

COVID-19 Student Teaching FAQ

We want to acknowledge the patience and support you have shown for your students over the last few weeks. We also want to say a particular thanks to St. Michael's and UVM for bringing this to our attention early so we could be proactive. Contingencies that seemed far-fetched a couple of weeks ago have revealed themselves to be prescient. We also know that EPPs have taken some action while waiting for guidance from the AOE. Please know the AOE and VSBPE trust that you are acting in the best interests of your students and, ultimately, the students in our schools. If any guidance is in conflict with action you have already taken, please reach out to us to coordinate next steps.

It is our intention to send out an updated FAQ each Thursday for the near future. At the end of this FAQ, you will find a form allowing you to submit additional questions or ask for further clarification.

What action did the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators take regarding student teaching and school closures due to coronavirus?

On March 12, the Standards Board moved to allow substantial flexibility for students who are currently enrolled in their student teaching placements. In short, the board approved truncated student teaching placements provided:

1. At least half of the required 13 weeks have been completed
2. The mentor/cooperating teacher writes a letter of recommendation attesting that the student has demonstrated the appropriate trajectory of a typically successful student teacher.
3. The university supervisor writes a letter of recommendation attesting that the student has demonstrated the appropriate trajectory of a typically successful student teacher.

This evidence will allow an EPP to recommend a candidate for licensure. This only applies to coronavirus-related closures.

What if the student teacher has failed to demonstrate that trajectory?

It is our hope that student teachers for whom there are substantial concerns about their efficacy would have received intervention from either the EPP or had those concerns raised by the cooperating teacher. We understand that mastery is not realistic; rather, is the student teacher where you would expect them to be at this point in their trajectory? Our working assumption is that the vast majority of student teachers have demonstrated this trajectory and have not required intervention.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:
Ellen Cairns, Educator Quality at Ellen.Cairns@vermont.gov.

I am really not sure about a few students. They need to show a good deal more before I can comfortably make such a recommendation.

If you do not feel comfortable making such a recommendation, assuming the candidate graduates, s/he can apply for a provisional license. At this point we have not determined the exact mechanics for applying for a provisional. Under our current rules, only a hiring SU/SD can apply for a provisional on behalf of a teacher. This may remain the case or there may be additional leniency. We will let you know as we determine that process. Once the student is hired, s/he can petition to upgrade the provisional license to a Level I license after the weeks the candidate is short of a full 13 weeks of student teaching have been completed AND s/he receives a letter of recommendation from the supervising administrator. This would allow the EPP to recommend for licensure.

Can you explain that again?

Of course. Let us use an example. Say a student teaching assignment for the student you have real concerns about is cut short after 9 weeks, leaving the candidate 4 weeks short of the required 13. The AOE will grant a provisional license to the candidate, provided that they graduate and apply for a license. The provisional license is good for 2 years.

When the candidate is hired, s/he could apply to have the provisional license upgraded to a full Level I license after teaching for 4 weeks (9 weeks completed in student teaching + 4 weeks completed in their employment = 13 weeks) AND their supervising administrator provides a written attestation of the candidate's efficacy. Then, the EPP could recommend for licensure, allowing the AOE to issue a Level I license.

A lot of our candidates are looking for jobs out-of-state. Will other states honor these agreements?

We cannot guarantee anything. The AOE only controls Vermont licenses. That said, our office is in contact with other licensing offices across the region and the country. We will explain the logic of our decision and ask other states to honor these decisions. Just as we are going to have to be flexible with out-of-state applicants from the cohort applying for licensure, we will lean on other licensing departments to do the same.

Are we going to have to change our recommendation stamp on our transcripts?

Yes. We will need you to acknowledge that a full student teaching placement was not completed and that we should be looking for a letter of recommendation from the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. It will not be your responsibility to submit those letters, though; that will fall on the applicant.

And for those we do not recommend, what should that stamp look like?

There should not be a recommendation on those transcripts. Think of this as analogous to a student who has completed all coursework satisfactorily but has not passed the PRAXIS Core. The student would still graduate but would not receive a recommendation until passing PRAXIS. Similarly, only when the remaining weeks of student teaching are complete and the

supervising administrator has attested to their efficacy, would an EPP stamp the recommendation.

About PRAXIS. It looks like test centers are closed and our students are not able to take their PRAXIS Core or PRAXIS II assessments. What are they to do?

Students graduating or completing an endorsement this spring who are unable to take a required PRAXIS exam should still apply for licensure. We will leave all applications open while awaiting PRAXIS scores. Please note on the EPP recommendation that all testing has not been completed. We recommend applicants reach out directly to the AOE if they have not completed a required PRAXIS at AOE.liceinsinginfo@vermont.gov. Please have candidates notify us of the assessments for which they are waiting and their current plan for completion. The most updated information from ETS can be found [here](#).

Our program requires students to have passed PRAXIS Core before the end of their sophomore year. Can students still matriculate through the program if they have not passed PRAXIS Core before junior year begins?

Yes. Different programs across the state have set different timelines for when testing needs to be completed. According to ROPA, appropriate testing only needs to be completed in order to recommend for licensure. If your EPP is changing policy due to a lack of available testing, please notify Ellen Cairns, the ROPA Coordinator. This will NOT be considered a substantial change requiring standards board action.

We have a number of other cases that are similar to incomplete student teaching. For example, we have students in a school librarian practicum who have only been able to complete 40 hours. What are they to do?

While we did not ask and the Standards Board did not seek guidance on these questions, we are proceeding as if these instances are substantially commensurate with the guidance they did provide. Therefore, if a student seeking an endorsement has completed at least half of a required practicum or internship AND has a recommendation from both the site supervisor and the university supervisor, the EPP can recommend for the endorsement being sought. As with student teaching, an accompanying attestation from the site and EPP supervisor will be required.

We have students who have not completed half of their required internships. What should they do?

As these candidates are not seeking initial licensure, they would be eligible for a provisional license in the endorsement they are seeking. An EPP could recommend and the candidate could apply for an upgrade to a Level I license after s/he has completed the remaining hours while employed. For example, if a candidate has completed 20 hours of their 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 EPP could recommend for licensure and the candidate could apply for a Level I license.

We have some candidates that are completing a practicum in their junior year needed for dual endorsement. What are they to do if they do not complete their 60-hour practicum? They will be student teaching at a later date.

We ask that they make every effort to complete their practicum during the term when they student teach or another term. The 60 hours do not need to be in a single placement. For example, if the early childhood practicum is not finished this spring, while the candidate is student teaching in the fall, s/he could spend a couple of days at the outset or end of their student teaching placement in an ECE setting to make up the remaining required hours of the practicum.

We are thinking of making some of our graded courses Pass/Fail this semester. Is that allowed?

Yes. However, a student must pass the course AND the transcript must acknowledge that a Pass is commensurate with a "B" or better.

Are we to assume that our spring ROPA visits are postponed?

In all likelihood, yes; however, Ellen Cairns will be in touch with you individually regarding those details.

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 contact Ellen Cairns via email at ellen.cairns@vermont.gov. Please note that our entire team is working remotely and will not be easily available by phone.