



District of Columbia
Office of the State Superintendent of Education

The District of Columbia's Approval Process for Education Preparation Providers

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Background and Purpose

The District of Columbia Official Code § 38–2602¹ gives the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) the authority to approve Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) in the District. Additionally, D.C. licensure regulations rely on candidates' admission and completion of OSSE-approved teacher preparation programs.²

All EPPs and the Subject Area Programs they offer must be approved by OSSE. EPPs must be approved by OSSE in order to train educators to be licensed in the District of Columbia. Eligible entities seeking approval as an EPP shall submit an application to OSSE on the forms and timelines provided by OSSE.

The purpose of this document is to detail OSSE's approval process for EPPs operating in the District of Columbia.

OSSE determines state approval for two types of EPPs in the District of Columbia: those in Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) and those in Alternate Route Organizations or Institutions (AROI).

Definitions

Alternate Route Organization or Institution (AROI) means an entity that seeks to prepare teacher, school service provider, and administrator candidates for roles in District of Columbia schools. It is expected that prior to being admitted into a program under this pathway, candidates will already possess a baccalaureate degree.

Business day means a regular District of Columbia government workday (Monday-Friday) and does not include holidays or days when the District government is closed for business.

Educator means a person licensed and certified by OSSE to engage in the practice of instruction, administration, or other related professional support services in DC Public Schools.

Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) means the college, university, postsecondary institution, non-profit organization, or corporation authorized to operate in the District of Columbia that provides training leading towards eligibility for educator licensure or certification. EPPs encompass both Institutions of Higher Education and Alternate Route Organizations or Institutions.

¹ DC Code § 38–2602 (11) Formulate and promulgate rules necessary to carry out its functions, including rules governing the process for review and approval of state-level policies by the State Board of Education under § 38-2652, pursuant to Chapter 5 of Title 2 [§ 2-501 et seq.];

DC Code § 38-2652 (6) Approve standards for accreditation and certification of teacher preparation programs of colleges and universities or teacher preparation academies;

² 5-A District of Columbia Municipal Regulations § 1601

Institution of Higher Education (IHE) means a college, university, or other postsecondary institution authorized to confer degrees and approved by the Higher Education Licensure Commission (HELIC) to operate in the District of Columbia. In these EPPs, candidates often complete a full preparation program prior to serving as a teacher, school service provider, or administrator of record, and/or earn an undergraduate or graduate degree upon program completion.

Site Review Team (SRT) means a group of OSSE-appointed individuals, trained in OSSE state and program review procedures, convened to evaluate an EPP and/or its subject area program proposals for the purpose of state and/or program review. These individuals are selected from DC-approved EPP staff/faculty, OSSE employees (with the exception of EQE staff), and DC LEA practitioners.

Subject Area Program means the sequence of courses and experiences required by an EPP for the preparation of candidates to become educators in a specific area, subject, or category.

Institutions of Higher Education

- In order to be approved by OSSE, EPPs in DC IHEs must receive and maintain accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).
- The CAEP accreditation cycle is seven years. EPPs are expected to maintain and renew their accreditation status with CAEP.
- CAEP [standards](#) require clinical experiences for candidates, selective criteria for candidate admission, and other rigorous components.

Approval of Educator Preparation Providers in IHEs

- EPPs in IHEs conduct their [accreditation and renewal](#) with CAEP on CAEP's timelines and applications forms.
- OSSE participates in the CAEP accreditation process via the site visit. The CAEP site visit generally includes a 6-member team (4 appointed by CAEP and 2 appointed by OSSE). One to two members of OSSE's staff join the site visit as the state team chair to provide context on D.C.-specific questions that arise.
- CAEP notifies OSSE of an IHE's accreditation status; additionally, OSSE has access to CAEP's database of accredited institutions in D.C.
- In the instance that an EPP in a DC IHE receives accreditation revocation from CAEP, the EPP may request the opportunity to apply for probationary approval from OSSE for a period of three years. Upon receipt of probationary approval from OSSE, the IHE must agree to corrective action and annual monitoring by OSSE for the three-year period under probationary approval. If the EPP is not making sufficient progress toward improvement at the annual check point, its probationary request may be revoked. At the end of the three-year provisional approval, EPPs in DC IHEs must receive and maintain accreditation from CAEP. If the EPP does not receive CAEP accreditation, they may not reapply for probationary approval from OSSE.

