

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

1. Teaching & Learning

1A.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on the use of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)¹ for program design and continuous improvement</p>	<p>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of classroom environment</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality of classroom environment</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on ERS¹</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Program administrator and 50% of teaching staff complete ExceleRate approved ERS¹ training</p> <p>AND</p> <p>ERS¹ self-assessment of all classrooms and continuous quality improvement plan (CQIP)², in coordination with CCR&R specialist.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>ERS¹ average overall classroom score of at least 3.25 or higher. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Program administrator and 50% of teaching staff complete ExceleRate approved ERS¹ training.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>ERS¹ average overall score at least 4.5 verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

¹

¹ Environment Rating Scale

² Continuous Quality Improvement Plan

³ Classroom Assessment Scoring System (for ages 3–5 only)

NOTE: CLASS (for ages 3-5) Emotional Support and Classroom Organization average verified score of at least 4.0 accepted at Silver; score of at least 5.0 at Gold. To prepare, program administrator and 50% teaching staff must complete ExceleRate approved training on CLASS.

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

1. Teaching & Learning

1B.

CURRICULUM

	LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Either an overview of aligned curricula</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p>	<p>Program implements a curriculum that is aligned with the IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p>	<p>Program implements a research-based curriculum that aligns with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵ and lesson plans that are aligned with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p>
EVIDENCE:	<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG⁴/IELDS⁵ and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum</p>	<p>Identification of selected curriculum that aligns with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>AND</p> <p>At least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training or other ISBE-approved training in that curriculum</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Identification of selected curriculum that is research-based and is aligned with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>AND</p> <p>On-site verification of connection with lesson plans by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

⁴IELG Illinois Early Learning Guidelines for Children Birth to Age Three Years

⁵IELDS Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards for Preschool 3 years old to Kindergarten Enrollment Age

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1. Teaching & Learning

1C.

INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on: IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Either an overview of aligned curricula</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Training on a specific curriculum that is aligned to the IELG⁴/IELDS⁵</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on IELG⁴/IELDS⁵ and either aligned curricula or specific curriculum</p>	<p>Program demonstrates developmentally appropriate instructional practices aligned with IELGS</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS¹ average score of at least 4.0 on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales and CQIP², developed in coordination with CCR&R Specialist. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality, developmentally appropriate instructional practices aligned with IELGS</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS¹ average score of at least 4.75 average on “Interactions” and “Language and Literacy/Listening and Talking” subscales. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

NOTE: CLASS (for ages 3-5) Emotional Support average verified score of at least 2.5 accepted at Silver; score of at least 3.0 at Gold.

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

1. Teaching & Learning

1D.

CHILD SCREENING

	LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools</p>	<p>Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all children (birth-5 years) are screened at least annually for the purpose of identifying special needs and parents are provided screening results and information on where they can go for additional evaluation and services</p>	<p>Program has policies and procedures in place to ensure all children (birth-5 years) are screened annually no later than 60 days after entry into program; parents are provided information on screening results; and children for whom the screening identifies a developmental concern are referred for further evaluation by Child & Family Connections (CFC)⁶ or school district</p>
	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on screening tools</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of screening policies and practices. Verified on-site by state approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implement screening with score of 5.0 or higher on PAS⁷ item #10. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>

⁶ Child and Family Connections

⁷ Program Administration Scale

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

1. Teaching & Learning

1E.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

	LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on assessment tools.</p>	<p>Program chooses aligned child assessment tool to use.</p>	<p>The program utilizes an appropriate assessment tool that aligns with the curriculum to document children’s progress over time with measurable outcomes; assessment results are used to inform instruction for individual children</p>
	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>
	<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on assessment tools</p>	<p>Use of assessment tool(s) that aligns with IELG⁴/IELDS⁵ OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state approved accrediting body</p>	<p>PAS⁷ score of 5.0 or higher on Item #11. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

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1. Teaching & Learning

1F.

