Educator Preparation Program Review and Approval Handbook

Procedural Guidance for Educator Preparation Programs Operating in the State of Maryland

Division of Educator Effectiveness

June 2024

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

Geoffery Sanderson
Deputy State Superintendent
Office of Accountability

Kelly Meadows
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Educator Effectiveness

Wes Moore
Governor

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Samir Paul, Esq.

Holly C. Wilcox, Ph.D.

Abisola Ayoola (Student Member)

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1.0	April 2024	Initial Document
1.1	June 2024	Formatting, Superintendent title, replaced "exceptionalities" with "disabilities,"; removed AC3.3 mandating the inclusion of nationally recognized and nationally scored portfolio-based assessments.

Context and Purpose

In December 2023, the Maryland State Board of Education (SBOE), in conjunction with the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB), formally repealed and replaced the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) that govern educator preparation and licensure. COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel***, and COMAR 13A.12.,** *Educator Licensure***, set forth new language to overhaul and improve the existing regulatory framework for educator preparation and licensure requirements. These regulations represent an alignment to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2021 to transform public education in Maryland into a world-class education system. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is responsible for designing, developing, and managing the implementation of these regulations, which became effective April 1, 2024.**

Consistent with MSDE's mission and vision and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, educator preparation in the state of Maryland will place a stronger, more intentional focus on evidence-based practices to ensure teachers, administrators, specialists, and other professional support staff understand, practice, and embody a culture of equity and excellence that supports ALL learners. This Educator Preparation Program Review and Approval Handbook outlines the approval and review processes for Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) to follow to ensure compliance with applicable governance.

This Handbook is provided to clarify MSDE guidelines and processes that are not specifically outlined in statute or regulation. For EPPs to have a complete understanding of what is required to be compliant, they must be familiar with provisions in statute, regulation (COMAR 13A.07.06) and the contents of this Handbook.

Additionally, this Handbook provides information and guidance on:

- National accreditation recognition,
- Approval of new programs,
- Formal review for EPPs seeking State approval,
- Reviewer processes and expectations, and
- Annual reporting requirements.

Definitions of Key Terms

When used in the scope of this handbook the following terms and phrases are defined as:

Accreditation - also referred to as "national accreditation", means a teacher education program has met standards set by a national accrediting agency recognized by the Department and the Commission.

Alternative Teacher Preparation Program - a sequence of courses established by a county board and approved by the State Superintendent that leads to a participant receiving a resident teacher certificate issued by the Department and includes teaching assignments with supervision and mentoring by a qualified teacher.

Approved - an overall program determination. A program receives an "Approved" status from MSDE when it has met all requirements of the application process and, through a formal review, demonstrated that it meets the requirements for approval in the state of Maryland.

Approved with Conditions – An overall program determination. A program will receive conditional approval if a program has met some, but not all, requirements set by the Department and may operate under certain circumstances

Candidate - means an individual enrolled in an educator preparation program who is preparing for or serving in a position as an educator in schools that educate students in preschool through grade 12.

Clinical experience - guided, hands-on, practical applications and demonstrations of a candidate's professional knowledge and the application of theory through collaborative and facilitated learning, including in the practicum and in field-based assignments, tasks, activities, and assessments across a variety of settings.

Clinical Supervisor - an individual employed by the education preparation provider who oversees a candidate, is trained or experienced in the field in which the individual is supervising and is trained to work with and provide feedback to candidates.

Commission or MHEC - the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Completer – a candidate who has met the exit requirements outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06.08E.

Department or MSDE - Maryland State Department of Education.

Does Not Meet - An essential component, subcomponent, and indicator determination. Evidence indicates areas of concern or inconsistencies that require action for the program to meet expectations.

Educator Preparation Program (program) - either a traditional or alternative Maryland-approved sequence of courses and experiences required to train candidates to become licensed educators in a specific area.

Education Preparation Provider (EPP *or* Provider) - an accredited college, university, or other post-secondary institution, public or private educational association, local school system, corporation or institution approved to operate traditional or alternative educator training programs in Maryland.

Entrance - means matriculation into a program.

Essential Component – A categorization used by MSDE to review and evaluate EPP alignment to regulations and statutes. Essential components categorize items within COMAR 13A.07.06 and are further divided into subcomponents and indicators.

Exit - completion of a program.

Focused Review - the subsequent review by the Department of a program that holds the status of approved with conditions or probation.

Formal Review – A review conducted by MSDE in partnership with external reviewers to evaluate EPPs. The goal is to ensure EPP compliance with applicable statutes and regulations.

Indicator – Verbiage from statutes and regulations used by formal review teams to ensure programs are operating in accordance with prescribed regulations and statutes.

Institution of Higher Education (IHE) - a place of postsecondary education that generally limits enrollment to graduates of secondary schools, and awards degrees at either the associate, baccalaureate, or graduate level.

Local School System (LSS) - a Maryland public local education agency, a State-operated school, or a nonpublic school.

Mentor Teacher - a highly competent educator, trained and selected by the partner school, who will work to instill in the participant the skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge necessary for the next generation of teachers.

Met – An essential component, subcomponent, or indicator determination. Evidence sufficiently demonstrates that the program is meeting all expectations as described.

Met With Conditions – An essential component, subcomponent, or indicator determination. Evidence provided by the EPP has demonstrated an attempt to meet the indicator and/or component but needs more development before it reaches the "Met" level completely**.**

Partner School - a local school system, nonpublic school, or nonpublic special education school that has a written partnership agreement with an institution of higher education or alternative teacher preparation program to provide a teacher training practicum for participants enrolled in a teacher preparation program at the institution of higher education or alternative teacher preparation program.

Practicum - the clinical experiences in which candidates have an increased teaching responsibility under the guidance of a mentor teacher.

Probation - a program has seriously failed to meet program requirements or has demonstrated a pattern of noncompliance.

Revocation – Programs that seriously fail to meet standards, reporting, and/or compliance requirements will have their approval revoked. EPPs receiving revocations status must cease operations immediately and may not recruit or accept new candidates.

State - the state of Maryland.

Subcomponent – An aspect of an essential component focused on specific areas of interest. Comprised of indicators, subcomponent scores are aggregated to determine essential component scores.

Traditional Program - a sequence of courses for educator preparation that:

- is offered by a college or university leading to a degree or that includes:
  - o general education and content coursework;
  - o professional coursework;
  - o clinical experiences; and
  - o demonstration of standards and competencies required to prepare educators for teaching students in the classroom environment; and
- on completion, makes candidates eligible for licensure in Maryland.

National Accreditation Processes and Guidance

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

When the Maryland State legislature passed Md. Code, Education, §11–208, it recognized that educator preparation program (EPP) providers may wish to seek recognition from an educator preparation national accreditor. This law gives EPPs in Maryland two distinct approval pathways: 1) State approval, or 2) national accreditation.

EPPs may seek national accreditation from an accreditor recognized by both the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) in lieu of State approval. If an accreditor does not obtain or loses recognition status in Maryland, an EPP may still choose to be accredited but must also seek State approval to continue operating.

