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MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Elementary
and Secondary Education

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

September 2023

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

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Introduction

Dear Educators,

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Sponsoring Organizations, and PK-12 schools and districts each strive to ensure that all students in Massachusetts have access to excellent educators. While this focus has contributed to continued achievement for students overall, disparities in PK-12 student experiences and outcomes persist, in particular for Black, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial learners.

Effective educators in Massachusetts are those who demonstrate culturally and linguistically sustaining classroom and school practices that support students to thrive by creating affirming environments where students have a sense of belonging, engage in deeper learning, and are held to high expectations with targeted support (DESE Educational Vision, 2023). The *Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval* articulate the expectation that all aspiring educators be prepared in these evidence-based practices that well serve all students in Massachusetts, particularly those from systemically underserved groups and communities, such that they will have equitable opportunities to excel in all content areas across all grades.

These Guidelines were shaped and informed by contributions from over 450 educator preparation personnel, preparation candidates and recent completers, district and school leaders, educators, and PK-12 students and families from across the Commonwealth. We have deep gratitude for these stakeholders' feedback. We also appreciate the members of the Educational Personnel Advisory Council, Educator Preparation Advisory Group, and Principal and Teacher Advisory Cabinet who provided ongoing collaboration throughout the revision process. Their contributions underscore a collective commitment to preparing educators in evidence-based, anti-racist, and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices in order to meet the needs of all students.

We commit to continuing to work with these and other stakeholders to improve the experiences and outcomes of the PK-12 students, current educators, and future educators of Massachusetts.

 In partnership,

Office of Educator Effectiveness, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Acknowledgements

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DESE would also like to acknowledge the stakeholders from Sponsoring Organizations and PK-12 districts across Massachusetts who contributed to these Guidelines by participating in the listening tour, roundtables, and public comment survey.

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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.

Furthering DESE's Educational Vision requires centering evidence-based practices that enable teachers, administrators, specialists, and professional support personnel to effectively serve *all* students from day one. This means preparing educators in anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining classroom and school practices that nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence in all students.[1]

> **All:** When used in reference to any group of individuals throughout these Guidelines, "all" represents each member of that group, inclusive of, but not limited to, all races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities, with particular focus on those who have been systematically marginalized or underserved, such as those who identify as Black, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial.

Our statewide data show continued disparities in experiences and outcomes for Black, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial students, as well as English Learners and students with disabilities.[2] This is especially true for students with intersecting underserved identities.[3] DESE has committed to strengthening its expectations for educator preparation programs to ensure that all educators are prepared to be effective, meaning they use evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to provide all students with an equitable and effective education that enables them 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 self**: 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; and
- **Engage with the world**: understand and think critically about local, national, and world events and societal systems; and create positive change through civic action;

So that they can:

- **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; and

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[1] Ladson-Billings, Gloria. (2006).
[2] Massachusetts Educational Equity Partnership. (2018).
[3] Hosp, John L. (n.d.); Jiménez-Castellanos, O., & García, E. (2017).

- **Be empowered**: play a role in advocating for equity, justice, and liberty in their communities and beyond.

> An **effective educator** is one who uses evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence. Please see the Glossary for definitions of additional terms used throughout the Guidelines.

The *Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval* detail the standards for educator preparation that lead to endorsement for licensure in the Commonwealth. These Guidelines have been updated to set an expectation for deeper examination of evidence-based practices in individual programs within the Sponsoring Organization. This focus aligns with DESE's increased prioritization of evidence-based instructional practices[4] as reflected in expectations for candidates' subject matter knowledge[5] and pedagogical skills[6], particularly in the areas of early literacy[7], curriculum literacy[8], and administrator preparation.[9] By centering these practices in the work of preparing educators, we establish the foundation upon which *all* educators are developed.[10]

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[4] Evidence-based practices or programs are those 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). DESE believes that the strongest evidence-based instructional practices have evidence of efficacy across diverse populations of students.

[5] In Massachusetts, for licensure areas in which a *MA Curriculum Framework* exists, the *Framework* for students anchors the expectations of subject matter knowledge for educators. The intent and expectation is not that educators should simply know the content included in the relevant *Framework*. Rather, educators must move beyond a basic or functional knowledge of the *Framework* to a level of fluency or expertise with the academic standards such that they can teach and support students in mastering the content. (See DESE Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines)

[6] The pedagogical standards for the effective preparation of teachers and leaders (the Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs) and the Indicators for Administrative Leadership, respectively) are aligned to the pedagogical standards for in-service educators, as articulated through the Massachusetts' Educator Evaluation Framework. This alignment ensures educators complete their preparation program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective as beginning teachers and leaders. (See DESE's PST Guidelines and Administrative Leadership Guidelines)

[7] See Appendix F: Evidence-Based Practices: Early Literacy.

[8] See Appendix G: Evidence-Based Practices: Curriculum Literacy.

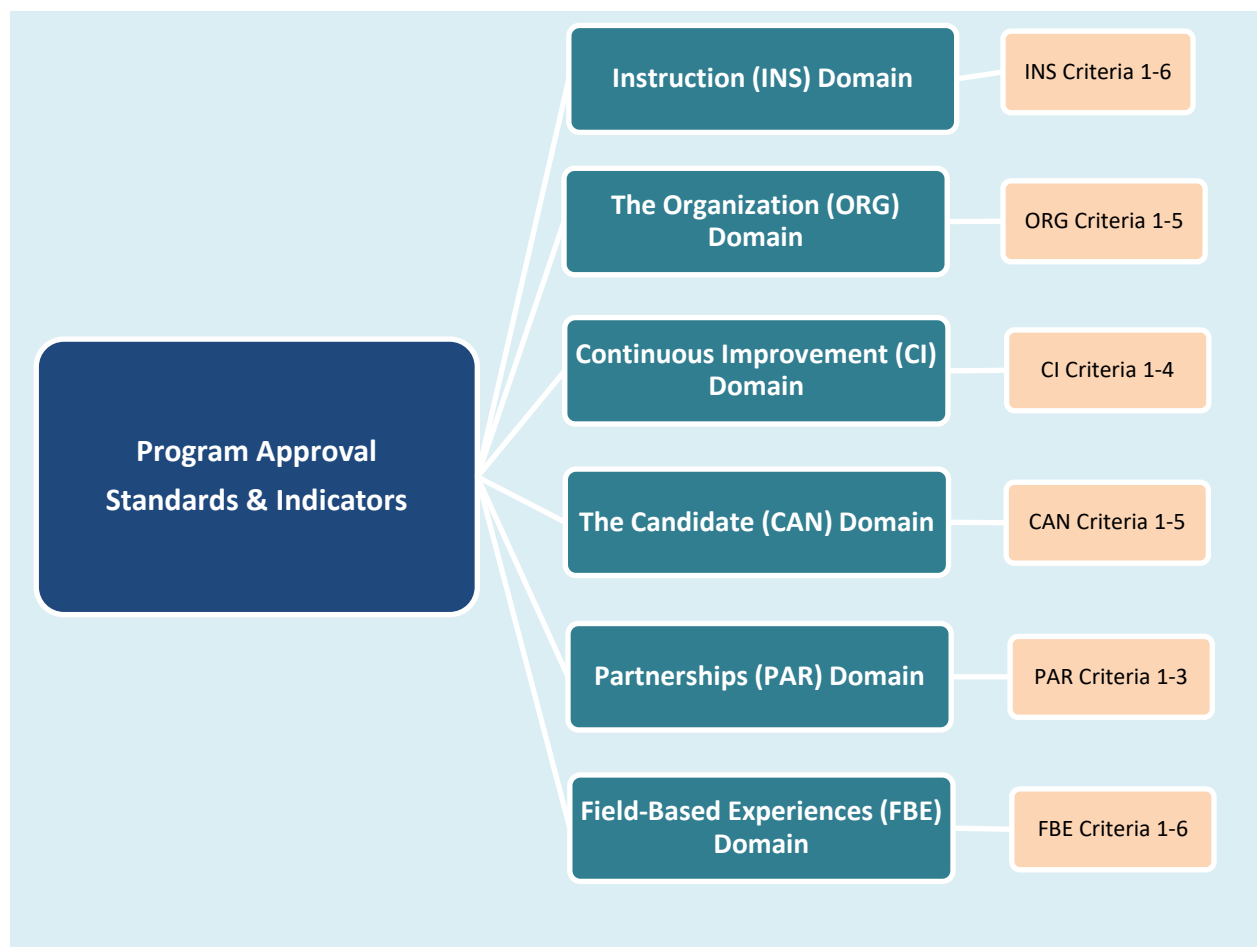[9] See Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders (2021).

[10] Sandoval, et. al. (2023)

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Program Approval Standards and Review Criteria

DESE's expectations of Sponsoring Organizations are based in state regulations (found in Appendix A). These Guidelines provide information for Sponsoring Organizations on how the Program Approval Standards outlined in the regulations are measured in the DESE program approval process.

For purposes of program review and approval, the Program Approval Standards are organized into six domains, under which similar criteria are grouped together: Instruction, The Organization, Partnerships, Continuous Improvement, The Candidate, and Field-Based Experiences. For a crosswalk of the standards to domains, please see Appendix B.

