rates
* Educator evaluation data
* Surveys of stakeholders such as recent completers, recent completers after one year of employment, Supervising Practitioners, and PK-12 hiring principals as to whether the program provided completers with the necessary knowledge and skills for success in the licensure role

All data are reported in the aggregate when the threshold of six or more has been met, including data at both the program and organizational level. Sponsoring Organizations have access to the data prior to publication via the [Edwin Analytics](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/improvement/edwin/) reports. Outcome measures published on the Profiles are considered one source of evidence in the evaluation of programs in formal, informal, and interim reviews.

DESE publishes data on its website for each Sponsoring Organization and approved educator preparation program including, but not limited to, the following information ([603 CMR 7.03(5)):](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=03)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Regulations | Online Profiles Elements | Source of Data |
| Sponsoring Organization general information | * Mission/vision statement
* Contact information
* Organization type
 | Provided by SO in DA (ongoing updates) |
| Candidate data (program level) | * Total enrollment
* Number of non-practicum completers
* Number of program completers
* Enrollment by gender
* Enrollment by race/ethnicity
 | Provided by SO in ELAR  |
| Faculty and staff data (org level) | * Full-time and part-time faculty
* Faculty gender
* Faculty by race/ethnicity
 | Provided by SO (annually collected in SAR data collection) |
| District partnerships and collaborations (org level) | * List of partner districts
* Description of partnerships
 | Provided by SO in DA (ongoing updates) |
| Annual goals and attainment (org level) | * Prior year goals
* Progress on goals
* Current year goals
 | Provided by SO (annually collected in SAR data collection) |
| List of approved programs  | * Programs offered
* Approval determination
 | DESE |
| Admission requirements for approved programs | * Admissions requirements
 | Provided by SO (annually collected in Title II data collection) |
| Manner of exit from the approved program and persistence rates | * Percent of enrolled candidates that complete a program
* Percent of enrolled candidates that are exited from a program and the top three reasons for exit
 | Calculations by DESE based on data provided by SO in ELAR  |
| MTEL: Single assessment and aggregate pass rates | * All candidates pass rate
* Pass rate by assessment
 | Calculations by MTEL Vendor based on data provided by SO  |
| MTEL: Summary pass rates at the point of enrollment, non-practicum completion, program completion | * Pass rate at enrollment – all assessments
* Pass rate at non-practicum completion – all assessments
* Pass rate at program completion – all assessments
 | Calculations by MTEL Vendor based on data provided by SO |
| State administered survey data | * Response rate and responses by question for stakeholder groups such as:
* Recent completers
* First year employed completers
* PK-12 hiring employers
* Supervising Practitioners
 | DESE |
| Aggregate employment data | * Percent employed in a MA public school
* Percent remaining employed for at least 2 years
 | Calculations by DESE based on data provided by SO in ELAR and districts in EPIMS |
| Aggregate evaluation ratings | * Percent by summative rating
 | Calculations by DESE based on data provided by SO in ELAR and districts in EPIMS |

# National Accreditation & State Program Approval

National Accreditation is not required in Massachusetts. Massachusetts does not have any partnerships with national accrediting bodies for educator preparation. In December 2018, based on collaborative discussions with preparation programs and the Department of Higher Education, Massachusetts ended its partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Sponsoring Organizations[[25]](#footnote-26) that wish to seek national accreditation may do so but will still need to undergo state review and approval to operate as an approved preparation program in Massachusetts.

# Appendix A: Regulations Governing Program Approval

# 603 CMR 7.00Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval RegulationsMost Recently Amended by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: June 28, 2022

[**7.03: Educator Preparation Program Approval**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=03)

(1) Program Approval. The Department shall issue Guidelines for Program Approval to be used in reviewing programs seeking state approval. The Guidelines for Program Approval will include detailed effectiveness indicators for each program approval standard set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (2).

1. (a) Candidates may qualify for licensure through successful completion of an approved preparation program leading to the license sought, providing they meet all other requirements. Individuals who complete approved preparation programs may be eligible for licensure reciprocity with other states that are parties to the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement.
2. (b) 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 programs of study for them. Granting such waivers is the official responsibility of the sponsoring organization. Records of candidates for whom coursework or other program requirements have been waived must be available during onsite review.
3. (c) A sponsoring organization that has received approval of one or more of its preparation programs shall endorse candidates who complete the approved preparation program.
4. (d) A sponsoring organization seeking approval of its preparation program(s) shall invite the Department to review them. The sponsoring organization shall provide written evidence in accordance with the Guidelines for Program Approval, demonstrating that it satisfies the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (1) through (4) for each program for which approval is sought. The Department shall review the written information for each proposed program and verify it through an onsite review at the sponsoring organization. The Department shall use the same standards in reviewing all programs and sponsoring organizations for approval.
5. (e) Program approval will be for a period of seven years, unless the program ceases to meet the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (2) through (4) and in accordance with the Guidelines for Program Approval.
6. (f) During the seven-year approval period a sponsoring organization that seeks approval of a new program may ask the Department for an informal review of that program. Sponsoring organizations seeking approval for the first time may also request an informal review. If the review is favorable, individual candidates who complete the program will be deemed to have met the requirements for licensure in Massachusetts, providing they meet all other requirements. Approval of the program will be considered at the time of the next seven-year program review.

