Chapter 1

ROPA Overview

I. Introduction

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) has the responsibility of evaluating and approving educator preparation programs at the undergraduate and graduate level and alternate routes to licensure. Candidates who complete any approved programs, who are recommended by their program and who meet examination requirements (e.g., Praxis or its equivalent) are eligible for licensure in Vermont.

The VSBPE approves licensure programs that have successfully demonstrated the capacity to provide prospective educators with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and dispositions needed to foster all students' growth. Unless otherwise specified, program approval is valid for seven years. An external review team must review programs seeking continued state approval; this process is briefly described below and detailed in Chapter 3. Institutions seeking to add new programs must also submit a detailed application for the new program to the VSBPE (see Chapter 6).

For more than 23 years the Results Oriented Program Approval Process (ROPA) has been used to help educator preparation programs improve the preparation of educators for Vermont's schools while at the same time holding preparation programs accountable for meeting standards. The ROPA process has been recently revised to improve the quality of the review process while increasing efficiency. During this revision, the following goals were addressed:

1. Align ROPA with the newly adapted Core Teaching and Leadership Standards and the Common Core Standards for students.
2. Improve quality of reviews by seeking review team members with expertise in their endorsement.
3. Increase team diversity to reflect best practices in teacher preparation.

4. Streamline the on-site review process and seek ways to make the review process less burdensome for institutions.
5. Migrate to electronic institutional portfolios with the goal of improving programs' self-study processes and overall preparation for visits.
6. Improve the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of reports by completing a draft with review team members while on the visit.

The Program Approval Process

One year prior to the expiration of a program's approval, the VSBPE will send a letter to the president of the institution notifying him or her of the approaching expiration date. The institution then suggests possible dates for the external review to the VSBPE. The VSBPE, through the VT Agency of Education, will work with the institution to arrive at a mutually acceptable date for the review and on-site visit.

Once a date is set, institutions are responsible for the creation and submission of an Institutional Portfolio. The Institutional Portfolio is the primary document through which the Review Team becomes acquainted with the institution, its programs, and candidates. Beginning in 2014, this is an electronic, web-based document that can be accessed by review team members prior to and throughout the visit.

The visit of the Review Team is meant to confirm the background information and evidence submitted in the Institutional Portfolio. A summary of the report of the findings of the Review Team will be shared with the institution at the conclusion of the visit with a final report submitted to both the VSBPE and the institution. The VSBPE has the final authority to approve an institution's educator preparation programs based on the findings of the Review Team. Assistance will be made available to the institution through the program approval process; however, it is the responsibility of the institution to have materials prepared and accessible on time. Contact the ROPA consultant at the VT AOE for more information.

III. Alternate Routes to Licensure

Alternate routes to licensure will be assessed through the ROPA review process. The program will be measured in terms of the four program approval standards, though

specific indicators may be revised or found not applicable. Upon scheduling a program review, an alternate route to licensure program must meet with a representative of the VSBPE and/or the VTDOE to formally review the four standards and to determine the appropriate indicators and supporting evidence.

IV. Vermont Approved Programs

Sixteen Vermont institutions of higher education have approved educator preparation programs. Vermont's alternative route to licensure, Peer Review, is also an approved program. A list of Vermont approved programs is provided in the chart below.

Name of Institution	Programs Approved Through
SPARK	2015
Vermont Technical College	2015
Middlebury College	2016
UVM	2016
TAP (Teacher Apprentice Program)	2016
Goddard College	2016
Champlain College	2017
College of St. Joseph	2017
Green Mountain College	2017
Norwich University	2017
Lyndon State College	2018
Peer Review	2018
St. Michael's College	2018
Castleton State College	2018
Johnson State College	2019
Vermont College of Fine Arts	2021

Program Approval Standards

Chapter 2

I. Introduction

The four program approval standards apply to all undergraduate, post-baccalaureate and graduate programs as well as to alternate routes that lead to a recommendation for initial licensure and to programs that offer additional endorsements. The program approval standards make frequent reference to Vermont's Core Teaching and Leadership Standards.

II. Overview of Vermont's Program Approval Standards

STANDARD I: **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE, PEDAGOGY, AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS** Provider ensures that candidates have the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge to help all students learn and to create learning experiences that make the content area accessible and meaningful for learners.
STANDARD II**: SYSTEMS OF ASSESSMENT** Provider uses valid and reliable methods to systematically evaluate candidates' knowledge and performance competencies, to monitor candidates' progress, and to acquire data that is used in making programmatic improvements.
STANDARD III**: FIELD EXPERIENCES** Provider and its PreK-12 partners collaborate to ensure high-quality field experiences where candidates demonstrate effective teaching and take responsibility for student learning.
STANDARD IV**: RESOURCES AND PRACTICES** Provider ensures that programs and candidates have the resources to meet Vermont's Core Teaching and/ or Core Leadership Standards as well as the endorsement requirements.

III. Overview of Indicators

Each program approval standard is further developed through its accompanying indicators. Programs are able to demonstrate meeting the program approval standards by detailing their performance on each indicator.

The following pages present the four standards and indicators along with possible sources of evidence that could be used to show proficiency in each. This chart also provides directions to institutions for creating their institutional portfolio. Programs should respond to each indicator using **evidence.** Once a standard is complete, programs will compose a reflective summary that indicates program weaknesses, strengths, and goals in that standard area.

