



PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE AUDIT

TOP 10 ACTION STEPS

August 2018

The Massachusetts Teachers Association has put together the following advice to help you manage an audit of your Professional educator license.

1. Don't panic.

Any educator who holds a Professional-level license may be audited at any time in the five years after each renewal. An audit itself does not mean your license is in danger of being revoked. Nearly all audits are resolved quickly and painlessly. Complete all forms to the best of your knowledge and submit copies, never originals, of all documents you have readily available.

You do need to successfully complete the audit in order to keep your license active. If you do not start – and complete – the audit, your license will be changed to “inactive”¹.

2. Ask for help from your union.

The MTA is here to help you! Members can reach out to their local president and/or send an email to licensure@massteacher.org. MTA staff members are available to answer your questions, assist you with completing the paperwork and provide support in working with your district and DESE as needed.

3. Communicate with DESE.

As soon as you receive notification of an audit, you should be in contact with the person indicated on your letter to let DESE know you intend to complete the licensure audit. In case you find that you are unable to meet the deadline, have questions about your license or run into any other issues, it is imperative that DESE become aware that you are working toward submitting your paperwork. Failing to do so may result in your license being changed to “inactive” and no longer valid for employment.

4. Everything in writing.

The MTA strongly recommends that all communication with DESE regarding your license audit happen via email or

written letter. It is too easy to miss a detail or misunderstand something over the phone. If you do meet with DESE staff in person, take notes. If you get a phone call, we always recommend either that you ask for the information to be sent by email or that you take good notes on the date, time, the person you spoke with and any information that is relayed over the phone. This will help protect your rights and provide valuable documentation for your local leadership or MTA staff to assist with any complications.

5. Signed IPDP if you are working under the license.

All educators with a Professional-level license are required to have a plan for professional learning that is endorsed by a building administrator. For more information on the IPDP, please see the **DESE Audit FAQ** at www.doe.mass.edu/licensure under “Advancing, Extending or Renewing a License.”

The MTA IPDP folder has specific instructions for your IPDP as well as areas for administrator endorsement of IPDPs. An electronic version is available at www.massteacher.org/licensure.

6. Documenting PDPs.

PDPs are rarely *issued* by any one organization. You do not need a district to provide approval or the *issuing* of a specific PDP document. Educators can always document the number of hours spent on activity. You may need to submit several documents to support a single activity. You may need to demonstrate proof of participation, topics/materials covered, observable demonstration of learning and connection to the topic/field of your license.

Examples of acceptable documentation include:

- Proof of registration
- Proof of attendance
- Course syllabus

¹ “Inactive” means that you were missing one or more requirements for license renewal. A license is not revoked or removed from your file. As soon as those requirements have been satisfied, your license will return to “active” status. Successful completion of an audit may be required to return the license to “active” after being marked “inactive” due to an incomplete audit.

- Agenda/documents/handouts
- Publication on a website
- Official district publication
- Course/workshop evaluations
- Completed assessment
- Transcript or official grade report
- Official letter from organization

Do not give up just because you are missing one or two documents requested. Be upfront with documents that you are unable to secure and don't hesitate to ask if there are alternative ways to document the items you are missing.

7. Check your dates.

You can only use professional development that was completed between the date the license was issued and the date you applied for renewal. Any activities that occurred outside of this window will not be accepted. PDPs in excess of the 150 hours cannot be used in future years or applied retroactively.

The only exception to this rule is that extra PDPs earned from the SEI Endorsement courses may be rolled over into a new licensure cycle. As always, save all documentation in case of future audits.

8. Bundling & Topics of Ten.

Educators are required to complete at least 10 hours on a topic for it to be used as part of license renewal requirements. Any course, seminar or professional learning activity that was less than 10 hours can be "bundled" together with other activities of the same topic. Topics for content-area PDPs must be drawn from the appropriate curriculum frameworks. Topics for elective PDPs may include (but are not limited to) education policy, using virtual classrooms, writing across the curriculum, Socratic discussions or assertive discipline.

9. Conferences.

Attendance at professional conferences does not count toward PDPs unless it has an observable demonstration of learning. However, if you present at the conference, use the information gained to lead a professional learning activity in your school or district or use the information to create lesson plans to share with your department. The conference time can be used as part of documenting the group of activities.

10. My documents are complete. Now what?

Before you put your packet in the mail, make sure you have a copy of everything. Do not send original documents. Within a few days, you should receive notification that your packet has been received at DESE. If you are not notified, don't hesitate to verify that your documents arrived safely.

DESE staff may contact you during the review for clarification or to request additional items. Be sure to follow the same good practices — everything in writing, save copies and ask for help!

Once DESE has completed the review of all available documentation, there are several possible outcomes. These include a successful completion of the audit with no further action needed, a requirement to complete additional PDPs within a timeframe to meet all requirements, or the license status being changed to "inactive" until all PDP requirements have been met. If an educator chooses not to participate in an audit or opts not to complete the audit, the license status is also changed to "inactive."

You will be notified in writing of the outcome. As always, please inform your local president and/or MTA staff if you need any further assistance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Massachusetts Teachers Association
www.massteacher.org/licensure
licensure@massteacher.org

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
www.doe.mass.edu/licensure



Massachusetts Teachers Association
**center for education
 policy and practice**