Approval of Subject Area Programs in IHEs

- In order to be approved by OSSE, EPPs in DC IHEs must also receive and maintain approval for their individual subject area programs (e.g., early childhood education, secondary biology, special education) from the program's relevant [Specialized Professional Association \(SPA\)](#).
- The national SPA recognition cycle is seven years. EPPs are expected to maintain and renew their recognition status with the program's relevant SPA.
- EPPs' SPA recognition status is maintained in the CAEP database. OSSE verifies SPA recognition through this database.

Special circumstances for DC IHEs:

- EPPs in DC IHEs seeking program approval for *new individual subject area programs* can apply for initial approval under [OSSE's specialty area standards](#) for a period of three years. At the end of the three-year initial approval, EPPs in DC IHEs must receive and maintain approval for their

individual subject area programs (e.g., early childhood education, secondary biology, special education) from the program's relevant SPA.

- EPPs in DC IHEs seeking program approval for individual subject area programs with *low (less than 10 candidates) or no enrollment* can apply for initial approval under [OSSE's specialty area standards](#) for a period of three years. If the program grows to 10 or more candidates at the end of the three-year initial approval, the EPP must receive and maintain approval for their individual subject area programs (e.g., early childhood education, secondary biology, special education) from the program's relevant SPA. If the program has less than 10 candidates at the end of the three-year initial approval, the EPP may apply for renewal of state approval under OSSE's specialty area standards.
- The application and renewal process for EPPs in DC IHEs operating under special circumstances is detailed in the following sections:
 - Intent to Seek State Approval of EPP and/or Program(s)
 - Site Visit Preparation
 - Site Visit
 - Site Visit Report
 - State Approval Decision
 - Review Policy for State Educator Preparation Provider Approval Decisions

Alternate Route Organizations or Institutions

Approval of EPPs in AROIs

- In order to be approved by OSSE, an EPP in an AROI must meet OSSE standards for AROI providers, as outlined in the [District of Columbia Standards for Education Preparation Providers](#).
- OSSE standards require clinical experiences for candidates, selective criteria for candidate admission, and other rigorous components.
- The state approval cycle of EPPs in AROIs in DC is three years. AROIs are expected to maintain and renew their approval status with OSSE. AROIs should apply for renewal at least six months prior to the end of their approval status.

Approval of Subject Area Programs in AROIs

- In order to be approved by OSSE, the individual subject area programs (e.g., early childhood education, secondary biology, special education) of an AROI must comply [with OSSE's specialty area standards](#).
- The state approval cycle of subject area programs is three years. AROIs are expected to maintain and renew their approval status with OSSE. AROIs should apply for renewal at least six months prior to the end of their program approval status.

The application and renewal process for EPPs in AROIs is detailed in the following sections:

- Intent to Seek State Approval of EPP and/or Program(s)
- Site Visit Preparation
- Site Visit
- Site Visit Report
- State Approval Decision
- Review Policy for State Educator Preparation Provider Approval Decisions

Intent to Seek State Approval of EPP and/or Program(s)

Timeline

Successful EPPs in AROIs will be granted state EPP and/or program(s) approval for three years beginning on the date the organization is granted state EPP and program(s) approval by the State Superintendent of Education.

1. If applying for *initial approval*, the EPP must submit the **Intent to Seek State Approval of Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) and/or Program(s) form** at least *six months* prior to the launch of the EPP and/or its program(s).
2. If applying for *renewal*, the EPP must submit the **Intent to Seek State Approval of Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) and/or Program(s) form** at least *four months* prior to the expiration of a state-approved EPP's term of approval.
3. OSSE will respond to the EPP's intent form submission within 3 business days to seek clarification on any parts of the form or to begin the site visit preparation process.
4. The EPP has 10 business days to respond to questions if clarification is needed.
5. The EPP has 30 business days to submit three preferred days for onsite review if beginning the site visit preparation process.

Criteria for State Approval Submission

The following criteria are required for AROIs seeking state EPP and program(s) initial approval or renewal in the District of Columbia:

- There is a defined unit within the AROI that is primarily responsible for the preparation of teachers and other professional education personnel.
- A Dean, Director, Chair, Executive Director, or other qualified administrator has officially been designated to represent the EPP in an AROI and has been assigned the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation.
- The EPP in an AROI must meet the District of Columbia Standards for Education Preparation.
- The EPP in an AROI has developed a candidate assessment system that evaluates candidate academic and professional competencies at multiple points throughout the program, using multiple evaluation methods.

