

Licensing COVID-19 FAQ

Updated responses in red.

We appreciate your patience as we attempt to gather answers to a number of questions related to licensing that have been raised to us and others that we imagine that might be lingering in your mind during these unusual days. First of all, know that we understand that changes to normal practice, starting with greater flexibility, are necessary. Second, know that we still have not developed answers for some of the questions. Finally, we will not be closing any applications due to conditions beyond your control.

The two overriding pieces of guidance should be the following:

- Ask us your questions. At the end of this FAQ you will find a location where you can log questions that you have. We are aiming to update this document every Wednesday for the next few weeks.
- In the absence of guidance, please justify decisions through the lens of what choice has the best interests of students in mind.

And thank you, again, for your patience.

Will there be an extension of the renewal deadline?

Yes. The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators moved to extend all licenses (Level I, II, Provisional, Emergency, and Apprentice) for 90 days from when the governor cancels the State of Emergency is cancelled. We urge you to continue to work as though the 30 June expiration remains in effect by submitting all parts of your application that you can. However, we know that many of you are unable to take PRAXIS assessments and get fingerprinted during the state of emergency. This extension will allow for a bit of flexibility. Until the governor cancels the State of Emergency, we will not know the exact date that licenses will expire. Know, too, that Local and Regional Standards Boards may not be meeting over the summer to approve professional learning. Please submit all professional learning to your standards board as soon as you can.

Many educators have already submitted their renewals. Though our staff is working remotely, we are able to continue to process all licensing applications. The main hindrances to completing applications on-time are access to fingerprints, Local and Regional Standards Boards' ability to approve professional development, PRAXIS assessment cancellation, and postponed professional learning necessary for relicensure. We will address each of these separately below.

Professional Learning

What should I do if I have not completed my professional learning for renewal and my planned PL has been cancelled?

Please recall that you can use professional learning from the past several years to meet your relicensing requirements. If you still have hours to complete, please seek alternate ways to do so. For example, as we are self-isolating at home, there are many PL opportunities that are available on-line that could potentially meet your needs. The Standards Board has not altered the number of credits needed for relicensure.

A full list of approved PL categories can be found [here](#).

But I was relying on PL my district had already planned.

We understand that this might be the case for many of you. Again, we encourage you to use this pause to see if there are other ways to complete PL requirements. Recall that much of the professional learning provided by your SU/SD during in-services can be submitted for your license.

I was supposed to complete a CPR recertification that was cancelled due to Covid19. I see an online option. Will that suffice, or must I also do the practical exam?

The online option is acceptable. However, please contact Deb Giles (deborah.giles@vermont.gov) to ensure that you are taking an approved on-line course.

I have a lifetime First Aid certification through ASEP (American Society of Exercise Physiologists) as an instructor. Will that satisfy the requirements for First Aid?

This is not an approved certification. Certifications need to be updated regularly to be considered current. If you have specific questions on your certification, please contact Deb Giles (deborah.giles@vermont.gov).

Fingerprints

What happens when the educator cannot be fingerprinted for their renewal application?

We understand that this is a real impediment for those who need a set of fingerprints. We will continue to process applications without fingerprints submitted. Should the need arise due to extended closures, we will develop a process that is analogous to our current Letters of Eligibility that allow a licensure applicant to teach while waiting for the results of background checks to be complete.

A full list of sites that take your fingerprints can be found through the Vermont Crime Information Center [website](#). Please check the status of sites that are closest to you. At this point, though, none of the fingerprinting centers are taking fingerprints. Some are expected to open in May. Please check in advance so that you are prepared for their specific safety requirements.

Can't I use the fingerprints that I had taken for my school?

Unfortunately, no. That is a decision that comes from the FBI. The FBI has not relaxed standards for sharing fingerprints between institutions. Unless that happens, we will need to follow the above procedure, with flexibility built in for those struggling to get their fingerprints taken in the extension of license expirations.

Local and Regional Standards Boards

If our LSB does not meet in April, how will this impact educators applying for relicensure?

We are currently looking into solutions to this. L/RSBs are not required to meet when physical schools are closed. That said, we will be offering support to L/RSBs to facilitate remote meetings, should they decide to pursue to do so. Again, the inability of an L/RSB to meet will result in neither the closing of an application.

Is the AOE recommending LSB and RSB try to meet remotely to approve submissions?