IV. Overview of Rubrics

ROPA Institutional Evidence Assessment Scale

Evidence presented by institutions in the ROPA process is meant to demonstrate that they are meeting the ROPA Educator Preparation Program Standards. This scale aims to give team members a method to assess evidence presented to teams.

Rating	Definition	Examples *(All evidence relating to Indicator 1.2: Candidates use technology within their discipline(s), apply them appropriately, and guide learners to use technology in a safe and effective way.)*
Satisfactory Evidence	Evidence presented demonstrates that one or more sources of valid* data have been presented to confirm that the standard has been met or exceeded.	• Syllabus from a comprehensive "technology in the classroom" course that requires students to plan lessons that incorporate different classroom scenarios (limited access to tech, full class set of iPads, etc.), differentiate lessons for students with accommodations, and plan for assessing electronic student work • Student teaching video of candidate leading a classroom lesson on internet search strategies • Collected student work samples from candidate portfolio that show understanding and application of concepts like Google Search functions, reliable sources, etc. linked to the prior lesson • Syllabus from education course that addresses national technology standards and/or technology in the Common Core
Partial Evidence	Evidence presented demonstrates that the program has collected some data in order to satisfy the standard. Questions may exist regarding the quality of the evidence (validity, reliability, etc.) and it cannot be confirmed that the standard has been met or exceeded without additional evidence.	• A syllabus is submitted that provides some students with a strong background in technology integration in the classroom, however, it is an elective course not required for all education majors.

Minimal Evidence	The evidence presented does not adequately demonstrate how the standard is being met. Evidence requires a significant amount of work or replacement to meet the standard.	• Syllabus from education course that lists Power Point as a presentation tool that students are required to use for a project.

*Valid: The extent to which evaluation data support specific inferences about individual or organizational performance.[1]

The Four ROPA Standards: Leadership and Educator Preparation Program Standards

ROPA Standards for Teaching and Leadership Programs

The original seven ROPA standards have been revised into four standards in an effort to align the ROPA process with the new Core Teaching Standards and to remove redundancy. The revised standards also reflect the Common Core State Standards and the Vermont Core Teaching and Leadership Standards.

ROPA Standards for Teacher Preparation Programs

Standard 1: CONTENT KNOWLEDGE, PEDAGOGY, AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Provider ensures that candidates have the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge to help all students learn and to create learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners.

Indicators

1.1 Candidates understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) they are planning to teach.

1.2 Candidates use technologies within their discipline(s), apply them appropriately, and guide learners to use technology in a safe and effective way.
1.3 Candidates have the necessary pedagogical knowledge in their endorsement area to design and implement learning experiences that are research-based and promote each learner's achievement of content.
1.4 Candidates understand and use multiple methods of assessment to measure student learning and use results to adjust their instruction to meet learners' needs.
1.5 Candidates understand how learners grow and develop; recognize learner differences in cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas; and design and implement developmentally appropriate and relevant learning experiences.
1.6 Candidates understand individual differences, diverse cultures and communities, and create inclusive learning environments enabling all students to learn.
1.7 Candidates understand and demonstrate professional responsibility, that is guided by legal and ethical principles, and engage in ongoing professional learning.

Standard 2: SYSTEMS OF ASSESSMENT

Provider uses valid and reliable methods to systematically evaluate candidates' knowledge and performance competencies, to monitor candidates' progress, and to acquire data that is used in making programmatic improvements.

Indicators

2.1 Programs use reliable, valid and continuous assessment measures to evaluate candidates' knowledge and performance competencies in relation to the Vermont Core Teaching and/or Core Leadership Standards as well as to the endorsement requirements.
2.2 Programs ensure that candidates are knowledgeable about the program's assessment system, including its policies and criteria for entrance to the program, continuing in the program, entrance to student teaching, and exit from the program.
2.3 Programs regularly and systematically use data from assessment measures to inform programmatic decisions.
2.4 Programs have made significant progress toward implementing their Five-Year Plan and addressing the concerns noted in previous ROPA evaluations.

Standard 3: FIELD EXPERIENCES

Provider and its PreK-12 partners collaborate to ensure high-quality field experiences where candidates demonstrate effective teaching and take responsibility for student learning.

Indicators

3.1 Programs collaborate with their field partners to design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure that candidates demonstrate effective teaching and support every student in meeting rigorous learning goals.

3.2 Programs collaborate with their field partners to ensure that candidates understand the expectations of the profession as well as the relevant laws and policies (e.g., school mentoring program, anti-bullying policies, teacher evaluation practices, personal learning plans, and school action plans.)

3.3 Programs collaborate with their field partners to ensure that candidates know when and how to access resources (e.g., special educators, related service providers and specialists) to address students' needs.

3.4 Candidates complete a sequence of high-quality field experiences that represent the range of grade levels, content, and requirements of the endorsement.

3.5 Programs provide candidates with a variety of high-quality field experiences with a diverse population of students and educators.

Standard 4: RESOURCES AND PRACTICES

Provider ensures that programs and candidates have the resources to meet Vermont's Core Teaching and/ or Core Leadership Standards as well as the endorsement requirements.

Indicators

4.1 Provider's policies and resources support faculty in scholarship, service, and teaching as well as in their efforts to collaborate with colleagues across the institution and in the field.

4.2 Programs have the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and technology necessary to meet approval standards and indicators.

4.3 Provider and programs recruit, admit, support, and retain candidates, faculty and cooperating teachers from diverse backgrounds.

