

**Structured Guidance & Supports Guidelines**

**A path towards meeting the competency review requirement**

**for licensure in Massachusetts**

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# **Introduction**

### What is the “Structured Guidance & Supports” process?

The Structured Guidance & Supports (SG&S) process is one path for completing the Competency Review. The Competency Review is the mechanism for determining whether the subject matter knowledge requirements for a license have been met in a field for which there is no subject matter knowledge test. The SG&S process is a performance-based assessment for a teacher licensure candidate that includes:

(1) High-quality professional support growth opportunities that are sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive impact on classroom instruction.

(2) Intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support.

(3) An assessment of the candidate’s knowledge and skills against a performance rubric, aligned to and fulfilling the subject matter knowledge requirements of that license.

The SG&S process and assessment takes place over a supervised 150-hour field-based experience. Documentation of the SG&S process will be accepted as evidence of the 150-hour internship required for teacher candidates seeking to add an Initial or Professional type license. Teacher candidates seeking to earn a Provisional type license must secure a 150-hour field-based experience in order to complete the SG&S process.

These SG&S Guidelines provide a description of the required process, including information about the performance rubrics, sources of evidence, and the portfolio that must be compiled as documentation of the process.

# Definitions

**Competency Review**: The process for determining whether the subject matter knowledge requirements for a license have been met in a field for which there is no subject matter knowledge test, using Department guidelines.

**Field-Based Experience:** Experiences such as observations of a variety of classrooms, pre-practicum, practicum/practicum equivalent, internship, apprenticeship, or administrative internship that are integral components of any program for the preparation of educators. Field-based experiences shall cover a range of time periods within the school year.

**Licensure Candidate:** The individual who is seeking the license.

**Supervising Educator:** The supervising educator must be able to give high quality feedback to the licensure candidate about his or her demonstration of the subject matter knowledge requirements. This individual must hold the Massachusetts license sought by the candidate at the Initial or Professional type, have at least three full years of experience under the license(s) being sought, been trained as a mentor, and have a minimum rating of Proficient in order to qualify for this role. Individuals holding the Special Education Administrator license and meeting these additional criteria may also serve as a supervising educator for special education licenses. The same individual may not serve as both the supervising educator and the supervising administrator.

**Supervising Administrator:** The supervising administratormay be the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, special education administrator, or educator preparation faculty member. If the candidate is presently employed by the district, the candidate’s evaluator may serve as supervising administrator. The supervising administrator must be able to facilitate all three meetings described below and to provide general administrative oversight. The same individual may not serve as both the supervising educator and the supervising administrator.

# Setting for SG&S

Competency is demonstrated through the SG&S process by licensure candidates during a supervised 150-hour internship or field-based experience. Internships and field-based experiences may be paid or unpaid and should take place in settings as appropriate to the license being sought. Settings must be documented in the Supervision Log and maintained in the portfolio.

**Adding an Initial or Professional License:**

The SG&S process allows licensure candidates seeking to add an Initial or Professional license to demonstrate competency in the subject matter knowledge requirements during their internship under the supervision of a supervising educator and supervising administrator. Candidates may remain in their employed position if appropriate, as long as they have the opportunity to complete the 150 hours in the appropriate setting and are receiving supervision from a properly licensed supervising educator.

**Provisional License:**

Candidates seeking a Provisional license must also secure a supervised150-hour field-based experience in which to complete the SG&S process. The SG&S process allows candidates seeking a Provisional license to demonstrate competency in the subject matter knowledge requirements during a field experience under the supervision of a qualified supervising educator and supervising administrator.

# The SG&S Process

Licensure candidate support

A licensure candidate will work with a supervising educator who will provide ongoing modeling, instruction, and support to the licensure candidate as part of the field-based experience. The supervising educator will conduct an evaluation of the candidate’s competency in these subject matter knowledge requirements using the rubric and evaluation of evidence included as appendices in these Guidelines.

The process is formalized through three meetings: the Initial Meeting, the Formative Meeting, and the Summative Meeting.

The Initial Meeting

When: 2-3 weeks before the SG&S process formally begins.

Who: Supervising administrator, supervising educator, and candidate(s). Note that this meeting may be done as a group if there are multiple candidates completing the process in the same setting. This is the only meeting that may be done in a group setting.

What: Meet to discuss the logistics of the SG&S process. This includes outlining the:

* Setting(s) where the candidate(s) will demonstrate competency (i.e. in a third-grade inclusion classroom throughout the fall semester)
* Sources of evidence the supervising educator will review to determine competency
* Supports the supervising administrator will need to provide

Documentation: The Initial Meeting section of the SG&S Form (See Appendices) should be completed at this meeting.

The Formative Meeting

When: At or around the mid-point of the field experience.

Who: Supervising administrator, supervising educator, and the candidate. This meeting is not meant to be conducted with a group of licensure candidates.

What: The team should meet to discuss progress towards demonstration of the subject matter knowledge requirements, including targeted feedback for the candidate. Candidate should identify areas where he/she would like to focus on personal growth and development. The supervising educator should provide targeted feedback around candidate’s progress and areas for continued growth. The supervising administrator should assure fidelity to the process.