(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.

1. (a) Continuous Improvement: Demonstrate continuous improvement by conducting an annual evaluation to assess program compliance, effectiveness, and impact using an evidence-based system that includes the analysis of state available data.
2. (b) Collaboration and Program Impact: Collaborate with school districts to ensure positive impact in meeting the needs of the districts.
3. (c) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.
4. (d) Subject Matter Knowledge:
	1. Initial License — Subject Matter Knowledge: Demonstrate 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: Demonstrate 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.
5. (e) Professional Standards for Teachers:
	1. Initial License — Professional Standards for Teachers: Demonstrate 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: Demonstrate that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Teachers at the level of a professionally licensed teacher.
6. (f) Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership: Demonstrate that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership at the level of an initially licensed administrator.
7. (g) Educator Effectiveness: Demonstrate effectiveness of program completers using 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.

(3) Preparation.

1. (a) Initial License. All sponsoring organizations with approved programs leading to the Initial license shall provide preparation that addresses requirements for the license, in accordance with the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines and the Guidelines for Program Approval
2. (b) Professional License. Sponsoring organizations with approved preparation programs leading to the Professional license shall provide preparation that satisfies the requirements for the license, in accordance with the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines and the Guidelines for Program Approval.
3. (c) Assistive and Alternative Technologies. All sponsoring organizations with approved programs leading to licenses for teachers of students with moderate disabilities or teachers of students with severe disabilities shall include in such programs instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies.

(4) Annual Reporting. All sponsoring organizations shall submit to the Department an annual report that includes the following information for each approved preparation program, in a form prescribed by the Department:

1. (a) Substantial changes to a program
2. (b) Candidate data:
	1. Number and list of candidates enrolled.
	2. Number and list of candidates completing all coursework, except the practicum/practicum equivalent.
	3. Number and list of program completers.
	4. Demographics:
		1. Race
		2. Ethnicity
		3. Gender
3. (c) Faculty and Staff data:
	1. Number of full-time equivalent
	2. Number of part-time equivalent
	3. Demographics:
		1. Race
		2. Ethnicity
		3. Gender
4. (d) Annual Goals and Attainment
5. (e) Program with Zero Program Completers:
	1. Reasons for zero program completers
	2. Plans for increasing enrollment and number of program completers.
6. (f) Types of District Partnerships and Collaborations.

(5) Public Reporting. The Department shall publish an annual report including, but not limited to the following information for each sponsoring organization and approved preparation programs:

1. (a) Sponsoring Organization General Information
2. (b) Candidate Data
3. (c) Faculty and Staff Data
4. (d) District Partnerships and Collaborations
5. (e) Annual Goals and Attainment
6. (f) List of Approved Programs and Program of Study
7. (g) Admission Requirements for Approved Programs
8. (h) Manner of Exit from the Approved Program and Persistence Rates
9. (i) MTEL Pass Rates:
	1. Single assessment and aggregate pass rates on licensing tests or assessments as required by 603 CMR 7.00.
	2. Summary pass rates on licensing tests or assessments as required by 603 CMR 7.00 at the point of: enrollment, completion of all coursework but the practicum/practicum equivalent, and program completion.
10. (j) State Administered Survey Data from:
	1. Candidates enrolled in an approved program.
	2. Candidates who have completed all coursework, but the practicum/practicum equivalent.
	3. Program completers
	4. District personnel
11. (k) Aggregate Employment Data of Program Completers employed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
12. (l) Aggregate Evaluation Ratings of Program Completers

(6) Revoking Approval.

1. (a) The Department may conduct an interim review of an approved preparation program on an as-needed basis to corroborate and augment the information provided by an approved preparation program pursuant to 603 CMR 7.03 (4), or during the seven-year cycle review.
2. (b) Following the interim review, if the approved preparation program fails to meet the requirements and benchmarks set forth in 7.03 (2) and (3) and the Guidelines for Program Approval, it shall receive a designation of low performing.
3. (c) The sponsoring organization shall submit an improvement plan to the Department for any of its programs that receive the designation of low performing. The Department will monitor progress in meeting the goals of the improvement plan. If, after one year under review, a program has not made satisfactory progress, its approval may be revoked. The Commissioner may extend the review for a second year if additional data must be collected, e.g., for small programs with enrollment of less than ten.
4. (d) The Commissioner will make the final determination regarding revocation of state approval.

(7) Restoring Approval.

1. (a) A sponsoring organization must wait two years after approval of an educator preparation program has been revoked before it can apply to the Department to restore approval. The sponsoring organization shall submit written documentation of how it will address the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (2) through (4).
2. (b) The Department will review the written documentation to determine whether the organization and its program(s) satisfy all of the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (2) through (4). Programs that demonstrate that they satisfy the requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3) will be allowed to recruit students.