4.4 Provider demonstrates an overall effort to address community, local, regional, state and national needs for hard-to-staff schools and fields of teacher shortage.

ROPA Standards for Leader Preparation Programs

Standard 1: CONTENT KNOWLEDGE, PEDAGOGY, AND PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Provider ensures that candidates have the necessary content and pedagogical knowledge as detailed in Vermont's Core Leadership Standards.

Indicators

1.1 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

1.2 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to learning and staff professional growth.

1.3 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by ensuring management of the organization, operation, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

1.4 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

1.5 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

1.6 An education leader promotes the success of every learner by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Standard 2: SYSTEMS OF ASSESSMENT

Provider uses valid and reliable methods to systematically evaluate candidates' knowledge and performance competencies, to monitor candidates' progress, and to acquire data that is used in making programmatic improvements.

Indicators

2.1 Programs use reliable, valid and continuous assessment measures to evaluate candidates' knowledge and performance competencies in relation to the Vermont Core Teaching and/or Core Leadership Standards as well as to the endorsement requirements.

2.2 Programs ensure that candidates are knowledgeable about the program's assessment system, including its policies and criteria for entrance to the program, continuing in the program, entrance to student teaching, and exit from the program.

2.3 Programs regularly and systematically use data from assessment measures to inform programmatic decisions.
2.4 Programs have made significant progress toward implementing their Five-Year Plan and addressing the concerns noted in previous ROPA evaluations.

Standard 3: FIELD EXPERIENCES

Provider and its PreK-12 partners collaborate to ensure high-quality field experiences where candidates demonstrate effective leadership and take responsibility for student learning.

Indicators

3.1 Programs collaborate with their field partners to design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure that candidates demonstrate effective leadership and support every student in meeting rigorous learning goals.
3.2 Programs collaborate with their field partners to ensure that candidates understand the expectations of the profession as well as the relevant laws and policies (e.g., school mentoring program, anti-bullying policies, teacher evaluation practices, personal learning plans, and school action plans.)
3.3 Programs provide candidates with a variety of high-quality field experiences in accordance with Vermont internship requirements for administrators.

Standard 4: RESOURCES AND PRACTICES

Provider ensures that programs and candidates have the resources to meet Vermont's Core Teaching and/ or Core Leadership Standards as well as the endorsement requirements.

Indicators

4.1 Provider's policies and resources support faculty in scholarship, service, and teaching as well as in their efforts to collaborate with colleagues across the institution and in the field.
4.2 Programs have the leadership, authority, budget, personnel, facilities, and technology necessary to meet approval standards and indicators.
4.3 Provider and programs recruit, admit, support, and retain candidates, faculty and field mentors from diverse backgrounds.

Suggested Evidence Chart for Teacher Preparation Programs

Suggested Evidence	Possible Reference to ROPA Standards and Indicators
Curricular maps cross-referenced to the endorsement and the ten Core Teaching Standards or six Core Leadership Standards.	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7 2.1, 4.2, 3.4, 3.5
Course syllabi and examples of candidate work (e.g., lesson or unit plans aligned with the Common Core or Vermont Standards).	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 3.4, 3.5
Summative assessments of data from the Portfolio.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1
Summative assessments of data from Cooperating Teachers' evaluations	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Summative assessments of data from Student Teaching Supervisors' evaluations.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 4.3
Summative assessments of data from completer survey	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7
Summative assessments of data from employer survey.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1
Summative assessments of data from monitoring and evaluating attributes and dispositions other than academic indicators	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2,
Student teaching and practicum expectations aligned with the endorsement and general licensure requirements.	2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5,
Handbooks detailing program assessments and policies, including practicum and student teaching roles and responsibilities as well as expectations of the professions	1.7, 2.2, 3.2,
Report from accreditor (e.g., the New England Association of Schools and Colleges or the equivalent)	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Outline of governing structure and organizational chart with accompanying budget spreadsheet and technology inventory as well as advisor-advisee ratios.	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Documented participation in Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs	4.3
Report of the VSBPE Rule Check conducted by the AOE	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2
Collaborative agreements between programs and their field partners	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1
Summative data on licensure test scores by endorsement area and overall (i.e., PRAXIS scores or other state approved alternatives)	1.1, 1.2
Description of the technologies used to support candidate learning in relation to each endorsement area with reference to pertinent policies that the provider imposes.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 4.2,

Update on the provider's progress toward implementing their Five-Year Plan and addressing the concerns noted in the previous ROPA evaluation.	2.3, 2.4
Strategic plans and practices that address (the needs of) Vermont's hard-to-staff schools and fields of teacher shortage.	4.4
Videos of student teacher lessons with accompanying analysis and reflection	
In addition to the list above, there are many other artifact that could be used to demonstrate having met ROPA standards (e.g., School Board, Standards Board or Town meetings; IEP and 504 meetings; Anti-bullying team meetings; Parent-teacher conferences; Professional learning communities; Vertical teaming; Grade level teaming; Action research projects; Responsive Classroom or other relent trainings; Student exchange experiences; Letters and Newsletters Home; Class web pages; School to home activities; Open houses; Campus-wide events; Reflections on district and/or school policies; Professional learning plans; use of Educator Quality Standards; School Action Plans; Vermont's code of ethics Mentoring and Induction programs; Mandatory reporting policies, etc.	

