

# **Meeting EPSB Requirements during the COVID-19 Crisis**

## **Guidance for Educator Preparation Providers**

Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness staff members met with the Kentucky Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (KACTE) representatives through a virtual meeting on March 26, 2020. A summary of that discussions is being provided to all Educator Preparation Providers as guidance on meeting the Education Professional Standards Boards (EPSB) regulatory requirements during the COVID-19 Crisis.

### **Student Teaching Days**

- NTI days may be counted as student teaching days if the student teacher participated with the supervising teacher.
- The determination of what qualifies as a student teaching day is left up to the institution.
- If student teachers are not able to meet the 70-day student teaching requirement, the institution may request a waiver.
- Just as with closures for weather, flu and political activities, unmet regulatory requirements due to closures for COVID-19 can be addressed through an EPSB waiver. Institutions may provide one waiver request with a list of all affected students and a discussion of the efforts made to meet the requirements. Please be aware that staff cannot grant waivers nor guarantee that waivers will be granted. The authority to grant waivers of the EPSB's regulatory requirements rests solely with the EPSB.
- Institutions may not be certain of the number of student teaching days that will need to be waived. Therefore, the waiver request may contain a range of dates or the maximum number of days that may need to be waived.
  - If an institution requests a waiver of 20 days, but only needs 15 days waived that will not be a problem.

### **Student Teaching Observations**

- 16 KAR 5:040, Section 4(1) provides that the university supervisor shall conduct a minimum of four (4) observations of the student teacher in the actual teaching situation, a portion of which may be remote. Requests for remote observation(s) shall be submitted to and approved by EPSB prior to observation(s).
- OELE understands that due to the COVID-19 crisis, in person observations are not a possibility, and most institutions have not requested approval for remote observations.
- Though only the EPSB has the authority to take this action, at the April EPSB meeting, staff will propose that the EPSB approve all remote observations for Spring 2020.
- Institutions will only need to submit a waiver request if observations cannot be performed at all. This request can simply be a letter and will not need to list all affected student teachers. The letter will need to include the number of observations requested to be waived and a brief discussion of the efforts made.
  - Please be aware that this is simply a proposal from staff, and final action will rest with the EPSB.

### **Field Experience/ Clinical Hours**

- Per previous guidance from OELE, EPPs are asked to do their best to help students accumulate the required clinical observation hours. Like student teaching, the EPP may create virtual opportunities to help meet the goals of field observations.

- If COVID-19 prevention efforts make it impossible for students to meet these requirements, institutions can also submit waiver requests for these students. Institutions may provide one waiver request with a list of all affected students and a discussion of the efforts made to meet the requirements. We recommend that these requests be submitted for the EPSB's June or August meeting.
- At this time, it is unclear how long the effects of the COVID-19 closures will affect future educators. If an institution has candidates for Spring 2021, who are unable to meet the field experience hours due to the COVID-19 closures, the institution may pursue waiver requests at the EPSB's October or December meeting.

### **ETS Closures**

- Admission to a program:
  - Those seeking admission are currently unable to complete the required assessments and may not be able to complete them prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.
  - OELE is monitoring the situation and remains in communication with ETS. Though only the EPSB has the authority to take this action, at the April EPSB meeting, staff will propose that for the Fall 2020 semester, the EPSB allow institutions to conditionally admit candidates who were unable to successfully complete the requisite admissions assessment prior to the start of the semester. The candidate would have to show successful completion of the requisite exam to remain in the program for the spring semester.
    - Please be aware that this is simply a proposal from staff, and final action will rest with the EPSB.
- Certification
  - Certification requires completion of the corresponding academic content assessment(s). Those seeking certification are currently unable to complete the assessments and may not be able to complete them prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.
  - Though only the EPSB has the authority to take this action, at the April EPSB meeting, staff will propose that the EPSB create a one-year certificate that would allow those applicants who met all certification requirements other than successful completion of the requisite assessments, to be issued the certificate for a one-year period. The educator would then be required to complete the requisite exam prior to renewal.
    - Please be aware that this is simply a proposal from staff, and final action will rest with the EPSB.
    - As staff finalizes this proposal, additional guidance will be disseminated regarding an institution's recommendation of a student for certification and certification fees.

### **GPA**

- If an individual is taking courses this semester to raise their GPA to meet requirements for admission to a program, but the course is changed to a Pass/Fail due to COVID-19 closures, then the individual may not be able to raise their GPA to the admission standard.
- If an institution has a candidate who was working to raise their GPA to meet admission requirements for admission to a program, but was unable to do so due to COVID-19 closures or the courses being converted to Pass/Fail, the institution may request that the EPSB waive the admission's GPA requirement for the candidate. Staff recommends that these requests be submitted for the EPSB's June or August meeting.
  - A candidate for admission to a program does not have standing to request a waiver from the EPSB. If a candidate reaches out to OELE staff, they will be directed to contact their institution.

### **Additional Supports for New Teachers**

- Due to the effects of COVID-19 closures on the Spring 2020 student teaching experience, new teachers may need additional support next Fall.
- Institutions are encouraged to continue to work with their candidates to provide them additional mentoring and support as needed.

### **Waiver Requests**

- Waiver requests should be submitted as soon as possible. To guarantee inclusion on the April EPSB Agenda, waiver requests must be submitted by noon on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Staff is unable to grant waivers of EPSB regulations or guarantee that they will be granted. Only the EPSB has the authority to grant waivers.
- The waiver needs will vary among institutions and even among the students within an institution. Staff simply recommends that the institution do your best to work with your students to assist them in meeting the regulatory requirements.

### **April EPSB Meeting**

- The EPSB is currently scheduled to meet on April 13<sup>th</sup>. We are working with the EPSB members and technology staff to have the meeting virtually.
- There will not be a physical location for the public to attend. Instead a weblink will be provided that will allow the public the ability to view the meeting.

Please contact Todd Davis in the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness (OELE) with any questions.

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