

**Frequently Asked Questions
Related to Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement
at Boston College Lynch School of Education**

(Updated August 7, 2013)

1. What is the RETELL Initiative?

RETELL stands for “Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners.” It is the name for the set of activities that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) began in 2011-12 to transform the teaching and learning of English language learners (ELLs) in the Commonwealth. RETELL combines a new system of curriculum standards and assessment, endorsement and licensure requirements, professional development, and related supports for core academic teachers of ELLs and the administrators who supervise or evaluate these teachers (i.e., principals, assistant principals, and supervisor-directors). RETELL is one of several efforts being undertaken by DESE to close the proficiency gap that exists among subgroups of student in Massachusetts. (For more information, please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>.)

2. What is the SEI Endorsement?

The SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) Endorsement is not a license. It is an acknowledgement that the teacher who earns it has successfully demonstrated the knowledge and teaching skills to teach English language learners in SEI classrooms. Every licensed in-service core academic teacher in public schools in Massachusetts (including charter schools and education collaboratives) with one or more ELLs in his or her classroom must participate in an ESE state-approved RETELL teacher course to earn the SEI Teacher Endorsement by July 2016.

3. Why do teachers in Massachusetts need SEI Teacher Endorsement?

After the passage of “Question 2” in Massachusetts, in 2002, the law addressing the education of ELLs in the state changed without mandating changes for teacher preparation programs. In 2011, the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division suggested to the Massachusetts DESE that this is a violation of the civil rights of ELLs and is requiring the state to take steps to rectify this potential injustice.

4. Does LSOE support ESE’s new requirement for SEI Teacher Endorsement?

Yes. LSOE’s teacher education program themes include the promotion of social justice and meeting the needs of diverse learners. Therefore, we strongly support efforts to preserve, advance and enhance the civil rights of ELLs and bilingual learners. It is precisely for this reason that LSOE began to develop and offer an optional Teaching English language learners (TELL) certificate program in 2003-04, a program that, when completed as part of an approved licensure program, exceeds the new state SEI Endorsement requirement.

5. If I am a current undergraduate student at LSOE in a teacher education licensure program will I graduate with SEI Endorsement?

Yes, pending Massachusetts DESE approval (which we anticipate by fall 2013) all LSOE teacher education programs leading to licensure will meet the requirement for SEI Teacher Endorsement. However, if you are graduating in May of 2014 or 2015, please review your program of study with your advisor and compare it with the revised programs of study for 2013 and beyond available on the LSOE website to confirm that you have completed the required coursework.

6. If I am a current graduate student at LSOE in a teacher education licensure program will I graduate with SEI Endorsement?

Yes, pending Massachusetts DESE approval (which we anticipate by fall 2013) all LSOE teacher education programs leading to licensure will meet the requirement for SEI Teacher Endorsement. If you are graduating in May of 2014 or 2015, please review your program of study with your advisor and compare it with the revised programs of study for 2013 and beyond available on the LSOE website to confirm that you have completed the required coursework.

7. Is the current LSOE's Teaching English Language Learner's (TELL) Certificate program *the same as* a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher Endorsement?

No, these two things are not exactly the same. If you are completing a teacher education licensure program at LSOE, then, pending Massachusetts DESE program approval, you will have SEI Teacher Endorsement. LSOE's optional TELL certificate program requires an additional course* and thus, when it is completed as part of a licensure program, exceeds state requirements. When completed as part of a licensure program, the optional TELL certificate program provides more extensive preparation to work with English language learners in mainstream and Sheltered English Immersion classrooms as well as in other contexts. Please note, however, that if you are completing the optional TELL program as part of a non-licensure program, (for example, the Curriculum and Instruction Master's program), TELL program coursework will not provide the SEI Teacher Endorsement because DESE will approve SEI Endorsement *only* when it is part of an approved licensure program.

If you are graduating in May of 2014 or 2015, please review your program of study with your advisor and compare it with the revised programs of study for 2013 and beyond available on the LSOE website to confirm that you have completed the required coursework.

* The exception is LSOE's program in Severe Special Needs. Students in this program who wish to add the TELL program should consult with their advisor.