Suggested Evidence Chart for Leadership Programs

Suggested Review Evidence: Leadership Standards

Suggested Evidence	Possible Reference to ROPA Leadership Standards
Curricular maps cross-referenced to the endorsement six Core Leadership Standards.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.4, 3.3
Course syllabi and examples of candidate work (e.g., Action Research Project, etc.)	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.3
Summative assessments of data from program or internship documentation.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
Summative assessments of data from internship mentor.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
Summative assessments of data from program completer survey. Ideally, participants would be recent graduates who have been employed for at least six months.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6
Summative assessments of data from employer survey.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1
Summative assessments of data from monitoring and evaluating attributes and dispositions. A description of the disposition rubric and how the rubric is used would be appropriate.	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2
Internship expectations aligned with the endorsement and general licensure requirement.	3.2, 3.3
Handbooks detailing program assessments and policies, including internship roles and responsibilities as well as expectations of the profession.	2.2, 3.2, 1.6
Report from accreditor (e.g., the New England Association of Schools and Colleges or the equivalent).	4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Outline of governing structure and organizational chart with accompanying budget spreadsheet and technology inventory as well as advisor-advisee ratios.	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Documented participation in Federal Student Aid (FSA) programs	4.3
Report of the VSBPE Rule Check conducted by the AOE.	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.2

Collaborative agreements between programs and their field partners.	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1
Summative data on formal assessment(s) demonstrating competency in the endorsement.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Description of the technologies (both the name and purpose) used to support candidate learning in relation to each endorsement area.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 4.2
Update on the provider's progress toward implementing their Five-Year Plan and addressing the concerns noted in the previous ROPA evaluation.	2.3, 2.4
Strategies plans and practices that address (the needs of) Vermont's hard-to-staff schools and fields of teacher and administrator shortage.	4.4

Continued Program Renewal

Chapter 3

I. Introduction

Program approval has two purposes: *review for improvement* and *review for accountability*. It is the expectation that institutions of higher education in Vermont, in partnership with the VSBPE and the VT AOE, engage in on-going program assessment and improvement to enhance the experiences and quality of the educators they develop. Through the program approval process, the VSBPE holds institutions responsible for meeting Vermont's Program Approval Standards.

Vermont's ROPA process consists of an internal review (e.g., a self-study) that the institution conducts and an external review that a team approved by the VSBPE conducts in collaboration with the VT AOE. In both types of reviews, the performance of an institution and programs is measured in terms of the program approval standards. The Institutional Portfolio summarizes the findings of the internal review, or self-study, an institution and program(s) undertake, whereas the Review Team Report summarizes the findings of the external review conducted during a visit.

Vermont institutions of higher education and alternate routes wishing to remain approved educator preparation programs must be reviewed every seven years in order to continue recommending candidates for licensure. The VSBPE expects, however, that programs will be engaged in on-going internal review and reflection in order to improve programs and to meet the program approval standards.

II. Self-Study

The major goals of program review are institutional self-assessment and program improvement. A self-study should be part of an ongoing process that continues throughout the seven years which a program is approved and culminates in the full program review. Chapter 2 provides detailed performance indicators for each program approval standard, suggested evidence charts, and scoring rubrics to guide institutions in completing a self-study and in creating the Institutional Portfolio.

The review team conducts a full program review which should principally serve to verify the findings of the self-study, as summarized in the Institutional Portfolio, and provide an outside perspective. An institution should continually evaluate its programs in order to align itself with current research and best practice. Continual review will also enable programs to assemble or develop the documentation needed to address the program approval standards. Some of the required data and documentation (e.g., curricular maps, surveys from program graduates) require advance planning and implementation.

A strong self-study would involve the ongoing, active participation of the program's preK-12 partners. Vermont's Program Approval Standards reflect the important role preK-12 educators have in developing high quality beginning educators. In addition, the belief that educator preparation is an institutional responsibility and opportunity underscores the program approval standards. Collaboration with faculty, staff, and administrators across the institution should extend their continual involvement in evaluating the program as well.

Appendix D offers a series of questions for each standard that may further assist an institution in self-reflection throughout the self-study process. Bear in mind, however, that each indicator must be addressed. While an institution may choose to incorporate its answers to the questions directly into the Institutional Portfolio, it is not required.

A. Institutional Portfolio Format and Style

The Institutional Portfolio, as of 2014, is now a web-based document. Programs may use a template that we have created in Google Sites or may create their own web-based document. Review team members and AOE staff must be able to access the document without password protections during the visit. The Institutional Portfolio is a professional document that should be complete, well-organized, and authored in one clear, coherent voice, although it will include input from many members of the program.

This document should organize the report so that a clear argument is presented of how the standard and indicators are met. **All assertions must be supported by evidence.** While institutions may provide narrative explanations if necessary, we encourage authors to remember that we will look to the evidence for proof of a standard being met.

Institutions that have both initial and advanced programs may elect to prepare a general report for initial programs and add an EAR (endorsement area report) for additional advanced programs.

Introduction

Programs are encouraged to begin with a brief introduction to the college or university and the educator preparation programs, which should include the following:

- A brief description of the institution and its mission
- The program's theme and how it guides the program's work
- The required chart that identifies all initial licensure and additional endorsement programs, various delivery models for each program, number of graduates of the program in the most recent year, number of candidates enrolled in each area, and other critical data. *Note: This does not apply to institutions with no other approved programs.*
- Any other contextual information that will assist the Review Team to better understand the institution, candidates, and the unique culture of the institution and programs. It is not necessary to repeat information that can be found in an institutions catalogue.

