

DESE Professional Licenses

Massachusetts Educator Professional level licenses have a valid life of 5-calendar years and must be renewed every five years to remain active. Professional licenses that are 1-year away from expiring, or that are currently inactive, can be renewed if the required number of Professional Development Points have been earned. Important links to Professional Development and Renewal resources provided on the left panel menu should prove helpful to educators, administrators, and PD Providers.

If you are renewing a Professional level license prior to July 1, 2016, the following requirements* apply to your renewal of a Primary Area:

1. Individual professional development plans must include at least 150 PDPs for the designated Primary Area. At least 120 of the PDPs must be in the content area of the license or in pedagogy directly related to the educator's primary license, with at least 90 of these PDPs in the content area of the educator's primary license.

If you are renewing a Professional level license on/after July 1, 2016, the following requirements* apply to your renewal of a Primary Area:

1. Professional development activities shall be identified by the educator and supervisor during the development of, and review of, the Individual Professional Development Plan in order to better support student achievement. Individual professional development plans must include at least 150 PDPs including:
 - a. At least 15 PDPs related to SEI or English as a Second Language.
 - b. At least 15 PDPs related to training in strategies for effective schooling for students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles.
 - c. At least 90 PDPs in the content area of the license or in pedagogy, with no less than 60 PDPs in or related to the content area of the educator's primary license.

*Regardless of when an educator is expected to renew their professional license, if employed the educator must obtain final approval of their individual professional development plan by their supervisor; the educator must have a minimum of 10 PDPs in a topic area in order to use the PDPs towards license renewal. Each additional license that an educator renews requires 30 PDPs in the content area of each license to be renewed.

Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) and its impact on Renewal:

The SEI Endorsement requirement is at the center of the Department's RETELL initiative to transform the teaching and learning of ELLs across the Commonwealth.

- All incumbent core academic teachers of ELLs, must earn a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement, and
- All incumbent principals/assistant principals and supervisors/directors who evaluate core academic teachers of ELLs must earn an SEI Administrator Endorsement.

PDP Information

May a variety of professional development activities in one topic be used to satisfy the 10-hour in a topic minimum requirement?

Combining (bundling) professional development activities in one topic may be used to satisfy the 10-hour in a topic minimum requirement. Note that districts will need to maintain reasonable documentation and award PDPs after an observable demonstration of learning. For example, a middle school mathematics teacher could participate in a six-hour, district-based professional development program focused on algebraic structures, then attend a four-hour session on teaching algebraic structures at a statewide workshop, and subsequently develop a new curriculum unit on algebraic structures for use as a district guide. The new curriculum unit would also serve as a demonstration of learning. In this example, the district may award the educator twenty-five PDPs in content (six PDPs for the district-based professional development program, four PDPs for the statewide workshop, and fifteen for the new curriculum unit.) For more information, please visit the [Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators](#).

What is a Professional Development Point (PDP)? 📌

A Professional Development Point (PDP) is a unit of measurement of professional development activities. For example, one clock hour is equivalent to one PDP; one undergraduate semester hour (or college credit) is equivalent to 15 PDPs; one graduate semester hour (or college credit) is equivalent to 22.5 PDPs; and one Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is equivalent to 10 PDPs. For more information, please visit [the Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators](#).

How do I earn my Professional Development Points (PDPs)? 📌

There are a variety of professional development activities that may help you earn PDPs. For a complete list of activities and the corresponding number of PDPs that may be earned, please visit the Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators at www.doe.mass.edu/recert.

What documentation am I responsible to maintain in order to verify the completion of my professional development activities? 📌

Educators must maintain a record of all applicable professional development activities in order to verify compliance with the renewal regulations. Typically, educators will only be asked to submit these documents if they are audited. The most common forms of verification include:

College/University course:

- Official Transcript
- Grade Report

School District, Collaborative, or Registered Provider Initiative:

- Official certificate or letter verifying participation (activity/hours of participation/PDPs earned, proper signature)
- End-of-course assessment (written product or other documentable product)

Self-directed Activities (resulting in a professional product):

- Published articles, books, curriculum units, etc. For curriculum units, points will be given by the district if the educator is employed in a public school. Also, the verification document must be on school letterhead and signed by an administrator.

Summer Professional Development Institutes sponsored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:

- Official certificate or letter verifying participation (activity/hours of participation/PDPs earned, proper signature)

What is Content? 🏡

Content is the subject matter of the license area. Content activities enhance the academic discipline or subject matter knowledge of a license. To determine the subject matter knowledge for your license, please visit www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=06.

What is Pedagogy? 🏡

Pedagogy is the art of teaching and the development and application of professional skills directly related to instruction and instructional effectiveness. For a definition of the pedagogical and other professional knowledge and skills required of all educators, please visit 603 CMR 7.08: Professional Standards for Teachers, and 7.10: Professional for Standards Administrators at www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html.

What is an Elective? 🏡

An Elective is a professional development activity, other than the subject content of the license or pedagogy that improves student learning and relates to general educational issues of interest to the educator.

How do I choose my Primary license? 🏡

Educators who hold more than one Professional license should first decide whether to renew one or more of their Professional licenses and then choose which license is to be the Primary license. Generally, educators will select the license that most closely matches their current or anticipated area of employment. Educators may only choose a Professional license that is eligible to be renewed. Remaining Professional licenses are considered Additional licenses. A Primary license designation may be changed only at the time of a renewal.