Documentation: The Formative Meeting section of the SG&S Form should be signed at the conclusion of this meeting.

The Summative Meeting

When: At the conclusion of the SG&S process.

Who: Supervising administrator, supervising educator, and candidate.

What: The team should meet to discuss the candidate’s readiness for licensure. In advance of this meeting, the supervising educator should review all evidence to determine if the candidate has Met Requirements or has Not Met Requirements. The supervising educator should then discuss evidence that the candidate has demonstrated proficiency in all of the subject matter knowledge requirements and the ratings corresponding to each indicator.

**Documentation:** The supervising educator should review the sources of evidence section of the SG&S Form. The Summative Meeting section of the SG&S Form should be signed at the conclusion of this meeting.

# Performance Rubrics

Rubrics are designed to support candidates and supervising educators:

* Develop a consistent, shared understanding of what high quality performance looks like in practice
* Develop a common terminology and structure to organize evidence
* Make informed professional judgments about whether or not the candidate has demonstrated subject matter knowledge

Rubric indicators capture critical aspects of the subject matter knowledge competencies required for each license. For candidates, the rubric should be used as a resource to demonstrate their level of readiness to meet the expectations for effective practice. When read together with their supervising educator, the rubric can develop a rich, detailed and shared picture of what effective practice looks like. That shared understanding can support the growth and development of the candidate as they move through the process during their field experience.

The rubric helps to paint a clear picture of what it will look like to move practice from Unsatisfactory to Needs Improvement to Proficient to Exemplary. These distinctions are the basis for feedback to the candidate as well as the final evaluation.

Candidates and supervising educators will use the rubric to collect and present evidence from multiple sources that will enable them to demonstrate their practice on each indicator. Supervising educators collect evidence by observing practice, examining work products and student work, reviewing the resource guide, talking with the candidate, reviewing the evidence provided by the candidate, and other means. Supervising educators should align this evidence with the rubric and share it with the candidate as part of their constructive feedback.

# Performance Levels in the Rubric

Performance levels in the SG&S rubrics are aligned to those in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and in the Candidate Assessment of Performance for educator preparation. Candidates must meet at least a Proficient readiness threshold across all indicators for the specific license. The ultimate determination of readiness is to be made by the supervising educator based on a holistic evaluation of the candidate’s demonstrated skills across the indicators.

Supervising educators should base their ratings on the appropriate rubrics by considering a variety of sources of evidence gathered during the supervised 150-hour field-based experience. The candidate must demonstrate readiness over the course of a minimum of 150 hours. The portfolio documentation of the SG&S process will be accepted as evidence of the supervised 150-hour internship required for teacher candidates seeking to add an Initial type license. Teacher candidates seeking to earn a Provisional type license must secure a supervised 150-hour field-based experience in order to complete the SG&S process.

The performance descriptors in the rubrics differentiate levels of candidate performance along a continuum of professional practice. In order to be eligible for licensure, candidates are expected to demonstrate performance at a proficient level on each indicator of subject matter knowledge requirements.

The rubrics distinguish among all four levels of performance on the basis of consistency, quality, and scope of impact. Without attention to all three, distinctions between different levels of performance are likely to be superficial. It is not proficient practice, for example, if a candidate “consistently” does something but rarely does it well or reaches few students.

Likewise, candidates may consistently offer high-quality instruction to some students, but struggle to meet the needs of others, such as English Learners, students with specific disabilities, or those who present behavioral challenges. Similarly, Exemplary performance requires demonstrating a behavior with greater regularity, at a higher level of quality, and/or with greater scope of impact than is expected at the Proficient level. The rubrics make those differences clear

Candidates must demonstrate competency by achieving performance levels of Proficient or Exemplary in the indicators represented in the rubric for the license being sought across all indicators as reflected in the portfolio. It is also recommended that the evidence presented represent a variety of forms and sources. While the rubric assigns levels of proficiency, the final determination of “Met Requirements” or “Not Met Requirements” is left to the professional judgment of the supervising educator as long as the readiness thresholds of Proficient or Exemplary have been met.

In the case of a disagreement between the licensure candidate, supervising educator, and/or supervising administrator, it is the role of the superintendent, or equivalent to mediate the process and their judgment is final.

# Portfolio Development

All candidates are required to maintain a portfolio representing evidence for each indicator on the rubric for the license sought. The portfolio will serve as an end product of the work leading to the competency determination and may include the following forms of evidence:

* Observation
* Artifacts of Practice
* Student Feedback
* Measures of Student Learning

These forms are intended to clearly document the candidate’s attainment of the knowledge and skill required for the license. The following forms to include in the portfolio are provided in the Appendices:

* **Observation Evidence Collection Tool** - should be completed by the Supervising educator and reflected on by the candidate.
* **Evidence Reflection Form** - should be submitted with each piece of evidence to demonstrate how it documents the knowledge and skill of the indicator.
* **Supervision Log** - should describe the setting and hours in which the SG&S process was demonstrated and the nature of the supervision.

Candidates must retain this portfolio for three years following completion of the SG&S process for potential auditing by Department. Candidates should **not** submit the portfolio to the licensure office as part of their application. The only forms that are required to be submitted to the licensure office are found in the license-specific appendices.