Addressing the Program Approval Standards

- Respond to each standard with evidence that best demonstrates the program's ability to meet or exceed that standard.
- If necessary, include a brief description of the evidence for that standard. Please do not include long narratives in this section.

Analyze the institution's performance for the entire standard. Delineate the strengths of program (or institution) and the areas for growth as supported by the evidence, and discuss possible improvements (see Appendix E).

Six-Year Plan

The program's Six-Year Plan should:

- Identify the program's areas of strengths and needs based on the analysis of the of the data collected for each standard;
- State goals, a timeline for meeting those goals, annual benchmarks, strategies, and the evidence that will benchmark progress (See Appendix E);
- Be consistent with the overall theme and purpose of the program, and;

- Be updated and adjusted on a yearly basis to reflect progress on meeting concerns and stipulations from the previous report as well as goals identified by the institution. We understand that goals may be modified over time to reflect the shifting needs of the institution.

ROPA Visits

Chapter 4

I. Preparing for the Visit

The ongoing maintenance of a college's or university's Institutional Portfolio is the primary means through which an institution may prepare for a visit. Self-studies and documentation that are begun in the year that a visit is scheduled may not provide the institution with enough evidence for a visiting team to confirm the meeting of a standard. Evaluated portfolios, for example, will need to be collected for several years across programs in order to assure that the review team has a strong sample to review. (Please note that candidate work in advanced degree programs will also need to be documented through a portfolio or alternate assessment.) Once on the visit, Review Teams will seek to confirm evidence that met standards and seek more information about standards that were lacking substantial evidence.

One year beforehand, the VSBPE will send a letter to the institution notifying the educator preparation program of the expiration date of a program's approval. The institution then suggests possible dates for the review visit to the VSBPE. The AOE staff will work with the institution to arrive at a mutually acceptable date for the Review Team's visit.

II. Review Teams

The AOE and the VSBPE work to create a review team that is balanced in terms of expertise, content knowledge, and instructional level.

It is the policy of the VSBPE to attract the most qualified individuals to serve on visiting teams in the education preparation program approval process. Team members must be independent and impartial in order to ensure that team recommendations are based solely on the merits of the institution visited. All team members will be trained in *Vermont's Core Teaching and/or Leadership Standards* and program approval standards. The review team will be determined by the VT AOE and approved by the institution. The Team will then be approved by the VSBPE. The size of the team depends on the

number of licensing areas to be evaluated and is comprised of specialists in the endorsement area(s) being sought. The team will include:

- One member of the VSBPE
- One member from an educator preparation institution
- One or more currently practicing educators/administrators
- Additional members may be added to the team as needed

(For further details on VSBPE's policy on the selection of Review Team members, please see Appendix F. Note that this policy was updated in May 2015.)

III. Pre-Visit Conference

Once the Institutional Portfolio has been received, the ROPA Consultant will meet with the coordinator of the preparation program(s) in order to discuss and set the itinerary for the visit. This visit may be virtual or in-person.

The outcomes of the Pre-Visit Conference are as follows:
(1) Clear understanding of the purpose, process, responsibilities, and appeal rights available to the institution.
(2) Schedule for the on-site visit
(3) Plans for logistics of the visit (see below)
(4) Identification of individuals from the institution who will participate in discussions and interviews
(5) Selection of field sites and individuals at the sites whom the team can interview
(6) Selection criteria for the licensure portfolios that will be available for the team to review
(7) General description of the documents and artifacts that will be made available to the team in the evidence room
(8) Regulations check with a member of the AOE Licensing Staff.

The institution should review the lists below and have preliminary responses ready for the planning visit.

A. Logistics

The institution should be prepared to provide the following support. These needs will vary based on size of the team and duration of the visit.

- Lodging near campus that will provide: lodging for them team; meeting space for the duration of the visit that includes wifi access for all team laptops; light refreshments in this space each evening.
- Meeting space at or near lodging for all evenings throughout the duration of the visit.
- Parking at the hotel and institution for team members
- Breakfast either at the hotel or in the on-campus meeting room for the duration of the visit.
- Lunch in the on-campus meeting room for the duration of the visit.
- Dinner with faculty, administrators, and program candidates on the first night of the visit (generally Sunday). Dinner for team members for the remainder of the visit, not including the day of departure.
- An on-campus meeting room that can provide work space for the team and may be used for the program to provide exhibits or additional evidence that could not be provided to the team in electronic format. This room must have wifi access: **please be sure to provide clear login/password instructions prior to team arrival**.
- Interview space to accommodate candidate and faculty interviews outside of the meeting room.
- Coffee, tea, water and light snacks should be available in the on-campus meeting room throughout the visit.

B. Interviews, Meetings, and Other Events to Schedule

In preparation for the planning visit, the institution should begin to identify the individuals who will play a key role in each of the meetings and interview sessions. The questions that follow can guide the institution's preliminary planning.

- What is the location of the on-campus meeting room?
- Who will meet the team and provide an overview of the on-campus meeting room?
- Who will attend the dinner on the first night? How will the institution highlight or set the context for its programs to team members? A list of attendees should

include designation of individuals by programs represented or offices on campus. Where will the dinner be held?

