

## **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** **CCTE COVID-19 Q&A - Version 2 - Updated 3/27/20 - 8:30 am**

This document attempts to capture and address issues that are specific to districts and schools that operate specific programs administered by DESE and its partners in the CCTE space, including Perkins, Chapter 74, Innovation Pathways, Connecting Activities, MassGrad and MyCAP. Separate guidance related to Early College is forthcoming. Please continue to be on the lookout for coronavirus-related information that applies more broadly at DESE's main COVID-19 resource page at: [COVID-19 Information and Resources - Student and Family Support \(SFS\)](#).

We will do our best to update this as information as it becomes available. However, do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the [CCTE team](#) with questions that may not be addressed below. We are all online and working from home, available to support you.

### **School and Program Closures**

All schools and programs, including postsecondary programs operating in vocational technical high school buildings should remain closed until May 4, 2020, per Governor Baker's order.

### **Program Monitoring**

Per the March 13, 2020 Coronavirus Guidance from Commissioner Riley: DESE is suspending all monitoring and onsite assistance visits, except in a few special circumstances. We want you to focus on what matters most, which is keeping your students and staff safe. If you want our assistance, we will be happy to provide it virtually.

### **Deadlines and Grants**

**Q1.** Will extensions be granted for various upcoming deadlines for grant opportunities and other program approval process (such as Chapter 74 Part B or After Dark)?

**A1.** Yes. Extensions will be granted on case-by-case basis for non-competitive processes, or new deadlines will be set for competitive grant processes. In general, we will still try to keep processes moving to avoid downstream delays for funding availability and new program starts in FY21.

See **Guidance for DESE Grant Recipients** shared on the morning of 3/19/20:

At this time, the Department is providing this general guidance with respect to grant program expenditures. This information is subject to change and updated guidance will be provided as needed.

- Per Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – grant recipients may continue to charge salaries and benefits to currently active awards consistent with the recipient organization's policy of paying salaries (under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances) from all funding sources, Federal and non-Federal.
- Other costs may be charged to awards, including those necessary to resume activities supported by the award, consistent with applicable cost principles and the benefit to the

project. DESE will also evaluate the recipient's ability to resume the project activity in the future and the appropriateness of future funding, as done under normal circumstances, based on subsequent progress reports and other communications with the recipient.

- EdGrants can be accessed remotely as it is a web-based application. Grantees are encouraged to continue using EdGrants as needed.
- Typically, the rule regarding line item amendments is that they are required to be approved 30 days prior to need. Grants management will temporarily lift this 30 day prior to need amendment rule. Please keep in mind that any funds spent using grant funds should still fall within the allowable costs and program parameters. If there are specific questions as to whether something is allowed, grantees should contact the DESE program personnel managing the grant. This is typically the person listed as the contact in the RFP posting.
- The payment request windows are set up at the start of the fiscal year so there will be no disruption in accessing payment windows. Payment windows remain open the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month through the end of the month. As always, if there is an issue you can contact Grants Management for assistance.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate this unprecedented situation. As always, you can email [EdGrants@doe.mass.edu](mailto:EdGrants@doe.mass.edu) for assistance.

**Q2.** Will the Mass Skills Capital Grant deadline application be extended?

**A2.** Yes. Per the Executive Office of Education, in response to the requests related to managing workflow due to COVID-19 from the field, the Skills Capital Grant is extending the Application Due date to April 30th 2020.

**Q3.** What guidance is DESE offering regarding the April 1 Non-Resident Tuition Application Deadline outlined in [VTE regulations](#).

**A3.** DESE is actively seeking flexibility for deadlines outlined in law. In the meantime, electronic submissions of the Non-Resident Tuition Application. This includes completing or responding to applications with electronic signatures (typing or hand-writing names are both acceptable). Superintendents are encouraged to practice flexibility as not all families have access to technology and internet services.

## **Perkins**

**Q1.** Will there be flexibility granted related to required performance indicators?

**A1.** We are working to get clarity from the U.S. Department Education about flexibility related to federal requirements.

**Q2.** Will the transition from Perkins IV to Perkins V be impacted?

**A2.** We are working to get clarity from the U.S. Department Education about flexibility related to the transition to Perkins V. Fortunately, the shifts in Perkins V align with aspects currently in place, and MA is well-positioned to transition smoothly to Perkins V.

## **Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education**

**NEW! Q1.** Will there be flexibility granted for students who must meet required minimum hours to qualify for licensure or credit toward apprenticeships?

**A1.** These decisions will be made by the respective licensing boards or the Division for Professional Licensure, but DESE will facilitate conversations as needed to develop reasonable accommodations while preserving the integrity of the licensing processes. Please reach out directly to Lisa Sandler at [Lisa.M.Sandler@mass.gov](mailto:Lisa.M.Sandler@mass.gov) with specific questions. Please see Appendix A below for preliminary compiled guidance.

**Q2.** Regarding Program Advisory Committee meetings, what relief is there from compliance with the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 18–25.

**A2.** On March 12, 2020, Governor Baker issued an [Executive Order](#) modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing. Based on this executive order, Program Advisory Committees should try to meet virtually. If this is not possible, please reach out to Marnie Jain at [Marnie.A.Jain@mass.gov](mailto:Marnie.A.Jain@mass.gov) or Cliff Chuang at [Cliff.Chuang@mass.gov](mailto:Cliff.Chuang@mass.gov).

**Q3.** Regarding Program Advisory Committee meetings, what relief is there from compliance with the requirement for PACs to meet twice a year.