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                                      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
                                      │  Instruction (INS)       │───│  INS Criteria 1-6   │
                                      │  Domain                  │   └─────────────────────┘
                                      └──────────────────────────┘
                                      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
                                      │  The Organization (ORG)  │───│  ORG Criteria 1-5   │
                                      │  Domain                  │   └─────────────────────┘
                                      └──────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────┐               ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Program Approval   │               │  Continuous Improvement  │───│  CI Criteria 1-4    │
│  Standards &        │───────────────│  (CI) Domain             │   └─────────────────────┘
│  Indicators         │               └──────────────────────────┘
└─────────────────────┘               ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
                                      │  The Candidate (CAN)     │───│  CAN Criteria 1-5   │
                                      │  Domain                  │   └─────────────────────┘
                                      └──────────────────────────┘
                                      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
                                      │  Partnerships (PAR)      │───│  PAR Criteria 1-3   │
                                      │  Domain                  │   └─────────────────────┘
                                      └──────────────────────────┘
                                      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────┐
                                      │  Field-Based Experiences │───│  FBE Criteria 1-6   │
                                      │  (FBE) Domain            │   └─────────────────────┘
                                      └──────────────────────────┘
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Each domain includes three to six criteria derived from the Program Approval Standards that distill high-level concepts into a set of concrete, actionable expectations. Criteria are descriptive of expectations, not prescriptive of approaches or strategies. The domains and criteria drive evidence collection and decision-making across all aspects of program approval.

Several Program Approval Standards align with more than one domain. By designing criteria to align specific expectations to a broader domain, DESE can guarantee full coverage of the standards while also ensuring that providers are evaluated efficiently and without duplication of efforts and findings.

The criteria outlined in these Guidelines have been revised to ensure the program approval process is increasingly effective, efficient, consistent, and equity-driven. All criteria reflect evidence-based and anti-racist practices across the domains. In the Instruction domain, criteria are differentiated by licensure area to support a deeper focus on evidence-based instructional practices.

The following sections detail the expectations by domain. For a complete list of criteria, see Appendix D.

The Instruction Domain

The Sponsoring Organization provides effective instruction to all candidates and ensures that all completers have the requisite content knowledge and evidence-based pedagogical skills, including curriculum literacy and anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, for the licensure role.

An effective educator is one who uses evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence. In order to prepare effective educators, programs of study must provide all candidates with access to effective instruction in relevant content knowledge (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)), evidence-based pedagogical skills (as articulated in the Professional Standards for Teachers[11]), and curriculum literacy competencies (see [Appendix G](#)).

> **Program of Study**: The coursework, seminars, workshops, webinars, field experiences, and other program components that are required for the completion of an approved program.

Sponsoring Organizations should intentionally design and routinely update programs of study and their associated coursework to ensure they are aligned with current evidence-based practices; represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and prepare effective educators. All programs should embed field-based experiences into coursework to provide candidates with opportunities to observe and apply evidence-based practices, including curriculum literacy, in the relevant school or classroom setting. Throughout their coursework, Sponsoring Organizations should ensure that candidates develop their ability to continuously reflect on their own identities, biases, and practices in the licensure role as a necessary foundation to cultivating their development of evidence-based instructional practices.[12]

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 collect additional evidence within review processes as needed to determine whether an approved preparation program continues to meet the standards and benchmarks set forth in [603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3)](#) and these Guidelines.[13]

The criteria in the Instruction domain are differentiated to reflect these expectations and responsibilities as they relate to Teacher, Specialist Teacher, Professional Support Personnel, and Administrator roles.

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[11] The [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](#) is under revision through SY2023-24 and is anticipated to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs) and the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.

[12] Ellerbrock, C.R., Cruz, B.C., Vasquez, A., & Howes, E.V. (2016).

[13] See [Appendix F: Evidence-Based Practices: Early Literacy.](#)

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Curriculum Literacy

INS Criterion 4 describes the expectations for curriculum literacy for each licensure category. A growing body of research indicates that curricular materials make a difference in student outcomes and can have a significant impact on ensuring educational equity (see Appendix G). All educator candidates should have coursework and field-based experiences that prepare them to be curriculum literate in their licensure role. Regardless of the quality of curricular materials used in the school or district where they are ultimately employed, educators must be able to:

- understand the integration and connections that are at the core of high-quality materials;
- discern whether materials are high or low-quality in order to adjust or adapt them; and
- skillfully use materials through evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students.

For candidates in Administrative Leadership programs, their program may focus on how to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, support, and conditions to develop curriculum literacy.

Professional Support Personnel program completers' roles in supporting student success are often tied to academic experiences that are influenced by the quality of instructional materials and curriculum literacy of their teachers. However, because Professional Support Personnel do not play an instructional role, this criterion is not applicable.

Instruction (INS) Domain Criteria:

Teacher Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of Teacher license fields and grade levels.

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

- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).

For Professional licensure programs: All candidates develop the expert content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the evidence-based pedagogical skills needed to be effective educators (as articulated in the Professional Standards for Teachers[14]).

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills needed to be effective educators through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of, understand the instructional approaches in, and skillfully use curricular materials (as articulated in Appendix G).

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

Specialist Teacher Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of Specialist Teacher license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).

> *For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates develop the expert content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).

INS 3: Not applicable for Specialist Teacher programs.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills needed to be effective educators through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of,

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[14] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, and is anticipated to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.

understand the instructional approaches in, and skillfully use curricular materials (as articulated in Appendix G).

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

Professional Support Personnel Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of Professional Support Personnel license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).

INS 3: Not applicable for Professional Support Personnel programs.

INS 4: Not applicable for Professional Support Personnel programs.

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

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Administrator Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of [Administrator](#) license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)). *(Only applicable for School Business Administrator programs)*

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the evidence-based skills needed to be effective leaders (as articulated in the [Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#)).

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 G](#)).

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices.

The Organization Domain

The Sponsoring Organization is committed to achieving, and has systems, structures, and personnel in place to enable, equitable and effective program experiences and outcomes for all candidates.

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 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 of the program.

> **Personnel:** All educator preparation program leadership, full-time and part-time education faculty, arts and sciences faculty who teach coursework included in preparation programs of study, Program Supervisors, and staff involved in candidate support, advising, and field-based experiences. The term does not include Supervising Practitioners, as they are employed by PK-12 districts rather than the Sponsoring Organization.

The commitment and capacity to prepare effective, anti-racist, and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators is integral to ensuring candidates' success in the program and employment. This requires Sponsoring Organizations to have systems to ensure all personnel continually improve in their ability to prepare all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) to provide equitable learning experiences for their PK-12 students. It also requires Sponsoring Organizations to have practices to support the recruitment, hiring, evaluation, retention, and advancement of effective and 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 educator preparation budget allocation is strategic, informed by data, and focused 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, leading to cohesive and equitable program experiences.

ORG 4: The Sponsoring Organization gathers data and feedback to inform fair and equitable recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement procedures and practices that support an effective and diverse personnel.

ORG 5: The Sponsoring Organization evaluates and provides development opportunities for all personnel to ensure they are effective in their ability to equitably support and prepare all candidates to be effective educators.

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The Continuous Improvement Domain

The Sponsoring Organization engages in continuous improvement efforts that drive toward improved experiences and equitable outcomes for all candidates and the PK-12 students, schools, and districts 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. This system should also support the Sponsoring Organization to take action towards increasingly equitable experiences that prepare effective educators.

> **Equitable experiences and outcomes**: Program experiences (e.g., access to resources or opportunities, interactions with peers and personnel) and outcomes (e.g., CAP ratings, program completion, employment and retention in the licensure role, impact on PK-12 student outcomes) that are consistently effective, regardless of a candidate's identity (including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability).

Each Sponsoring Organization is responsible for using a variety of quantitative and qualitative evidence sources,[15] including stakeholder feedback, data collected by the organization, and, when available, state-collected data, to target areas for additional focus. The Sponsoring Organization is also responsible for regularly analyzing available local and state PK-12 student outcomes data related to completers' effectiveness and PK-12 school/district partnerships' impacts (see Partnerships) and using these data to inform programmatic changes that will improve candidates' experiences and outcomes (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds).[16] The Sponsoring Organization should incorporate multiple viewpoints in its analyses, including those directly impacted by programing, to ensure decisions are evidence-informed and center equity.

Constructing effective preparation programs that ensure equitable outcomes will require time and attention; only through a comprehensive and inclusive continuous improvement system can each Sponsoring Organization ensure decisions are having the intended impact and leading to increasingly equitable experiences and outcomes.

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[15] Data includes both quantitative and qualitative evidence, including stakeholder feedback. The use of available state-collected data is required by 603 CMR 7.03 (2) (a). This data should be considered alongside other sources of evidence, including data collected internally by Sponsoring Organizations. In cases where state-collected data is not available for a Sponsoring Organization or specific program(s) within a Sponsoring Organization, it is the organization's responsibility to collect and analyze relevant data to monitor program efficacy.

[16] DESE will look for evidence of changes made in response to PK-12 student outcomes data. The Sponsoring Organization will not be held accountable for the PK-12 student outcomes on their own; rather, the Sponsoring Organization is expected to be using these data to make aligned, internal changes in response to identified trends.

The Continuous Improvement (CI) Domain Criteria:

CI 1: The Sponsoring Organization's continuous improvement efforts are intentionally designed to involve a variety of stakeholders (including those directly impacted by programming) in decision-making to 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 stakeholder feedback, data collected by the organization, and, when available, state-collected data) in order to understand the experiences and outcomes of all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) and identify program strengths and areas for improvement.