MSDE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ACCREDITED PROVIDERS

MSDE will work diligently to maintain positive, proactive, and professional relationships with all EPPs, to include EPPs that choose the national accreditation pathway. While EPPs will not be reviewed formally by MSDE review teams, MSDE coordinators will regularly engage with nationally accredited EPPs to provide technical assistance, collaborate on State priorities, and collect annual data. MSDE envisions a close partnership between EPP leadership and MSDE coordinators.

While State law allows an EPP to seek accreditation from a recognized accreditor in lieu of State approval, MSDE reserves the right to conduct visits to EPPs while investigating complaints. Further, programs that have chosen national accreditation may be reviewed by their accrediting body at the request of MSDE at any time.

ACCREDITED EPPS

Institutions holding current accreditation in good standing with a recognized national accreditor must submit proof to MSDE of their accreditation status. In addition, EPPs seeking continuing accreditation via the re-approval process provided by their national accreditor must notify MSDE no later than twelve months before their scheduled site visit.

Please note that recognition by an accreditor does not absolve an EPP from the State mandated reporting requirements set forth in COMAR 13A.07.06.10A(5). For further information please reference the Reporting Requirements section in this Handbook.

Approved EPPs Seeking Initial Accreditation

State-approved providers seeking initial accreditation by a recognized accreditor must notify MSDE no later than a year in advance of their site visit by a national accreditor. During the interim period between notification and receipt of national accreditation, the provider will still be responsible for meeting the requirements in COMAR 13A.07.06 set forth for State-approved providers. Once an accreditor has rendered an approval decision for the EPP, notification must be sent to MSDE within 15 days. EPPs that earn national accreditation by a recognized accreditor will henceforth be approved under Md. Code, Education, §11–208.

Accredited EPP Documentation Timelines

EPPs that hold accreditation from a recognized accreditor must still submit annual data to MSDE as outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06.10A(5) and notify MSDE of any accreditation status changes. The chart below contains submission times for required documentation from accredited EPPs:

Event	Submission Timeframe	Documentation Required
Accreditation status changes	Within 15 days of notification from accreditor	Written notice to MSDE with explanation
EPP is approved/re-approved by national accreditor	Within 30 days of accreditor decision	Official approval documentation from accreditor to EPP
EPP submits annual accreditation report to MSDE	Within 30 days of submission to national accreditor	A copy of the annual report and any subsequent related reporting
EPP discontinues program	No later than six months prior to discontinuation of program	Written notice to MSDE including an exit plan for current students along with notification to the impacted students
EPP chooses to seek accreditor approval/re-approval	One year before accreditor site-visit	Written notice to MSDE
Graduate cohort and annual reporting	Annually by MSDE deadlines	Written reports to MSDE utilizing MSDE-approved templates and guidance

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONALLY ACCREDITED EPPS

EPPs currently approved by a national accreditor or those seeking first time approval must continue to adhere to State EPP reporting requirements as outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06.10A(5). If a provider submits annual reporting as part of maintaining their accreditation via an approved national provider, the provider must also submit a copy of the annual report to MSDE within 30 days of submission to the accreditor. Providers must also provide MSDE with any follow-up reporting that results from the submission of the annual accreditation report.

ACCREDITATION FEES

Per Md. Code, Education, §11–208, MSDE is responsible for paying the following accreditation related fees:

- Any fee that a national accrediting agency charges an IHE in connection with the accreditation process,
- Any training fee that a national accrediting agency charges a State representative who serves with a review team of an accrediting agency in conjunction with an accreditation visit to an IHE in the State, and
- One-half of the expenses incurred by an IHE in connection with the accreditation visit of a review team of a national accrediting agency.

State Approval Processes and Guidance

This section pertains to EPPs wishing to pursue State approval in lieu of national accreditation. EPPs will meet, at minimum, the requirements listed within COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel.*

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS AND REVIEW CRITERIA

For program approval and review, MSDE has established five essential components that align to COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel*:

- Literacy and the Science of Reading,
- Comprehensive Instruction,
- Cultural Responsiveness,
- Partner Schools and Practicum, and
- Accountability and Compliance

Each of the essential components includes subcomponents and indicators that ensure teacher candidates demonstrate knowledge and skills mandated by statute and regulations.

The essential components, subcomponents, and indicators have been established to align with COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel*, and ensure that EPPs are aligned to the strategic initiatives contained within the Blueprint and the MSDE Strategic Plan. MSDE reserves the right to collect additional evidence during the review process to determine if an approved preparation program is continuing to meet expectations according to regulations and this Handbook.

Administrator and Specialist Program Requirements

Administrator and specialist-focused programs do not have the same requirements as teacher education programs, and will only be accountable to the indicators listed under Subcomponent AC5: Administrator and Specialist Requirements.

Five Essential Components for Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel

Essential Component	Subcomponents
Literacy and the Science of Reading	• The Learner and Learning • Literacy Processes • Literacy Content Knowledge • Literacy Instruction in a Diverse Classroom • Effective Literacy Instruction • Effective Literacy Assessment • Professional Responsibilities • Evidence-Based Practices
Comprehensive Instruction	• Evidence-Based Practices • Pedagogy • Mathematics Competencies
Cultural Responsiveness	• Culturally Responsive Instruction • Cultural Competence
Partner Schools and Clinical Experiences	• Clinical Experience Guidelines • Action Research • Clinical Experience Placements • Mentor Teachers • Partner School Requirements
Accountability and Compliance	• Entrance Requirements • Administrator and Specialist Requirements • Standards and Competencies • Exit Requirements • Assessment System

Essential Component: Literacy and the Science of Reading

Evidence-based literacy instruction aligned with the science of reading is integrated throughout COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel*. Programs must provide a curriculum aligned to the science of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and candidates must demonstrate competency in providing instruction using instructional strategies aligned to the science of reading to exit the program.

Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, each approved program leading to licensure in early childhood education, elementary education, special education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) must post on its website information describing its program to prepare teachers to teach reading using evidence-based practices in literacy programming and instruction aligned to the science of reading.

Subcomponents and Indicators: Literacy and the Science of Reading

EPPs will be evaluated on their ability to meet the following subcomponents and indicators:

Subcomponent LSR1: The Learner and Learning
Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in Secondary and PreK-12 content areas
The program ensures candidates can:
LSR1.1 Identify and apply understanding of reading and writing processes of Multilingual learners aligned with the science of reading, including for biological, cognitive, linguistic, and/or sociocultural factors define, describe, explain and analyze the developmental characteristics of adolescent literary learners, active independent readers; processes of making meaning, and motivation and engagement.
LSR1.2 Interpret, synthesize, and apply learning of active independent readers; processes of making meaning, and motivation and engagement to specific content area instruction.
LSR1.3 Define and distinguish features of diversity and interpret linguistic cultural differences among adolescent learners.
LSR1.4 Examine, evaluate, and apply learning of inclusive content area literacy environment and instruction to close achievement gaps.
LSR1.5 Describe the characteristics of a high-quality learning environment.
LSR1.6 Construct high quality learning environments that support individual and collaborative interaction and engagement.