8. If I completed a teacher education program at LSOE and graduated before May 2014, will I have completed the requirements to earn the SEI Teacher Endorsement?

No. Unfortunately, at this time, Massachusetts DESE has not approved a process to “grandfather in” previous graduates of programs that are subsequently approved. Generally speaking, licensed teachers in Massachusetts are required to take the Massachusetts DESE-approved RETELL course, therefore, if you are a licensed teacher in Massachusetts you will be required to do this. If you have been hired as a teacher in Massachusetts, your school district may provide options for you to take the DESE-approved RETELL course. (For more information, please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/> but refer to additional questions and answers below to learn of other possible options for gaining SEI Endorsement depending on your situation.)

9. If I completed a teacher education program at LSOE and also completed the TELL certificate program and graduated before May 2014, will I have completed the requirements to earn the SEI Teacher Endorsement?

No. Unfortunately, at this time, Massachusetts DESE has not approved a process to “grandfather in” previous graduates of programs that are subsequently approved. However, since the optional TELL program was approved by the Massachusetts DESE as meeting the optional “Categories of Skills and Knowledge” recommended for working with English language learners in SEI classrooms in Massachusetts at that time, graduates who completed the TELL program along with a licensure program and graduated prior to May 2014 are eligible to take soon-to-be developed Massachusetts DESE-approved Bridge course. (See the FAQ, specifically A-Q11 available on <http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/>.)

10. If I am a licensed teacher who needs SEI Teacher Endorsement can I take the RETELL course or the Bridge course at LSOE?

No. At this time LSOE does not offer either of these Massachusetts DESE-designed professional development courses at LSOE and there is no plan to offer either of them because the state requires that such courses be taught *only* by Massachusetts DESE-trained instructors.

11. If I am a licensed teacher who needs SEI Teacher Endorsement can I take just the TELL courses at LSOE and get SEI Teacher Endorsement?

No. Per regulation, teachers are required to take the Massachusetts DESE-designed RETELL course (or, if eligible, the Bridge course). Contract teachers are encouraged to explore available district-based options.

12. If I am a licensed teacher who needs SEI Teacher Endorsement can I take just the SEI Teacher Endorsement courses at LSOE and get SEI Teacher Endorsement?

No. Per regulation, teachers are required to take the Massachusetts DESE-designed RETELL course (or, if eligible, the Bridge course). Contract teachers are encouraged to explore available district-based options.

13. If I am a licensed teacher who needs SEI Teacher Endorsement, can I enroll in a Master's program at LSOE and get SEI Teacher Endorsement?

It depends. This is possible only if you complete an approved program leading to licensure. At this time, this is not possible if you complete the Curriculum and Instruction Masters program, which does not lead to licensure.

14. I have read all the FAQs and still wonder isn't there an easier way to demonstrate that I have acquired the subject matter knowledge required for the SEI Teacher Endorsement?

Yes, eventually. Massachusetts DESE has plans to offer a Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure for Sheltered English Immersion (MTEL for SEI). (See "Frequently Asked Questions," specifically A-Q11 available at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/))

15. I graduated from LSOE in May or August 2013 and am currently applying for my first Initial License in a core academic area. Will my application for my license be denied because I don't have the SEI Endorsement?

It depends. If you apply on or after July 1, 2014 your application will be denied because you will have completed our program before it was approved (see #8 above). However, if you apply before July 1, 2014 your application will not be denied but you will be required to obtain SEI Endorsement by July 1, 2016 in order to renew or advance your license. (Please see Guidelines for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher and SEI Administrator Endorsements - 4/2013, page 18, available at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/))

16. I am an incoming graduate student and am licensed outside of Massachusetts. I am looking to obtain a license in Massachusetts while I take graduate courses at LSOE. Will I need the SEI Endorsement?

It depends. Educators seeking their first Initial license via the interstate agreement in a core academic area/field before July 1, 2014 will not need the SEI Endorsement to obtain a license. On or after July 1, 2014, according to the new DESE guidelines, "teachers seeking licensure through "reciprocity/interstate agreement" may be eligible for the Temporary or Preliminary license and must have the SEI endorsement in order to obtain an Initial license." (Please see Guidelines for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher and SEI Administrator Endorsements - 4/2013, page 17, available at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/))