CI 3: The Sponsoring Organization regularly analyzes available local and state PK-12 student outcomes data related to completers' effectiveness and PK-12 school/district partnerships' impacts and uses the data to inform aligned actions.

CI 4: The Sponsoring Organization makes evidence-informed, equity-centered decisions that lead to improved experiences and outcomes for all candidates.

The Candidate Domain

The Sponsoring Organization provides effective guidance and comprehensive support to all candidates from recruitment through program completion and ensures that those who are endorsed for licensure are prepared to be effective educators.

The Candidate domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization provides all candidates with the information and resources necessary to complete their program of study, fosters candidates' social and emotional well-being, and effectively prepares them for employment in their licensure role.

Sponsoring Organizations determine candidates' readiness for endorsement and, in turn, readiness to impact PK-12 students from all races, ethnicities, identities, and backgrounds in the licensure role. As such, the Sponsoring Organization should both provide comprehensive support to and hold high expectations for all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) in evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

Within any preparation program, there will be candidates who need additional, differentiated interventions in coursework, fieldwork, or for their social and emotional well-being. The Sponsoring Organization should have in place policies and processes to identify candidates 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 prepared to become effective educators, should not be endorsed for licensure.

The Candidate (CAN) Domain Criteria:

CAN 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines recruitment, admissions, and retention data and revises policies and practices to address systemically inequitable barriers to entry and completion.

CAN 2: The Sponsoring Organization positions all candidates to be successful in their program, licensure, and career through equitable, effective, and comprehensive guidance and support systems.

CAN 3: The Sponsoring Organization identifies and provides differentiated interventions for candidates who need additional support in coursework, fieldwork, or for their social and emotional well-being, and ensures that only candidates who are prepared to be effective educators are endorsed for the licensure role.

CAN 4: The Sponsoring Organization's waiver policy is applied equitably across programs and candidates and ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

The Partnerships Domain

The Sponsoring Organization has intentional and collaborative PK-12 partnerships that benefit candidates/completers and schools/districts, including supporting the cultivation of an increasingly diverse and effective educator workforce and anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences for both candidates and PK-12 students.

The Partnerships domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization has mutually beneficial partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts. High-quality partnerships are designed around the effective preparation and strategic recruitment, hiring, and ongoing development of Massachusetts educators in order to improve both PK-12 student learning and the long-term sustainability of educator pathways.[17] Effective partnerships go beyond transactional relationships (i.e., a sole focus on field-based experience placements) to mutually beneficial, institutionally sustainable relationships built upon open lines of communication, data sharing, and collaborative decision making, such that they remain responsive to both preparation program and PK-12 school/district needs.

Partnerships are essential for building a diverse and effective educator workforce, and building a strong educator workforce is a shared responsibility of DESE, Sponsoring Organizations, and PK-12 schools and districts. DESE has made, and will continue to build upon, a concerted effort to align expectations and initiatives across educator preparation and employment that center evidence-based, anti-racist, and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. The list below reflects these efforts and should serve as a foundation upon which to build strong partnerships:

- **Content Knowledge:** Alignment of the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- **School and District Leadership Practices:** Alignment of the Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders, the Model Principal Induction & Mentoring Handbook, and the Model Administrator Educator Evaluation Rubric

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[17] According to evidence from Massachusetts and nationally:

- Generally, practicum placement is highly predictive of first teaching positions (Krieg, et al., 2016). Recent research in Massachusetts also signals that prospective teachers of color are highly likely to teach close to their hometown (Rucinski, *pending*). Together, this creates an important and 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).

- **Pedagogical Skills:** Alignment of the Model Educator Evaluation Rubrics for Teachers and Leaders and the preparation standards articulated in the Professional Standards for Teachers[18] and the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership
- **Evaluation, Feedback, and Goal Setting:** Alignment of the Educator Evaluation Framework and the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)[19]

The Partnerships (PAR) Domain Criteria:

PAR 1: The Sponsoring Organization establishes, evaluates, and sustains partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts to ensure partnerships meet the needs of all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) and improves or discontinues those that do not meet candidates' needs.

PAR 2: The Sponsoring Organization collaborates with PK-12 partners in order to respond to school/district needs (e.g., increasing the diversity of educators; supporting the use of evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices; developing new programs for high-needs subject areas; offering professional development; or providing services for students).

PAR 3: The Sponsoring Organization solicits input from PK-12 partners to identify its strengths and areas for growth and takes aligned actions (e.g., improving preparation curriculum, strengthening field-based experiences).

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[18] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, and is anticipated to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.
[19] See prior footnote.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

The Field-Based Experiences Domain

All candidates engage in high-quality school-based experiences that prepare them to be effective educators for all students.

The Field-Based Experiences domain articulates the expectation that a Sponsoring Organization intentionally designs and integrates opportunities for candidates to observe, practice, and demonstrate effective, evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. Sponsoring Organizations should ensure that candidates also use these experiences to reflect on their identities, biases, and practices while in the role. To meet these objectives, Sponsoring Organizations should aim to provide field-based experiences that afford candidates access to an anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school culture, effective Supervising Practitioners, high-quality curricular materials, PK-12 students from diverse identities and backgrounds, and opportunities to participate in all components of the school community.[20]

If a setting does not have all of these aspects in place, it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to identify the gap(s) within the specific setting and provide additional resources to the candidate to address that area.

Field-based experiences encompass both pre-practicum and practicum placements. Guidance pertaining to each is outlined in greater detail below. The Sponsoring Organization is encouraged to supplement the minimum requirements described with additional expectations in support of effectively preparing candidates for the role. The organization should strategically leverage and/or design these experiences to build to candidate readiness for full responsibility in the licensure 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 should 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.

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[20] Zeichner, K., et. al. (2016); Bennet, S.V. (2013).

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences

According to state regulations (see Appendix A), 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 a supervisor from the preparation program in which the candidate is enrolled (i.e., Program Supervisor) and a qualified PK-12 educator (i.e., Supervising Practitioner).

All individuals in educator preparation programs shall assume full responsibility in the licensure role during the practicum 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 responsibility for all duties associated with the license being sought.

> **Full responsibility in the licensure role:** All functions and duties regularly fulfilled by an educator employed in the specific licensure category, field, and level.

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)):

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 or PreK-2, 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
Professional Support Personnel	See individual license requirements in 603 CMR 7.11

Placements and Supervision during Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences

The Sponsoring Organization is responsible for identifying effective practicum placements for its candidates. This is best accomplished through the development of intentional and collaborative partnerships with local schools/districts. The Sponsoring Organization should recruit, select, match, support, and monitor Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors to ensure that all candidates receive robust and equitable supervision.

A Supervising Practitioner should:
- meet all regulatory requirements relative to Supervising Practitioner eligibility;
- be able to model evidence-based instructional practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices;
- be able to provide candidates with high-quality feedback[21] and evaluation that prepares them to be effective, anti-racist, and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators;
- be able to effectively and equitably support candidates of all races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds; and
- commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization's expectations of the role.

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[21]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.

If a candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that meets these criteria, it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to directly support the candidate with additional resources in that area. DESE may request evidence of these additional supports at the time of an interim or formal review.

A Program Supervisor serves as the liaison between the practicum placement and Sponsoring Organization and should be able to:

- collaborate with and support the Supervising Practitioner in meeting the Sponsoring Organization's expectations;
- support candidates to make explicit connections between coursework and fieldwork;
- provide candidates with high-quality feedback and evaluation that prepares them to be effective, anti-racist, and culturally and linguistically sustaining educators; and
- effectively and equitably support candidates of all races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds.

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

Field-Based Experiences (FBE) Criteria:

FBE 1: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that pre-practicum and practicum placements expose all candidates to a range of settings, including settings[22] with:

- access to high-quality curricular materials;[23]
- diversity of students (including racial, ethnic, 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); and
- anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school cultures.

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[22] If the most appropriate setting(s) for an individual candidate does not allow for exposure to all required aspects for placements, it is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization to directly support the candidate by 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.

[23] See Appendix G for DESE's definition of Curriculum Literacy and information regarding the identification of high-quality curricular materials.

FBE 2: The Sponsoring Organization identifies, selects, and matches[24] Supervising Practitioners who:

- model evidence-based instructional practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices;
- effectively and equitably support candidates from all races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds; and
- 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 receive robust and equitable supervision in their licensure field, including high-quality feedback and evaluation that prepare them to be effective educators.

FBE 4: Pre-practicum and practicum ensure all candidates experience key milestones throughout the PK-12 academic year (e.g., establishing classroom routines, parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, benchmark assessments) and 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 are endorsed. For programs that do not use the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP),[25] performance assessments are regularly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

FBE 6: Field-based experiences meet regulatory requirements:

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

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[24] All Supervising Practitioners must effectively and equitably support all candidates and must commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization's expectations of their role. If an individual candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that models anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and evidence-based instructional practices, despite attempts by the Sponsoring Organization to find such a Supervising Practitioner, it is the responsibility of the organization to directly support the candidate with additional resources or guidance in that area. DESE may request evidence of this support at the time of an interim or formal review.

[25] See Appendix E for the performance assessment expectations for each licensure category (Initial Teacher, Specialist Teacher, Professional Support Personnel, and Administrator licenses).