Subcomponent LSR2: Literacy Content Knowledge

Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in Secondary and PreK-12 content areas

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR2.1 Describe purposes and opportunities for reading, writing, and communicating within and across content areas and analyze types of new literacies and their uses for acquiring content knowledge and student understandings.

LSR2.2 Employ new literacies for acquiring and developing content knowledge and student understandings.

LSR2.3 Identify and select appropriate multimodal sources and resources for inquiry.

LSR2.4 Evaluate and employ discipline specific processes of inquiry to engage in collaborative problem-solving and critical thinking.

Subcomponent LSR3: Effective Literacy Instruction

Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in Secondary and PreK-12 content areas

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR 3.1 Describe guiding principles and practices and examine assessment types, tools, and purposes for content literacy assessment.

LSR 3.2 Select and/or develop content-specific assessment tools to evaluate student performance and the effectiveness of assessment tools for content-specific assessment.

LSR 3.3 Examine factors of text complexity and analyze student data to inform and evaluate instructional practice.

LSR 3.4 Synthesize multiple data points to evaluate and to refine content area instructional practice.

LSR 3.5 Identify professional and literacy standards and curricula for lesson development to plan and evaluate engaging instruction that supports all learners in meeting goals and intended outcomes.

LSR 3.6 Employ professional and literacy standards and curricula to plan, implement, and evaluate lessons and instructional units of study within content areas.

Subcomponent LSR3: Effective Literacy Instruction

LSR 3.7 Critique effectiveness of instruction and design next steps for students and teachers.

LSR 3.8 Examine research and theoretical frameworks and investigate evidence-based multi-modal instructional practices to develop comprehension.

LSR 3.9 Employ evidence-based multi-modal instructional practices to develop and evaluate comprehension within content areas.

LSR 3.10 Examine research and theoretical frameworks and investigate evidence-based multi-modal instructional practices for general academic and content specific vocabulary use.

Subcomponent LSR4: Professional Responsibilities

Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in Secondary and PreK-12 content areas

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR 4.1 Examine current trends, initiatives, and educational reform efforts.

LSR 4.2 Explore professional dispositions and engage in critical self-reflection in order to construct a professional development plan as a content area literacy teacher.

LSR 4.3 Identify organizational structures and school-based resources for specific needs.

LSR 4.4 Investigate opportunities for collaboration with families/school/communities and develop leadership capacities through actively participating in school-based opportunities for growth and development.

Subcomponent LSR5: Literacy Processes

Note: *Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, English to speakers of other languages, and special education areas*

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR5.1 Identify the component processes involved in reading and writing.

LSR5.2 Apply knowledge of the component processes involved in reading and writing to understand the reading and writing processes of native English speakers and Multilingual learners.

LSR5.3 Describe how key components of reading and writing processes develop and what biological, cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural factors may influence literacy development.

LSR5.4 Identify characteristics that define evidence-based practices in literacy programming and instruction.

LSR5.5 Use evidenced-based criteria to select and organize print and multimedia resources for teaching reading and writing.

LSR5.6 Use a variety of print and multimedia resources to engage students as readers and writers.

Subcomponent LSR6: Literacy Instruction in a Diverse Classroom

Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, English to speakers of other languages, and special education areas

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR6.1 Provide instruction focused on the core components of reading that lead to proficient and motivated reading behavior for all students.

LSR6.2 Provide instruction focused on the core components of writing that lead to proficient and motivated writing behavior for all students.

LSR6.3 Design speaking and listening opportunities that lead to more active, equitable and academically oriented conversations for all students.

LSR6.4 Identify the role of classroom literacy instruction in a multi-tiered system of supports and work with colleagues to provide effective interventions for students who struggle as readers and writers.

LSR6.5 Provide literacy instruction that reflects and is responsive to the diversity of the classroom community and promotes all students' cultural competence through inclusive and equitable literacy learning opportunities.

Subcomponent LSR7: Effective Literacy Assessment

Note: Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, English to speakers of other languages, and special education areas

The program ensures candidates can:

LSR7.1 Identify the foci, purposes and features of literacy assessments and application.

LSR7.2 Select or design appropriate literacy assessments and use data from those assessments to make valid educational decisions, differentiate instruction, collaborate with instructional specialists, and evaluate the effectiveness of literacy instruction.

LSR7.3 Use effective techniques for communicating assessment information to a variety of stakeholders.

Subcomponent LSR8: Evidence-Based Practices

Note: *Only applicable to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure in early childhood, elementary, English to speakers of other languages, and special education areas*

The program ensures candidates can apply research-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading, including:

LSR8.1 Phonological and phonemic awareness.

LSR8.2 Phonics and decoding.

LSR8.3 Fluency.

LSR8.4 Vocabulary.

LSR8.5 Comprehension of literary and informational text.

LSR8.6 Written expression, spelling, and grammar.

LSR8.7 Assessment and instructional decision-making.

LSR8.8 Long term planning aligned with the literacy curriculum, student needs, instructional histories, school/grade level needs.

LSR8.9 Effective methods for promoting the reciprocal relationship between writing and reading.

LSR8.10 Strategies that foster connections to students' homes and communities.

LSR8.11 Multiple opportunities for incorporating oral language variation.

Essential Component: Comprehensive Instruction

The Comprehensive Instruction essential component is comprised of subcomponents and indicators relating to classroom instruction. Programs are expected to develop candidates who use data to inform and drive instructional practices, leverage evidence-based research strategies, and apply multiple formal and informal assessment approaches. Candidates must strive to master both the art and science of pedagogy, building safe, inclusive environments in which all students within a diverse student body can not only achieve, but thrive.

Subcomponents and Indicators: Comprehensive Instruction

During reviews EPPs will be evaluated on their ability to meet the following subcomponents and indicators:

Subcomponent CI1: Evidence Driven Practices
The program ensures teacher candidates can:
CI1.1 Analyze and use data derived from assessments to develop intervention plans aligned to the specific needs of individual students.
CI1.2 Apply multiple, valid assessment approaches, both formal and informal, modifying when appropriate, that address a variety of developmental needs, conceptual abilities, curriculum outcomes and school goals.
CI1.3 Employ evidence-based research strategies, learning theories, and methods to help improve student performance.

Subcomponent CI2: Pedagogy

The program ensures teacher candidates can:

CI2.1 Employ inquiry skills and methods regularly to collect meaningful data and improve one's professional practice.

CI2.2 Demonstrate that knowledge of the learner's physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural development is the basis for effective teaching of:

- Students from different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds
- Students for whom English is not their primary language
- Students with different learning abilities
- Students with social and emotional needs

CI2.3 Create, build, and sustain a safe, inclusive learning environment by effectively:

- Using trauma-informed instruction and other approaches to meet social and emotional needs
- Implementing restorative practices
- Employing active listening, conflict de-escalation to include bullying, and other strategies
- Managing student behavior

CI2.4 Apply instructional supports including a 504 Plan and an Individualized Education Plan, to support a student with disabilities by providing developmentally appropriate access to age- or grade-level instruction, individually and in collaboration with colleagues.

