



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Professional License Extensions – Guidelines and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Educator Licenses Department of Elementary and Secondary Education May 1, 2020

Governor Baker issued an [executive order](#) on March 18, 2020, extending Massachusetts-issued licenses for certain licensed professionals, including licensed educators. The order provides that a license that is “in good standing” as of March 18, 2020, and that has expired or will expire during the state of emergency, is now extended and will remain valid until 90 days after the end of the state of emergency.

This will impact educators who possess an expiring license issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department or DESE), regardless of category (e.g., Academic, Vocational, or Adult Basic Education) or type (Temporary, Provisional, Initial, or Professional) of license.

If you have an active Professional license and are unable to renew the license prior to its renewal date during the state of emergency, your license will continue to remain valid and active even if it reads as Inactive/Invalid in the Educator Licensing system (ELAR). The Department will, when the state of emergency is over, place your Professional license back into an “active” status in ELAR and provide you with a new renewal date (90 days from when the state of emergency is over). If you have an inactive Professional license and are unable to renew the license during the state of emergency, your license will remain in inactive status (rather than entering invalid status) until 90 days after the end of the state of emergency, and this status will be reflected in ELAR once the state of emergency is over.

Educators with a license that is valid for a certain period of employment, such as a Temporary, Provisional, or Initial license, if employed, are considered to be working under their license at this time. These educators would only need to utilize the additional 90-day provision of the executive order should their licenses expire during the state of emergency and had they not already advanced their license.

Please note that this executive order applies to licenses. It does not apply to waivers or endorsements. Please also note that while covered licenses will not expire due to the passage of time as a result of the executive order, the Department will continue to engage in enforcement and discipline, and may suspend or revoke licenses in accordance with governing laws and/or regulations during the state of emergency.

The following frequently asked questions (FAQ) have been developed to assist educators, school districts, and other stakeholders in understanding the executive order and how it impacts educator licensure. The Department will update this document as needed.

Licensure regulations for each category of licensure can be found at:

Academic – [603 CMR 7.00](#) & [603 CMR 44.00](#)

Vocational – [603 CMR 4.00](#)

Adult Basic Education – [603 CMR 47.00](#)

FAQs:

Q: What is meant by “in good standing”?

A: A license that was valid for employment or eligible for renewal as of March 18, 2020 is considered to be “in good standing.” A license that was revoked, surrendered, subject to disciplinary restrictions, or suspended prior to March 18, 2020 is not considered to be “in good standing.” A Professional license that was in an “active” or “Inactive/Invalid” status on March 10, 2020 and went into inactive or invalid status during the state of emergency will retain the status it held on March 10, 2020 for a period extending to 90-days after the state of emergency unless otherwise renewed, revoked, surrendered, subject to disciplinary restrictions or suspended.

For Those with a Professional License

Q: My Professional license is expiring on 6/7/20. Will it be considered Inactive/Invalid after that date?

A: The expiration date for your Professional license will be extended by 90 days following the end of the state of emergency. Due to functionality within the Educator Licensing system (ELAR) during this time, however, it will still read as Inactive/Invalid. The Licensure Office will work with our IT team to implement the changes in ELAR when the state of emergency is over. In the meantime, educators who do not renew their Professional licenses will see a temporary change in their status to Inactive/Invalid. (District personnel will be notified that these licenses are valid for employment when they log into ELAR.) This means, for example, if the state of emergency ends on May 4th, and you have not already renewed your license, the new expiration date will be August 4, 2020.

Q: My license expired on 3/20/20 and now reads Inactive/Invalid. I know there is an extension of Professional licenses due to the state of emergency but when will I see the status change in my ELAR account?

A: Your license expired during the period covered in the executive order and will be extended. As long as your license was in good standing on March 18, 2020, the Department will, at the conclusion of the state of emergency, adjust the expiration date in ELAR. The new expiration date will be 90 days following the conclusion of the state of emergency and your license status will be the same as it was on March 10, 2020, when the state of emergency was declared by Governor Baker.

Q: I was scheduled to take an approved for-cost Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) teacher course and wanted to use the course to satisfy my Professional Development Points (PDPs) for license renewal. Now that the course has been cancelled, what should I do?

