

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM GUIDANCE

The following guidance is the Delaware Department of Education's response related to Educator Preparation Program (EPPs) completion requirements related to students for the 2019-2020 school year due to the impact of COVID-19 school closures.

TRADITIONAL EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Capstone Clinical Residency

Pursuant to 14 Del. Admin. Code 290 §1.0, a "Capstone Clinical Residency" must consist of at least 10 consecutive weeks encompassing at least 200 hours of student teaching experience. "Programs may adjust the schedule of the Clinical Capstone Residency to comply with embedded LEA vacation schedules, holidays, and unforeseen official school closures."

For the teacher candidates expected to graduate in the spring of 2020, the Delaware Department of Education will allow EPPs to adjust the schedule of any Clinical Capstone Residency where the student, EPP, or Institute of Higher Education, is directly affected by the COVID-19 virus. An EPP with teacher candidates who will not meet minimum requirements as set forth in Regulation 290 shall notify the Delaware Department of Education no later than May 22, 2020 of any alternative experiences and/or assignments incorporated into the program to ensure that expectations and outcomes for each student's clinical experience are met. Experiences/assignments are subject to DDOE approval and may include, but are not limited to the following:

Remote learning sessions focused on: designing lessons and units of instruction, selecting and implementing instructional strategies, teaching lessons and content, assessing learning to evaluate student progress and inform instructional decisions, creating a supportive learning environment, managing the classroom effectively, and other appropriate activities. When possible, the EPP should identify opportunities to assess the teacher candidate's level of understanding of best practices for instructing students and provide feedback.

Content-Readiness Exams

Pursuant to 14 Del. Admin. Code 290 §3.4.1, EPPs shall establish rigorous exit requirements, which shall include but not be limited to achievement of a passing score on a Content-Readiness Exam, where such an exam in the appropriate area, subject or category is available and approved by the Delaware Department of Education. The requirement to take and pass an "Examination of Content Knowledge" is also required for educators to be issued a Standard Certificate in the State of Delaware.

Students exiting a Delaware Educator Preparation Program in the spring of 2020, who are not able to take a Content-Readiness exam prior to exiting an Educator Preparation Program may exit the program with institutional recommendation. Students who have met all other requirements set forth in Regulation 1510 will be eligible to be receive an Initial License and be eligible to apply for an Emergency Certificate with an exception to the employment requirement of Regulation 1506. The Emergency Certificate may be converted to a Standard Certificate when the teacher candidate has met all requirements set forth in Regulation 1505 Standard Certificate.

Due to Federal and State requirements, emergency certification is not available for special education areas, unless the educator is actively enrolled in a state-approved alternative routes to certification add-on program for Certificates of Eligibility.

For those students graduating in spring of the 2019-2020 school year who were eligible for special education certification and were not able to take the content-readiness exam in the appropriate special education area, there are two options. Students who have met all other requirements set forth in Regulation 1510 will be eligible to be receive an Initial License and be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility with an exception to the employment requirement of Regulation 1504.

1. Take the “Praxis At Home” exam (ETS Exam Code 5354- Special Education: Core Knowledge & Applications). ETS has indicated that this test will be available no earlier than May 18, 2020. Once DDOE has received a passing score from ETS, the educator will be eligible to receive their Standard Certificate in the appropriate special education content area assuming they have met all other requirements for licensure and certification.
2. The student can be enrolled in an approved ARTC for special education program. Once enrolled, the program will submit a letter to DOE and the student will be eligible to be placed on a certificate of eligibility in accordance with established timelines until they pass the appropriate content-readiness exam. Students will be enrolled in the ARTC for special education program for the sole purpose of passing the content-readiness exam and will not be required to take any additional coursework or meet any other ARTC program requirements.

Performance Assessment

Pursuant to 14 Del. Admin. Code 290 §3.4.1, EPPs shall establish rigorous exit requirements, which shall include but not be limited to achievement of a passing score on a performance assessment, where such an assessment in the appropriate area, subject or category is available and approved by the Delaware Department of Education. The requirement to take and pass a performance assessment is also required for an educator to be issued an Initial License in the State of Delaware.

For the spring of 2020, students who are not able to take a performance assessment prior to exiting an EPP may exit the program with institutional recommendation. Students who have met all other requirements set forth in Regulation 1510, will be eligible to receive an Initial License. Prior to the expiration of their initial license, they shall obtain a passing score on an approved performance assessment.

Observations

Pursuant to 14 Del. Admin. Code 290 §3.5.1, EPPs shall conduct an annual evaluation of each teacher candidate, which shall consist of a minimum of three (3) formally documented observations, resulting in teacher candidates receiving feedback about their practice.

For the spring of 2020, the Delaware Department of Education will allow EPPs to adjust the frequency of observations during the “Capstone Clinical Residency” where the teacher candidate, program, or institute of higher education, is directly affected by the COVID-19 virus.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR TEACHER LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION (ARTC)

Coursework, observations, content-readiness exams and/or evaluations

ARTC program participants unable to meet the requirements for coursework, observations, content assessments and/or summative evaluations as outlined in Regulation 290 prior to June 30, 2020, due to the impact of COVID-19, may submit an extension request through the educator's Human Resources Department to the Delaware Department of Education Licensure and Certification Office to receive another school year in which to meet any of these requirements.

Performance Assessments

Pursuant to 14 Del. C. § 1262, participants of ARTC programs must achieve a passing score on an approved performance assessment.

Where the student, program, or institute of higher education, is directly affected by the COVID-19 virus, ARTC program participants who have otherwise met all other ARTC program requirements, and who have met all other requirements for educator licensure, may exit the program with institutional recommendation. Prior to the expiration of their initial license, they shall obtain a passing score on an approved performance assessment.

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Pursuant to 14 Del. Admin. Code 290 §6.2, the Delaware Department of Education will review all data, reports and outcomes outlined in subsection 6.1 and create and publish reports, including a report with a scorecard for each Unit and Program.

Due to the federal and state response to COVID-19, Delaware has received a waiver for state testing for the 2019-2020 school year. This exemption will prevent collecting data associated with the graduate performance domain of Educator Preparation Program Reports which comprises 35% of an EPP's score. As a result, the Department of Education has decided to postpone publishing of Educator Preparation Program reports until fall of the 2020-2021 school year. The Department of Education will provide additional information and guidance regarding this decision in a forthcoming communication to Institutes of Higher Education.

Summary

This public health emergency is a unique scenario based on events taking place at local, national, and international levels. DEDOE's actions should not be interpreted as a waiver of requirements for future evaluation system requirements.

During this unprecedented time, the Delaware Department of Education believes it is critical that all members of our education community work collaboratively to ensure Delaware students are provided with the very best education. As such, we strongly encourage EPPs to play a significant role in support of their educators who graduate from one of their programs through ongoing assistance, as requested either by the educator or the LEA over the course of the 2020-2021 school year. We will continue to send additional information as it becomes available.

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