Library Teacher Licensure in Massachusetts

Educator licenses (including library teacher) are granted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Requirements and conditions for licensure are set by DESE and may be revised from time to time. Information here was compiled in February 2016 by Carol Kelly, Lisa Estabrook, Donna Guerin, and Elaine Mokrzycki. It was formatted in March 2016 by a committee from Massachusetts School Library Association (MSLA) that included Jennifer Reed, Jennifer Varney, Chani Craig, and Carrie Tucker. It is a tool to help people who seek library teacher licensure to navigate the paths to licensure, understand the requirements, and investigate options. It should be used as a guide, not as a replacement for DESE information.

Introduction

Candidates for library teacher licensure apply directly to DESE. The application includes proof of coverage of nine essential competencies. Candidates also provide evidence of passing the MTEL test of [Communication and Literacy Skills](#). Candidates choose to apply for one of [four license types](#).

The most direct path to licensure is completion of one of three graduate programs in Massachusetts. These programs grant both a graduate degree and an endorsement for Massachusetts licensure. Licensure, however, is complicated by the various backgrounds candidates bring to their applications, including: differing undergraduate and graduate degrees; other licenses held; and, out-of-state or international education/experience. Included here are links and information to help you navigate your way to licensure. An application submitted to the DESE will provide you with an official analysis of additional requirements applicable to your particular background.
http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/academic-prek-12/applying-for-and-checking-the-status-of-a-license.html)

- There is no subject matter test. MA instead requires what they call a "competency review" to ensure that all subject matter coverages have been met.
- Any individual can apply for the license at any time. The DESE will respond with specific information about missing areas of coverage which can guide the candidate in deciding whether s/he needs to enroll in a complete advanced degree program or can take separate courses at accredited schools.
- Library Teachers are not considered "core" teachers. The DESE does NOT require the SIOP/RETELL course although a SIOP course is required by all three in-state graduate programs that offer licensure.

Graduate programs

[Cambridge College](), [Salem State University](), and [Simmons College]() offer accredited programs leading to a master's degree as well as endorsement for initial license. (Out-of-state institutions may offer viable online programs as well.) The Massachusetts programs offer the option of taking courses without matriculation, allowing candidates who do not need the entire program to acquire necessary course work. Each program offers possible course waivers, credit for previous courses, and the ability to tailor the program to individual background and needs.

Useful DESE links

[Entry Page for DESE Licensure Information]()

[Library License is a K-12 Teacher License]()

[Explanation of FOUR license types: Temporary, Preliminary, Initial and Professional]()

[Applying for a License]()

[Educator License and Renewal (ELAR) portal]()   Apply for licensure via ELAR. First-time users will create a profile before applying.

[License Requirements Tool]() Navigate the series of pull-down menus as follows: **Field:** 'Academic: Teacher'   **Select Field:** 'Library' **Grade**: 'All Levels' **Type:** choose 'Temporary', 'Preliminary', 'Initial', or 'Professional'

The nine 'coverages'

These coverages are common to all types of license. However, specific programs, previous licensures, and experience make this tool unique for each applicant. See below for definitions of "coverage" and options for achieving it. (Numbers are added here for convenience; DESE does not use numbers.)

1. Characteristics, uses, and design of information systems, for standard reference sources and appropriate technologies
2. Selection, acquisition, organization, and maintenance of information resources
3. Appropriate equipment for using information resources
4. Development, organization, management, and evaluation of school library media programs and resource centers
5. Community and governmental resources
6. Selection, adaptation, and production of instructional materials

7. Federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to media, including those governing access to and reproduction of materials
8. Ethical issues affecting library media services
9. Literature for children and young adults

Consider how your previous coursework might align with these coverages. You may choose to meet with graduate program managers to possibly develop individual programs of study which waive certain courses based on previous work.

What does "coverage" mean?
From the DESE website:
> "Please note that at least 10 hours of professional development activity specific to and completely covering each competency review "coverage of" requirement are necessary to satisfy the requirement. These hours may be gained through completion of any one or combination of the following options: coursework, seminars, workshops, mentored employment, peer coaching, or other professional learning experiences. Additional information regarding a competency review can be found at http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/educator-effectiveness/licensing/guide-competency-review-made-simple.pdf
>
> **Option I - Coursework:** If you have addressed any noted requirement through previously completed coursework at a college or university then please submit an official transcript for that course work if you have not already done so and either a letter as noted below or copy of the official catalog course description for review and consideration.
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> **Option II - Seminar/workshop or other professional learning experience:** If you have addressed any noted requirement through a previously completed seminar or workshop then please submit either a letter as noted below or a copy of your certificate of completion for review and consideration. When it is not self-evident in the title of a course, seminar, workshop, or other professional learning experience or in supporting documentation that any or all of a requirement has been covered and/or the number of hours of instruction that were delivered specific to a requirement then you may submit a letter stating the number of hours of instruction that were delivered specific to a requirement and the specific component(s) of the requirement that were covered. For example, if the requirement has been completely satisfied through one of these professional learning experiences then this should be documented in the letter by the following language: "At least 10 hours of instruction were delivered within (state the professional development activity) specific to and completely covering (state the entire requirement)." A professional development activity may be used to satisfy more than one requirement. Letters verifying coursework must be on official college/university letterhead and be signed by the course instructor, licensure officer, appropriate department chair, registrar, dean, provost, chancellor, vice-president, or president. Letters verifying seminars, workshops, or additional professional learning experiences should be on official letterhead of the provider and be signed by an appropriate representative.
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> **Option III - School-based mentored employment/peer coaching**: If you have addressed a requirement through school-based (PreK-12) mentored employment or peer coaching then please submit a letter on official letterhead signed by the Superintendent/or equivalent stating the hours of mentored employment or peer coaching that were delivered specific to a requirement and the specific component(s) of the requirement that were covered. If the requirement has been completely

satisfied through mentored employment or peer coaching this should be stated in the letter through the following language: "At least 10 hours of (state either mentored employment or peer coaching) were delivered specific to and completely covering (state the entire requirement)." For example, "At least 10 hours of mentored employment were delivered specific to and completely covering the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of Individualized Education Programs." The name and license number of the educator who served as the mentor or coach must also be included. Providers of these professional learning experiences may be in a position to write such letters; however, it is up to the discretion of the provider to issue these letters and is not a requirement or expectation of the Office of Educator Licensure."

Change is on the way

In the 2016-2017 school year requirements for all licensure programs will change. The first and most immediate update will be to practicum standards and requirements.

Traditionally, library licensure programs were certified by either the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the American Library Association (ALA). Recently, a new agreement between organizations changes the accreditation structure. For more information, read this from DESE:
- [Guidelines for Program Approval](#)
- [Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)](#)

As accrediting bodies join forces, changing standards will apply to coursework and practicum requirements. Licensure candidates who plan to extend coursework and preparation beyond 2016 are advised to stay alert to changes.

A note on license renewal

License renewal is beyond the scope of this document. However, as of April 2016, upgrading an initial license (with advanced degree) to a professional license requires three years of employment as a school librarian. Renewing a professional license carries additional requirements, including coursework, Sheltered English Immersion endorsement, and more. Individual school systems may impose conditions of employment beyond DESE's requirements.