In response to the impact of the COVID-19 health crisis, the West Virginia Department of Education’s (WVDE) Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness and Office of Certification have developed guidance on meeting certain requirements for program completion and, subsequently, application for initial licensure. All waivers of the West Virginia Board of Education policies contained in this document have been reviewed and approved by State Superintendent W. Clayton Burch.

**Field and Clinical Experiences**

**Will the WVDE allow students to be recommended for licensure without completing the 12-week minimum for student teaching?**
Yes. Policy 5100 allows institutions to move forward with clinical experiences that have fallen short of meeting the minimum 12-week requirement, as follows:

6.7.b.5. Clinical Experiences Completed in the Public Schools. Each candidate completing an approved program shall spend a minimum of 12 weeks in the clinical portion of the program unless he/she is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the college supervisor and the cooperating public school supervisor that he/she has achieved the proficiency level in less than the specified time.

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) should follow the directives from university administration for determining how affected students will meet course proficiencies required in the student-teaching practicum. The WVDE will accept the EPP’s professional recommendation of program completion.

**Will students who were not able to complete a second programmatic level placement or additional content area placement be permitted to apply for licensure?**
Yes. EPPs should follow the directives from the university administration for determining how affected students will meet course proficiencies for program completion related to developmental level and/or additional endorsement requirements. The WVDE will accept the EPP’s professional recommendation of program completion.

**Will the 125 hours of required pre-student teaching be adjusted due to this unanticipated shutdown?**
Candidates who are being admitted to student teaching/residency for Fall 2020 will be provided with flexibility in meeting the 125-hour field experience requirement. An EPP should work within the guidelines of its university protocols to provide innovative, alternative options (in lieu of onsite experiences) for meeting the diverse field experience requirements. Documentation should be maintained for accreditation purposes as well.

**How will field placements be affected by P-12 school closures?**
EPPs may adapt and innovate in order to provide field experiences in alternative formats, including virtual options. Documentation should be maintained for field experiences that are unable to be completed. See question related to 125-hour pre-student teaching requirement.
How will program completion be impacted for those completing school counselor and speech pathologist programs since national licensure requires a minimum number of clinical hours which most likely will not be met due to COVID-19 closures?

EPPs should follow the university program completion guidance. These student support program completers may be recommended for West Virginia P-Adult licensure if the minimum hours of the West Virginia state-approved program are completed. The national clinical hour requirements are not in the state purview to determine, and the guidance of the national organization should be followed for obtaining a national licensure.

**Program Completion Performance Assessment and Licensure Assessments**

**What are the options for Spring 2020 student teaching candidates who have not completed and passed the teacher performance assessment (TPA)?**

For candidates completing student teaching or residency placements during Spring 2020, EPPs should continue to support those candidates to satisfactorily complete the TPA according to the plan that the institution has developed for all enrolled students completing semester requirements.

**Nationally Normed TPA:** EPPs who have selected a nationally normed TPA as a requirement for program completion should follow the COVID-19 guidance and adjusted deadlines from the vendor (ETS/PPAT or Pearson/edTPA). If the EPP administration and its stakeholders determine it is not feasible for candidates to complete the edTPA or the PPAT, the WVDE will allow those completing student teaching/residency during Spring 2020 to use the PLT in lieu of the program completion requirement of a TPA.

**Locally Developed TPA:** EPPs that have selected to use either the West Virginia TPA or another locally developed performance assessment should also support candidates to complete the TPA and follow the guidance of the respective institution regarding program completion. The PLT is already a licensure requirement for EPPs choosing the locally developed TPA.

**If a Spring 2020 teacher candidate has not taken and passed the PLT, due to continued closure or capacity issues of Prometric or other testing sites, will the candidate be required to wait to apply for licensure?**

While licensure testing will still be required, program completers will not be required to wait to apply for licensure. A one-year, non-renewable Temporary Professional Teaching Certificate allowing the licensure applicant the opportunity to complete the PLT will be granted. Once all licensure testing is successfully completed, the applicant may apply for an Initial Professional Teaching Certificate. **Please note:** The Temporary Professional Teaching Certificate may be used for employment in West Virginia schools but is nonrenewable and cannot be used for reciprocity. However, experience gained while holding this certificate will be counted as professional teaching experience.

**If a Spring 2020 teacher candidate has not taken and passed the Praxis II content assessment(s), will the candidate be permitted to apply for a clinical permit?**

Yes. If testing centers are not available due to closure and/or capacity issues, candidates may still apply for a clinical permit with the institution’s recommendation. All content exams must be completed for initial licensure. Please note that this flexibility is for those candidates who will be entering their clinical experience in Fall 2020. Testing timelines will continue to be evaluated based upon COVID-19 impact.
Will licensure testing requirements be waived due to testing sites being closed?
No. However, the WVDE has developed a plan to address the processes, timelines and other requirements that have and continue to be affected by the COVID-19 testing site closures.

How should Fall 2020 admissions be handled if the candidate has not yet successfully passed the Praxis basic skills exams or qualifies for an exemption?
For those candidates who are applying for Fall 2020 admission to an education program but have not yet completed the basic skills test due to the closure of the testing sites, the free Khan Academy Praxis diagnostic assessments may be used to assist program selection committees in making the determination as to the readiness of candidates for program admission in conjunction with GPA and other factors to make a conditional admission decision. EPPs should follow the guidance provided by the institution for meeting basic skills requirements for program admittance.

If a licensure test is included as a requirement for passing a course, how will a grade be provided if testing sites do not reopen prior to the end of the semester?
Course completion requirements are determined by the institution. EPPs should follow the guidance provided by the institution for meeting course requirements impacted by COVID-19 campus closures.

What if our institution changes how grades or course completion is reflected on a transcript?
A designated representative from an EPP will need to inform the Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness of changes. The Office of Certification will be provided the changes so that licensure processing will not be delayed.

Accreditation

Will incomplete data collection affect future accreditation or other requirements where data is submitted as a measure of program quality?
EPPs should maintain data that was able to be collected and document the effect of the state of emergency. It is recommended that the data for the cohort of students affected by COVID-19 be collected for future research or analysis of the effects of closures on teacher education candidates.

Will CAEP extend the annual report deadline as Title II did?
The WVDE has been informed that CAEP will make that determination on a case-by-case basis. We will update the guidance if CAEP’s response changes.

Additional Inquires: Please contact Lisa Hedrick, Executive Director, Office of Educator Quality and Effectiveness, at lisa.hedrick@k12.wv.us or 304-558-3119.