CI2.5 Implement Response to Intervention, Universal Design for Learning, Direct Instruction, and Specially Designed Instruction to differentiate instruction.

CI2.6 Evaluate student behaviors and unique learning needs in the adaptation of various learning environment, such as physical arrangement, student grouping, instructional intensity, pacing, and embedded assistive technology supports.

CI2.7 Use assistive technologies ranging from low tech to high tech devices or equipment, materials, and resources to educate individuals whose disabilities interfere with written or verbal communication.

CI2.8 Demonstrate the ability to effectively teach students from different backgrounds and with different abilities.

CI2.9 Effectively use high-quality instructional materials (including online) and adapt existing curriculum to make it stronger using standards-aligned tools, including the ability to use digital resources and computer technology .

Subcomponent CI3: Mathematics Competencies

Note: Only applies to programs with teacher candidates seeking licensure to provide mathematics instruction, including early childhood education, elementary education, special education, ESOL, middle school, and secondary math.

The program ensures candidates can:

CI3.1 Appropriately use mathematical language.

CI3.2 Apply mathematics content knowledge for teaching within one's area of licensure.

CI3.3 Recognize the coherent progression of mathematical concepts both within an age/range/grade/course and across an age/range/grade/course.

CI3.4 Identify the appropriate sequence of mathematical learning targets for both a unit of study and an individual lesson.

CI3.5 Use multiple assessment tools and evidence-based instructional strategies to guide the mathematics instructional process.

CI3.6 Use mathematics to model real world problems.

CI3.7 Construct collaborative and self-directed learning opportunities that reflect active student engagement in learning and a growth mindset.

CI3.8 Develop strategies for responding to anticipated and present student misconceptions.

CI3.9 Design rich mathematical tasks that help students develop the conceptual understanding, procedural skills, and the ability to apply the mathematics associated with learning targets.

CI3.10 Integrate instructional strategies and/or teaching aides that enhance the learning of mathematics, such as multiple representations, manipulatives, calculators, and other technological aides.

CI3.11 Recognize productive struggles and unproductive struggles to promote perseverance and thinking flexibly.

CI3.12 The teacher candidate shall identify the cognitive process, learning theories and developmental strategies related to the teaching and learning of mathematics.

Essential Component: Cultural Responsiveness

EPPs must ensure that all teacher candidates who are seeking licensure know and are able to demonstrate theory and practices specific to cultural responsiveness and cultural competence to increase academic achievement and promote critical consciousness and cultural competence for socially, racially, linguistically, or otherwise diverse students. Teacher candidates should be able to effectively work with disadvantaged student populations to improve their academic standing, work with families, respect their differences, and explore relevant resources. Throughout their programs, EPPs must ensure that teacher candidates engage in continuous reflection about their understanding and professional readiness. EPPs are expected to provide teacher candidates experiences that allow them to explore, analyze, plan, teach and assess to support the resistance of inequities for the purpose of increasing academic achievement and to establish as support a culture of equity and inclusion.

Subcomponents and Indicators: Cultural Responsiveness

During reviews EPPs will be evaluated on their ability to meet the following subcomponents and indicators:

Subcomponent CR1: Culturally Responsive Instruction
The program ensures teacher candidates can:
CR1.1 Be prepared to support culturally, racially, linguistically, and otherwise diverse populations of students through providing culturally responsive instruction in order to meet its goals of increasing academic achievement, critical consciousness, and cultural competence.
CR1.2 Demonstrate required knowledge and skills to include application of competencies that support various racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic groups through teaching that promotes social justice and equity. Competencies might include restorative practices, and practices to develop racial literacy.
CR1.3 Identify and apply the elements of culturally responsive teaching including academic achievement, critical consciousness, and knowledge of self and at least one other culture.
CR1.4 Examine curriculum and learning materials for bias and deliver instruction with materials that center the perspectives and lived experiences of historically marginalized people.

Subcomponent CR2: Cultural Competence

The program ensures teacher candidates can:

CR2.1 Identify and assess how issues such as racism, sexism, socioeconomic status, immigration, and gender impact marginalized students, families, and educators on multiple levels.

Candidates must:

- Acknowledge their own biases and inequitable actions

- Assess how their own assumptions, values, and biases may impact their responses to students and families and result in inequitable actions and practices, and identify equitable actions and practices

Demonstrate respect for students' cultures.

CR2.2 Candidates must:

- Learn about students' cultural backgrounds

- Seek purposeful immersion experiences within groups different from their own

- Communicate high expectations for students of all identities including gender, race and ethnicity, language, socioeconomics, and disability

- Incorporate a variety of culturally responsive materials that represent and support learning for diverse populations of children and families

- Differentiate instruction with consideration for cultural, linguistic, and academic diversity

CR2.3 Build a safe and accessible environment, respectful of all individuals.

Candidates must:

- Provide strategies to support students with responses to discrimination and negative attitudes associated with cultural or other differences

- Create learning environments that facilitate the active engagement of diverse populations of students

- Co-construct the values and expectations of the school to incorporate different perspectives, including students, families, and colleagues

CR2.4 Build relationships with families and communities.

Candidates must:

- incorporate families' perspectives about school culture to create an environment that is inclusive and respects their values, beliefs and hopes for their child(ren)

Subcomponent CR2: Cultural Competence
● provide opportunities for families to be involved in their child's educational experiences by communicating regularly, in multiple ways, and including them in the curriculum   ● integrate family and community-based funds of knowledge into teaching and learning   provide information regarding school and community resources that are available for students, educators, and families including multilingual resources reflecting students and families' heritage languages.

Essential Component: Partner Schools and Clinical Experiences

EPPs must establish and maintain collaborations with PreK-12 institutions to ensure that candidates and completers engage in high quality school-based experiences to prepare them to be effective educators.

Partner Schools

EPPs and partner schools must collaborate to establish mutually beneficial partnerships through a written agreement. The goal is to ensure high quality partnerships that support the EPP with placements for teacher candidates to complete field experiences, pre-practicum requirements, and a practicum. Teacher candidates should engage in diverse learning experiences that allow them the opportunity to work with diverse Prek-12 students and engage in professional experiences required as a professional educator. In turn, the EPP should provide mutual support to the partner school to support the professional growth within the school/district, ensure effective lines of communication, shared decision-making, data sharing and analysis, and considerations for program improvement.

A high-quality partnership supports and promotes the development of teacher candidates who are prepared to address the unique needs of underrepresented student populations, including implementing evidence-based practices relative to literacy, cultural/linguistic responsive practices, equity-centered decision-making, cultural competence; as well as trauma informed instruction and restorative practices.

Clinical Experiences (Practicum)

EPPs are expected to work with partner school personnel to ensure that teacher candidates are placed with clinical mentors who are highly competent and selected from the career ladder system (when implemented). In addition, EPPs should provide initial training to clinical mentors on best practices in coaching and mentorship, as well as other professional development to support effective mentorship.

