

Educator Licensing COVID-19 FAQ

This FAQ document is for educators due for relicensure in 2020, educators seeking initial license, and local and regional standards boards.

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?

We don't know yet, but proceed as though it will not be extended. Many educators have already submitted their renewals. Though our staff is working remotely, we are able to continue to process all licensing applications. The three main hindrances to completing applications on-time are access to fingerprints, Local and Regional Standards Boards' ability to approve professional development, and postponed professional learning necessary for relicensure. We will address each of these separately below.

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 many of us are self-isolating at home, there are many PL opportunities that are available on-line that could potentially meet your needs. At this point, the Standards Board has not considered altering the number of credits needed for relicensure.

Please consult the [full list of approved PL categories](#) for more information.

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. We also understand that these are unusual times.

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 our last check, all but one fingerprinting center is closed. The one center open is only taking fingerprints for educators living in the immediate area.

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

Unfortunately, no. That is a decision that comes from the FBI. At this point, they have not relaxed standards for sharing of 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.

If our LSB does not meet in March, 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 do so. Again, the inability of an L/RSB to meet will not result in either the closing of an application nor the expiration of a license. We will be developing additional measures such as waivers and extensions should the closures persist for several weeks.

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.

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 the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) meeting last Thursday (3/12/2020), 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 will still be eligible for a provisional license in the endorsement you are seeking. The remaining hours can be completed while employed, allowing you to move from a provisional to a Level I license. For example, if an applicant has completed 20 hours of a school librarian practicum, they could apply for a provisional. Once hired in a new position, the remaining 40 hours can be earned on the job. When those 40 hours have been completed, the applicant can apply for a Level I license.

I am going to need to start teaching on-line courses, but I do not have an On-line Teaching Specialist endorsement.

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 most recent meeting.

My transcript was 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.

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

The latest information on PRAXIS can be found at the [ETS website](#). If you are unable to take a PRAXIS II or PRAXIS Core assessment due to test centers being closed for the coronavirus, we will not close your application. Again, we will develop procedures to extend current licenses or develop waivers as necessary as we get a better understanding of the length of closures.

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 Wednesday. 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.wilikins@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: rebecca.gile@vermont.gov

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

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