(8) Implementation

1. (a) Approved programs leading to licenses set forth in 603 CMR 7.04 will be required to implement new subject matter knowledge in accordance with the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines within 18 months of issuance of the new or updated Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines.
2. (b) Approved programs leading to licenses set forth in 603 CMR 7.04 (3)(a) 1., 3., 6., 7., 9., 14., 22., 23., (b) 1., (c) 2. and (d) 1., will be required to implement the new license names, levels and license type requirements by July 1, 2019.

Regulatory Authority:
M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B; c. 69, §§ 1J and 1K, as amended by St. 2010; c. 12, § 3; c. 71, §§ 38G, 38G ½; c. 71A, § 10; c. 76, § 19.

# Appendix B: Program Approval Standards and Domain Crosswalk

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Domain**  | **Program Approval Standards (603 CMR 7.04)**  |
| **Organization**   | Standard (C) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.   |
| **Partnerships**   | Standard (B) Collaboration and Program Impact: Collaborate with school districts to ensure positive impact in meeting the needs of the districts.  |
| **Continuous Improvement**  | Standard (A) Continuous Improvement Conduct an annual evaluation to assess program compliance, effectiveness, and impact using a data driven system to ensure continuous improvement.  |
| Standard (G) Educator Effectiveness  Analyze and use: aggregate evaluation rating 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.  |
| **Candidate**   | Standard (C) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.   |
| Standard (D) Subject Matter Knowledge **Initial License** - Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK): 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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=06), at the level of an initially licensed educator.  |
| **Field-Based Experiences**   | Standard (C) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.   |
| **Instruction**   | Standard (C) Capacity: Create, deliver and sustain effective preparation programs.   |
| Standard (D) Subject Matter Knowledge **Initial License** - Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK): 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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=06), at the level of an initially licensed educator **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](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=07) at the level of a professionally licensed educator.  |
|
| Standard (E) Professional Standards for Teachers **Initial License** – Professional Standards for Teachers: Ensure that program completers have been assessed and mastered the Professional Standards for Teachers, [603 CMR 7.08](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=08) at the level of an initially licensed teacher. **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.  |
| Standard (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.  |
| Standard (G) Educator Effectiveness:  Analyze and use: aggregate evaluation rating 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.  |

# Appendix C: Program Approval Criteria

**The Organization: The Sponsoring Organization is committed to achieving equitable outcomes for candidates and PK-12 students and has systems and structures in place to realize those outcomes.**

ORG 1: The Sponsoring Organization has the capacity and authority to make strategic decisions that sustain effective and equitable preparation programs.

ORG 2: The Sponsoring Organization’s budget allocation is strategic and data-informed, with a focus on sustainable and equitable program experiences and candidate outcomes.

ORG 3: The Sponsoring Organization has systems and structures that support clear communication and collaboration across all personnel (including those involved in coursework, fieldwork, and candidate support), leading to cohesive and equitable program experiences.

ORG 4: The Sponsoring Organization gathers data to inform recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement practices in order to cultivate a racially and ethnically diverse personnel.

ORG 5: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that all personnel are effective and continually improve in their ability to equitably support and prepare all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) for full responsibility in the licensure role.

**Continuous Improvement: The Sponsoring Organization engages in continuous improvement efforts that drive toward improved experiences and equitable outcomes for all candidates and the PK-12 students they serve.**

CI 1: The Sponsoring Organization’s continuous improvement efforts are intentionally designed to involve multiple viewpoints in decision-making, ensure equitable program experiences, and improve candidate outcomes.

CI 2: At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization collects and analyzes evidence from a variety of sources (including available state-collected data and stakeholder feedback) in order to understand the experiences and outcomes of candidates within and across identity groups and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

CI 3: The Sponsoring Organization makes evidence-informed, equity-centered decisions that lead to improved experiences and outcomes of candidates.

CI 4: At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization collects and analyzes evidence of completers’ and PK-12 school/district partnerships’ impacts on PK-12 student outcomes and takes aligned actions to ensure positive impacts.

**The Candidate: All candidates are supported through recruitment, admission, and completion of the program to ensure that completers are prepared to create anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining learning environments for all students.**

CAN 1: The Sponsoring Organization continually examines recruitment, admissions, and retention data and adjusts policies and processes to remove systemically inequitable barriers to entry and completion, resulting in the increased racial diversity of completers.

CAN 2: The Sponsoring Organization selects candidates for admission who demonstrate a commitment to educating all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds).

CAN 3: The Sponsoring Organization positions all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) to be successful in their program, licensure, and career through effective guidance and comprehensive support systems.

CAN 4: The Sponsoring Organization identifies and provides differentiated interventions for candidates who need additional support in coursework, fieldwork, or for their general well-being, leading all completers (including completers from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) to be prepared to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators.

CAN 5:  The Sponsoring Organization’s waiver policy equitably ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

**Partnerships: The Sponsoring Organization has intentional and collaborative partnerships that support strong pipelines and cultivate anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences for candidates and PK-12 students and contribute to a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.**

PAR 1: The Sponsoring Organization establishes, evaluates, and sustains partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts to ensure that all partnerships are meeting the needs of candidates and improves or discontinues those that are not meeting candidates’ needs.