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. All programs must be approved by DESE in order to endorse candidates for licensure.[26]

Types of Reviews

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

	Initiated by	Form of Review	Term of Approval	Purpose
Informal Review	Sponsoring Organization	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	Determined based on reasons for review, will be articulated in writing when initiated (See Interim Review of Approved Programs)	Varies by Approval Determination	For currently approved Sponsoring Organizations on an as-needed basis, may be voluntary or required
Formal Review	DESE	Stakeholder engagement and document review	Varies by Approval Determination, typically 7 years	For currently approved Sponsoring Organizations seeking continued approval at the end of current window

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[26] 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.

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Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

DESE's Role in Reviews

To support Sponsoring Organizations during the review process, DESE provides technical assistance to each organization through information sessions, phone or virtual meetings, and timely responses to questions or concerns. This technical assistance includes setting clear timelines, 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. 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. Formal reviews are conducted by external review teams comprised of representatives from both educator preparation programs and PK-12 schools and districts, facilitated by DESE specialists. DESE may work with a contracted vendor within the informal, interim, or formal review processes, should such a need arise.

Ultimately, the Commissioner maintains full discretion over all review determinations ([603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3)](#)).

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 or shorten approvals in extenuating circumstances. If/when an approval period is amended, DESE will aim to provide at least six months' notice to the Sponsoring Organization.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Review Processes

For all types of review, DESE has intentional processes to build an evidence base on which decisions can be made. This evidence-based model relies on the triangulation of information from multiple sources and the professional judgment of carefully selected and trained reviewers. The review process takes into consideration plans for improvement and organizational inputs but weighs evidence of impact most heavily.[27] Tools and resources to guide the review process are available in the program approval toolkits for informal and formal 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 processes in line with growing experience with each process and expectations.

Informal Review

The informal review process allows new Sponsoring Organizations and new programs within approved Sponsoring Organizations to apply for approval outside of the formal review cycle and timeline. 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 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 emailing EducatorPreparation@mass.gov. By obtaining advance notification, DESE can more effectively support the submission process and plan internal capacity for a timely review.

2. **Needs Assessment and Recruitment Strategy.** Proposing, reviewing, and operating a high-quality program requires a considerable amount of time and resources from Sponsoring Organizations and DESE. The Needs Assessment and Recruitment Strategy phase ensures that Sponsoring Organizations and DESE only engage in reviews for programs that will be able to meet demonstrated demands and effectively recruit and enroll candidates. Needs assessments are not required for programs on the DESE-determined list of high needs subject areas list.

   Needs assessments ensure that if a Sponsoring Organization proposes a program that is outside of the DESE-determined statewide high need areas, the organization is able to demonstrate need for the licensure program based on at least one of the following:

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[27]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.

- Local need
- Candidate interest
- Diversity in the workforce
- Effectiveness of completers (demonstrated by organizations Approved with Distinction)

If the completed worksheet suggests both need for the proposed educator preparation program(s) and the Sponsoring Organization's capacity 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.

3. **Informal Submission.** DESE provides a list of required documents for the informal submission. Requirements vary depending on program type, but typically include both responses to worksheet prompts and the submission of program materials to demonstrate programmatic alignment with DESE expectations. The Sponsoring Organization should refer to the program approval toolkit for informal review for specific requirements.

4. **DESE Review**. DESE reviews the informal submission to determine whether the proposed program sufficiently meets expectations as outlined in the Guidelines. This review focuses on inputs and plans, given that evidence of impact is not yet available.

5. **Notification of Approval Determination.** Based on the review of the informal submission, DESE notifies the Sponsoring Organization of its approval determination within six months from the close of the informal review window.

Organizations granted informal approval may be required to implement specific changes to their proposed program prior to enrolling candidates. If applicable, these requirements will be outlined by DESE in the approval letter.

For new Sponsoring Organizations, informal approval is granted for a three-year period. For current Sponsoring Organizations proposing new programs, informal approval is granted until the next formal review. Formal approval of informally approved programs is granted only after the successful completion of a formal review. After the first year of operation under informal review and for each subsequent year, the Sponsoring Organization must submit an annual report to DESE in accordance with 603 CMR 7.03 (4).

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 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) 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:

- Statewide outcome data (see Public Reporting and Annual Reporting below) that suggests concerns about novice educator readiness overall or in specific licensure roles, subject areas, grade spans, and/or with specific populations of students.
- State Annual Report data that indicates a significant change in the quality or sustainability of programs or the capacity of educator preparation leadership at a Sponsoring Organization and/or its program(s).
- 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 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.

Sponsoring Organizations may also request an interim review to submit substantial new evidence for purposes of changing an approval determination outside of the formal review (i.e., from Approved to Approved with Distinction).[28]

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 (if initiated by DESE)

- Details about the process for the interim review, including:
  - A timeline (e.g., submission date, stakeholder engagement dates, report date)
  - Evidence collection expectations
  - Role of external reviewers and/or entities, if any

- Clear criteria, benchmarks, and expectations

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[28] The process described in Appendix H: Demonstrating Progress Towards Addressing Conditions will be used for all Sponsoring Organizations seeking to move from Approved with Conditions or Probationary Approval to Approved.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Following feedback and dialogue with the impacted Sponsoring Organization(s), DESE reserves the right to update and revise the scope, rationale, and/or 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 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 for the Sponsoring Organization(s) or specific program(s):
- Feedback for improvement with no change in ratings or approval determination
- Conditions on continued approval
- Changes to criterion or domain ratings
- Changes to an approval determination (e.g., Approved to Approved with Distinction)
- The addition or removal of an at-risk or low-performing status designation
- The addition or removal of 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 its discretion (603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3)).

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 and 801 CMR 1.00. 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.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Formal Review of Approved Programs

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.[29] 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. Between cohorts, DESE solicits feedback, and makes shifts to the formal review toolkit as needed to ensure the process is effective, efficient, consistent, and equity-driven.

Stage	Step	Timing[30]	Description of Activities
Launch	Notification	Six months before cohort 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.[31] This communication formally launches the review and includes a timeline and overview of the process.

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[29] 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.

[30] 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.

[31] The anticipated academic year and cohort group for each Sponsoring Organization's next review is available on DESE's website.

September 2023

| Launch | Launch Worksheet | Month 1 (minimum of 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 six or fewer completers over the three years preceding review.[32] 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. Programs identified as "high need" by DESE are eligible to continue to operate if the Sponsoring Organization completes the "High-Needs Affidavit" ensuring they will monitor outcomes data for these programs and attempt to increase enrollment. If the Sponsoring Organization chooses not to complete a Needs Assessment or Affidavit, or if insufficient need or capacity is demonstrated, DESE will not review the program(s) and the program(s) will expire at the conclusion of the formal review.

Proposed New Programs. The Sponsoring Organization can also 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 need" by DESE. Only programs for which need is demonstrated will move forward to be considered for approval. |
| **Launch** | Cohort Launch Session | Month 1 | DESE hosts a launch session for all Sponsoring Organizations undergoing review. The session provides a more detailed overview of the review process and timeline, evidence sources, and guidance for the initial submission materials. |

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[32] If, across all of its approved programs, a Sponsoring Organization has six or fewer completers in the three years preceding the launch of their formal review, there will be insufficient outcomes data to conduct the formal review and the Sponsoring Organization's approval will expire. The Sponsoring Organization may undergo informal review if it seeks to continue operations as an approved preparation provider.

Launch	Technical Assistance 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, required documents, and candidate artifacts submission.
Launch	Program Overview, Required Documents, and Candidate Artifacts Submission	Months 2-5 (four months to complete)	The Sponsoring Organization compiles required documents and 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	Technical Assistance 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 to three days and is scheduled in collaboration with the Sponsoring Organization based on organization structure, size, and stakeholder availability. Stakeholder engagement includes a welcome meeting, interview with educator preparation leadership, and focus groups with internal and external stakeholders. It 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	Technical Assistance 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 a Targeted Submission worksheet for each domain. Prompts within each worksheet are determined based on evidence gathered in during the Launch and Initial Inquiry stages of the review and provide the Sponsoring Organization with the opportunity to address gaps and/or inconsistencies that could lead to findings and elevate strengths that could lead to commendations. During this stage, Sponsoring 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 and Report Drafting	Months 13-16	DESE works with the review team and engages in calibration to [determine criterion and domain ratings](#). DESE drafts a written report summarizing these decisions and an internal DESE team vets the content to ensure decisions are evidence-based, equity-oriented, 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 that informed those determinations.
Determination	Factual Accuracy Response	10 business days to complete from receipt of report	Upon receiving the Factual Accuracy 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, 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 at the organization and/or program level 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/their 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 and 801 CMR 1.00. 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.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Decision-Making

For each formal review, DESE works with a team of external reviewers to triangulate all available evidence, make evidence-based judgments, and calibrate ratings within the team. An internal DESE vetting panel reviews all ratings recommended by the external review team to ensure they are grounded in evidence, aligned with regulatory requirements, and set consistent expectations across reviews. DESE has the authority to change ratings recommended by the review team ([603 CMR 7.03 (2) and (3)](#)). 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 represent the level at which the 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 considers the domain ratings in determining the Sponsoring Organization's overall approval determination, program-specific approval determinations, and possible status designations if the Sponsoring Organization is granted Probationary Approval.

The following sections detail these ratings and decision-making processes.

