While DESE strongly believes that effective educators demonstrate all skills outlined in the PSTs, teachers will deepen and advance these skills throughout the course of their careers. Considering this, these Guidelines differentiate the levels of mastery that candidates must develop for each element by the time they complete their Initial teacher preparation program and are endorsed for licensure.

To determine the levels of practice for the updated PST elements, DESE gathered survey feedback from nearly 200 representatives from educator preparation programs and PK-12 districts across Massachusetts. DESE also convened a working group of educator preparation program leaders and faculty, program supervisors, supervising practitioners, recent completers, and other PK-12 representatives to inform the updated PST practice levels. Updates were also informed by ongoing research on teacher quality and impact in Massachusetts[[1]](#footnote-2) and the research base showing the importance and developmental trajectory of specific evidence-based skills that foster culturally and linguistically sustaining practices in beginning teachers.

The chart below defines each level of practice and what it means for teacher candidates during their preparation. Each level of practice builds on the level(s) preceding it:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Expectation for Candidates** | **Examples** |
| Introduce | Candidates ***exhibit a foundational understanding*** of key concepts and skills through coursework and/or in early field-based experiences. | Readings, observations, assignments, or assessments that expose candidates to the theoretical and practical aspects of the element |
| Practice | Candidates are introduced to and then ***actively engage in opportunities to apply*** the concepts and skills they have learned. They have opportunities to practice these skills, be observed by instructors or field supervisors, and obtain feedback. | Opportunities in coursework and/or field-based experiences: Simulations, rehearsals, role plays; one-on-one, small group, or whole group instruction in field placements; planning and data meetings; engagement with the school community |
| Demonstrate | Candidates practice and are ultimately able to ***demonstrate proficiency*** in the concepts and skills they have acquired. They are able to apply their knowledge and skills in various situations, including in field-based experiences. Their application of the concepts and skills meets established standards. **They are able to demonstrate the concepts and skills without the need for significant guidance or support, though they may still be developing the scope and consistency expected for the Essential Elements.** | *These should build on prior opportunities to practice and receive feedback*: One-on-one, small group, or whole group instruction in field placements; planning and data meetings; engagement with school community |
| Essential Elements | A subset of elements at the “demonstrate” level have been identified as the Essential Elements. These are the practices and skills assessed through the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP). Each Essential Element was selected in part because the knowledge and skills it describes serve as an umbrella to other elements within the PSTs (See [Appendix C](#_Appendix_C:_Crosswalk)). Candidates must meet the established readiness thresholds for quality, scope, and consistency for each Essential Element to be deemed “ready to teach” during their practicum (see [2024 Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/)). | Building on opportunities to practice and demonstrate these elements in coursework and field-based experiences, the Essential Elements should be demonstrated in appropriate settings during a candidate’s practicum experience. |

These levels do not suggest a hierarchy for the elements, but rather a trajectory of learning and development. Candidates should experience thoughtful exposure to all elements and have appropriate opportunities to practice or demonstrate those that have been determined as most critical for success in meeting the needs of all students as beginning teachers, particularly those from systemically marginalized groups and communities.

1. \* This Quick Reference Guide is taken directly from the [2024 Guidelines for Professional Standards for Teachers](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/pst-guidelines.pdf). Please see the Guidelines for additional information.

   See the [Continuous Improvement](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/improvement/slds.html) page on DESE’s Educator Preparation website for additional information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)