PAR 2: The Sponsoring Organization collaborates with partner schools/districts to understand and respond to their needs, leading to increasingly equitable learning experiences for the students the school/district serves (e.g., expanding pathways to licensure, professional development offerings, services for students).

PAR 3: The Sponsoring Organization solicits input from PK-12 partners to identify its strengths and areas for growth and takes actions (e.g., aligning preparation curriculum, strengthening field-based experiences) to improve candidate experiences and outcomes within the context of the partnership.

**Field-Based Experiences: All candidates engage in high-quality school-based experiences that prepare them to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators for all students.**

FBE 1: The Sponsoring Organization ensures all candidates are placed in settings for pre-practicum and practicum which prepare them to become effective educators. Candidates are exposed to a range of settings, including those with[[26]](#footnote-27):

* Access to high-quality curricular materials.
* Diversity of students (including racial, socioeconomic, linguistic diversity, and diversity of ability).
* Opportunities to integrate candidates into all components of the school community (e.g., staff meetings, professional development, family engagement opportunities).
* Anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school culture.

FBE 2: The Sponsoring Organization selects and matches Supervising Practitioners with individual candidates to ensure that all candidates’ (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) placements are appropriate and supportive by identifying Supervising Practitioners who:

* Model anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices[[27]](#footnote-28).
* Effectively support candidates of all races, identity groups, and backgrounds.
* Commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization’s expectations of the role.

FBE 3: The Sponsoring Organization supports and monitors all Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors to ensure that all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) receive robust supervision and mentorship, including high-quality feedback[[28]](#footnote-29) and evaluation that prepare candidates to be effective anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators.

FBE 4: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that candidates’ pre-practicum and practicum experiences cover the full academic year and are structured to build to readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

FBE 5: Performance assessments are implemented consistently within and across programs to improve practice and ensure only candidates who are ready for full responsibility in the licensure role complete the program. For programs that do not use CAP, performance assessments are regularly evaluated to ensure assessments are effective.

FBE 6: Field-based experiences meet regulatory requirements:

1. Practicum hours, including hours of full responsibility in the licensure role, meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4);
2. Placement(s) meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4); and
3. Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.02

**Instruction: Programs prepare candidates to have deep content knowledge, anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogical skills, and the ability to continuously reflect on their identities, biases, and practices.**

***Teacher Programs:***

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.
*For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop expert content knowledge that makes them more effective in the licensure role.

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the pedagogical skills (as articulated in the [Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)[[29]](#footnote-30)) to be effective educators for all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) in the licensure role.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills (as articulated in Appendix D: Curricular Literacy) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of and skillfully use curricular materials, including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

***Specialist Teacher Programs:***

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 3: n/a

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills (as articulated in Appendix D: Curricular Literacy) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of and skillfully use curricular materials, including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

***School Support Personnel Programs:***

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Prepare anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 3: n/a

INS 4: n/a

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

***Administrator Programs:***

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly interrogates and updates the program of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:

* Strengthen candidates’ commitment to and use of anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices; and
* Align with current evidence-based practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates (including candidates from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) develop fluent content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)) to be ready for full responsibility in the licensure role.
(Applicable only for School Business Administrator programs)

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the leadership skills (as articulated in the [Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leaders](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)hip) to be effective educators for all students (including students from all races, identity groups, and backgrounds) in the licensure role.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates are prepared to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, support, and conditions to develop curriculum literacy (as articulated in Appendix D: Curricular Literacy), including leveraging known high-quality curricular materials when available.

INS 5: The program(s) of study is intentionally designed such that sequencing and connections between courses build candidates’ readiness for full responsibility in the licensure role.

INS 6: The program(s) of study embeds field-based experiences such that candidates have opportunities to observe, apply, and reflect on theories in practice, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices.

# Appendix D: Curriculum Literacy

A growing body of research indicates that [curricular materials](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) make a difference in student outcomes and can have a significant impact on ensuring educational equity. High-quality, better-aligned curriculum can prompt improvement in student outcomes that are:

* Comparable to over half a year of additional learning (see [Teaching Higher](https://cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/teaching-higher-report.pdf))
* About 1.5 times the difference between an average teacher and one at the 75th percentile (see [Choosing Blindly](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0410_curriculum_chingos_whitehurst.pdf))
* Greater than the difference between a new teacher and one with three years of experience (see [Never Judge a Book by Its Cover](https://www.brookings.edu/research/never-judge-a-book-by-its-cover-use-student-achievement-instead/))
* Reflective of more equitable access to rigorous schoolwork, high expectations, and effective instruction (See [The Opportunity Myth](https://opportunitymyth.tntp.org/))

Educator candidates must be prepared with knowledge and skills to evaluate and skillfully use curricular materials with evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices to ensure equitable outcomes and promote academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness for every student. All educator candidates should have coursework and field-based experiences that prepare them to be curriculum literate. For candidates in Administrative Leadership programs, these experiences may focus on how to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, support, and conditions to develop curriculum literacy.