Criterion and Domain Ratings

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 criterion ratings and must work towards agreement for each rating cited in the report. Rating recommendations result in one of the following for each criterion:

- *Commendation*: Evidence is consistently positive and indicates exceptional and/or 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.

- o *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, and 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.

The review team may also 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.

For Sponsoring Organizations that receive a determination of Approved with Conditions or Probationary Approval, DESE differentiates findings into two categories: conditional findings and non-conditional findings. Although all findings require action, DESE may determine that there are some findings 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. By addressing concerns outlined in conditional findings, the Sponsoring Organization is likely to see improvement in key areas, giving DESE the assurances needed to remove conditions and grant a Sponsoring Organization full formal approval. Sponsoring Organizations must create an improvement plan for each conditional finding and submit evidence of impact to DESE to demonstrate progress towards meeting expectations. Conditional findings may exist across all programs and/or for individual programs/program groupings. (For more information see the Appendix H: Demonstrating Progress Towards Addressing Conditions.)

- **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. Sponsoring Organizations report work to address non-conditional findings in the State Annual Report.

When a Sponsoring Organization has one or more conditional findings, they cannot be granted full Approval. DESE works with the 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. (See Appendix H: Demonstrating Progress Towards Addressing Conditions.)

Domain Ratings

Once the review team has rated all criteria in a domain, the team weighs the cumulative impact and significance of the criterion ratings to determine an overall domain rating recommendation. Each domain receives one of the following ratings:

- *Exemplary*: Sponsoring Organizations whose performance on a domain is rated as Exemplary exceed the already high standard of Proficient. This rating is reserved for performance on a domain of such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the state, or nation.

- *Proficient*: Sponsoring Organizations whose performance on a domain is rated as Proficient meet the expected, rigorous expectations for that domain. This rating represents 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 demonstrate gaps in implementation or weaknesses in key area(s) that negatively impact candidate experiences and outcomes. They are significantly underperforming as compared to expectations.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

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 state 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 is meant to signal to a Sponsoring Organization and external stakeholders the overall results and the general status of preparation within an organization. As such, Sponsoring Organizations must post their approval determination on their webpage where it is clearly visible to prospective candidates and other stakeholders.

While individual program groupings receive criteria and domain ratings, a Sponsoring Organization's approval determination is typically granted to the organization overall. However, DESE maintains the authority to issue a separate approval determination for individual programs or program groupings within the organization.

Each approval determination has specific indicators and implications, the details of which are outlined below. Regardless of approval determination, DESE continues to monitor provider and program efficacy and reserves the right to engage in an interim review.

Determination	Indicators	Implications
Approved with Distinction	Approved with Distinction is the highest level of approval. A Sponsoring Organization or program 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. While findings may be identified, they are generally limited in scope or severity. 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.	• Sponsoring Organization 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 evidence of insufficiently meeting standards • Sponsoring Organization is granted additional autonomy in making substantial changes • Sponsoring Organization may submit new programs for informal review without a needs assessment and at any time

		following review; the two-year moratorium prior to their next review does not apply • Should opportunities arise, Sponsoring Organizations that are Approved with Distinction may 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, their preparation is not significantly impacted by findings, and they receive a high-quality preparation experience.	• Sponsoring Organization 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 evidence of insufficiently 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 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.	• Sponsoring Organization 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, with conditions reassessed per improvement plan), unless program ceases to meet requirements or DESE finds evidence of insufficiently meeting standards • DESE identifies conditions that must be addressed and works with the Sponsoring Organization to develop an improvement plan and set a timeline for evidence submission

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 must be addressed for the Sponsoring Organization to meet state standards, and preparation is placing PK-12 students at risk of receiving an ineffective education.	• Sponsoring Organization 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 evidence of insufficiently meeting standards or program is also designated "low performing" • DESE outlines conditional findings that must be addressed and works with the Sponsoring Organization to develop an improvement plan and sets a timeline for evidence submission • Status designation as At-Risk or Low Performing (see Status Designations)
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 expectations. 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 receive a Not Approved determination 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 • The Sponsoring Organization has all rights of review required by G.L. c. 30A,s. 13 and 801 CMR 1.00. All requests for hearings, where hearings are provided by statute, must be received within 30 days of receipt of the final report and approval letter

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

At-Risk and Low Performing 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.

In Massachusetts, these status designations are associated with Probationary Approval. If, following a formal or interim review, a Sponsoring Organization fails to meet the requirements and benchmarks set forth in the Program Approval Standards and receives Probationary Approval, it shall receive a status designation of at-risk or low performing:

- At Risk Designation: Results in a three-year term of approval within which the Sponsoring Organization must demonstrate improvement. 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.

- Low Performing Designation: Results in a one-year term of approval. If, after one year under review, a program has not made satisfactory progress, its approval may be revoked, in accordance with G.L. c. 30A,s. 13. The Commissioner may extend approval for a second year if additional data must be collected.

Following either designation, the Sponsoring Organization shall submit an improvement plan to DESE that addresses the criteria, domain(s), and/or program(s) contributing to the at-risk or low performing status designation within the approval period. The Department will monitor the Sponsoring Organization's progress in meeting the goals outlined in the improvement plan. The burden of improvement rests solely with the Sponsoring Organization. (See Appendix H: Demonstrating Progress Towards Addressing Conditions for additional details.)

Any Sponsoring Organization with a status designation of at-risk or low performing may contest the designation by submitting a rejoinder response within 30 days of notification. 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 his/her/their discretion.

Stakeholder Communication Concerning a Low Performing Status Designation

Given the heightened stakes around a low performing status 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. The Sponsoring Organization may use language from the approval letter, final report, these Guidelines, and/or regulations to communicate the status designation. 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" present in the communication

- Clear communication that the Sponsoring Organization's authority to endorse candidates for licensure beyond the current approval date is in jeopardy

- Acknowledgment 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

- Communication of the low performing designation to any other stakeholder or entity potentially affected by the status. For example, the Sponsoring Organization should not enter 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.

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 30 days after notifying the Sponsoring Organization of the status.

- DESE does not publicly post the formal review report provided to the Sponsoring Organization; 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 PK-12 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 Sponsoring Organization, 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 organization.

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

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(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)). 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 that 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.

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. As a result, Sponsoring Organizations must 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.[33]

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	a) Number and list of candidates enrolled in each program
	b) Number and list of candidates completing all coursework, except the practicum/practicum equivalent
	c) Number and list of program completers
	d) Demographics:
	   a. Race
	   b. Ethnicity
	   c. Gender

Faculty Data	a) Number of full-time equivalents
	b) Number of part-time equivalents
	c) Demographics:
	   a. Race
	   b. Ethnicity
	   c. Gender

Continuous Improvement Activities	a) List of what data is being collected on a regular basis, including but not limited to stakeholder feedback, state

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[33] Information collected for annual and public reporting is primarily reflective of regulatory requirements for reporting and is not necessarily indicative of the evidence that will be weighed most heavily in program review processes.

	collected data, and evidence of completers' and partnerships' positive impact on PK-12 student outcomes b) 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	a) Reasons for zero program completers b) Plans for increasing enrollment and number of program completers
Types of District Partnerships and Collaborations	List of partner districts and 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 or interim review.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Public Reporting

DESE publicly reports educator preparation data in Public Profiles 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 Organizations 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:

- Employment and retention rates
- Educator evaluation data
- Surveys of stakeholders including recent Initial Teacher program completers after program completion and following one year of employment in a Massachusetts public school, 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
- Assessment data, including MTEL pass rates

All data are reported in the aggregate and only when the n-size 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 Edwin Analytics reports. Outcome measures published on Profiles are considered one source of evidence in the evaluation of programs during informal, interim, and formal reviews.

DESE publishes data on its website for each approved Sponsoring Organization and preparation program including, but not limited to, the following information:

Regulations	Online Profiles Elements	Source of Data
Sponsoring Organization general information	- Mission/vision statement - Contact information - Organization type	Provided by SO in Directory Administration (ongoing updates)
Candidate data (individual preparation 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 (Sponsoring Organization 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 (Sponsoring Organization level)	• List of partner districts • Description of partnerships	Provided by SO in Directory Administration (ongoing updates)
Annual goals and attainment (Sponsoring Organization 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. The Commonwealth 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 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.[34]

Individual license areas that have associated national accreditation required as per 603 CMR 7.00 will continue to use documentation of that accreditation to meet the expectations for program approval.

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[34] This refers to the Sponsoring Organization overall. Individual license areas that have associated national accreditation required as per 603 CMR 7.00 must use documentation of that accreditation to meet the expectations for program approval.

Appendix A: Regulations Governing Program Approval

603 CMR 7.00
Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations
Most Recently Amended by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education: March 7, 2023

7.03: Educator Preparation Program Approval

(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. As part of the formal review process, the Department shall review the written evidence for each proposed program and evidence collected by the Department. 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.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation 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:

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

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:
        a. Race
        b. Ethnicity
        c. Gender
3. (c) Faculty and Staff data:
    1. Number of full-time equivalent
    2. Number of part-time equivalent
    3. Demographics:
        a. Race
        b. Ethnicity
        c. 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, as amended by St. 2022, c. 154, § 10; c. 71, 38G ½; c. 71A, § 10; c. 76, § 19.

Appendix B: Program Approval Standards and Domain Crosswalk

Domain	Program Approval Standards (603 CMR 7.03)
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 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.
	Standard (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.
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, at the level of an initially licensed educator. (See also Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines)
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, 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 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 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:
	Demonstrate 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: 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.