Credit Hour Requirements

An EPP in an AROI is designed to accommodate recent college graduates and mid-career applicants in gaining entry to the field. Programs must have a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours (180 contact hours), and last for a minimum of one (1) academic year. The contact hours may include pre- and in-service coursework.

Field Experiences

Successful field experiences are a critical element of any EPP and requires forging a strong partnership with LEAs and/or schools. EPPs in AROIs are required to offer a hands-on, student-based field

experience for candidates. EPPs in AROIs must also provide at least one academic year of intensive mentoring for candidates. The state requires programs to provide extensive and frequent mentoring to candidates with intensive contact and support for the first eight weeks of employment, and ongoing mentoring throughout the first academic year as teacher of record.

Admissions

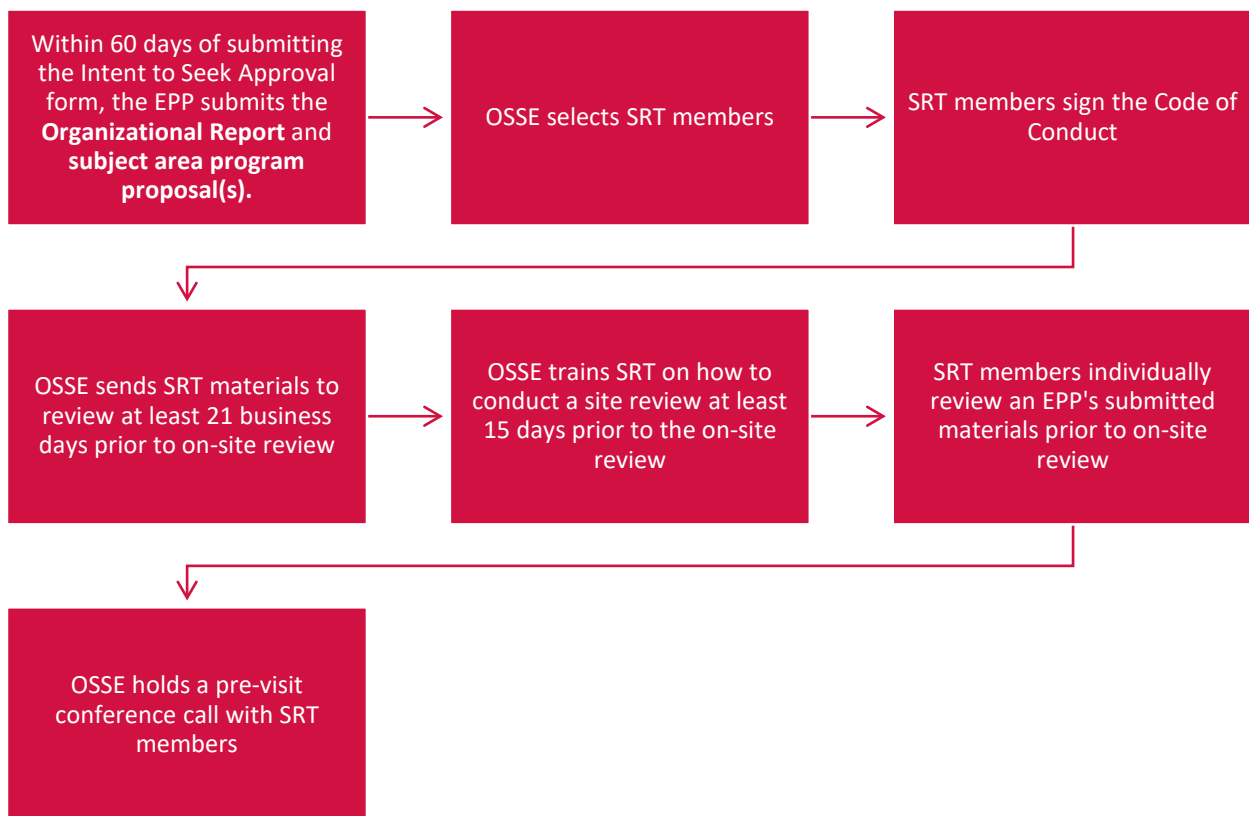
EPPs in AROIs must demonstrate criteria for candidate admission and may include evidence of successful work experience. The table below shows the overall grade point average requirements for program entry.