 **Curriculum literacy** is the ability to:

1. Understand that the integration and connections among content expectations, aligned curricular materials, and student engagement are at the core of high-quality, equitable instruction;
2. Discern high-quality curricular materials from low quality curricular materials in order to advocate for high-quality curricular materials; and
3. Skillfully use materials through evidence-based, inclusive, and [culturally and linguistically sustaining practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/default.html), to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students to reach their full potential.

**Curriculum literacy** requires educators and educator preparation programs to shift from **creating** **curriculum** to **effectively evaluating and implementing curriculum**. The following definitions anchor DESE’s use of **curriculum literacy**:

* **Curricular materials** are resources teachers use to facilitate sequences of learning experiences (e.g., lesson and unit plans, texts); also referred to as adopted curriculum or written curriculum.
* A **curriculum** is a sequence of student learning experiences that teachers facilitate using curricular materials as a foundation (not a script!); also referred to as enacted curriculum or taught curriculum.

DESE strongly encourages Sponsoring Organizations to design coursework and experiences to build familiarity with the components of high-quality curricula, including those used by partner and/or top hiring districts.

All educators, including administrators, coaches, educator candidates, novice educators, and veteran teachers should understand the following competencies as a means to be curriculum literate:

1. **Understand that the integration and connections** among content expectations, aligned curricular materials, and student engagement are at the core of high-quality equitable instruction.
* Be fluent with the [state standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) and [learning progressions](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/search/) within their content area
* Be fluent with evidence-based approaches to teaching the content (pedagogical content knowledge)
* Understand the relationship between equity and challenging tasks outlined in reports such as [The Opportunity Myth](https://tntp.org/publications/view/the-opportunity-myth)
* Understand how materials support important content-specific instructional practices (such as explicit teaching of phonemic awareness in early literacy)
* Understand the consequences of the lack of high-quality materials, such as low-quality tasks and low expectations for students
* Be fluent in the features of high-quality materials, such as high-quality lessons that support culturally responsive practices and provide guidance for supporting multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students working above grade level, and students not yet meeting learning targets
1. **Discern high-quality curricular materials** from low-quality curricular materials in order to advocate for high-quality curricular materials
	* Understand how to use credible curricular reviews, where available, including those from [CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers (CURATE)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) [EdReports](https://www.edreports.org/), and [STEM Learning Design](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/dlcs/curriculum-guide.pdf), as resources for identifying high-quality curricular materials
	* Understand how to use tools such as the [CURATE rubrics](http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/resources.html) for content areas where there are comprehensive curriculum or the [IMET (Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool)](https://achievethecore.org/page/1946/instructional-materials-evaluation-tool) and [EQuIP](https://www.achieve.org/our-initiatives/equip/equip) tool in content areas that are not being rated by curricular reviews
	* Understand how to use tools such as the [Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/media/users/atn293/ejroc/CRE-Rubric-2018-190211.pdf) to evaluate the extent to which the curricular materials are culturally responsive and relevant
	* Understand how a curriculum builds student understanding of the content over time by recognizing how lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks fit together to support that understanding
	* Understand how specific curricular materials represent, reflect, affirm, and support many student identities such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, language, religion, family structures, ability, gender, and sexual orientation
2. **Skillfully use materials** through evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices, to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages students to reach their full potential
	1. Grounding in the materials’ instructional approach
		* Understand the instructional approach of the specific set of curricular materials
		* Understand how the specific curricular materials build student understanding of the content over time through the lessons and units
		* Understand the specific strengths and weaknesses of the materials, and ways that the materials should be supported to address any weaknesses
	2. Navigating the materials
		* Understand how to navigate specific curricular materials and resources, including the teacher’s guide and high-quality resources outside of the curriculum, to plan for a lesson
		* Understand the features of each unit and/or lesson and how it fits with other aspects of the curriculum (e.g., lesson, section, unit)
		* Be able to use the curricular materials effectively to plan a lesson by examining the lesson objectives, tasks, and expectations for student work and determine the preparation or learning teachers need to do to implement the lesson effectively
	3. Enacting curriculum
		* Be able to implement materials effectively and skillfully (what to keep, what to emphasize, what to add, what to adjust, etc.) without undermining the coherence or rigor of the materials and addressing time constraints, specific student learning needs, etc.
		* Understand how to identify supplemental resources and practices needed to address specific student needs
		* Be able to use Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction to support students not yet reaching learning goals
		* Be able to use scaffolding to support students in accessing the curriculum – and removing scaffolds at the appropriate time
		* Be able to use the content and pedagogical knowledge necessary to make instructional decisions based on inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices
		* Be able to draw upon students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds to enhance curricular materials and inform instructional decision making
	4. Adjusting practice
		* Be able to analyze data from a wide range of sources, including formal and informal assessments and feedback from colleagues, students, and families
		* Be able to use data to adjust practice and implement differentiated supports
		* Be able to engage with families in constructive, asset-based conversations around students’ learning and progress and partner with them to understand, monitor, and improve student learning
		* Be able to identify areas where an educator would benefit from additional professional development or coaching to more effectively use curricular materials

# Appendix E:  Massachusetts-based Off-Campus/Satellite Programs, Hybrid (online and face-to-face) and Online Delivery Models

DESE recognizes that a variety of delivery models exist for educator preparation programs in Massachusetts and expects each program and delivery model to be in alignment with the regulations governing educator preparation and licensure. The program expectations should be consistent across all delivery models. Significant differences in delivery models should be presented at the point of the program document submission (informal or formal review) to DESE.