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES OR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays</p>	<p>Program submits annual data on number of children served AND Program has policies and procedures in place for supporting inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays</p>	<p>Program submits annual data on number of children with special needs served; program has a MOU^{8*} with CFC⁶ (if serving children ages birth to 3)* and implements written policies and procedures detailing how the program supports children who have IEP⁹s or IFSP¹⁰s; program must also have a written MOU with at least one Local Education Agency concerning services to children with special needs</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Program administrator and 50% of teaching staff complete ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Policy and procedures related to supporting inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>All teaching staff complete ExceleRate-approved training on inclusion</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Policy and procedures related to supporting inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays. Implementation verified on-site by state approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

⁸ Memorandum of Understanding

⁹ IEP Individual Education Plan

¹⁰ IFSP Individual Family Service Plan

* A statewide MOU is in development for CFC's to use with programs. Until a statewide MOU is available, this requirement is waived.

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

2. Family & Community Engagement

2A.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies</p>	<p>Program implements at least five family supports and offers at least two family-staff conferences annually.</p>	<p>Program has policy and procedures to ensure strong partnerships with families and within their community AND _____ Program implements at least five family supports and offers two family-staff conferences annually</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on family engagement strategies</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of family engagement practices (see list in PAS⁷ Item #17, page #42 for examples) and documentation of offering at least 2 parent conferences annually. Verified on-site by state approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>PAS⁷ average score of 5.0 or higher on Items #16, #17 and #19. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor OR _____ Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

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2. Family & Community Engagement

2B.

TRANSITIONS

	LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies</p>	<p>Program implements policies and practices to provide general information about transitions and engages families in discussions and/or activities addressing child and family transitions</p>	<p>Program implements a written plan of activities and strategies that facilitate the transition of children and families into and out of classrooms, early learning environments, community services, and school settings (including transition to kindergarten)</p>
	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>AND</p>
	<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on transition strategies</p>	<p>Policy and practices around transition activities including transition of children into and out of classrooms, community services, school setting</p>	<p>Program shares this plan with parents and community/school stakeholders</p>
			<p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Implementation and communication of transition plan. Verified by on-site state-approved assessor</p>
				<p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

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3. Leadership & Management

3A.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved introductory training on the Program Administration Scale (PAS)⁷</p>	<p>Program demonstrates commitment to quality improvement of administrative practices</p>	<p>Program demonstrates high quality program administration practices</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate approved training- "Getting Ready for the PAS⁷"</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Program administrator completes "Getting Ready for the PAS⁷" training AND PAS⁷ self-assessment and CQIP² completed in coordination with CCR&R Specialist AND PAS⁷ assessment of three program-selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment and Family Partnerships subscales). Verified on-site by state approved assessor. <i>Note: PAS⁷ score is for quality improvement purposes only.</i> OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Program administrator completes "Getting Ready for the PAS⁷" training AND PAS⁷ average overall score of at least 5.0 on four program selected subscales (excluding Child Assessment, Family Partnerships, and Marketing & Public Relations). Verified on-site by state approved assessor. OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

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3. Leadership & Management

3B.

GROUP SIZE AND
STAFF/CHILD RATIOS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>INFANTS 6w-14m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 8</p> <p>TODDLERS 15m-23m, Ratio 1:4, Max Group = 12</p> <p>TWO YR OLDS Ratio 1:6, Max Group = 12</p> <p>AGES THREE TO FIVE Ratio 1:10, Max Group = 20</p> <p>AGES FIVE Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 20</p> <p>SCHOOL AGE (INCLUDES KINDERGARTEN) Ratio 1:20, Max Group = 30</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on group size and staff/child ratios</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Ratios and group size verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

Programs may be exempt from the ratio and group size requirements at Gold Circle of Quality if they have an average score on the ITERS of 5.0 with no classroom below 4.5

AND

Every Infant-Toddler and Two-Year Old classroom has at least one staff person with an Infant-Toddler Level 3 Credential

AND

The program receives an overall Program Administration Scale score of at least 4.5

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3. Leadership & Management

3C.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator has completed ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning</p>	<p>Program develops and implements Continuous Quality Improvement Plan using self-assessment results</p>	<p>Program demonstrates progress towards meeting objectives of its Continuous Quality Improvement Plan based on self-assessment results</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on continuous quality improvement planning</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>In coordination with CCR&R specialist, review ERS¹ and PAS⁷ self-assessment results and develop detailed CQIP² to address scores and areas in need of improvement. <i>*Signed consultation agreement with CCR&R Specialist required</i></p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>AND</p> <p>Program implements a continuous quality improvement process that includes analysis of child and classroom data</p> <p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Progress made on implementation of self-assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement Plan. Verified on-site by state-approved assessor</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

CQIP² should include documentation of specific changes designed to improve the quality of classroom environments (Standard 1A); instructional practices (Standard 1C), including the quality of language/reasoning interactions used by teachers to promote learning; and program administration practices (Standard 3A). Updated CQIP, with **progress shown**, required annually.