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Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement in the Revision Process

Updates to program approval criteria as reflected in these Guidelines reflect a process of initial stakeholder engagement, internal drafting, and multiple rounds of stakeholder feedback on the drafted language.

During the initial engagement stage, DESE staff and external vendors heard from over 200 family, students, PK-12 educators, and educator preparation candidates and personnel about their desired outcomes for the program approval process and expectations. Through a survey, a series of case studies, town hall events, and focus groups, these stakeholders elevated several key themes that informed these Guidelines. In particular, the importance of developing an educators' understanding of students' communities and families and preparing educators with evidence-based and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices were named as key foci. Along with the importance of these foci, participants elevated that these changes will require changing institutional systems and structures to promote anti-racism within Sponsoring Organizations.

The DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness used the feedback from initial stakeholder engagement to update each domain vision statement and draft criteria that centered evidence-based and anti-racist practices. Several external advisory groups provided multiple rounds of feedback on the draft criteria, including:

- The Principal and Teacher Advisory Council, comprised of 40 current school-based administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals from across the Commonwealth
- The Educator Preparation Advisory Group, comprised of 8 representatives from diverse educator preparation programs across the Commonwealth
- The Educational Personnel Advisory Council, comprised of 14 representatives from organizations across the Massachusetts PK-12 and educator preparation landscape

These Guidelines were then published for a public comment period. Through a survey and series of roundtables, DESE received feedback from over 250 educator preparation personnel, preparation candidates, district and school leaders, current educators, and PK-12 students and families from across the Commonwealth. Several state-wide associations also provided public comment, including the Commonwealth Teacher Education Consortium (COMTEC), Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE), and the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA).

Across stakeholder groups, demographic groups, organization types, and geographical regions, there was broad support in the public comment for the evidence-based focus and integration of anti-racist practices throughout the Guidelines. Survey comments and roundtable discussions also emphasized these themes, with stakeholders sharing sentiments such as:

> *"This effectively captures the knowledge and skills I would hope candidates possess on day 1. Up to now, the language around anti-racist educators has felt like an add-on rather than something well-integrated into the process."* – Educator Preparation Program Representative

> *"I truly appreciate the level of detail written that explains just what is meant by "effective." The breadth, the humanness, of what is contained in those descriptions is, I think, crucial."* – Educator Preparation Program Representative

> *"I appreciate the focus on anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices across domains. [Our educators across the state don't] represent the student body or their families. This sets up an uneven playing ground for students and families. Without [pre-service educators] doing pre-work to develop anti-racist practices, you are not going to be able to build successful relationships with families."* – Family Engagement Coordinator

Most of the critical comments and questions shared during the public comment period sought clarity on key terms and processes referenced in the Guidelines. In response to this feedback, revisions were made throughout the Guidelines to further clarify expectations, processes, and terminology including:

- Updates to domain overviews, vision statements, and criteria
- Clarification of the review processes, ratings, and implications of approval determinations
- Expansion of the glossary of terms and addition of callout boxes for key terms

As the Guidelines provide a high-level description of expectations and processes, stakeholders also requested resources to strengthen their understanding of the criteria and how they align with expectations for PK-12 schools and districts. In addition to the changes made within the Guidelines, DESE has and will continue to provide a variety of resources, technical assistance, and communication regarding these Guidelines.

Appendix D: Program Approval Criteria

> An **effective educator** is one who uses evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence. Please see the Glossary for definitions of additional terms used throughout the Guidelines.

The Instruction (INS) Domain
The Sponsoring Organization provides effective instruction to all candidates and ensures that all completers have the requisite content knowledge and evidence-based pedagogical skills, including curriculum literacy and anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, for the licensure role.

Teacher Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of Teacher license fields and grade levels.

> INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
> - Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
> - Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.
>
> INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).
>
> > *For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates develop the expert content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines).
>
> INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the evidence-based pedagogical skills needed to be effective educators (as articulated in the Professional Standards for Teachers[35]).
>
> INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills needed to be effective educators through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of, understand the instructional approaches in, and skillfully use curricular materials (as articulated in Appendix G).

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[35] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

Specialist Teacher Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of [Specialist Teacher](#) license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)).

> *For Professional licensure programs:* All candidates develop the expert content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)).

INS 3: Not applicable for Specialist Teacher programs.

INS 4: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the curriculum literacy skills needed to be effective educators through opportunities to critically analyze the quality of, understand the instructional approaches in, and skillfully use curricular materials (as articulated in [Appendix G](#)).

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy.

Professional Support Personnel Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of [Professional Support Personnel](#) license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program(s) that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)).

INS 3: Not applicable for Professional Support Personnel programs.

INS 4: Not applicable for Professional Support Personnel programs.

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

Administrator Programs:

Please reference DESE's website for a complete list of [Administrator](#) license fields and grade levels.

INS 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines and updates the program(s) of study to ensure content and practices throughout the program that:
- Represent diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives; and
- Align with current evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.

INS 2: The program(s) of study ensures all candidates develop the fluent content knowledge required for the licensure role (as articulated in the [Subject Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#)). *(Only applicable for School Business Administrator programs)*

INS 3: The program(s) of study ensures that all candidates develop the evidence-based skills needed to be effective leaders (as articulated in the [Professional Standards and Indicators for Administrative Leadership](#)).

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 G](#)).

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 evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining leadership practices.

The Organization (ORG) Domain

The Sponsoring Organization is committed to achieving, and has systems, structures, and personnel in place to enable, equitable and effective program experiences and outcomes for all candidates.

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 educator preparation budget allocation is strategic, informed by data, and focused 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, leading to cohesive and equitable program experiences.

ORG 4: The Sponsoring Organization gathers data and feedback to inform fair and equitable recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement procedures and practices that support an effective and diverse personnel.

ORG 5: The Sponsoring Organization evaluates and provides development opportunities for all personnel to ensure they are effective in their ability to equitably support and prepare all candidates to be effective educators.

The Continuous Improvement (CI) Domain

The Sponsoring Organization engages in continuous improvement efforts that drive toward improved experiences and equitable outcomes for all candidates and the PK-12 students, schools, and districts they serve.

CI 1: The Sponsoring Organization's continuous improvement efforts are intentionally designed to involve a variety of stakeholders (including those directly impacted by programming) in decision-making to 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 stakeholder feedback, data collected by the organization, and, when

available, state-collected data[36] in order to understand the experiences and outcomes of all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) and identify program strengths and areas for improvement.

CI 3: The Sponsoring Organization regularly analyzes available local and state PK-12 student outcomes data related to completers' effectiveness and PK-12 school/district partnerships' impacts and uses the data to inform aligned actions.[37]

CI 4: The Sponsoring Organization makes evidence-informed, equity-centered decisions that lead to improved experiences and outcomes for all candidates.

The Candidate (CAN) Domain
The Sponsoring Organization provides effective guidance and comprehensive support to all candidates from recruitment through program completion and ensures that those who are endorsed for licensure are prepared to be effective educators.

CAN 1: The Sponsoring Organization regularly examines recruitment, admissions, and retention data and revises policies and practices to address systemically inequitable barriers to entry and completion.

CAN 2: The Sponsoring Organization positions all candidates to be successful in their program, licensure, and career through equitable, effective, and comprehensive guidance and support systems.

CAN 3: The Sponsoring Organization identifies and provides differentiated interventions for candidates who need additional support in coursework, fieldwork, or for their social and emotional well-being, and ensures that only candidates who are prepared to be effective educators are endorsed for the licensure role.

CAN 4: The Sponsoring Organization's waiver policy is applied equitably across programs and candidates and ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

The Partnerships (PAR) Domain
The Sponsoring Organization has intentional and collaborative PK-12 partnerships that benefit candidates/completers and schools/districts, including supporting the cultivation of an increasingly

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[36] The use of available state-collected data is required by 603 CMR 7.03 (2) (a). This data should be considered alongside other sources of evidence, including feedback and quantitative and qualitative data collected internally by Sponsoring Organizations. In cases where state-collected data is not available for a Sponsoring Organization or specific programs within the Sponsoring Organization, it is the organization's responsibility to collect and analyze relevant data to monitor program efficacy.

[37] The Sponsoring Organization will not be held accountable for making improvements to PK-12 student outcomes data, but will be expected to make aligned, internal changes in response to identified trends.

diverse and effective educator workforce and anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining learning experiences for both candidates and PK-12 students.

PAR 1: The Sponsoring Organization establishes, evaluates, and sustains partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts to ensure partnerships meet the needs of all candidates (with particular focus on those from systemically marginalized races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds) and improves or discontinues those that do not meet candidates' needs.

PAR 2: The Sponsoring Organization collaborates with PK-12 partners in order to respond to school/district needs (e.g., increasing the diversity of educators; supporting the use of evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices; developing new programs for high-needs subject areas; offering professional development; or providing services for students).

PAR 3: The Sponsoring Organization solicits input from PK-12 partners to identify its strengths and areas for growth and takes aligned actions (e.g., improving preparation curriculum, strengthening field-based experiences).

The Field-Based Experiences (FBE) Domain
All candidates engage in high-quality school-based experiences that prepare them to be effective educators for all students.

FBE 1: The Sponsoring Organization ensures that pre-practicum and practicum placements expose all candidates to a range of settings, including settings with[38]:
- access to high-quality curricular materials[39];
- diversity of students (including racial, ethnic, 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); and
- anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining school cultures.