How many Professional Development Points (PDPs) may I earn for completing a college or university course? 🏡

One undergraduate semester hour (or college credit) is equivalent to 15 PDPs and one graduate semester hour (or college credit) is equivalent to 22.5 PDPs. Note, an educator may earn 22.5 PDPs per semester hour (or college credit) for an upper-level undergraduate course or its approved equivalent when the content is substantially new to the educator. For example, an elementary teacher with limited content expertise in the area of mathematics may take an upper-level undergraduate course in mathematics and receive 22.5 PDPs per semester hour. A high school mathematics teacher taking the same course would typically receive 15 PDPs per semester hour, as this would not be substantially new content for the individual.

Who determines if the content in an upper-level undergraduate course or approved equivalent is substantially new to the educator? 🏡

The educator determines if the content is substantially new. However, during a Department audit the educator may need to explain why the content was substantially new

What is Advanced Academic Study? How do I receive points for Advanced Academic Study? 🏡

The Advanced Academic Study courses, typically graduate courses, are worth 22.5 PDPs per semester hour (or college credit) when taken for credit and 15 PDPs per semester hour (or college credit) when not taken for credit. However, educators not pursuing college credit will still receive 22.5 PDPs per credit when the entity offering the course provides the educator with a statement verifying that the activity was equivalent to a college or university course and that the work the educator completed was the same as the work that qualifies other participants for academic credit. This document must be on official letterhead and signed by the college or university professor.

Is the ratio of one PDP per clock hour still in effect? 🏡

Yes, educators are able to earn one PDP per clock hour for professional development activities and programs outlined in the Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators. Educators who complete professional development activities that include an end-of-course assessment and are sponsored by the Department will earn 1.5 PDPs per clock hour.

May I earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) for teaching an undergraduate or graduate level course? 🏡

Educators who teach college/university courses (undergraduate or graduate), which focus on strengthening content knowledge and skills are eligible to receive 45 PDPs per semester hour (college credit) for the first time the course is taught in a five-year renewal cycle. For more information, please visit the [Recertification Guidelines](#) for Massachusetts Educators.

May I earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) for presenting at a professional conference? 📌

Educators may earn 30 PDPs the first time they make a presentation at a professional conference in a five-year renewal cycle.

May I earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) as a trainer/presenter of a professional development workshop or seminar? 📌

Educators who develop and present a professional development workshop or seminar are eligible to receive twice the number of PDPs given to participants, with the presenter receiving a minimum of 10 PDPs and a maximum of 24 PDPs. These points may be counted the first time the training is provided in a five-year cycle.

May I earn Professional Development Points (PDPs) for attending a professional conference? 📌

Professional Development Points are no longer awarded for attendance at a professional conference. However, educators who attend a professional conference may earn PDPs from their district if they extend their learning by developing a school-based activity or curriculum or by publishing written material. In this case, educators should obtain official verification from their school district. In addition, registered PD providers may award PDPs for conference attendance when educators participate in a workshop that includes an observable demonstration of learning that could include a written product. Registered providers should issue Certificates of Attendance when educators participate in a conference.

Please note that eligible workshops must total 10 hours or more on a related topic. Combining (bundling) workshops on a related topic to equal 10 or more hours is acceptable. For more information, please visit the [Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators](#).

When should I start to collect my Professional Development Points (PDPs)? 📌

Educators may start earning PDPs for their first renewal cycle upon the issuance of a Professional level license.

For subsequent renewal cycles, only PDPs earned after the previous expiration date are eligible. Activities older than five years from the date of application may not be counted.

May I use self-directed activities to earn Professional Development Points (PDPs)? 📌

Educators may earn PDPs through a professional development activity designed by the educator, independent of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the school/school district, or any professional development provider. The activity must result in a professional product related to the subject content of the license, including published written materials such as a book, journal article, book chapter, dissertation, or thesis. For more information, please visit the [Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators](#).

What would be considered a topic? 📌

A topic is a single or tightly integrated area of study within an academic discipline or related to a particular method of teaching or administration. Examples of topics might include the American Revolution, Greek Literature, Organic Chemistry, Algebra, Questioning Techniques, Behavior Management, and Direct Instruction.

How do I determine which topics are in my licensure content area? 🏠

For a list of topics and content for each license, please visit our [Regulations for Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval](#), and view Section 7.06: Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements for Teachers.

What is the 10-hour in a topic minimum requirement 🏠

A minimum of 10 hours in a topic must be completed in order to count your activities toward the renewal of your license. Workshops/seminars with similar topics that are fewer than 10 hours may be bundled (combined) to equal at least 10 PDPs.

If you are unable to bundle your PDPs and they equal less than 10 you will not be able to submit these PDPs for renewal purposes.

The License Renewal Regulations and Guidelines list content-specific tests and performance assessment as options for Professional Development Points (PDPs). Are these options available? 🏠

Educators may be eligible for up to 30 PDPs by passing a Department-approved licensure content test. Currently the only test that has been approved by the Department is the General Curriculum Math Subtest. Only those educators who are renewing a license that currently requires passing the General Curriculum Math Subtest or renewing an Early Childhood license are eligible to receive 30 PDPs for passing this test. To determine the requirements for a particular license, please visit [Licensurehelp](#). Please note that this professional development option is not available to educators who have already passed the General Curriculum Math Subtest.