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3. Leadership & Management

3D.

LINGUISTICALLY & CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator and at least 50% of teaching staff have completed ExceleRate-approved training on diversity that addresses the relationship between culture, race, and language development and usage</p>	<p>Program implements practices to support the development of culturally, linguistically and racially diverse children and families AND Children are encouraged to use their home language in play and learning experiences and, wherever possible, program communicates with families in their home language</p>	<p>Program implements evidence-based policies, practices, curriculum and assessments that support the development of linguistically/ racially/culturally diverse children and families AND Children are encouraged to use their home language in play and learning experiences and, wherever possible, program communicates with families in their home language</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of ExceleRate-approved training on linguistic/ cultural/racial diversity</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS' score of at least 4.0 on "Promoting Acceptance of Diversity/Cultural Awareness" Item AND Evidence of communication with families in home language. Verified on-site by state approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>ERS' score of at least 4.5 on "Promoting Acceptance of Diversity/Cultural Awareness" Item AND Evidence of communication with families in home language. Verified on-site by state approved assessor OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4A.

DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards on director qualifications</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards; Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level I or higher OR Illinois Principal Endorsement</p>	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards; Gateways Illinois Director Credential Level II or higher OR Illinois Principal Endorsement</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p>
<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards on director qualifications</p>	<p>Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>Director qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>

Administrator must hold the applicable Gateways Illinois Director Credential, or have a pending application on file. If not meeting the applicable Credential, the program may write a CQIP² (using the letter received from the Credential Department), to outline goals and action steps, coursework & training to accomplish towards the applicable Credential. Updated CQIP² of accomplishments towards Credential attainment will be required at annual report and **progress must be shown.**

This chart provides an overview of the standards and Evidence at each Circle of Quality for Licensed Child Care Centers.

4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4B.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>At least 30% of teaching staff with a minimum of Gateways ECE Credential Level 2</p>	<p>At least 30% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 3 AND 30% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 2</p>	<p>At least 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 5 (or equivalent) AND An additional 20% of teaching staff have a minimum of a Gateways ECE Credential Level 4 (or equivalent) AND 40% of teaching staff in infant-toddler classrooms have a Gateways Infant Toddler Credential Level 3 (or equivalent)</p>
<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff qualifications verified by Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>
<p>Teaching staff must hold the applicable Gateways ECE or IT Credential, or have a pending application on file. If not meeting the applicable Credential, the program administrator/staff may write a CQIP² to outline goals, action steps, specific coursework/training the individual can accomplish over the year to work towards the applicable Credential. The program administrator/staff should use the letter each individual received from the Credential Department to guide CQIP² development in what coursework/training is needed. Updated CQIP² of accomplishments towards Credential attainment will be required at annual report and progress must be shown.</p>			

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4. Qualifications & Continuing Education

4C.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

	LICENSED	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
	<p>State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>Program administrator or the staff member responsible for professional development planning has completed ExceleRate-approved training on developing Individualized Professional Development Plans</p>	<p>Program has individualized, written staff development plans developed for all classroom staff AND Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year</p>	<p>Individualized, written staff development plans implemented for all classroom staff AND Minimum of 20 hours Professional Development per year including minimum of 5 hours Gateways Registry-approved training per year</p>
	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Meets State of Illinois (DCFS) Licensing Standards</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Documentation of completion of ExceleRate-approved training on individualized professional development planning</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Policy and procedures for all teaching staff to acquire at least 20 hours of professional development annually OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>	<p>EVIDENCE:</p> <p>Staff development plans and hours of professional development verified on-site by state-approved assessor and Gateways Registry OR Accredited sites: Evidence from state-approved accrediting body</p>