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[38] If the most appropriate setting for an individual candidate does not allow for exposure to all required aspects for placements, 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.

[39] See Appendix G for DESE's definition of curriculum literacy and information regarding the identification of high-quality curricular materials.

FBE 2: The Sponsoring Organization identifies, selects, and matches[40] Supervising Practitioners who:

- model evidence-based instructional practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices;
- effectively and equitably support candidates from all races, ethnicities, identity groups, and backgrounds; and
- 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 receive robust and equitable supervision in their licensure field, including high-quality feedback and evaluation that prepare them to be effective educators.

FBE 4: Pre-practicum and practicum ensure all candidates experience key milestones throughout the PK-12 academic year (e.g., establishing classroom routines, parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, benchmark assessments) and 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 are endorsed. For programs that do not use the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP),[41] performance assessments are regularly evaluated to ensure their effectiveness.

FBE 6: Field-based experiences meet regulatory requirements:
a. Practicum hours, including hours of full responsibility in the licensure role, meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4);
b. Placement(s) meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.04 (4); and
c. Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements as per 603 CMR 7.02.

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[40] All Supervising Practitioners must effectively and equitably support all candidates and must commit to meeting the Sponsoring Organization's expectations of their role. If an individual candidate is unable to be matched with a Supervising Practitioner that models evidence-based instructional practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, despite attempts by the Sponsoring Organization to find such a Supervising Practitioner, it is the responsibility of the organization to directly support the candidate with additional resources or guidance in that area. DESE may request evidence of this support at the time of an interim or formal review.

[41] See Appendix E: Performance Assessments during Practicum/Practicum Equivalent Experiences for the performance assessment expectations for each licensure category (Initial Teacher, Specialist Teacher, Professional Support Personnel, and Administrator licenses).

Appendix E: 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 a bridge from training to employment by aligning the expectations and process to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework.[42] 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.

Just as the Educator Evaluation Framework relies on the use of multiple measures to assess performance, CAP assesses candidate readiness using a variety of measures. There are five major categories of evidence required: observations, measures of student learning, student feedback, progress toward a candidate's professional practice goal, and candidate artifacts.

While these expectations are specific to the performance assessment for Initial Teacher licenses, Sponsoring Organizations are encouraged to utilize similar categories of evidence within performance assessments for each licensure type.

For more information about CAP, see the Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance.

Specialist Teacher and Professional Support Personnel Licenses

CAP does not apply to Specialist Teacher or Professional Support Personnel programs. The Sponsoring Organization is expected to assess candidates during their practicum/practicum equivalent experience with a performance assessment of comparable rigor that provides candidates with feedback to improve their practice and ensures completers are ready on day one. It is the responsibility of the Sponsoring

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[42] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.

Organization to develop and consistently implement a performance assessment appropriate for each Specialist Teacher and Professional 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](). 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.[43]

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[43] See the [Resources and Information about PAL](), including the PAL Administrative Field Guide, for additional information about acceptable forms of support for candidates.

Appendix F: Evidence-Based Practices: Early Literacy

Being able to read, write, speak, and communicate are essential for full participation in our society. Literacy affords access to ideas, opportunities, and so much more. In order to put all Massachusetts students on a path toward literacy for life, students must have access to evidence-based early literacy instruction provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally and linguistically sustaining.

Evidence-based early literacy instruction can be defined as "the practices or programs [specific to early literacy instruction in preschool through third grade] that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research" (U.S. Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). DESE believes that the strongest evidence-based instructional practices have evidence of efficacy across diverse populations of students.

Research indicates that students' access to this kind of effective literacy instruction is linked to teachers' **content fluency in early literacy**, which has a direct impact on student achievement. Therefore, it is critical that educator preparation programs **promote deeper learning of early literacy content knowledge** through rich practice and feedback, moving beyond the functional level of knowledge assessed by the MTEL to ensure fluency in teaching and learning.

In addition to gaining knowledge of the evidence-base of instructional practices that promote positive student outcomes, educator candidates should understand research that has conclusively shown which instructional practices do not serve students (e.g., Round Robin Reading or teaching a Letter of the Week). All teachers need to be critical consumers and thinkers and know how to navigate ongoing research in order to ensure effective literacy instruction.

In order to promote educator candidates' access to opportunities to learn, practice, and demonstrate the content knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary to effectively teach early literacy, DESE launched the Early Literacy in Educator Preparation initiative and established literacy-specific expectations aligned to Mass Literacy for educator preparation in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities licensure programs. The criteria (available here) set expectations for:
- literacy coursework that builds an educator candidate's content knowledge of the principals of intentional and equitable literacy instruction, language comprehension, foundational early literacy skills, reading comprehension, and writing,
- field-based experiences that support an educator candidate's growing understanding and demonstration of effective literacy instruction, and
- sponsoring organizations' partnerships with PK12 districts and schools that foster evidence-based early literacy practices.

In accordance with the Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria, by SY2024-2025, all approved sponsoring organizations with Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities licensure

programs must prepare teacher candidates in Massachusetts in evidence-based early literacy practices articulated in Mass Literacy through coursework and opportunities for practice and high-quality feedback. DESE will use the criteria in decisions about educator licensure and program approval, including authorizing an individual program or group of programs to operate. Through its oversight, DESE seeks to ensure that educators entering the workforce have sufficient knowledge in evidence-based early literacy instructional practices to support students in mastering relevant Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Appendix G: Evidence-Based Practices: Curriculum Literacy

A growing body of research indicates that curricular materials 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)
- About 1.5 times the difference between an average teacher and one at the 75th percentile (see Choosing Blindly)
- Greater than the difference between a new teacher and one with three years of experience (see Never Judge a Book by Its Cover)
- Reflective of more equitable access to rigorous schoolwork, high expectations, and effective instruction (See The Opportunity Myth)

Educator candidates must be prepared with knowledge and skills to evaluate and skillfully use curricular materials with evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining 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; and
3. Skillfully use materials through evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining 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 exclusively **creating curriculum** from scratch, to include **effectively evaluating curriculum and strategies for skillfully 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. Regardless of the materials being used in the school/district where a completer is

ultimately employed, curriculum literacy is necessary for all educators in critically and effectively navigating the breadth of options available.

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 and learning progressions 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
   - Understand how materials support knowledge-building and 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 sustaining practices and include rich texts with diverse perspectives and stories, and
     - Providing guidance for supporting multilingual learners, students with disabilities, students working above grade level, and students not yet meeting learning targets

2. **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), EdReports, and STEM Learning Design, as resources for identifying high-quality curricular materials
   - Understand how to use tools such as the CURATE rubrics for content areas where there are comprehensive curriculum or the IMET (Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool) and 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 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 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

3. **Skillfully use materials** through evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining, to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages students to reach their full potential

   A. 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

   B. 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

   C. 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 sustaining teaching practices
      - Be able to draw upon students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to enhance curricular materials and inform instructional decision making

D. 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 H: Demonstrating Progress Towards Addressing Conditions

It is necessary for a Sponsoring Organization to address all conditions outlined in the formal review report in order to move from Approved with Conditions or Probationary Approval to full Approval.

After being granted Approval with Conditions or Probationary Approval, a Sponsoring Organization must submit an improvement plan using the DESE-provided template. The improvement plan will describe the actions that will be taken to address each condition and the anticipated evidence of impact that will demonstrate that these high-priority areas of concern have been addressed. At least annually, the Sponsoring Organization must submit evidence of impact for each condition.

Improvement Plan

The Sponsoring Organization must use a template provided by DESE to articulate the actions that will be taken in response to each condition and the anticipated, aligned evidence of impact that will be submitted to DESE for review.

When putting together the improvement plan, the Sponsoring Organization should consider what evidence will exist to demonstrate that each condition is met or is on track to be met. The evidence reflected in the formal review report should serve as a baseline for this evidence of progress. The Sponsoring Organization may also choose to monitor additional qualitative and/or quantitative measures aligned to the condition.

DESE will review the improvement plan and work with the Sponsoring Organization to finalize the specific evidence that will be used to assess progress. DESE will evaluate whether the anticipated evidence of impact will be sufficient for decision-making; DESE will not evaluate the quality of the plans or proposed actions. If the anticipated evidence of impact will not be sufficient for decision-making, DESE may require that the improvement plan be revised and resubmitted.

The Sponsoring Organization is encouraged to share the improvement plan or a summary of key actions that will be taken to address conditions with all stakeholders, including current and prospective candidates.

Evidence of Impact Submission

After one year, and at least annually for as long as conditions remain, the Sponsoring Organization will submit evidence for each condition. DESE will share a timeline for the submission of evidence of impact upon approval of the Sponsoring Organization's improvement plan. Sponsoring Organizations may request an alternative timeline, which will be approved at DESE's discretion. DESE also reserves the right to amend the approval timeline as needed. Upon review, DESE will determine whether evidence is sufficient to remove each condition.

Appendix I: 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. Program expectations should be consistent across all delivery models.

During informal, interim, and formal reviews, programs offered at an off-campus/satellite location, through an 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.

If a Sponsoring Organization plans to change the delivery model of an existing approved program, including approved programs offered at off-campus/satellite locations within Massachusetts or online, this must be reported to DESE.

