MEMORANDUM

Date: March 30, 2020
To: NH Approved Educator Preparation Programs
From: Bureau of Educator Preparation and Higher Education
& Bureau of Credentialing
Subject: Provisions for Clinical Requirements and Testing Requirements

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES:
The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) recognizes the effort to curb the spread of COVID-19 are impacting the duration of clinical experiences (practicum, field experiences, early field experiences, culminating field experiences, and internship placements, etc.) and this places EPP programs and students at risk of not meeting requirements outlined in the NHDOE Administrative Rules Ed. 604s.

The NHDOE recognizes that each EPP is in the best position to understand the unique needs of its candidates and the disruptions that have occurred to their educational experiences as a result of the unprecedented efforts to curb the spread of the virus. As such, there is flexibility for each EPP to design a plan to help students meet the expected outcomes of those clinical experiences, using the basic guidance provided below.

Each EPP should provide flexibility through alternative experiences and/or assignments and instruction as appropriate to ensure that expectations and outcomes for each candidate’s clinical experience are met. The opportunities may include, but are not limited to, virtual learning, designing lessons and units of instruction, selecting and implementing instructional strategies, teaching lessons and content, assessing learning to evaluate PK-12 student progress and inform instructional decisions, creating a supporting learning environment, managing the classroom effectively, and other appropriate activities. Ultimately it is up to the EPP to ensure candidates meet the competencies.

EPP candidates who have made satisfactory progress through their clinical experiences by the end of the semester/term, and have demonstrated sufficient mastery of the outcomes and expectations will be eligible for licensure recommendation. The Institution must document that the candidate has demonstrated fulfillment of state and institutional expectations. However, any EPP candidate not making satisfactory progress to meet the standards, should be given the opportunity to extend their clinical experiences. It is up to the discretion of each EPP to determine the best path forward for remediating candidates who have not made satisfactory progress.

The NHDOE will forward notification at the end of April requesting summary information on your plan and basic information regarding the number of students affected. Your responses to the survey will be due by June 1, 2020. The survey responses are for documentation purposes only. This timeline also provides an opportunity to make adjustments as local, state or national responses evolve.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR and SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST REQUIRED HOURS (PSU; Rivier):
School Counselor (Ed 614.03):
The current rules in NH stipulate- The school counselor preparation program shall require at least 600 total hours of supervised internship experience, inclusive of practicum, of which at least 300 hours shall be direct service clock hours. And, an average of 2 hours of school counselor preparation program group supervision/seminar per week shall be provided on a regular schedule throughout the internship, performed by a school counselor preparation program faculty member. While the Department does not currently anticipate the current requirements to be changed and/or waived, it is suggested that those accredited through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), refer to their recent advisory which outlines:

“CACREP is not waiving the minimum requirement of direct and indirect service hours for Practicum and Internship.”
However, flexibility has been provided for meeting internship requirements:
• Policy 1.h has been temporarily waived to allow you to count any Practicum hours in excess of the 100 hour requirement toward your Internship hour totals. Direct service practicum hours can be applied to direct service internship hours, and the same with indirect hours.
• You may use alternate methods of service delivery such as tele-mental health, if it follows the standard professional and ethical guidelines and if your program and state regulatory board allow it.
Program faculty and site coordinators have flexibility to identify what activities are acceptable as direct service especially in a crisis response scenario.”

Each EPP has the authority to accommodate within the rule requirements, keeping in mind the potential impact, of this particular cohort of graduates with regard to their future mobility to states that have not changed credentialing requirements.

Institutions that have potential graduates enrolled in the school counselor program can forward a list of candidates potentially affected to Laura Stoneking, at laura.stoneking@doe.nh.gov of your current candidates that are unable to complete the required hours.

School Psychology (Ed 614.06):
The current rules in NH stipulate- The program of school psychology shall ensure a supervised internship for 1,200 clock hours, full-time over one year or at least half time over 2 consecutive years, in a general school setting. If additional experiences are provided in mental health clinics, psychiatric hospitals, and other institutions for children, such experiences shall not replace the supervised internship in a general school setting for more than 600 of the 1,200 clock hours. While the Department does not currently anticipate the current requirements to be changed and/or waived, it is suggested that those accredited through the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), refer to their recent advisory (https://www.cacrep.org/for-programs/updates-on-covid-19/#march4 *updated 3/18/2020) which outlines:

“Interns are still expected to obtain a minimum 1200 hours during their internship experience.” This is critical because many states base their credentials on completing a 1200 internship; it is risky to assume that states will waive this requirement. However, the NASP program Accreditation Board and National School Psychology Certification Board (https://www.nasponline.org/) have agreed to require a minimum of 800 hours in direct, field-based supervised experiences, with a minimum of 400 hours is a school setting. Programs may employ flexibility on the remainder of hours.

Each EPP has discretion as to how many non-school hours spent on such internship tasks as writing reports, making phone calls, researching and creating service delivery plans, planning in-services, etc., may be counted toward the 1,200-hour minimum.” Each EPP has the authority to accommodate within the rule requirements, keeping in mind the potential impact of this particular cohort of graduates, with regard to their future mobility to states that have not changed credentialing requirements.

Institutions that have potential graduates enrolled in the school psychology program can forward a list of candidates potentially affected to Laura Stoneking, at laura.stoneking@doe.nh.gov of your current candidates that are unable to complete the required hours.

TESTING REQUIREMENTS and LICENSURE OPTIONS:
*See the attached 03/26/2020 Memorandum from the Bureau of Credentialing regarding IPLA.

IN CONCLUSION:
The NHDOE appreciates the complexities and stress created due to the measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. Clearly, we are experiencing extraordinary times and need extraordinary responses. We continue to work on resolving issues related to licensure, clinical opportunities and testing requirements. We appreciate your patience through this process. However, we recognize that situations are changing rapidly and many of you are pulled in multiple directions. While having a plan is an immediate priority of our EPPS, we understand that our responses will need flexibility too.