Significant modifications to existing approved programs’ delivery models should be reported to DESE, including approved programs offered at off-campus/satellite locations within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or online.

Programs offered at an off-campus/satellite location, in-person/online hybrid approach, or fully online are reviewed at the same time and with the same program review evidence and expectations that educator preparation programs offered at a Sponsoring Organization’s main campus/facility are reviewed. When adding a new delivery model outside of formal review, Sponsoring Organizations should submit a letter of intent with a succinct description and rationale for the proposed off campus/satellite location or online program, as well as programmatic information documenting alignment to the existing approved program.

When considering an online or hybrid model of programming, Sponsoring Organizations should ensure that programming is designed using current and effective online educational learning models. Asynchronous learning typically will not be considered commensurate with synchronous or in-person learning experiences. Sponsoring Organizations will provide evidence of the amount of asynchronous learning in any online or hybrid program, including evidence of how they ensure asynchronous learning experiences are consistent with other delivery models, at the point of program document submission. There are also specific requirements for delivering the Sheltered English Immersion course online, including synchronous learning expectations. See SEI Course Requirement advisories [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/) when considering online delivery models for this programming.

# Appendix F: List of Supporting Guidelines

All supporting Guidelines and Advisories can be found on the [Educator Preparation Guidelines and Advisories](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/) webpage.

* [Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/leadership-guide.pdf)
* [Guidelines for Pre-Practicum for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/field-based/pre-practicum.docx)
* [Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/cap/2020-21guidelines.docx)[[30]](#footnote-31)
* [Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/teachers-guide.docx)[[31]](#footnote-32) (PST Guidelines)
* [Guidelines for Subject Matter Knowledge](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/smk-guidelines.docx) (SMK Guidelines)
* [Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of Moderate and Severe Disabilities: Instruction on the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication and other assistive technologies](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/at-aac-guide.docx)
* Endorsement Guidelines:
	+ [Autism](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/special-guide.docx)
	+ [Bilingual Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/bilingual-guide.docx)

[Transition Specialist](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/tse-guide.docx)[SEI Stand-Alone Course Requirements](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/sei-standalone-requirement.pdf)

# Appendix H: Glossary of Terms

**All candidates/All students:** When used in reference to any group of individuals throughout these criteria, “all” represents each and every member of that group, within and across identity groups and backgrounds, with particular focus on those who have been systematically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to those who identify as Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial.

**Anti-racist Teacher and Leader:** Believes racial groups are equals in all their differences and continually engages in self-reflective work that leads to educational policies, practices, conditions, and cultures that resist and dismantle inequities due to individual and systemic racism to advance racial equity. (Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders)

**Approval Determination**: The type of approval a Sponsoring Organization receives from formal review (Approved with Distinction, Approved, Approved with Conditions, Probationary Approval, or Not Approved). Formerly called Approval Status.

**Bias:** A disproportionate weight that may be created intentionally or unintentionally in favor of or against an idea, thing, individual, or group.

**Candidate***:* A person who is currently enrolled in an educator preparation program; *student*.

**Commendation:** Criteria rating in Formal Review reserved for truly extraordinary innovative, or outstanding practices. Commendations impact a Sponsoring Organization’s overall approval determination.

**Completer***:* A person who has successfully completed an educator preparation program;

*alumnus, graduate*.

**Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practice:** See DESE’s [Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-responsive/default.html) definition.

**Curriculum Literacy:** The ability to:

1. Understand that the integration and connections among content expectations, aligned curricular materials, and student engagement are at the core of high-quality equitable instruction;
2. Discern high-quality curricular materials from low quality curricular materials in order to advocate for high-quality curricular materials; and
3. Skillfully use materials through evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally responsive practices, to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students to reach their full potential. ([Curriculum Matters](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html), also see [Appendix D](#_Appendix_D:_Curriculum) for additional information)

**Enrollment:** The point at which an individual has met all the Sponsoring Organization’s requirements in order to be formally admitted into the educator preparation program. Each Sponsoring Organization may define enrollment differently.

**Equity:** Exists when one’s identity (including but not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability) can no longer be used to predict social, economic, and educational outcomes. Enacting steps towards equity means ensuring that opportunities and supports to eliminate bias and structural barriers are operationalized at every level of the education system and society. (Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders)

**Evidence-based:** Practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing positive results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research (US Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act) Evidence-based practices include, but are not limited to, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and use of high-quality curricular materials. (US Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act)

**Field-based experiences:** Experiences in PK-12 schools and classrooms such as observation of a variety of classrooms, pre- practicum, practicum/practicum equivalent, internship, or apprenticeship that are integral components of any program for the preparation of educators.

**Finding:** Criteria rating in Formal Review for areas of concern requiring corrective action.

Findings may impact a Sponsoring Organization’s overall approval determination.