When adding or changing to a new delivery model outside of informal or formal review, Sponsoring Organizations must submit a letter of intent with a succinct description and rationale for the proposed change, 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. 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 when considering online delivery models for this programming.

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Appendix J: Implementation of Waivers in Approved Programs

Based on the Regulations for Program Approval (603 CMR 7.03 (1) (b)), any time a candidate's participation in a state-approved educator preparation program deviates from the design and/or requirements of the program submitted to and approved by DESE, documentation of a waiver is required. Records of candidates for whom program requirements have been waived, including the rationale that warrants the waiver, must be available for review by DESE.

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 has the authority to review an individual 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. A Sponsoring Organization may not design a program dependent upon a waiver; each decision to issue a waiver must be made on a case-by-case basis with individual documentation and rationale. In each decision to issue a waiver, a Sponsoring Organization should 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.

A Sponsoring Organization has the authority to grant the following types of waivers, when appropriate for a specific candidate:
- Individual Courses
- Pre-Practicum
- Up to one half of the Practicum/Practicum Equivalent
- Practicum setting requirements (except for the use of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks[44])
- Supervising Practitioner regulatory requirements

Implementing an equitable policy for granting waivers is the responsibility of the Sponsoring Organization. A Sponsoring Organization's waiver policy should be clear and equitably communicated and applied. 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.

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[44] If a candidate has a spouse or domestic partner in the armed forces of the United States who is relocated outside of Massachusetts due to their duty assignment, the Sponsoring Organization may also waive the use of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks as a requirement for the practicum setting.

Appendix K: List of Supporting Guidelines

The following supporting Guidelines can be found on the Educator Preparation Guidelines and Advisories webpage.

- Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders
- Guidelines for Pre-Practicum for Teachers
- Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)[45]
- Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers (PST Guidelines) [46]
- Guidelines for Subject Matter Knowledge (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
- Endorsement Guidelines:
  - Guidelines for the Autism Endorsement
  - Guidelines for the Bilingual Education Endorsement
  - Guidelines for the Transition Specialist Endorsement
  - SEI Stand-Alone Course Requirements

Advisories to support the effective implementation of these guidelines, including clarification, additional details, and examples, can also be found on the Educator Preparation Guidelines and Advisories webpage. Additional advisories will be added based on ongoing questions and feedback from stakeholders.

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[45] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.
[46] See above.

Appendix L: Glossary of Terms

Admission: The point at which an individual has met all of the Sponsoring Organization's requirements in order to be formally accepted into the educator preparation program. Each Sponsoring Organization may define admission differently, though they are encouraged to formally enroll candidates in Early ID early in their program to promote accurate retention data.

All: When used in reference to any group of individuals throughout these Guidelines, "all" represents each member of that group, inclusive of, but not limited to, all races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, gender identities, and abilities, with particular focus on those who have been systematically marginalized or underserved, such as those who identify as Black, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial.

Anti-racist practices: Practices that demonstrate that all racial groups are equals in their differences and resist and dismantle inequities due to individual and systemic racism to advance racial equity. The use of these practices fosters the development of an anti-racist school/classroom culture.

Anti-racist educator: An educator who 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. All educators should strive to be anti-racist, including those in predominantly white classrooms/schools/districts.

Approval determination: The type of approval a Sponsoring Organization and/or individual program receives at the conclusion of a formal review (Approved with Distinction, Approved, Approved with Conditions, Probationary Approval, or Not Approved).

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.

Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP): A performance assessment used to gauge a teacher candidate's readiness in relation to the Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs). CAP parallels the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system. Successful completion of CAP is required to complete all teacher preparation programs.

Commendation: Criterion rating in formal review reserved for innovative, or especially outstanding practices that exceed the expectations described in the Program Approval Criteria. Commendations may impact a Sponsoring Organization's overall approval determination.

Completer*:* A person who has successfully finished an educator preparation program; alumnus, graduate.

Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practice: See DESE's Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining definition: https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html.

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; and
3. Skillfully use materials through evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining, to ensure the enacted curriculum supports and engages all students to reach their full potential. (See DESE Webpage on Curriculum Matters, also see Appendix G)

Data: Quantitative and qualitative evidence, including stakeholder feedback. The use of available state-collected data is required by 603 CMR 7.03 (2) (a). This data should be considered alongside other sources of evidence, including data collected internally by Sponsoring Organizations. In cases where state-collected data is not available for a Sponsoring Organization or specific programs within a Sponsoring Organization, it is the organization's responsibility to collect and analyze relevant data to monitor program efficacy.

Effective Educator: An educator who uses evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence in their students.

Endorse: The action taken by a Sponsoring Organization when a completer has successfully finished all program requirements, regardless of whether the individual has met additional licensure requirements (e.g., Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL), Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL)).

Equity: Exists when identity (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, language, disability and ability) can no longer be used to predict social, economic, or educational outcomes. Enacting steps towards equity means making available opportunities and supports to eliminate bias and structural barriers at every level of the education system and society.

Equitable program experiences and outcomes: Program experiences (e.g., access to resources or opportunities, interactions with peers and personnel) and outcomes (e.g., CAP ratings, program completion, employment and retention in the licensure role) that are consistently effective, regardless of a candidate's identity (including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, language,

socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability).

Evidence-based: Practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented as supported by valid and reliable research. (U.S. Department of Education, Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

Evidence-based practices include, but are not limited to, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and use of high-quality curricular materials.

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

Finding: Criterion rating for areas of concern requiring corrective action. Findings may impact a Sponsoring Organization's overall approval determination.

Full responsibility in the licensure role: All functions and duties regularly fulfilled by an educator employed in the specific licensure category, field, and level.

High-quality curricular materials: High-quality curricular materials exhibit a coherent sequence of lessons that target learning of grade-appropriate skills and knowledge through instructional strategies that are well supported by research 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. (See DESE Webpage on Curriculum Matters, also see Appendix G)

High-quality feedback: Feedback that is specific (based on evidence from a candidate's practice), 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: Include, but are not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability.

Inclusive: Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments, and actively seek and hear about differences, and ensure 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 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, Comprehensive Health, Digital Literacy and Computer Science, English Language Arts and Literacy, English Language Development, History and Social Science, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, Vocational Technical Education, and World Languages.

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 and quantitative evidence from interviews, focus groups, and surveys as well as data on program results.

Partnership: Deliberate collaboration between Sponsoring Organizations and a PK-12 school/district to ensure effective preparation that meets the needs of the Sponsoring Organization and PK-12 partner (see [Partnerships Domain](#)).

Performance assessment: An evaluation conducted during the practicum/practicum equivalent that provides candidates with feedback to improve their practice and ensures only candidates who are ready for full responsibility in the licensure role complete the program.

Persistence 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. Also known as retention rate.

Personnel: All educator preparation program leadership, full-time and part-time education faculty, arts and sciences faculty who teach coursework included in preparation programs of study, Program Supervisors, and staff involved in candidate support, advising, and field-based experiences. The term does not include Supervising Practitioners, as they are employed by PK-12 districts rather than the Sponsoring Organization.

Practicum/Practicum Equivalent: A field-based experience within an approved program in the role and at the level of the license sought, during which a candidate's performance is supervised jointly by the Supervising Practitioner and Program Supervisor and evaluated through a performance assessment for the Initial License.

Pre-Practicum: Early field-based experiences integrated into courses or seminars in accordance with the [Pre-Practicum Guidelines](#).

Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs): The pedagogical and other professional knowledge and skills required of all teachers defined in the Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers. The standards align expectations for pre-service candidates with those for in-service teachers as outlined in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. (See Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers[47])

Professional suggestions: Professional suggestions serve as recommendations from external reviewers to the Sponsoring Organization to support continuous improvement. They do not require a 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 of Study: The coursework, seminars, workshops, webinars, field experiences, and other program components that are required for the completion of an approved program.

Program Supervisor: The supervisor from the sponsoring organization, under whose immediate supervision the candidate for licensure practices during a practicum. The Program Supervisor is responsible for overseeing the student teaching experience, observing and providing feedback to the candidate alongside the Supervising Practitioner, and coordinating the performance assessment.

Racism: A system of advantage and disadvantage based on membership of racial or ethnic groups.

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 educator preparation programs. During the program approval process, evidence collection and evaluation will focus on the specific unit within the organization that oversees educator preparation programs (e.g., Education Department, School of Education). Approved Sponsoring Organizations have the ability to endorse candidates for Massachusetts licensure.

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[47] The Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric is under revision through SY2023-24, to be re-released in Summer 2024. The Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP will be updated to align with the rubric during SY2023-24. Programs may access the draft rubric at https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/ to monitor proposed revisions.

Status designation: An assessment of a Sponsoring Organization's performance as required by Title II of the Higher Education Act (At-Risk or Low Performing).

Student: A pupil enrolled in a PK-12 school.

Subject Matter Knowledge: The content knowledge expectations for educator licensure in Massachusetts for each license are outlined in the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines. The requirements directly align with the set of PK-12 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks appropriate for each subject and grade level license, wherever possible.

Substantial changes: Significant changes to the delivery model, program(s) of study, or turnover of key personnel that alter the substance of the program as originally approved by DESE.

Supervising Practitioner: A PK-12 educator under whose immediate supervision the candidate for licensure practices during practicum. For the educator of record, a comparably qualified educator will function as the supervising practitioner during the practicum equivalent.

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, ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status. sexual orientation, gender identity, and ability.

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.

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