An EPP's evidence of partner school collaborations and teacher candidate practicum requirements should be clearly evidenced and defined consistent with COMAR 13A.07.08-09, *Clinical Experience Placements,* and ensures that a practicum is embedded into programs for the required amount of time. Practicums should be deliberately planned to ensure that teacher candidates are ready to assume full professional responsibility upon graduating from the program.

Minimum Practicum Length Requirements

Teacher candidates must meet the required practicum length requirements to complete an undergraduate, graduate, or alternative preparation program, which must include classroom observations in different school settings. Educator candidates can accumulate practicum time throughout the course of their program or consecutively within one school year.

Program Type	Practicum Length	Notes
Undergraduate	Full School Year Equivalent	After July 1, 2025. Prior to July 1, 2025, practicum length can be as short as 100 days
Graduate	100 Days	
Alternative	Full School Year Equivalent*	

*Where an alternative teacher preparation program operating in Maryland on or before July 1, 2021 provides effective and diverse teachers in schools and local school systems, as approved by the State Superintendent, and has high rates of teacher vacancies, teacher turnover, and new teachers relative to other public schools in Maryland, a provider shall ensure that this program has a required practicum of a minimum of 100 days.

Subcomponents and Indicators: Partner Schools and Clinical Experiences

During reviews EPPs will be evaluated on their ability to meet the following subcomponents and indicators:

Subcomponent PSCE1: General Clinical Experience Guidelines
Programs leading to licensure shall include a practicum experience in a partner school and shall:
PSCE1.1 Be located in a Maryland public school, nonpublic school, or an out-of-state school with the permission of the State Superintendent.
PSCE1.2 Be aligned with program curricula that encompass the area, subject, or category of licensure being sought by candidates.
PSCE1.3 Provide candidates on-site supervision by a mentor teacher and ongoing support by a clinical supervisor from the provider, including: ● Documented observations   ● Collaboration between clinical supervisors and mentor teachers to evaluate candidates for demonstration of required competencies   ● Observations and evaluations of candidates, aligned to a Department-approved educator evaluation system   ● Feedback, placement, remediation, or support, informed by candidate evaluation.
PSCE1.4 Ensure candidates are responsible for the instruction and classroom management of a roster of students for a minimum of 150 hours during the practicum.

Subcomponent PSCE1: General Clinical Experience Guidelines
EPPs shall require the following:
PSCE 1.5 All teacher training programs shall incorporate classroom observations in which the candidate is observed in different school settings at the beginning of the program to assist in determining if the candidate has the aptitude and temperament for teaching.
PSCE 1.6 All undergraduate teacher preparation programs have a required practicum of a minimum of a full school year, completed consecutively or over the course of a program.
PSCE 1.7 All graduate teacher preparation programs shall have a required practicum of a minimum of 100 days, completed consecutively or over the course of a program.
PSCE 1.8 Alternative teacher preparation programs shall have a required practicum of a minimum of a full school year, completed consecutively or over the course of a program.
In addition, a teacher training practicum in an alternative teacher preparation program shall include, at a minimum, the following:
PSCE 1.9 At least 4 weeks of professional development before the candidate assumes full responsibility of the classroom. The professional development must include: - Pre-employment training   - Initial coursework   - Pedagogy   - Pre-practicum experiences
PSCE 1.10 Preparing lesson plans.
PSCE 1.11 Teaching.
PSCE 1.12 Debriefing.
PSCE 1.13 Observation of a class of students to which the participant is assigned as a student teacher.
PSCE 1.14 40 hours of teaching during class periods.

Subcomponent PSCE2: Clinical Experience Placements
The program ensures there is official documentation of a partner school agreement with a LSS that:
PSCE2.1 Prioritizes selecting partner schools within the local community.
PSCE2.2 Provides teacher training placements in school environments with diverse student populations that simulate experiences of employed teachers.
PSCE2.3 Employs an organization and instructional program that is reflective of the career ladder within the Partner School (once the career ladder is well established throughout the State) if the partner school is located in a local education agency.

Subcomponent PSCE3: Mentor Teachers
The program ensures that mentor teachers:
PSCE3.1 Are highly competent, evidenced by impact on student achievement.
PSCE3.2 Are trained and selected by the partner school.
PSCE3.3 Hold a professional educator license .
PSCE3.4 Have the skills and knowledge needed to mentor teacher training practicum participants and to instill the skills, attitudes, values, and knowledge necessary for the next generation of teachers.
PSCE3.5 Provide opportunities for teacher training practicum participants in guided, hands-on, practical applications and demonstrations of a candidate's professional knowledge while applying educational theory through collaborative and facilitated learning tasks, activities, and assessments.
PSCE3.6 Able to conduct formal evaluations to determine the extent to which those interventions are successful, correcting course as necessary to produce the outcomes for students they want.
PSCE3.7 Have teaching and release time to: ●   Mentor candidates, newer and struggling teachers ●   Lead workshops ●   Give demonstrations at the school level

Subcomponent PSCE3: Mentor Teachers

PSCE3.8 Are selected using the criteria from the career ladder system, as applicable, when the Accountability and Implementation Board determines that the career ladder system is well established throughout the state. Until that time, they meet requirements of COMAR 13A.07.06B(1)-(7).

The provider shall:

PSCE3.9 Collaborate with the partner school to provide mentor teachers initial training on best practices in coaching, mentoring, and reflective strategies.

PSCE3.10 Collaborate with the partner school to provide the mentor teacher additional professional development to support mentor teachers.

PSCE3.11 Collaborate with mentor teachers to ensure teacher candidates demonstrate the teacher competencies established in Regulations .12—.15 of COMAR 13A.07.06.

A program shall:

PSCE3.12 Collaborate with mentor teachers at a partner school to evaluate participants in a teacher training practicum to ensure each participant demonstrates the competencies required of licensed teachers.

Subcomponent PSCE4: Partner School Requirements

A Partner School shall:

PSCE4.1 Partner Schools will ensure:

- A well-rounded clinical experience based on student population and geographic location

- Exposure to distinguished instructional practices

- Placement with a mentor teacher who meets the requirements outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06 and is professionally licensed in the area in which the candidate is placed

PSCE4.2 Actively collaborate with programs to ensure mentoring and growth of teacher candidates.

PSCE4.3 Compensate mentor teachers who supervise participants in a teacher training practicum when the career ladder system is well established throughout the State.

Subcomponent PSCE5: Action Research
Programs shall require the following:
PSCE5.1 Teacher candidates to conduct action research during the practicum.
PSCE5.2 Teacher **c**andidates shall present findings to the partner school and Program. Findings shall include the ongoing cycle of problem identification, data collection, reflection, analysis, and lessons learned for the next cycle.

Essential Component: Accountability and Compliance

The ability for an EPP to ensure the training of effective educators and to function effectively relies on the accountability and compliance component. EPPs are expected to establish and maintain rigorous entrance and exit requirements, provide evidence that content within programs is deliberately included to meet standards and competencies outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06, and successfully prepare candidates for professional assessments, licensure, and employment in the field.

Administrator and Specialist Program Requirements

Administrator and specialist-focused programs do not have the same requirements as teacher education programs, and will only be accountable to the indicators listed under Subcomponent AC5: Administrator and Specialist Requirements.