**High-quality Curricular Materials:** High-quality curricular materials exhibit a coherent sequence of target skills and knowledge, empirical evidence of efficacy, and other characteristics such as engaging content and inclusive design. Some factors in quality are nonnegotiable, while others vary by context: for example, compatibility with a school’s technology infrastructure or cultural relevance to its student population. ([Curriculum Matters](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html))

**High-quality feedback:** High-quality feedback is specific (evidence-based), concrete (related to quality, scope, and/or consistency of practice), useful (provides the candidate with clear next steps for improvement) and addresses areas of both strength and improvement.

**Identity groups:** Groups in which individuals are members based on their social identity, which may include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, language, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or citizenship.

**Inclusion:** Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments and ensure differences are actively sought and heard, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging and a role in impacting decision-making, practices, and policies.

**Input measures**: Sources of evidence used to demonstrate actions and systems Sponsoring Organizations have in place to meet Formal Review criteria. These measures recognize that overall outcomes are influenced by programmatic inputs.

**Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks**: The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks comprise the following subject areas: Arts, English Language Arts, Foreign Language, Comprehensive Health, Mathematics, History and Social Science, Science Technology and Engineering, English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes, and Vocational Technical Education.

**NASDTEC Interstate Agreement:** The agreement sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) concerning reciprocal licensing of educational personnel among participating jurisdictions.

**Output measures:** Sources of evidence that link criteria with qualitative evidence on from interviews, focus groups, and survey as well as quantifiable data on program results.

**Partnership:** Deliberate collaboration between Sponsoring Organizations and PK-12 schools/districts to ensure effective preparation that meets the needs of the Sponsoring Organization and PK-12 partner. For more information, see Stakeholders section.

**Persistence rate:** Also known as **retention rate**. The percentage of students who return to the institution from one year to the next year. This data will be collected through ELAR and included in Public Profiles.

**Professional Suggestions:** Professional Suggestions serve as recommendations for continuous improvement. They do not require a mandatory response or action.

**Program approval:** State authorization of an educator preparation program or its Sponsoring Organization to endorse program completers prepared in Massachusetts for educator licensure in the Commonwealth. Also, the process through which a program or Sponsoring Organization may receive state approval.

**Program Supervisor:** A member of the Sponsoring Organization staff, the Program Supervisor serves as the liaison between the Sponsoring Organization and the practicum placement. She/he is responsible for overseeing the student teaching experience, observing and providing feedback to the candidate alongside the Supervising Practitioner, and coordinating the assessment for program completion.

**Reviewer:** Person identified by DESE as someone with the knowledge and experience required to evaluate evidence of how programs meet review criteria. Reviewers are chosen based on their qualifications and screened for bias or potential conflicts of interest. Reviewers also receive extensive training and calibration to implement the review process.

**Sponsoring Organization:** Institution of higher education or alternative preparation organization that provides, or seeks to provide, approved preparation programs.

**Status designation:** An assessment of a Sponsoring Organization’s performance as required by Title II of the Higher Education Act (high performing, at-risk, or low performing).

**Student:**  A pupil enrolled in a PK-12 institution.

**Supervising Practitioner:** A PK-12 educator who oversees a candidate’s field-based experience; cooperating teacher, mentor teacher. A Supervising Practitioner shall be supported and evaluated by the Sponsoring Organization, have at least three full years of experience under an appropriate Initial or Professional license, and have received a rating of proficient or higher on his/her most recent summative evaluation.

**Systemically marginalized groups**: Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion on a systemic level because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. These groups include but are not limited to race, culture, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender, and ability. Significant disparities exist for marginalized people.

**Triggering data:** Any data that indicate an interim review of a Sponsoring Organization may be warranted. Data submitted annually to DESE by Sponsoring Organizations or collected by DESE from other stakeholders may trigger an interim review. Other triggering data may include: a high rate of staff or faculty turnover; checks on candidate files that reveal issues; zero program completers for multiple years; offering of large numbers of programs potentially compromising quality for quantity; and watered-down general curriculum attempting to appease all potential candidates (large numbers of waivers).

**Waiver policy:** Regulations state (603 CMR 7.03 (1) (b)): 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 programs of study for them. Granting such waivers is the official responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization. Records of candidates for whom coursework or other program requirements have been waived must be available during onsite review. For more information, see Implementation of Waivers in Approved Programs section.