Minimum Overall Undergraduate Grade Point Average	Successful Work Experience
3.0	Less than 5 years
2.75	5 to 10 years
2.5	More than 10 years

Site Visit Preparation

During the site visit preparation process, EPPs submit materials³ for review. OSSE selects a Site Review Team (SRT) consisting of skilled and committed experts in the field of education and educator preparation in D.C.⁴ Members of the SRT are charged with critically and objectively reviewing EPPs seeking recognition by the state to operate approved programs. See the **Site Review Team Handbook** for more details.

Site Visit Preparation Process



³ Materials are detailed in Appendix G: Exhibits and Interviews of the Site Review Handbook

⁴ Selection of SRT members is detailed in the Site Review Teams section of the Site Review Handbook

Site Visit

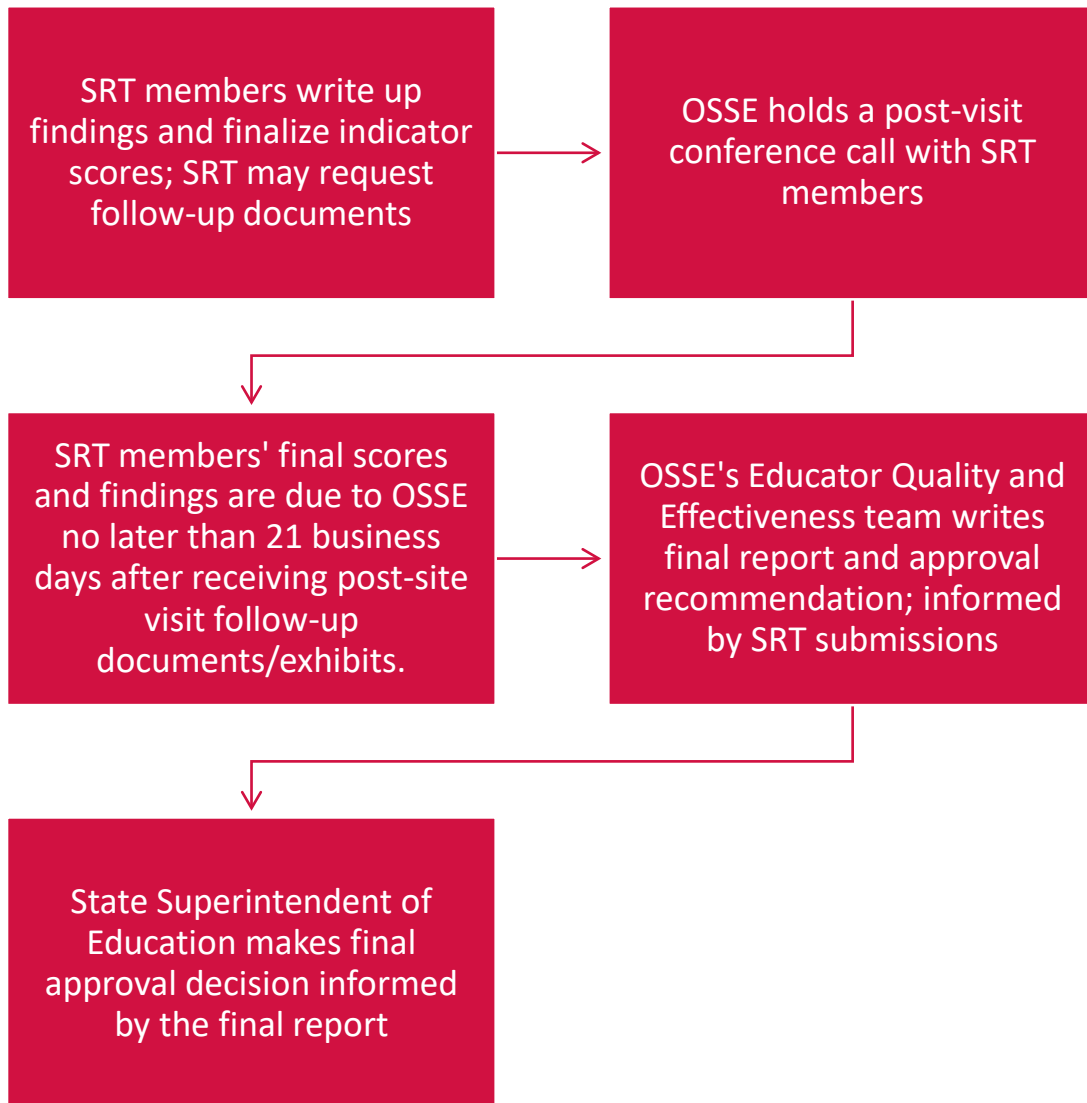
During the site visit, EPP staff provides an overview of its organizational structure, general program, exhibits, and site visit schedule. SRT members engage in team discussions, review exhibits, interview EPP staff, faculty, candidates, and/or alumni, as well as LEA and school partners. EPP staff are expected to participate in interviews, arrange for participation of other EPP staff/faculty, LEA/school partners, candidates, and/or alumni in interviews, and provide any follow-up documents or exhibits requested by the SRT (via OSSE) during the site visit or seven business days after the site visit. If applicable, EPP staff may schedule school and classroom visits and observations to provide evidence of DC EPP standards for SRT members. OSSE facilitates SRT discussions, exhibit review, the EPP leadership/OSSE exit interview, and follow-up document/exhibit requests.