We will be offering support to L/RSBs to meet remotely should they choose to do so. They will not be required to meet remotely at this point.

Student Teaching, Practica and Internships

I am in the middle of completing a practicum for an endorsement that I am adding, but I can't now that my school has closed. What should I do?

At our Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) meeting 12 March, the board granted a conditional waiver to student teachers who cannot complete their required 13 week placement

due to school closures. While the board did not act on practica and internships, we are applying the same logic to those. Therefore, if you have:

- Completed at least half of a required practicum or internship;
- A recommendation from the site supervisor/mentor; and
- A recommendation from the university supervisor

We will count the practicum or internship as complete for the endorsement you are seeking. Again, this only applies to cases where schools are closed due to coronavirus.

I have not completed half of their required internships. What should I do?

You would still likely be eligible for a provisional license in the endorsement you are seeking. The remaining hours could be completed while employed, allowing the applicant to move from a provisional to a Level I license. For example, if an applicant has completed 20 hours of a school librarian practicum, s/he could apply for a provisional. Once hired in a new position, the remaining 40 hours could be earned on the job. When those 40 hours have been completed, the applicant could apply for a Level I license.

PRAXIS Assessments

I need to take a PRAXIS II exam, but I am guessing that all exam sites are closed. What should I do?

UPDATED: Beginning on 18 May, several PRAXIS Assessments will be available to be taken at home. There are a number of limitations--only about 30 tests will be available, there are controls on the testing environment that must be followed, devices on which the test will work are limited--but for many this will provide a solution to completing a required PRAXIS exam. The PRAXIS Core will be among the exams offered. On 1 June, additional assessments will be added to the menu.

The exams will be the same content in the same form at the same price as the ones currently taken in testing centers. Additional information and registration will be posted on the [ETS website](#) beginning on 15 May.

For those assessments that are not offered at home, until test centers begin to reopen, the Licensing Team is developing a Letter of Eligibility that would allow an educator to be licensed. Once the test centers open, the educator would have a limited time to pass the required assessment.

NEW: What if I am issued a Letter of Eligibility, but do not pass the assessment within the required window?

If an educator is unable to pass an assessment once the testing centers reopen, the license and/or endorsement would be rescinded; however, a superintendent would likely be able to apply for a provisional license on behalf of an educator, allowing the educator to retain your employment and retake the required assessment.

Other

I am going to need to start teaching on-line courses, but I do not have an On-line Teaching Specialist endorsement. Please tell me that is not going to be a problem.

That is not going to be a problem, The VSBPE passed a blanket waiver for all educators without the OTS endorsement to teach on-line coursework through the end of the academic year at the 12 March meeting.

I think I had a transcript mailed to the AOE. If the AOE is all working remotely are you going to see it?

Our building currently remains open. We have AOE staff stopping in the office occasionally to check and collate mail. We will see your transcript. That said, please try to have all transcripts submitted electronically to our transcript email AOE.transcripts@vermont.gov.

We have two teachers who are teaching with an emergency license for this school year and now cannot take the PRAXIS. Will emergency licenses be extended as well?

Yes. Emergency (and provisional and apprentice) licenses expirations will be extended to 90 days after the governor cancels the State of Emergency. However, please see the note above regarding the PRAXIS test at home option.

All Teachers are being paid through this, but what if your significant other who contributes to the household is not being paid, so money is tight. Will late payments be allowed?

At this point we are not extending payment timeframes. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please contact Patrick Halladay (patrick.halladay@vermont.gov) for further discussion.

I have a question that you did not answer. How do I get that to you?

If you have additional questions or would like further clarification of any of the above, please enter those questions in [this form](#). For the next few weeks, we are aiming to send out updated guidance each Thursday. If you have immediate needs, please refer to the list below for an expedited response. Please note that our entire team is working remotely and will not be easily available by phone.

Provisional, Emergency, and Apprenticeship Licenses: lisa.pierson@vermont.gov;
ronald.ryan@vermont.gov

Transcript Review: catherine.wilkins@vermont.gov

Peer Review: andrew.prowten@vermont.gov

Initial Licenses: josh.mccormick@vermont.gov

Renewals through a Local or Regional Standards Board or Retired Licenses: deborah.giles@vermont.gov

ROPA: ellen.cairns@vermont.gov

Technical assistance or VSBPE: amy.scalabrini@vermont.gov

General license renewals or all other inquiries: aoe.licensinginfo@vermont.gov