- What candidates will be selected by the programs for interviews for each program? This should include candidates early in the program, in the middle of the program, and late in the program. When are they available for interviews? Where will the interviews be held?
- How will the program involve program graduates for interviews? Who will attend? Who will need to be interviewed over the phone?
- What schools/districts will be selected by the programs for team visits? This list should include solid partnerships and representatives of all the programs. Who will drive teams to the sites?
- Whom will the programs invite to a meeting of arts and science faculty members who are partners in educator preparation? Where will it be held?
- Whom will the program invite to a meeting of individuals who are knowledgeable about the institution's commitment to diversity? Where will it be held?
- Whom will the program invite to a meeting of individuals who are knowledgeable about the institution's resources? Where will it be held?
- Whom will the program select for interviews from the group of cooperating teachers? This may be several small groups, depending on the number of programs at the institution. Where will they be held?
- What other individuals or groups should the team meet in order to fully evaluate ways which the program meets the standards? Are there other places the team should visit?
- Whom will the program invite for the exit report? Where will it be held?

The AOE will work with the institution to develop a detailed agenda for the visit, including times, location, and a lists of interviewees. The agenda will be reviewed, revised, and refined prior to arrival of the visiting team. At the visit, be prepared to provide a list of all current candidates, including status (just admitted; just approved to student teach; currently student teaching).

Whenever possible, interviews will be scheduled prior to the site visit. However, if the team decides there is a need to schedule other interviews, the chair will work with the

institution to make these arrangements during the visit. Additionally, it should be noted that upon occasion a scheduled interview may need to be canceled or rescheduled. While the team makes every effort to stay on schedule, the Review Team's needs require some flexibility.

IV. On-Campus Meeting Room

The Review Team will need to have a private work room available on campus throughout the visit; this room may also be used to display evidence that was not available in electronic format to include in the digital institutional portfolio. Please be sure to bear in mind that all evidence must be labeled with the standard it pertains to. Institutions should not include information that doesn't directly link to the standards.

V. Visits

The purpose of the site visit is to enable to Review Team to evaluate evidence needed to verify a program's ability to meet ROPA standards. Although the specific agenda for an on-site visit will depend on the unique characteristics of each program, the core activities include: visiting field sites; interviewing faculty, administrators, candidates, and graduates; reviewing candidate portfolios; and examining support documentation.

All on-site visits have three phases:

- The first phase involves orienting the team and developing an understanding of the context of the institution and programs.
- The second and longest phase is data collection of evidence that we have gathered while on-campus, from interviews, observations, and analysis of portfolios.
- The final phase is the Team's evaluation of the institution and its programs upon reviewing the evidence and using the scoring rubrics. The initial draft of the report is also written at this time.

VI. Exit Reports

The team's final evaluation of the evidence, as based on the scoring rubrics, will be presented in an exit report on the last day of the visit. The presentation of the exit report will include the Chair of the Review Team, the ROPA Consultant, and representatives from the institution.

The purpose of the exit report is to share the team's preliminary findings and overall evaluation with the institution. This is not a time to discuss or debate the team's findings. The institution will have the opportunity to respond to the team's findings once it receives the draft written report.

The team will begin their report by reviewing the institution's rating on each of the seven standards. These ratings provide an overview of the institution as a whole in its efforts to meet the program approval standards. The evidence presented for each standard may be found to have been *satisfactory, partial*, or *minimal*.

The team will then proceed to ranking each of the institution's individual programs. The team can recommend *full approval* for a seven-year period, *conditional approval* of a period less than seven years, or *deny approval*. Please note that this is only a recommendation; only the VSBPE can formally issue decisions on a program.

The Review Team may also recommend stipulations for the improvement of the institution or individual programs. Stipulations are issued when the team has a serious concern(s) that need to be addressed in a particular way within a specific time frame.

A. Recommendation Criteria

Institutional Standard Rating

Satisfactory Evidence	Achieves "Satisfactory Evidence" across a substantial number of indicators
Partial Evidence	Has a substantial number of "Partial Evidence" ratings on indicators
Minimal Evidence	Has a substantial number of "Minimal Evidence" ratings on indicators.

Program Rating

Full Approval	Achieves "satisfactory evidence" on at least three program standards.
Conditional Approval	Achieves at least "partial evidence" on many, or the most significant, program approval standards.
Deny Approval	Has a substantial number of "partial evidence" or "minimal evidence" ratings.

VII. Timeline for Visits

Timeline	Item	Responsible Party
One Year Prior to Visit (Full Program Visits Only)	Institution is notified of approval expiration	VT AOE notifies President of the institution
3-5 months prior to visit	Response to the institution and set date for on-site visit	VSBPE/AOE
12 weeks prior to on-site visit	Submit list of proposed members for Review Team to the institution	VSBPE/AOE *Note: institution has 2 weeks to submit any objections
8 weeks prior to on-site visit	Electronic institutional portfolio submitted to AOE and Review Team members	Institution
4-6 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Preliminary review of the Institutional Portfolio; institution receives feedback from team	Review Team
4 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Pre-visit meeting (virtual or in-person)	AOE, Institution, Review Team Chair (optional)
3 weeks prior to the on-site meeting	Send agenda for the visit, map, lodging information to VT AOE; AOE will forward to team members.	Institution
1-2 weeks after visit	Draft of report sent to team members for feedback	Review Team Chair and ROPA consultant
2-3 weeks after visit	Draft of report sent to the president of the institution for any factual corrections	ROPA consultant
4-5 weeks after visit	Notify AOE if any corrections to the report are needed	Institution
6 weeks after visit	Final Report sent to the institution	ROPA consultant
9 weeks after visit	Institution Six-Year Plan and	Institution

	optional rejoinder sent to AOE	
Next monthly VSBPE meeting	VSBPE meets with Review Team member and representative of the institution to review report and rejoinder prior to issuing a final decision on program approval status.	AOE/VSBPE

Reports and Results of a ROPA visit

Chapter 5

I. Report of the Review Team

The ROPA consultant, with the assistance of the Chair of the Review Team, prepares the final report. The report summarizes the findings of the Review Team relative to the evidence provided that the program(s) and institution are meeting Vermont's Program Approval Standards.

