

COVID-19 Impact on Educator Licensure and Preparation

Updated: April 21, 2020

During a [special called meeting on April 9](#), the state board passed a series of emergency rules to address disruptions caused by COVID-19 and other timely changes. This includes changes to [Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04](#) and [Educator Licensure Rule 05-02-03](#).

Clinical Practice Flexibility

- **Educator candidates** who have completed all preparation requirements but were not able to complete the full clinical practice may still be recommended for the full practitioner or instructional leader license.
 - EPPs may otherwise continue to determine whether a candidate meets the minimum criteria for licensure recommendation.

License Validity Period – Extension

- **Practitioner License** - The validity period of a **current, valid practitioner 1st or 2nd issuance** license (including academic teacher, occupational teacher, and school services personnel) that is set to expire on Aug. 31, 2020 will automatically be extended to **Aug. 31, 2021**.
 - Educators do not need to take any action. The department is currently working with the TNCompass software developer to implement this extension.
 - The extension will provide novice educators with additional time to complete any outstanding programmatic, assessment, and professional development requirements.
- **Other License Types** – Educators with a current, valid professional license (including academic teacher, occupational teacher, and school services personnel) or instructional leader license that is set to expire on Aug. 31, 2020 **will not** be granted an extension.
 - The department has increased flexibility in activities that are TASL-approved (for questions, contact TASL.Information@tn.gov) and there are online options for educators who hold a professional license and may not have already obtained the requisite PDPs through evaluation or district-led PD activities.

One Year Provisional Licenses (applications must be submitted by Dec. 31, 2020 and licenses will be valid through Aug. 31, 2021)

- **Academic and Occupational Teachers and School Services Personnel** may be issued a one year provisional practitioner license if they complete a program in the spring or summer of 2020 but have not yet passed required assessments.
 - EPPs will recommend candidates for a *Practitioner License* and select the appropriate one year endorsement from the endorsement list in TNCompass.
 - The one year provisional license may be converted to the standard practitioner license or advance to the professional license when qualifying scores on required assessments are obtained and an application to renew or advance the license is submitted in TNCompass.
- **Instructional Leaders** may be issued a one year provisional instructional leader license if they complete a program in the spring or summer of 2020 but have not yet passed required assessments.
 - EPPs will recommend candidates for a *Provisional Instructional Leader License*

- o The one year provisional license may be converted to the standard instructional leader license when qualifying scores on the required assessment is obtained and an application to renew the license is submitted in TNCompass.
- **Out-of-State applicants for initial Tennessee teacher licensure** applying on the basis of spring or summer 2020 completion of an educator preparation program approved for licensure in a state other than Tennessee (i.e. who do not hold an active license in another state) may be issued a one year provisional practitioner license in Tennessee.
 - o The one year provisional license may be converted to the standard practitioner license or advanced to the professional license when qualifying scores on required assessments are obtained and an application to renew or advance the license is submitted in TNCompass.

Note: These provisions to **do not apply to individuals who are seeking to enroll in a job-embedded program**, which may require content assessments for admission to the program if the educator does not hold a major in the content area. In addition, these provisions **do not apply to educators who are seeking to add an endorsement to an active Tennessee license**. The department is closely monitoring the availability of content assessments and will address these issues in partnership with the state board of education in the coming weeks/months if necessary.

Provisional Special Education Additional Endorsements (applications must be submitted by Dec. 31, 2020 and endorsements will be valid through Aug. 31, 2021)

- Candidates completing a provisional special education additional endorsement program in spring or summer 2020, who have been impacted by professional assessment center closures due to COVID-19, may be recommended for the one year provisional license by their educator preparation provider, if all other program requirements have been met.
- Candidates will receive a one year provisional endorsement expiring on August 31, 2021. The one year provisional endorsement may be converted to the standard endorsement when qualifying scores on required assessments are obtained and an application to add the endorsement is submitted in TNCompass.

Additional Licensure Considerations

Practitioner License Renewal/Advancement - LOE in Lieu of Professional Assessments

- TCA § 49-5-108 offers flexibility for educators who are issued a Tennessee practitioner license based on holding a professional license in another state. The law states that out-of-state licensure candidates will not be required to take an assessment to advance or renew a license if certain criteria are met, including that the candidate earned a level of overall effectiveness (LOE) rating of *Above Expectations* (level 4) or *Significantly Above Expectations* (level 5) in the first two years immediately following the issuance of the Tennessee practitioner license.
- As a result of educators not receiving an LOE score for the 2019-20 school year, due to COVID-19, this flexibility will not be available to some educators who hold a Practitioner license and were planning to utilize this flexibility. These educators may be required to submit qualifying scores on the appropriate assessments.

Permits - Professional Assessments

- The department will consider **1st year permit** applications on a case-by-case basis if candidates for permits have not completed the Praxis due to test center closures (the alternative is still 6 hours coursework in the content area of the permit).
 - Applications for first year permits will be strengthened by program enrollment, in the absence of Praxis scores.
- Applications for **2nd and 3rd year permits should not be impacted** by professional assessment center closures, as program enrollment satisfies both the 2nd and 3rd year permit requirements.

Waivers - Professional Assessments

- The department will consider **1st year waiver** applications on a case-by-case basis if candidates for waivers have not completed the Praxis due to test center closures (the alternative is still 6 hours coursework in the content area of the permit).
 - Applications for first year waivers will be strengthened by program enrollment, in the absence of Praxis scores.
- Applications for **2nd and 3rd year waivers for endorsements that cannot be added by assessment-only should not be impacted** by professional assessment center closures, as program enrollment satisfies both the 2nd and 3rd year waiver requirements.
- Applications for **2nd and 3rd year waivers for endorsements that can be added by assessment only** will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis if candidates for waivers have not completed the Praxis due to test center closures.

Professional Development Points (PDPs)

Educators who were awarded PDPs on the basis of their LOE in 2018-19 will be awarded the same PDPs for 2019-20.