A: If your license expired between March 10, 2020 and the end of the state of emergency, you will receive an extension of 90 days following the end of the state of emergency. You can also take any of the online professional development offerings from the list of providers at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/courses.html>. Additionally, online college/university courses in English as a Second Language or Bilingual Education will also satisfy this requirement.

Q: I have an SEI Restriction placed on my Professional license and was participating in a Department-approved for-cost SEI course which has been cancelled/postponed. What are my options?

A: The restriction will remain in place during the period of the state of emergency. If after the state of emergency is lifted, you are still unable to complete the SEI course within the 90-day period, then you may consider taking the SEI MTEL exam which, if passed, would satisfy one of the routes to earning the SEI Endorsement. Alternatively, per [603 CMR 44.12](#), the Commissioner may waive or modify the requirements of license renewal through a license renewal hardship waiver. To request this waiver, please submit a letter requesting a waiver, explaining why the waiver is necessary, to: License Renewal Coordinator, DESE, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148.

Q: I hold a History, 8-12, Professional teaching license that is due to be renewed on April 20, 2020. Will the PDPs I earned in April 2015 be applicable when I renew following the state of emergency?

A: Yes. For Professional licensure renewals extended through this executive order, PDPs accrued at any point from the start of the renewal cycle through this extension period are valid.

Q: I have an Instructional Technology, All Levels, Professional license that was Invalid prior to March 10, 2020. Does this Executive Order change anything for me?

A: No. Educators with a license that became Invalid before the state of emergency was declared on March 10 must renew their license in order to have it be in active status. School districts interested in employing an educator with an Invalid license can do so if they obtain a License Renewal Waiver. For additional information regarding Inactive and Invalid educator license status, please see [Appendix A \(page 30\) of the License Renewal Guidelines](#).

Q: Will I have to pay a fee for this 90-day extension of my Professional license?

A: No. There is no fee for the automatic 90-day extension if your license expires during the state of emergency. Once you are able to renew your license, you will pay the renewal fee at that time which is \$100 for a primary area Professional license and \$25 for each additional Professional license you wish to renew.

Q: Am I still able to renew online?

A: Yes. You are still able to renew online in your [ELAR](#) account as long as you have the requisite Professional Development Points for renewal. Please refer to the [License Renewal Guidelines](#) for additional information about renewing your Professional license.

Q: I prefer to mail in my renewal with payment. Is this still possible?

A: Please be advised that DESE staff are working remotely, per Governor's orders. Materials mailed to DESE will be checked periodically but there will be a delay in processing time. The quickest route to renewal is via your [ELAR](#) account.

Q: With school not being in session, I am unable to obtain approval of my Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) from my supervisor. Can I still renew my Professional license?

A: Although school is not in session, your supervisor is probably available via email. The Department will accept an email from your supervisor approving your IPDP.

Q: The Licensure Office had notified me that I was randomly selected for a License Renewal Audit and I am unable to gather all evidence of my PDPs. Can I obtain an extension and have more time to gather my documents and complete the audit?

A: Yes, you can obtain additional time to submit your documents. Please contact the staff person indicated on the audit notification letter. Also, while the audit is ongoing and until a decision has been reached, the status of your renewed Professional license will be unchanged – it will remain valid and renewed and you should continue to engage in professional development activities in order to renew your license after the five-year validity period.

Q: If I was unable to renew my Inactive/Invalid secondary license and it became Invalid, will I now need 150 PDPs to renew it or can I still renew it with just 30 PDPs?

A: An additional license that became Invalid during the state of emergency will be reinstated to an Inactive/Invalid status and educators will have 90 days from the end of the state of emergency to renew the Inactive/Invalid license with the 30 PDPs required to renew an additional license. If the additional license is not renewed within the additional 90 days, it will become Invalid and require 150 PDPs to renew.

Employability and Licensure

Q: I am employed in my fifth year under my Provisional or Initial license. Does the executive order apply to me?

A: Yes. If your license expires during the state of emergency as a result of hitting the five-year limit, you would receive additional time on your license. Following the end of the state of emergency, you will have 90 additional days of employability added to your license.

Q: I am employed under a Temporary license. Does the executive order apply to me?

A: Yes. If your temporary license expires because you have hit the one year of employment limit during this period, you are eligible for this extension. Following the end of the state of emergency, you will have 90 additional days of employability added to your license.