The format for the report is as follows:
1) Description of the process including names and affiliations of the Review Team and details of the team's activities
2) Summary of findings and rating for each of the program approval standards (e.g., satisfactory evidence, partial evidence, minimal evidence)
3) Recommendation to VSBPE to grant full approval, conditional approval, or deny approval for each program reviewed
4) Review Team's stipulations for institution and/or programs
5) Introduction and overview of the preparation program(s) at the institution
6) Summary of findings of the Review Team for each of the four program approval standards by indicator and for individual programs
7) *Commendations, Concerns, and Considerations for Further Program Development* by the four program approval standards and for each program reviewed.

II. Report Process

Draft Report
Upon completion of the draft report by the ROPA Consultant, a copy is sent to Review Team members for verification of findings. With the team's approval, the draft is sent to the department chair for factual corrections. The institution will notify the AOE in a timely manner if any corrections to the report are needed. Please also offer supporting documentation. (See appendix E for a sample of factual corrections.)

Final Report
A finalized report is sent to the president of the institution and a copy is filed with the AOE.

Revised Six-Year Plan
Upon receipt of the draft report, the institution must create a Six-Year Plan incorporating the findings of the Review Team prior to VSBPE approval. The plan may also include institution-identified goals. This plan is intended to be updated and submitted to the AOE on an annual basis. It is understood by the AOE that these plans may change to reflect changes or shifting priorities within programs.

Rejoinder (Optional)
The institution's rejoinder can also respond to the concerns of the Review Team. (See Appendix E for sample documents.) Institutions may choose to challenge a stipulation or rating issued by the Review Team or raise concerns about the visit process in the rejoinder. Please note that while the institution may refer to evidence that was present during the visit, **new evidence may not be submitted in a rejoinder**. If an institution chooses to write a rejoinder, we ask that it remain focused on larger issues such as stipulations and ratings, rather than individual comments or findings by team members.

III. VSBPE Actions

Upon receiving the team's report and the institution's rejoinder, the ROPA consultant will submit the final report for the VSBPE's consideration at their next monthly board meeting. The ROPA consultant will present the team's findings and recommendations. Representatives from the institution are notified of the meeting and invited to participate. The VSBPE Program Approval Committee will review the revised plan, the report and rejoinder before making a final decision on program approval. The VSBPE may take one of the following actions for the institution as a whole or for each program reviewed at the institution:

- Grant full approval for up to seven years
- Grant conditional approval for a specified time period less than seven years

- Deny approval

The VSBPE may also choose to make specific recommendations or add stipulations following discussions. A simple majority of the VSBPE is required to enact any recommendation.

IV. Two-Year Report

Once the report of the Review Team has been accepted by the VSBPE, the institution must submit a report to the VSBPE within two years of the acceptance date. The report should begin by offering a brief overview of all programs seeking continued full approval, including the number of candidates enrolled in each program, and continue to describe any major changes at the institution that may impact the educator preparation programs(s).

The Two-Year Report should proceed to offer a description of its overall progress on each of the program approval standards not found to provide *satisfactory* evidence at the time of the full-program review. Explain what steps the institution has taken as a whole to meet the standard. The report should go on to describe in detail how the institution and/or program have addressed the specific concerns and stipulations of the Review Team. (See Appendix E for a sample report.)

The VSBPE reviews the report and determines whether satisfactory progress has been made towards addressing the concerns. If the VSBPE finds satisfactory progress, full approval for the program will be continued and extended for the next four years. Programs on conditional approval may be granted full approval at this time. If the progress is unsatisfactory, the VSBPE may decide to grant conditional approval for a given period of time or deny approval for the program.

V. Interim Report

The Review Team or the VSBPE may request an interim report from an institution if the concerns of the Review Team are such that they feel closer monitoring and/or support of the educator preparation program is warranted.

If a program is granted *conditional approval,* the Review Team will recommend to the VSBPE the length of the approval and what conditions need to be met in order for the program to be granted full approval. The conditions may be a written report, a set of modifications verified through an on-site visit, or any other appropriate course of action. If the VSBPE finds that a program has satisfactorily met the conditions and submitted supporting evidence, the VSBPE may grant full approval until the next scheduled approval review. If the conditions are not met, the VSBPE may continue approval for a specified time period with conditions attached or deny approval.

VI. Follow-Up or Focused Visits

Vermont's *Regulations Governing the Licensing of Educators and the Preparation of Educational Professionals* provides the VSBPE with the authority to conduct a follow up review of any approved program during its approval period if there is a concern that the program is out of compliance with any program approval requirement (section 5942.1). The follow-up review may be a written report, a focused visit, or both. The VSBPE has the responsibility for determining the exact nature of the review. As with all of its actions, the VSBPE will provide information, adequate notice and consultation to the institution.