See the **Site Review Team Handbook** for more details.

Site Visit Report

After the site visit, each SRT member will use his/her site visit notes to finalize his/her standard indicator scores, write summaries and highlights to each standard (s)he is assigned, and write summaries to the quality of the EPP's evidence as well as general highlights for any subject area program proposals.

Post-site visit and report writing process



State Approval Decision

1. Within 45 business days of receipt of site visit team standards summaries, OSSE's Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness will complete the final site visit report and findings.
 - a. The site review team's submissions inform OSSE's final site visit report and recommendation to the State Superintendent for approval or denial.
 - b. When making a recommendation for approval or denial, the Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness considers the SRT's submissions, all materials submitted by the EPP and the needs of DC LEAs, schools and students.
 - c. The Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness submits the report to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning for review.
2. The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning submits the report, along with a recommendation for approval or denial, to the State Superintendent of Education.
3. Within 21 business days of receipt of the report, the State Superintendent of Education will make a decision about the approval status of the EPP and/or its programs.
 - a. The Superintendent's decision is informed by the SRT's findings, rationale and indicator scores, OSSE staff recommendations, and the needs of DC LEAs, schools and students.
4. Within 3 business days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision, OSSE will send the approval decision and final site visit report to the EPP.
5. After receiving the Superintendent's approval decision, the EPP has 15 business days to notify OSSE if it will seek review of the Superintendent's decision.

Review Policy for State Educator Preparation Provider Approval Decisions

Background

A state's approval process for Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) holds providers accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is the agency in the District of Columbia responsible for approving EPPs to ensure compliance with the agency's Organizational Standards and the applicable Subject Area Standards. In order to seek approval from OSSE, an EPP must submit an application package and undergo a site visit. After conducting the site review visit, OSSE reviews the totality of the information presented. If OSSE finds that an EPP is not meeting minimum standards of program quality, OSSE may deny approval or revoke its previously approved program status.

OSSE has developed this review policy to permit an EPP to request review of a decision to deny approval or to revoke previously granted approval of the EPP (or one or more of its subject area programs). Pursuant to this policy, the Superintendent will designate a review panel to review the decision. The review panel is authorized to Affirm, Reverse, or Remand the OSSE decision. The review panel's determination is final. There is no further agency level review.

Review Policy

1. Basis for Requesting Review

The basis for review of a decision by OSSE to deny or revoke approval shall include one or more of the following:

- a. OSSE site visit procedures were not followed by the Site Review Team (SRT);
- b. The OSSE decision to deny or revoke approval is not substantially supported by the information and facts presented to OSSE by the EPP;
- c. A member of the SRT or a member of the OSSE staff assigned to work on the EPP application had a conflict of interest or other ethical breach, which substantively affected the integrity of the review or approval process or substantially violated to the OSSE *Accreditation and Program Approval Site Review Team Protocol*.

2. Notice of Intent to Seek Review

Within fifteen (15) business days of the date of receipt of the OSSE decision, an EPP must provide written notice to OSSE of its intention to request review. OSSE's written decision to deny or revoke approval shall provide information on where and to whom the EPP must submit written notice of an intent to seek review. If the EPP does not provide notice of intent to request review within fifteen (15) business days, the OSSE decision shall be deemed the final agency decision.