Subcomponents and Indicators: Accountability, Equity, and Compliance

During reviews EPPs will be evaluated on their ability to meet the following subcomponents and indicators:

Subcomponent AC1: Entrance Requirements
Traditional Programs shall require:
AC1.1 ● candidates to have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the most recent 2 years of the candidate's post-secondary education, **OR** ● demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by providing evidence of a qualifying score, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE), on a basic skills assessment, **OR** ● The program has waived entrance requirements for no more than 10 percent of candidates admitted in an annual cohort, and implemented strategies to ensure candidates admitted under a waiver receive assistance to successfully demonstrate the required standards and competencies and meet requirements for licensure on exit from the program.
Alternative Programs shall require:
AC1.2 ● candidates to have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the most recent 2 years of the candidate's post-secondary education, **OR** ● demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by providing evidence of a qualifying score, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE), on a basic skills assessment, **OR**

Subcomponent AC1: Entrance Requirements

- The program has waived entrance requirements for no more than 10 percent of candidates admitted in an annual cohort, and implemented strategies to ensure candidates admitted under a waiver receive assistance to successfully demonstrate the required standards and competencies and meet requirements for licensure on exit from the program.

AC1.3 Candidates to have:

- a conferred bachelor's degree or higher with a major related to the program licensure area, **OR**

- a conferred bachelor's degree or higher with a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit related to the licensure area, **OR**

- a conferred bachelor's degree or higher and evidence of a qualifying score on an approved content assessment, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the SBOE.

Subcomponent AC2: Standards and Competencies

EPPs shall ensure that programs provide the following:

AC2.1 Instruction and experiences aligned with Maryland-recognized national content and pedagogy standards listed under Regulation .03A of COMAR 13A.07.06.

AC2.2 Instruction and experiences aligned with *Department-approved competencies* under Regulations .12-.15 of COMAR 13A.07.06.

AC2.3 Instruction in the Department-approved Model Code of Ethics for Educators.

AC2.4 Instruction in teaching in high poverty, culturally, and linguistically diverse schools.

Subcomponent AC3: Exit Requirements

Programs will ensure that upon exit teacher candidates:

AC3.1 Demonstrate successful completion of required coursework that is based upon Department recognized national content standards and Department-approved competencies.

AC3.2 Demonstrate successful completion of the clinical experience outlined in Regulation .08D of COMAR 13A.07.06.

Subcomponent AC4: Assessment System

EPP has an established assessment system that:

AC4.1 Includes key assessment evaluations of teacher candidate's skills, knowledge, and abilities throughout the program.

AC4.2 Systematically collects data on EPP, program, and teacher candidates' effectiveness.

AC4.3 Includes descriptions and evaluation tools for key assessments that are aligned to professional standards.

AC4.4 Systematically generates reports on EPP, program and teacher effectiveness that are analyzed, shared, and used for continuous improvement.

Subcomponent AC5: Administrator and Specialist Requirements
A provider of a program that offers courses in school administration shall:
AC5.1 Develop a method for evaluating the potential of candidates to be effective school leaders.

AC5.2 Develop a curriculum to enable candidates to organize and manage schools to achieve:
 	
   ● Management of highly skilled professionals in a professional work environment
 	
   ● Effective peer observations and effective evaluations of other personnel

AC5.3 Include clinical experiences and assessments that measure competencies established in the program curriculum.
AC5.4 Include instruction in research-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading.
AC5.5 Include a supervised clinical experience totaling a minimum of 240 hours equitably distributed within the program to include observations and evaluations of candidates aligned to a Department-approved administrator evaluation system.
AC5.6 Ensure administrator candidates complete at least three semester hours or State-approved continuing professional development credits of special education coursework
A provider will ensure specialist programs:
AC5.7 Are aligned with Maryland-recognized national content and pedagogy standards listed in 13A.07.06.03A.
AC5.8 Ensure specialist candidates complete at least three semester hours or State-approved continuing professional development credits of special education coursework
AC5.9 includes a supervised clinical experience in the specialty area being pursued.

FORMAL REVIEW OVERVIEW AND STEPS

The formal review applies exclusively to programs who choose State approval as opposed to national accreditation by a recognized accreditor.

The overarching purpose of the formal review is to provide all stakeholders with assurance of program quality and professional educator competency. MSDE works in concert with EPPs in a collaborative partnership to document and evaluate the level of program compliance with all regulations. MSDE evaluates each program provider over a five-year cycle.

EPP providers with currently approved educator preparation programs nearing the end of their approval window that would like to continue operating programs must undergo a formal review. Formal reviews ensure educator preparation programs' continued growth and effectiveness beyond their initial approval. EPPs undergoing formal reviews are grouped by cohorts in accordance with their review cycle.

MSDE's goal is to implement a formal review process that is transparent, repeatable, efficient, and effective. The process is designed to recognize EPPs' 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 P-12 students they impact as educators.

Throughout the review, each EPP 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 MSDE staff member and a group of external reviewers from educator preparation programs, LEAs, IHEs, and other professional and government organizations.

The table below outlines the high-level steps included in each stage of the process. Between cohorts, MSDE solicits feedback and makes shifts to the formal review process as needed to ensure the process is effective, efficient, consistent, and equity driven.

Step	Timing	Description of Activities
Notification	Months 1-6	EPPs with programs that are nearing the end of their approval periods are contacted by MSDE and notified of the need for a formal review. This communication formally launches the review and includes a timeline and overview of the process. The EPP works on completing the Program Overview Form, which familiarizes reviewers and MSDE to the provider and allows the review team to adjust surveys, focus groups, and interviews based on the organization's unique mission and structure. If requesting an extension to their current approval, EPPs are encouraged to submit an extension request at this time.

Step	Timing	Description of Activities
Cohort Launch Session	Month 7	MSDE hosts a launch session for all EPPs undergoing review. The session provides a more detailed overview of the review process and timeline, evidence sources, and guidance for the initial submission materials.
Submit Provider Overview	Month 7	EPP submits the Provider Overview form to their MSDE liaison
Technical Assistance Call	Month 8	MSDE leads a call with the EPP and provides support for upcoming documentation submission, discussing required documents and candidate artifact submissions. MSDE provides potential reviewer names to EPP for review.
Required Documents, and Candidate Artifacts Submission	Months 8-11	The EPP compiles and submits documents and candidate artifacts, providing information for each indicator. This information is used as evidence that the EPP is or is not in compliance with applicable governance, and to orient the review team to the organization's approach to educator preparation prior to speaking with stakeholders in a site visit.
Technical Assistance Call	Month 9	MSDE provides written guidance outlining the next stage of the review and leads a call to confirm understanding of key requirements and planning for surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
Survey Completion/ Focus Group and Interview Recruitment	Months 9-12	MSDE shares surveys with the EPP for distribution to relevant stakeholder groups. The EPP 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.

