



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Guidance for Colleges and Universities on Addressing the Needs of Students Impacted by the Coronavirus

Updated April 2, 2020

In response to concerns regarding students who are impacted by the coronavirus, either because they are returning from study-abroad programs or in the event of campus emergencies or closures, the NYS Education Department (NYSED) offers the following guidance.

State and Federal Advisories and Protocol

- Institutions should monitor USDE, State and Local Department of Health websites for up-to-date information, guidance and instructions concerning COVID-19 (the coronavirus), including any protocol concerning students on campus and returning from study abroad programs: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>.
- Title IV Guidance for interruption of study: <https://ifap.ed.gov/electronic-announcements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19>.
- CDC Higher Education Guidance can be found here: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>.

NYSED Regulatory and Programmatic Guidance

- To help students already enrolled at the institution who are impacted by the emergency (e.g., students returning from study-abroad programs, all current students impacted by a campus emergency/closure in NYS, etc.), institutions that wish to offer current courses/programs **online** that are not currently registered with NYSED in the distance education format are granted temporary approval for the Spring 2020 academic term. Extension of this time frame will be monitored depending on the emergency time frame.

4/2/20 Update: The flexibility concerning offering courses/programs online that are not currently registered by NYSED in the distance education format is extended to the Summer 2020 term(s) and is extended to include new students, enrolling for the first time in the Summer 2020 term(s). Please note that offering programs in the distance education format (i.e., 50% or more of the requirements can be completed through study delivered by distance education) beyond the Summer 2020 term(s) will be subject to regular distance education approval requirements, including the submission of program registration applications to NYSED. The need to extend this flexibility beyond the Summer 2020 term(s) will be determined depending upon the COVID-19 emergency time frame.

- Institutions may consider exceptions to their published policies on granting course extensions/incompletes and extend the deadline for incompletes to be resolved, but should be mindful of possible impact on student financial aid eligibility.
- Institutions may consider flexibility regarding withdrawal and refund policies but should be mindful of possible impact on student financial aid eligibility.
- Institutions may consider options for substitution of credit bearing courses for credit-bearing experiential programs (i.e., study-abroad programs).
- Institutions may consider assisting students in finding comparable courses at other institutions where necessary and practicable and may allow exceptions to their published policies on transfer credit and residency requirements.
- Programs and support services provided to all students, including those returning from studying abroad, should continue to meet program registration standards, while also noting the flexibility and provisions offered herein.
- Professional licensure or certification clinical experience courses must meet regulatory requirements. If present emergency circumstances create challenges associated with meeting clinical experience requirements, institutions should contact NYSED concerning appropriate alternatives to meet requirements, such as clinical simulation options.

4/2/20 Update:

Guidance was recently issued for **educator preparation program** clinical experiences and certifications at: <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/college-university-evaluation/nysed-covid-19-guidance-epp-clinical-experiences-certification-exams.pdf>

For **Professional licensure programs** if present emergency circumstances create challenges associated with meeting clinical experience requirements, institutions should continue to contact NYSED concerning appropriate alternatives to meet requirements, such as clinical simulation options. Please check www.op.nysed.gov/COVID-19.html for updates on meeting clinical experience requirements.

- If the State or local government in NYS temporarily closes an institution due to a disaster (including an epidemic), section 52.2(c)(4) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education provides regulatory relief concerning the granting of a semester hour of credit for fewer hours of instruction. The regulations and application form can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/regulatory-relief-temporary-closure-institution-due-disaster>
- Institutions should consult with their accrediting agencies for additional guidance.
- Institutions should notify NYSED at OCUEINFO@nysed.gov regarding any decisions to temporarily close any NYS campuses.

Agency Contact Information

- Questions should be directed to the appropriate office at **NYSED** as noted below:
 - Academic programs that lead to professional licensure: Office of Professional Education Program Review (PEPR) at: OPPROGS@nysed.gov
 - All other academic programs, including teacher education: Office of College and University Evaluation (OCUE) at: OCUEINFO@nysed.gov

- SUNY and CUNY institutions should contact their respective System Administration for additional guidance.

- Questions about financial aid issues:
 - USDE Federal Student Aid Office:
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/gen/index.html?src=ft#financial-aid>
 - NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC): <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/>