

Concerns Identified by the Texas Directors of Field Experiences

1. Clinical Teaching Days: Numerous districts are not providing placements until after September 8th. Even with the reduction of days, many EPPs will find it difficult to have students complete the number of days required. EPPs in East Texas stated that they would be closed for at least another week due to Hurricane Laura.

Response: 19 TAC §228.1(d) addresses instances where a state of disaster is declared and clinical teaching, internship, and practicum assignment minimums can be decreased by up to 20% as necessary. If the clinical teacher was scheduled to do 70 days of clinical teaching, this can be reduced by up to 20%, or 14 days. If the clinical experience appointment overlaps with the disaster declaration, then it is eligible for the 20% reduction. The disaster declaration does not need to be in place for the entire duration of the clinical assignment. Please see additional guidance [here](#).

2. COVID-19: What should a candidate in clinical teaching do if they contract the virus? Since they will have to quarantine for at least 14 days, are there any provisions for these situations? We have heard in the field that the student could receive an incomplete for the course and finish in the spring semester, but there was a comment about having to take the STR examination after 1/1/2021.

Response: The EPP can address student illness through guidance found in Chapter 228.35(e)(2)(A)(iv) and may permit a full-day clinical teaching assignment up to 5 full days fewer than the minimum and a half-day clinical teaching assignment up to 10 half days fewer than the minimum if due to maternity leave, military leave, illness, or bereavement. The requirement for STR is not flexible, as it is a legislative mandate.

3. COVID-19: What happens if the teacher assigned to the clinical teacher contracts the virus? The teacher will be out for at least 14 days. This is a concern because the clinical teacher might get reassigned to another teacher or asked to work with a substitute.

Response: This situation would be similar to any other illness or long-term absence of the cooperating teacher. We encourage the EPP to work with the campus and district leadership to problem-solve around this issue in a similar way.

4. Instruction: Many of the field directors commented about virtual instruction. The phrase used was "3rd party instruction." For example, we have heard where teachers are having students watch a video on a topic and then students complete an assignment that goes with the topic. The concern was about quality instruction. We have seen resources to address virtual instruction; however, the clinical teacher cannot impose the resources on the cooperating teacher.

Response: In the current reality, schools, teachers, and leadership are identifying and solving challenges that emerge on a daily basis. We think that educator preparation programs are well positioned to support their candidates in learning and implementing best practices, while also engaging in conversations with cooperating and mentor teachers. Relatedly, TEA has made available virtual teaching and learning resources, which can be accessed using the following link:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/covid-19-support-instructional-continuity-planning>

5. Observation Time Frame: The 45-minute observation requirement was discussed. The field directors are asking that flexibility be allowed for supervisors to complete the 45 minutes within the week instead of within the day.

Response: The 45-minute observation requirement was not waived in any of the waiver provisions. While the rule does not require that these minutes be consecutive, we encourage EPPs, field supervisors, candidates, cooperating teachers, and campus leaders to collaborate to observe meaningful sessions of teaching and learning that meet this duration requirement and ensure candidates the opportunity to receive structured guidance and regular ongoing support and to demonstrate proficiency in the educator standards.

6. Technology: Field directors discussed the issue of technology as related to virtual settings. For clinical teachers who are providing virtual instruction, they need to have a district email. Numerous districts are either not allowing this or where allowed is taking time to get this set up.

Response: The SBEC has provided additional flexibility to allow for asynchronous observations, which may work in this case. We encourage you to work closely with the campus/district staff and the EPP.

Closing reminder for field supervisors:

Candidates in clinical teaching will complete their clinical teaching in settings that exist at the assignment campus. Even when in a virtual setting, candidates should be able to demonstrate proficiency in each of the educator standards and be supported by the cooperating teacher in areas such as planning, classroom management, instruction, assessment, working with parents, obtaining materials, and understanding district policies. Field supervisors should be able to observe candidates either asynchronously and synchronously, monitor their performance, and provide constructive feedback to the candidate.