Step	Timing	Description of Activities
Stakeholder Engagement (Welcome Meeting, Leadership Interview, and Focus Groups)	Month 13	Stakeholder engagement is conducted over the course of one to three days and is scheduled in collaboration with the EPP based on organization structure, size, and stakeholder availability. Stakeholder engagement includes a welcome meeting, an 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.
Technical Assistance Call	Month 14	MSDE leads a call to preview the EPP's targeted submission, if applicable.
Targeted Submission	Month 15 (30 days to complete)	The EPP completes a targeted submission form for each essential component where there is a lack of evidence that an indicator has been sufficiently met (if applicable). Prompts within each worksheet are determined based on evidence gathered during the review and provide the EPP with the opportunity to address gaps and/or inconsistencies that could lead to findings. During this stage, EPPs review summaries of key evidence collected and respond with additional examples, data, and context.
Reviewer Work Time and Report Drafting	Months 16-17	MSDE works with the review team and engages in calibration to determine essential component, subcomponent, and indicator ratings. The site review team-lead drafts a written report summarizing these decisions and an internal MSDE team vets the content to ensure decisions are evidence-based and consistent across organizations.

Step	Timing	Description of Activities
Factual Accuracy Report Shared	Month 18	MSDE shares a Factual Accuracy draft report with the EPP, outlining the essential component, subcomponent, and Indicator ratings and the key evidence that informed those determinations.
Factual Accuracy Response	10 business days to complete from receipt of report	Upon receiving the Factual Accuracy draft, the EPP 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 only in the report but may not refute conclusions or judgments made by the review team at this time. Further, no new evidence may be provided as part of the EPP's response. MSDE reviews the response carefully and amends the report as deemed appropriate within 10 business days from receipt of the factual accuracy response.
Notification of Approval Determination	30 days after receipt of factual accuracy response	MSDE notifies the EPP of its approval determination, including any program-specific approval determinations, in writing. If the EPP receives an approval determination of Approved with Conditions or Probationary Approval, the review designee works with MSDE to determine timelines and next steps in response to findings requiring action.
Rejoinder Response and Hearing Requests	Within 30 days of receipt of approval determination	Any EPP with an approval determination of Revocation 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. MSDE reviews the rejoinder response, and the State Superintendent may modify the report and determinations solely at his/her/their discretion. In the case of a revocation decision the EPP may appeal the decision via written request submitted to the State Superintendent within 20 days of receipt of notification. The State Superintendent will then refer the matter to the Office of Administrative Hearings.

Step	Timing	Description of Activities
Approval Determination Updated on Profiles	60 days after notification of approval determination	MSDE publishes the EPP's approval determination on public profiles.

GOOD CAUSE EXTENSIONS

A provider may request an extension of the Department's 5-year review and, if approved, receive a one-time 1-year extension based on documentation submitted to justify the extension. The provider must submit a Good Cause Extension request at least 180 calendar days before the end of the provider's 5-year approval. Any such extension is granted at the sole discretion of MSDE and will be communicated in a "timeline waiver" letter establishing a revised timeline for provider State review.

Examples of factors that may trigger the approval of a Good Cause Extension are:

1. State or federal standards or legislation requiring significant programmatic change;
2. The EPP has recently undergone or is planning to undergo a major substantive change; or
3. Other extenuating circumstances, such as an Act of God, natural disaster, or civil unrest.

Please be aware that the factors listed above should be considered only as examples. A provider may have an extenuating circumstance that rests outside the factors listed that could justify an extension being granted.

FORMAL REVIEW DETERMINATIONS

Essential Component, Subcomponent, and Indicator Determinations

Reviewers will scrutinize evidence provided by EPPs and determine if programs are operating in alignment with applicable governance. During a formal review, reviewers will look for evidence that all indicators are being met. The verbiage for each indicator is taken from State statutes, regulations, and policies, oftentimes verbatim. Indicator ratings will be aggregated to create subcomponent ratings, and subcomponent ratings will be aggregated to create essential component ratings.

After reviewing all evidence collected during the review process, reviewers will assign one of three ratings to each indicator, subcomponent, and essential component:

3. **Met:** Evidence sufficiently demonstrates that the program is meeting all expectations as described.
2. **Met with Conditions:** There is evidence that the program is meeting some expectations of the indicator, but not to a level of sufficiency that warrants a determination of "met."
1. **Does not Meet:** Evidence indicates areas of concern or inconsistencies that require action for the program to meet expectations

Overall Program Determinations

MSDE will render a final decision for program approval after a formal review has been completed. MSDE will render one of the following approval decisions: approved, conditionally approved, probation, or revocation.

Status	Term of Approval	Implications	Must Notify Candidates	Outcomes
Approved	5 years	Full-term approval and program may endorse candidates to the state for licensure	No	Full approval
Conditionally Approved	2 years	Program may continue to enroll and endorse candidates but must make progress towards correcting deficiencies	No	Leads to approval, probation, or revocation
Probation	1 year	Program may not enroll new candidates but may continue to endorse candidates to the state for licensure. Must make progress towards correcting deficiencies	Yes	Leads to approval, conditional approval, or revocation
Revocation	N/A	Program must cease operations and may not recruit new candidates. Cannot apply for approval for at least two years	Yes	Closure of program

Approved

A program receives an "Approved" status from MSDE when it has met all requirements of the application process and, through a formal review, demonstrated that it meets the regulatory requirements for approval in the state of Maryland.

Conditionally Approved

A program will receive conditional approval if it fails to meet all standards, competencies, reporting and/or compliance requirements outlined in COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel*. Programs that are conditionally approved receive a 2-year approval period during which time they must make strides towards meeting the deficiencies outlined in their formal review. At the end of the approval period, MSDE will conduct a focused review of the program to determine progress towards rectifying deficiencies. A program may have its conditions removed after 1-year and returned to a 5-year cycle if they can demonstrate, through annual reporting measures, that they meet program approval requirements. Programs failing to demonstrate satisfactory progress towards meeting requirements after 2 years may be placed on probation or have their status revoked.

Probationary Approval

Programs that have demonstrated a significant failure to meet standards or pattern of failure to meet standards and benchmarks, reporting, and/or compliance requirements will be placed on probation. A pattern of failure includes (but is not limited to): multiple indicator or subcomponent ratings that do not meet standards within an essential component, multiple indicator or subcomponent ratings that do not meet standards across multiple essential components, and/or annual reporting data for one or more years that demonstrate an EPP's failure to meet standards.

MSDE will conduct a full review within 1 year of the last formal review for a program on probation unless, through annual reporting requirements, the program supplies sufficient evidence to meet program approval requirements. During the probation period, programs may not recruit new students and shall notify existing candidates in writing within 30 days of decision regarding program probation. If sufficient progress towards meeting requirements is not demonstrated within one year of probationary status, approval to operate as a program will be revoked by MSDE.

Revocation

Programs that seriously fail to meet standards, reporting, and/or compliance requirements will have their approval revoked. EPPs receiving a revocation status must cease operations immediately and may not recruit or accept new candidates. All candidates currently in the program must be notified in writing of the decision and its implications. Compliance with this written notice must be furnished to MSDE upon completion. A program receiving a revocation decision must wait 2 years before applying for approval to operate a preparation program.

