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Rhode Island Program Approval Process

Extension Review Guidelines

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Background

The Rhode Island Program Approval (RIPA) process is the process that the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) uses to approve all educator preparation programs in the state. The RIPA Process is a standards-based approval process designed to ensure that PK-12 educators have access to quality programs that prepare them well for the increasing expectations of proficiency-based elementary and secondary education. The current RIPA process was developed between 1997 and 2001 and was structured upon rounds of visits in which each of the educator preparation programs are visited at least every five years, the maximum allowable length of approval.

On February 8, 2011 the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education temporarily suspended the Rhode Island Program Approval process. This suspension was implemented to allow RIDE to review the Program Approval process, the Rhode Island Program Approval Standards, and to connect the work of program approval to the RIDE Strategic Plan and Race to the Top initiatives including educator certification, induction, and evaluation. As the Commissioner stated in the memo, this work “will require an intense focus and a significant time commitment.” As such, RIDE has suspended full RIPA visits for three years. During this hiatus, RIDE will conduct ‘Extension Reviews’ which are focused, one-day reviews to ensure that preparation programs continue to make progress towards meeting the RIPA Standards and the expectation for continuous improvement. Programs that successfully complete an Extension Review will have their approval decision from the previous full RIPA visit extended for up to three years.

During the hiatus period, RIDE will work with the preparation programs and other stakeholders to review the RIPA process and more fully integrate it with other Rhode Island education priorities. The connections with the RIDE Strategic Plan, the Race to the Top goals, and lessons learned from the RIPA process will guide this work.

RIPA Connections to RIDE Strategic Plan

Objective EE1: Improve the quality and rigor of all educator preparation programs.

Strategy EE1.1 Review and strengthen rigorous standards and criteria for approval of educator preparation programs.

- *Increase minimum scores on basic skills testing requirements for candidates.*
- *Establish rigorous protocols for the recruitment and interview of preparation program candidates.*
- *Establish objective requirements for teaching performance in order to exit any educator preparation program.*
- *Revise Rhode Island Program Approval Standards to include measures of effectiveness of program completers.*

Strategy EE1.2 Create innovative options and supports for individuals with diverse backgrounds to demonstrate proficiency and enter the profession.

- *Expand the variety of pathways into the profession by attracting high-quality, non-college-based programs for all educators.*
- *Require all programs to fully implement and monitor proven strategies for the recruitment of diverse individuals into the profession.*
- *Remove barriers to the recruitment of a diverse candidate pool for all educators.*
- *Establish rigorous non-degree leadership development options.*

RIPA Connections to Race to the Top

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

- *Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State.*
- *Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).*

Purpose and Overview

The purpose of the RIPA Extension Review is to fulfill RIDE's monitoring and support responsibilities under the NASDTEC interstate agreement to ensure quality programs and continuous improvement of educator preparation programs in Rhode Island. The extension review process allows RIDE to review progress towards specified RIPA Standards and indicators and any institution or program-specific concerns that were identified in previous RIPA visits.

The RIPA Extension Review is a one-day¹ process during which RIDE staff² review specified RIPA Standards and indicators against specified and representative evidence from the educator preparation programs. The Extension Review also includes opportunities for RIDE staff to meet with and discuss progress the program(s) is making to meet RIPA Standards and the expectation for continuous improvement. The Extension Review will result in an RIPA Extension Review Memo that details formative observations and recommendations to inform continuous improvement efforts.

Extension Review Process

The timing of the Extension Review will coincide with the approval timeline from the previous full, RIPA visit. RIDE will work with preparation programs to determine a date and schedule for the Extension Review. A date for the Extension Review will be scheduled at least 3 months in advance. RIDE staff will work with the institutions and programs to develop a detailed schedule for the Extension Review approximately three months prior to the scheduled date. Institutions are not required to provide an Institutional Report or action plan as part of the Extension Review process.

During the Extension Review, RIDE staff evaluates two sources of evidence – documents that the programs have prepared for the review and interview meetings with specified personnel. Due to the limited nature of the Extension Review, RIDE Staff only reviews evidence and provides feedback for the following RIPA Standards and indicators³:

- 1.01 Assessment, Advisement, Feedback, and Counseling throughout the Program
- 1.05 Validity of the Assessment System
- 1.06 Reliability of the Assessment System
- 3.01 Extensive Clinical Experience
- 3.02 Clinical Experience in a Variety of Settings
- 4.03 An Environment that Values Diversity
- 4.04 Faculty
- 4.05 Students
- 6.01 Commitment to High Quality and Improvement

¹ Larger institutions or those with substantial concerns from previous RIPA visits may require additional time and focus.

² Due to the specific nature of some programs, RIDE may include individuals with specialized backgrounds as part of the Extension Review team.

³ RIDE may also require evidence from additional standards and indicators based on concerns from the previous RIPA visit.

Important note: Any RIPA Standards and indicators that were rated as ‘Unacceptable’ during the previous RIPA are also reviewed as part of the Extension Review process. Any program rated as “At Risk of Low Performing’ at a previous RIPA interim visit is also reviewed more extensively.