Q: I am employed under a Provisional or Initial license, but it is not my fifth year under the license (i.e., I am in year 1-4 under the license). Does the executive order apply to me?

A: No, because your license will not expire during the state of emergency.

Q: I am in my fifth year under an Initial license. At the end of the 90-day extension, if I am unable to obtain a Professional license, what are my options?

A: You may apply for an Initial Extension. Information about obtaining an Initial Extension can be found in the extension guide and template on [our website](#).

Q: I am in my fifth year under a Provisional license. At end of the 90-day extension, if I am unable to obtain an Initial license, what are my options?

A: Except as provided by the executive order, a Provisional license cannot be extended. In this instance, your school district could pursue a waiver, or you could obtain another Provisional license in a new grade level or field, or you may submit a Commissioner's Reconsideration request to the Licensure Office. You can make a request by sending a cover letter providing information to support your request for reconsideration, including the nature of your request, the reason for your request, and any supporting documentation.

Q: I am employed in the fifth year under my Vocational Preliminary license. At the end of the 90-day extension, if I am unable to obtain a Professional license, what are my options?

A: You may apply for a Preliminary Extension. Information about vocational licenses can be found on our [website](#).

Q: I was due to complete my master's degree in May 2020 and then qualify for a Professional license. However, I contracted COVID-19 and was unable to complete requirements for the master's degree. I already have obtained an Initial Extension. What can I do?

A: If additional time is needed in order to obtain your Professional license, you may submit a Commissioner's Reconsideration request to the Licensure Office. You can make a request by mailing a cover letter providing information to support your request for reconsideration, including the nature of your request, the reason for your request, and supporting documentation (in this case, a letter from a healthcare professional) to the Licensure Office.

Q: I currently have an Initial license but have satisfied all requirements for a Professional license with the exception of three years of employment under my Initial license. This is my third year of experience. Will the Department accept my employment to date to satisfy this requirement?

A: Yes. Since more than half of the 2019-2020 school year has been completed, the Department will accept this school year, and your two previous years of employment under your Initial license, to satisfy the three-year requirement.

Endorsements, Waivers, and Other Licensure Impacts

Q: I was employed under the Transition Specialist Endorsement. Does this executive order apply to me?

A: No, this executive order does not apply to educator license endorsements.

Q: I am employed under a waiver; will the executive order extend my waiver?

A: No, the executive order does not apply to waivers. The waiver will expire on June 30, 2020.

Q: I am employed under a waiver and was scheduled to take the MTEL in April in order to make continuous progress toward getting licensed and if necessary, an additional waiver. With the test being cancelled, will the Department grant an additional waiver for the next school year?

A: The Department recognizes that these are unprecedented times and will review each situation on a case-by-case basis. It is important to note that taking the MTEL is just one way to demonstrate continuous progress. Please see additional guidance on the continuous progress provision available on [our website for more information](#). In situations where an educator was employed under a waiver and was unable to satisfy continuous progress because of the impact of the COVID-19 emergency, the educator should be prepared to submit an explanation to the Department regarding why they could not make continuous progress.

Q: I hold a Provisional Adult Basic Education (ABE) license that is due to expire on May 31, 2020. Will I be able to get an extension on my Provisional ABE license?

A: Yes. A new expiration date will be placed on your Provisional ABE license that will be 90 days following the end of the state of emergency.

Q. Does this executive order provide any flexibilities for approved Educator Preparation Programs?

A. This executive order provides extension and flexibility for individuals, not organizations that operate educator preparation programs. The Department has provided guidance and support to preparation programs. Please see [here](#) for guidance provided on practicum and student teaching requirements. If you are an individual currently enrolled in an approved preparation program, please reach out to the program directly.

Q: What if I do not yet have an educator license but was in the process of completing requirements to obtain one during this period?

A: The executive order applies to individuals with a current license. The Department is working to consider implications and flexibilities for individuals intending to enter the workforce who were unable to complete licensure requirements (e.g., one or more of the MTEL requirements, or the Performance Assessment of Leaders).

If you have questions about educator licensure that aren't covered by this FAQ, please contact the DESE licensure call center at 781-338-6600. The call center is open each business day from 9:00am-1:00pm and 2:00-5:00pm.