3. Written Request for Review

- a. Within thirty (30) business days of providing notice of intent to request review, the EPP must submit to OSSE a written request for review that does not exceed 20 double-spaced pages.
- b. The request must specify the allowable bases upon which review is sought.

- c. The request may not present new evidence or information not previously provided to or collected by OSSE.
- d. The request may not include changes an EPP made since the Site Review visit.
- e. The request may include a statement from the EPP regarding the written record.

4. Intra-Agency Review Panel

- a. Within ten (10) business days of receipt of a request for review from an EPP, the State Superintendent of Education will designate a 3-member intra-agency panel (“the panel”) of OSSE employees to conduct a review.
- b. The intra-agency review panel shall not include any OSSE employee who had any direct involvement in the decision to deny or revoke state approval.
- c. The intra-agency panel shall convene within thirty (30) business days of the Superintendent’s designation, to review the EPP’s request and the written record as necessary.
- d. The intra-agency review panel may Affirm, Reverse, or Remand the OSSE decision.

5. Review Panel Standards and Process

- a. The panel review shall be limited to the EPP’s bases for review and the written record regarding the issues presented in the review request.
- b. The panel will review the request to determine whether the EPP has stated a proper basis for the review of the OSSE decision pursuant to Section II.1 (a)-(c) of this policy.
- c. If it is determined that the request for review does not present a valid basis for review, OSSE will promptly notify the EPP of the deficiency. The EPP will then have ten (10) business days from notification to submit an amended request for review.
- d. If the amended request for review does not present adequate basis for review, the panel shall affirm the agency’s prior decision to deny or revoke approval. In such case, the OSSE decision shall be the final agency decision.
- e. If it is determined that the amended request for review does present a valid basis for review, the panel shall determine whether the matter should be remanded for a new site review, or whether the review will be limited to the existing written record.
- f. Remands shall be limited to conducting a new site review. The panel shall consider a remand only if there is specific evidence that the integrity of the initial site review process was compromised.
- g. When the panel remands for a new site review, the remand initiates a new approval process at OSSE, and the panel relinquishes any further authority over the matter.
- h. If it is determined that the review is limited to the existing written record, the panel will review the totality of the information presented by the EPP in its application, including information from the site review and any statement submitted by the EPP. Additional exhibits supplementing the application *shall not be submitted*. If such information is submitted, it shall not be considered by the panel.

6. Review Panel Outcomes

- a. If the panel decides to Affirm the OSSE decision, OSSE’s prior Denial or Revocation remains in effect.
- b. If the panel decides to Reverse the OSSE decision, the EPP application shall be approved or the decision to revoke approval shall be reversed.
- c. The panel shall prepare its written decision within fifteen (15) business days of the convening of the panel. The panel’s written decision shall include the bases for the panel’s decision.

- d. If the panel decides to Remand the OSSE decision, the panel shall notify OSSE in writing. The panel is not involved after issuing a remand; OSSE is responsible for convening a new site review team.

7. Status Pending Review

For an EPP that elects to undergo this review process, the status of that EPP or one or more of its programs remains unchanged pending the final decision.

8. Final Agency Decision

OSSE shall provide the EPP with the panel's written decision within three (3) business days. A decision by the panel to Affirm or Reverse shall be deemed the final agency decision.

Definitions:

1. "Business day" means a regular District of Columbia government workday (Monday-Friday) and does not include holidays or days when the District government is closed for business.
2. "Site Review Team" is defined as a group of OSSE-appointed individuals, trained in OSSE state and program review procedures, convened to evaluate an EPP and/or its subject area program proposals for the purpose of state and/or program review. These individuals are selected from DC-approved EPP staff/faculty, OSSE employees (with the exception of EQE staff), and DC LEA practitioners.
3. "Conflict of Interest" shall have the meaning as described in *EQE Accreditation and Program Approval Site Review Team Protocol*.
4. "Written record" means the EPP's organization report, subject area program proposals, and exhibits; and the final site visit report by the Site Review Team.
5. "Final agency decision" means that an aggrieved party does not have any further administrative remedies at the agency level; the action marks the consummation of the agency's decision-making process.