In addition to document review, RIDE staff also conducts one or more interview meetings with specified personnel and/or candidates. The purpose of the interview meetings is to discuss questions that may arise from the document review, to provide additional insight into the programs progress towards meeting the RIPA Standards and indicators, and to respond to any specific concerns from the previous RIPA visit. Participation in the interview meetings is typically limited to institution and program personnel but RIDE may request candidate or field personnel if it is merited based on the previous RIPA visit

Required Evidence

The chart below details the evidence that is required for each standard and indicator. Programs should provide the required evidence and may provide additional evidence to demonstrate progress towards meeting a standard or indicator. Please note, RIDE urges programs to provide *representative and not exhaustive* evidence due to the nature of the Extension Review process.

1.01	A chart describing the assessment system including assessment at admission, prior to student teaching/internship, and prior to recommendation for certification. The chart is provided in Appendix A.
1.05	A chart describing how the program aligns the assessment system to professional standards and assures the assessment of all key professional standards within the system. The chart is provided in Appendix A. Additionally, evidence describing how the assessment system is communicated to candidates, how the assessment system uses a variety of assessment methodologies and sources of evidence, and how the system is designed to reduce sources of bias.
1.06	Evidence that details how the assessment system yields fair, accurate, and consistent evaluations; how evaluators are trained to make consistent judgments; and how programs use data to improve the consistency of decisions.
3.01	A chart describing the clinical experiences required by each program. Include in the chart the purpose of each field experience, the sequencing of experiences, the setting and duration, and any products that result from the experience. The chart is provided in Appendix A.

3.02	A data base detailing the field experiences that assure that all prospective educators have the opportunity to work with students in a variety of schools, including those that serve culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse students and students with a range of abilities. The data base should allow a reviewer to track student field experiences throughout the program.
4.03	Evidence that describes how the institution and programs make issues of socio-cultural awareness, affirmation of diversity, and the preparation of culturally responsive educators central to their mission.
4.04	A chart describing the efforts the institution and programs have made to recruit hire, support, and retain faculty members who contribute to the diversity of the faculty. Two charts should be provided – one for the institution and one for the educational faculty. The chart is provided in Appendix A.
4.05	A chart that describes the efforts the institution and programs have made to recruit, admit, support, and retain students that contribute to the diversity of the student body. Two charts should be provided – one for the institution and one for the education programs. The chart is provided in Appendix A.
6.01	A two to four page narrative that describes how the programs are reviewing and improving the assessment system, program curriculum, field experiences, diversity efforts and other programmatic improvement efforts.

Please note - In addition to the specified RIPA Standards and indicators, RIDE also reviews any standards and indicators that were rated as 'Unacceptable' at the previous RIPA visit.

Exit Meeting and Extension Decision

Prior to the end of the Extension Review, RIDE staff meets with the dean, director or chair of the education programs for an exit conference. The purpose of this meeting is to report the general findings from the review and to highlight any specific concerns that surfaced. Approximately one month after the Extension Review the institution and programs will receive an Interim Review Memo that details the formative observations and recommendations that resulted from the review process and should that inform ongoing program improvement efforts. Programs that successfully complete an Extension Review will have their approval decision from the previous full RIPA visit extended for up to three years.

Appendices

Appendix A: Required Evidence Charts

1.01

Assessment Point	Criteria	Sources of Evidence	Evaluators and Review Process	Possible Decisions
Admissions				
Rationale				
Assessment Point	Criteria	Sources of Evidence	Evaluators and Review Process	Possible Decisions
Prior to Student Teaching/Internship				
Rationale				
Assessment Point	Criteria	Sources of Evidence	Evaluators and Review Process	Possible Decisions
Recommendation for Licensure				
Rationale				

1.05

	Admission to Program	Progressing to Student Teaching/Internship	Recommendation for Licensure
RIPTS or Professional Standards			

3.01

Description and Purpose of Specific Field Experience	Sequence in Program	Description of Field Experience Setting	Length of Field Experience	Resulting Product(s)

4.04

FACULTY Race (Census 2000 Categories)	Currently	Over the Last Five Years		
		Recruited	Hired	Promoted
American Indian or Alaska Native				
Asian				
Black or African-American				
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander				
White				
Some other race				
Two or more races				
Hispanic or Latino				
Not Hispanic or Latino				

4.05

STUDENTS	Currently	Over the Last Five Years		
		Recruited	Admitted	Graduated
Race (Census 2000 Categories)				
American Indian or Alaska Native				
Asian				
Black or African-American				
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander				
White				
Some other race				
Two or more races				
Hispanic or Latino				
Not Hispanic or Latino				

Appendix B: Sample Schedule

Time	Activity
8:30-12:00	RIDE review of evidence
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:45-1:45	Interview Meeting 1
2:00-3:00	Interview Meeting 2
3:00-4:00	RIDE final review of evidence
4:00	Exit Conference