1. Equity: Exists when one’s identity (including but not limited to race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability) can no longer be used to predict social, economic, and educational outcomes. Enacting steps towards equity means ensuring that opportunities and supports to eliminate bias and structural barriers are operationalized at every level of the education system and society. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. When used in reference to any group of individuals throughout these Guidelines, “all” represents each and every member of that group, within and across identity groups and backgrounds, with particular focus on those who have been systematically marginalized or underserved by our education systems, including but not limited to those who identify as Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Massachusetts Educational Equity Partnership, [Number One for Some](https://number1forsome.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/09/Number-1-for-Some-9.25-18.pdf), 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Hosp, John L. “[Response to Intervention and the Disproportionate Representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education](http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/disproportionaterepresentation).” *Representation of Diverse Students in Special Education | RTI Action Network*, RTI Action Network. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Jiménez-Castellanos, O., & García, E. (2017). [Intersection of Language, Class, Ethnicity, and Policy: Toward Disrupting Inequality for English Language Learners](https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16688623). Review of Research in Education, 41(1), 428–452. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. According to evidence from Massachusetts and nationally:

	* Student teachers are more likely to teach where they complete their practicum (Krieg, et al., 2016), and prospective teachers of color are more likely to teach close to their hometown (Rucinski, *pending*) creating a natural pipeline between student teaching placement and district employment.
	* Student teachers who complete their practicum in urban settings are more likely to stay in urban schools once employed, combating the higher rates of teacher turnover that persist in these districts (Goldhaber, et al., 2020a).
	* Partnerships between districts and educator preparation organizations can result in the development and placement of more effective teachers in the often hard-to-staff roles.
	* Teacher candidates who complete their practicum with effective Supervising Practitioners are more effective once they enter the workforce (Goldhaber, et al., 2020b; Goldhaber, et al., 2020c). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) is under revision and will be finalized by SY2024-25, at which point the Professional Standards for Teachers will be updated to align. CAP will be updated following those revisions. Programs may access the draft rubric at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/> to monitor proposed revisions.  [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. See prior footnote.  [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Sponsoring Organizations can access the [Public Lookup for Educator Licensure](https://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/lookup/) to confirm an educator’s license and use [the list of equivalent licenses](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Flicensure%2Fresources%2Fmatching-licenses.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)  if your proposed Supervising Practitioner possesses a license that DESE no longer issues. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) is under revision during SY2022-23 and SY2023-24. Once finalized, the Professional Standards for Teachers will be updated to align, and CAP will be updated following those revisions.  [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. See the [Resources and Information about PAL](https://www.doe.mass.edu/pal/resources.html), including the PAL Administrative Field Guide, for additional information about acceptable forms of support for candidates. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. If the most appropriate setting for an individual candidate does not have all these aspects in place, it is the responsibility of the SO to directly support the candidate in interrogating gap(s) within the specific setting and providing additional resources in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. If an individual candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that models anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, despite attempts by the SO to find such a Supervising Practitioner, it is the responsibility of the SO to directly support the candidate with additional resources or support in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. High-quality feedback is specific (evidence-based), concrete (related to quality, scope, and/or consistency of practice), useful (provides the candidate with clear next steps for improvement), and addresses areas of both strength and improvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. DESE reserves the authority to engage in more detailed reviews of specific programs to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) is under revision during SY2022-23 and SY2023-24. Once finalized, the Professional Standards for Teachers will be updated to align, and CAP will be updated following those revisions.  [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. DESE reserves the authority to engage in more detailed reviews of specific programs to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. DESE reserves the authority to engage in more detailed reviews of specific programs to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. DESE reserves the authority to engage in more detailed reviews of specific programs to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Candidates may qualify for licensure through successful completion of an approved preparation program leading to the license sought, provided they meet all other licensure requirements. Individuals who complete approved preparation programs may be eligible for licensure reciprocity with other states that are parties to the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. As it will take time to have data available that will indicate evidence of impact associated with new expectations, implementation inputs will be weighed more heavily until academic year 2026-2027. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Currently approved educator preparation programs may continue operating, even beyond the seven-year approval window, until DESE has conducted the formal review process, unless the Sponsoring Organization does not submit required materials for review. If a Sponsoring Organization fails to meet one or more deadlines associated with review, program(s) will expire on the established expiration date of approval. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Timing estimates are provided as an overview of what to expect in each stage and reflect the minimum amount of time that may be provided for each step. Timelines will vary slightly between Sponsoring Organizations. Each Sponsoring Organization will be provided with an individualized review schedule during the Initiation step. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. The anticipated academic year and cohort group or each Sponsoring Organization's next review can be found on [DESE’s website.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/program-approval/anticipated-review-timelines.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. This refers to the Sponsoring Organization overall. Individual license areas that have associated national accreditation required as per [603 CMR 7.00](https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=all) must use documentation of that accreditation to meet the expectations for program approval. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. If the most appropriate setting for an individual candidate does not have all these aspects in place, it is the responsibility of the SO to directly support the candidate in interrogating gap(s) within the specific setting and providing additional resources in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. If an individual candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that models anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, despite attempts by the SO to find such a Supervising Practitioner, it is the responsibility of the SO to directly support the candidate with additional resources or support in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional resources at the time of an interim or formal review. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. High-quality feedback is specific (evidence-based), concrete (related to quality, scope, and/or consistency of practice), useful (provides the candidate with clear next steps for improvement), and addresses areas of both strength and improvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) is under revision during SY2022-23 and SY2023-24. Once finalized, the Professional Standards for Teachers will be updated to align, and CAP will be updated following those revisions.  [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) is under revision and will be finalized by SY2024-25, at which point the Professional Standards for Teachers will be updated to align. CAP will be updated following those revisions. Programs may access the draft rubric at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/> to monitor proposed revisions. .  [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. See above. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)