Scoring

While a rating of "3" (met) means that the program is meeting all expectations and a rating of "1" (does not meet) would be considered a failing score, a rating of "2" (met with conditions) does not necessarily mean one or the other. A rating of "2" means that reviewers and MSDE staff must collaborate with EPPs to explain where aspects of a program need improvement, and to begin a conversation on how the EPP plans to address noted concerns. A score of "2" is not a failing score and is instead meant to open dialogue about the operations within programs and use the formal review process as a catalyst for a program's continuous improvement.

It is expected that all programs will earn indicator scores of "2" during portions of their formal review. This does not automatically mean a program cannot earn an "Approved" determination overall. However, the more "2s" earned throughout a formal review, the more likely it is that a program will earn a lower overall determination.

Reviewer Guidelines

FORMAL REVIEWS

MSDE will build and coordinate formal review teams composed of members from a myriad of organizations from across the state. The benefits of this are multifold:

- Members of formal review teams will learn firsthand about the formal review process and be able to glean insights into best practices and areas of improvement that they can use to improve their own programs
- EPPs will have the ability to not only learn about the formal review process but become key, influential members of its implementation by serving on review teams
- Partnerships between MSDE, EPPs, and subject matter experts across Maryland will be strengthened as review team members work in tandem during reviews
- Formal reviews will have increased objectivity as team members from around the state bring a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences
- EPPs, subject matter experts, LEAs, and other review team members will have a chance to provide MSDE feedback on the Formal Review process itself, allowing MSDE to modify and improve the process as needed

Priority participation on formal review teams will be given to individuals from organizations who are scheduled for upcoming formal reviews.

Reviewers are trained to utilize specific protocols, developed by MSDE, to conduct provider reviews. Reviewers complete off-site reviews in synchronous and asynchronous formats before convening to conduct virtual or physical on-site reviews.

RECRUITMENT OF REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS

Review team members will be volunteers from around the state, including (but not limited to):

- Staff and faculty from EPPs,
- MSDE staff, and
- Educators, including teachers, specialists, and administrators.

Recruitment for volunteers to participate in formal reviews will be continuous. Initial training for reviewers will be conducted at least annually, while additional training for reviewers will take place if formal review processes undergo substantive changes.

To increase participation, objectivity, diversity of thoughts, and transparency, recruitment for review teams will include members from **all** EPPs, regardless of whether they have chosen the National Accreditation or the State Approval pathway.

While not mandatory, it is recommended that all EPPs provide MSDE with at least three names of employees who would benefit from and provide benefit to being a member of formal review teams. EPPs are urged to consider how participation on a review team would benefit an employee's professional growth and deliberate development, as well as what benefits formal review participation affords an EPP.

REVIEW TEAM WORKFLOW

MSDE shall select one or two review team chairs (determined by the size of the EPP), as well as additional review team members. During the first EPP-specific technical assistance, MSDE shall notify the EPP's institutional coordinator and/or principal administrator of the review team chair(s) and members' identifying information.

The EPP, through the MSDE Educator Preparation Coordinator, may request that any proposed review team member not serve as a reviewer based on one or both of the following concerns:

Conflicts of interest, including but not limited to:
    a.   Affiliation as an employee, board member, former student, or graduate of the institution;
    b.   Having a close relative or partner affiliated with the IHE under review;
    c.   An affiliation with a related IHE consortium or professional organization; or
    d.   A former employee

MSDE shall review the request to determine whether the institution has demonstrated that the concerns listed in (1) or (2) above disqualify a review team member. MSDE shall be responsible for final decisions regarding the membership of the review team.

MSDE shall provide reviewers with training (virtual or in-person), guidance, and tools, including an electronic review team template, for reviewing and evaluating evidence. MSDE will ensure review team members are trained in the State's expectations for reviews, calibrate on all protocols and tools, and have a chance to practice review of evidence before engaging with an EPP for a formal review.

Review team members will review data submitted by EPPs as evidence that indicators are being met. Gaps in this data will influence what is examined during a site review.

Prior to a virtual or in-person site review, the review team chair(s) and MSDE shall establish with the EPP institutional coordinator a review team schedule, including (but not limited to):

- Appointments with individuals or groups to be interviewed;
- Work times for the team;
- Specified time for team members to discuss issues and questions with the co-chairs;
- Closing meeting time with the institution; and

If an in-person visit is necessary, MSDE, review team chairs, and EPP institutional coordinators will collaborate on logistical items including:

- Lodging,
- Parking,
- Directions to the institution, and
- Meals.

After the site visit, reviewers and MSDE staff will review all evidence collected during both the off-site and on-site portions of the review process, request further evidence from EPPs (if required), and assign ratings and determinations to indicators and essential components, as well as the provider overall.

In total, reviewers should expect to be part of the review process for approximately 12-18 months.

Reporting Requirements for All EPPs

ANNUAL REPORTS

All EPPs, ***regardless of accreditation status***, shall compile and report data to MSDE for each graduating cohort at the individual level, including race, ethnicity, and gender, for the most recent five years of program cohorts, on a selection of MSDE-identified metrics that may include, at a minimum:

- Program completion rates, including number and demographics of completers, non-completers, and degrees granted;
- Placement in partner schools by subject area, grade level, local school system employer, and school;
- Performance, including passing rates on MSDE-approved performance, content, and basic skills assessments;
- Enrollment data, including candidate residence, and past and projected enrollment in each program;
- Employment of graduates/completers;
- Retention of program completers through the first 5 years of employment; and
- Candidate satisfaction survey.

EPPs who have national accreditation who submit annual reporting to a national accreditation agency recognized by the MSDE and MHEC shall submit a copy of the annual report to MSDE within 30 calendar days of submission to the accreditation agency, as well as any follow-up reporting required by the accreditation agency.

EPPs who are not nationally accredited shall submit data and annual reports to MSDE demonstrating each program's compliance with requirements. A provider shall ensure the annual reports include documentation of compliance with the following measures as prescribed by COMAR 13A.07.06:

- Entry requirements as stated in Regulation .08A
- Clinical experience requirements as stated in Regulation .08D
- Standards and competencies requirements as stated in Regulation .08C
- Exit requirements as stated in Regulation .08E, including candidate passing rates on performance assessments, as well as rate of program completion, and attrition data;
- Candidate evaluation requirements as stated in Regulation .08D(8)(c), including documentation of evaluation processes and remediation policies as defined by the program; and
- The process by which the provider uses data to continuously improve the program, including the recruitment and support of a racially and ethnically diverse pool of candidates.

For both annual and cohort reports, MSDE will coordinate with EPPs each Summer, with reports due to MSDE in the Fall. Summer coordination will include specific information on timelines, reporting methods, and specific data required by MSDE.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact MSDE's Educator Preparation team:

Jason Keys, Ed.D.
Education Preparation Manager
jason.keys@maryland.gov

Juanita Ashby-Bey, Ph.D.
Education Preparation Coordinator
juanita.ashby-bey@maryland.gov

Keith Krempel
Education Preparation Coordinator
keith.krempel@maryland.gov