VII. Appeals Process

If a program is *denied approval,* the institution shall be notified and offered an opportunity for a hearing. The institution may appeal the decision of the VSBPE to the State Board of Education (section 5950). After conducting a hearing, the State Board may affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the VSBPE.

VIII. Assistance

The AOE is available to provide assistance to institutions following a visit. The ROPA program liaison can meet with interested programs to review the findings of the Review Team and develop strategies to meet program approval standards and to address the concerns of the Review Team.

IX. Substantive Changes

Once a program is approved, it is the expectation of the VSBPE that no significant changes will alter the course of the preparation of its students. The VSBPE will need to be notified in writing of any substantive changes to the practices or policies of the educator preparation program and/or the institution. Such changes may include substantially changing a program's design, significantly altering field experiences, etc. (See Appendix E for a sample format.)

X. Low Performing Institutions

The Vermont State Board of Education adopted revised criteria on June 23, 2006 in order to identify and assist low-performing programs of teacher preparation in compliance with HEA Title II, Section 208(a). (Please see Appendix G for further information.)

XI. Teach-Out Plans

The VSBPE must approve plans to close approved educator preparation programs to ensure that currently enrolled students are aware of their status and have plans to obtain their licensure. Please see the appendix for specific information regarding the requirements for these plans.

New Program Approval

Chapter 6

I. Introduction

Institutions seeking to begin a new program are required to submit a request to the VSBPE for a program approval visit to take place prior to admitting candidates into the new program. Accompanying this request should be a new program application detailing the proposed program. A review of this document by the AOE and VSBPE offers assurance that the program meets minimal requirements for approval by a review team.

New programs can only be conditionally approved for one or two years or denied approval by the VSBPE based on the recommendation of the review team. New programs cannot receive full approval until the end of a two-year period.

II. Steps for Attaining Program Approval

Step 1: Complete and Submit Program Application

Step 2: Request Visit

- Along with the application, submit a letter from the institution's president to request the visit at least six months before the visit is to be conducted.

Step 3: VSBPE Review

- Upon receipt of the request, the VSBPE will consider the application and seek clarification, as needed, from the institution before approving a visit.

Step 4: Plan Visit

- The visit date will be established by the VT AOE in cooperation with the institution.
- The Review Team will be determined by the VT AOE and approved by the institution. The team will then be approved by the VSBPE.
    - Review Team size depends on the number of licensing areas to be evaluated. See the appendix for more information on team composition.
- The institution should begin drafting the Institutional Portfolio addressing the four program approval standards and indicators. Note that the Review Team will not expect to see completed portfolios, etc. for new programs.

Step 5: Submit an Institutional Portfolio

- At least six weeks prior to the scheduled visit, the Institutional Portfolio should be available via the web to AOE staff and members of the Review Team.
- The AOE Reviews the Institutional Portfolio with the Review Team and makes one of the following determinations:
    - Not enough information was provided for the visit to take place
    - More information is needed prior to the visit
    - Visit is ready to take place

Step 6: Pre-Visit Conference

- Meet with ROPA program liaison to coordinate visit details and review the agenda for the visit.
- Confirm team accommodations, meals, etc., as needed.

Step 7: Visit is conducted

- Visits typically last a day.
- The Review Team will collect evidence confirming the information provided in the Institutional Portfolio by conducting interviews of faculty, reviewing program documentation, and by meeting with admissions and program administrators.
- The Team's recommendation for approval or denial of the program will be communicated to the institution during the exit report.

Step 8: VSBPE Response

- The report of the Review Team will be submitted to the institution for factual correction.
- The institution will notify the ROPA program coordinator if any corrections to the report are needed.
- Upon receipt of the final report, the institution must revise its six-year plan and write its rejoinder (optional).
- Representatives of the institution are invited to meet with the VSBPE Program Approval Committee.
- The VSBPE Program Approval Committee will review the plan, the report, and the rejoinder before making a final decision on program approval.

- VSBPE votes to accept the report of the Review Team.

III. Timeline for Adding New Programs

Timeline	*Item*	*Responsible Party*
6 months prior to on-site visit	Written request for adding a new program and new program application is sent to the chair of the VSBPE and the ROPA program coordinator	Institution
8 weeks after request	Response to the institution and set date for visit	VSBPE/AOE
12 weeks prior to on-site visit	Submit list of proposed members for Review Team to the institution	VSBPE/AOE
10 weeks prior to on-site visit	Deadline for any objections institution may have to Review Team composition	Institution
8 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Link to the Institutional Portfolio sent to AOE staff: will be forwarded to Review Team members.	Institution
4-6 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Preliminary review of the Institutional Portfolio	Review Team/AOE
4 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Pre-Visit Meeting to organize and confirm logistics	Institution and ROPA Program Liasion
2 weeks prior to the on-site visit	Agenda, directions, lodging info sent to review team members	Institution and ROPA Program Liasion
3-4 weeks after visit	Draft of report sent to team members for feedback	ROPA Program Coordinator
6 weeks after visit	Draft of report sent to program director and president of institution for any factual corrections	ROPA Program Coordinator
8 weeks after visit	AOE notified if any corrections to the report are needed	Institution
9 weeks after visit	Final Report sent to the institution	ROPA Program Coordinator
12-13 weeks after visit	Institutional Rejoinder sent to VSBPE (optional) as well as six-year plan (required).	Institution
3-4 months after visit	VSBPE reviews report and rejoinder prior to issuing a final decision on program approval status.	