**A3.** If a second meeting has not yet occurred this year, we strongly encourage you to convene the PAC virtually. If this is not possible, please reach out to Marnie Jain at [Marnie.A.Jain@mass.gov](mailto:Marnie.A.Jain@mass.gov) to request a waiver from this regulatory requirement.

**Q4.** How does this situation impact the new 900 hours requirements just approved in regulation?

**A4.** Even without the current COVID-19 situation, CCTE planned on using FY21 to focus on technical assistance (not compliance) related to this requirement, and these plans have not changed.

**Q5.** Are there changes in requirements for PDPs for licensure?

**A5.** TBD

**Q6.** Will there be guidance coming supporting learning in a remote context, applicable for technical courses or programs?

**A6.** Yes, we are working in collaboration with educators and leaders in the field on this.

**Q7.** Will there be guidance offered regarding expectations for delivering Special Education services in CTE programs?

**A7.** For now, please see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/covid19.html>.

**Q8.** Will the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Teacher Testing Program continue to operate?

**A8.** Due to current health emergency related to the COVID-19 virus, the May 2 and May 9, 2020 MA Vocational Technical Teacher Testing Program's performance exams have been CANCELLED until further notice. As soon as school test sites become available, these performance exams will be rescheduled and the new test dates will be posted on the program's web page [www.gltech.org/domain/69](http://www.gltech.org/domain/69). We are also suspending performance exam registrations until further notice. Please continue to check this web page for additional updates and feel free to contact the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Teacher Testing Program staff via email if you have any questions or concerns about Vocational Technical Teacher Testing Program activities.

### **Chapter 74 New Program Applications**

**Q1.** Will new programs still be approved as early as June 30th?

**A1.** It is unclear at this time if any programs will be approved by June 30th. However, the June 30th approval has no programmatic or fiscal advantage. June 30th approvals are done as a convenience so that districts can know before the end of the school year.

**Q2.** How will this affect new program approvals in general?

**A2.** We are aware that the timely hiring of teachers, acquiring appropriate vocational licenses, and waivers may all be affected. Districts will be notified when the Department has information on this. For now, no PAC meetings will be taking place in person or remotely. Safety Inspections of Facilities and Equipment are suspended for the time being. CTE will be issuing more information at a later date. Review of the Part B applications will continue; however, CTE staff will not be reaching out to districts at this time. Districts are welcome to contact us should they wish to do so.

### **Innovation Pathways**

**Q1.** Will there be flexibility provided related to the 100 hour internship/capstone requirement for seniors this year?

**A1.** Yes. Consistent with the guidance the Commissioner has issued related to making up school days, schools and students will not be required to make-up hours that are missed after reasonable good faith efforts.

**Q2.** Our district received an Innovation Pathways implementation grant. Will there be flexibility in contract end dates?

**A2.** In general, we are seeking flexibility with grant spending deadlines. Depending upon the funding source, legislative approval may be required. If you do not think that you can spend down the funds you were awarded, please email Jennifer Gwatkin, [jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov](mailto:jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov).

**Q3.** Our school received the Innovation Pathways designation for multiple programs this spring (2020) and we are looking at the logistics of implementing the IP program for AY21. If it would

be more realistic for us to start smaller (e.g. with one or two pathways) or even delay the launch, is that a possibility?

**A3.** Yes. Please contact Jennifer Gwatkin if this is the case ([jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov](mailto:jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov)).

**Q.4.** If a school is not implementing a newly designated Innovation Pathway in fall 2020, will we be able to receive implementation funding?

**Q.5.** If your school is not positioned to implement one or more pathways, designated in Spring 2020, the program is not eligible for FY21 implementation grant. Receipt of FY21 implementation funding is contingent on formal pathway launch in FY21.

**Q5.** Will there be flexibility with respect to Innovation Pathways' performance?

**A5.** We are finalizing the Innovation Pathways performance criteria and will provide guidance and technical assistance in the coming months. All schools with the IP designation as of spring 2020 will be in "Year 1" in AY2020-2021. Please continue reporting your IP students through the usual data collections.

**Q6.** Will there be a new Innovation Pathways designation cycle launching this spring? If so, what will the timeline look like?

**A6.** Given the ever-evolving situation, we are weighing approaches. Any new information will be communicated via the Commissioner's Weekly Update (to receive these, please [subscribe](#)) and a news headline on the [CCTE Homepage](#). You may always reach out directly to Jennifer Gwatkin, [jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov](mailto:jennifer.a.gwatkin@mass.gov).

**Q.7.** What are the expectations for involvement in the Innovation Pathway Community of Practice during this time?

**A.7.** Technical assistance offerings are continuing, in the form of webinars and online interactive workshops, and each is designed to be supportive and relevant to the Innovation Pathway community. Innovation Pathway designee schools are not required to participate in technical assistance provided to the Community of Practice, however we hope you will consider participating virtually.

### **College and Career Advising (CCA) and MyCAP**

**Q1.** Will Workshop 3 of CCA/MyCAP Professional Development Series be offered?

**A1.** Yes. When schools are back in session, there will be an opportunity to participate in Workshop 3 though most likely in an online format. We are working to create that presentation in a format that will allow school teams to access the information at time that is convenient for the individual school's schedule.

## Appendix A

### **Guidance Compiled by DESE from Licensing Boards to Districts/Institutions that Operate Ch.74 State-Approved VTE Programs Offering State Recognized Hours Toward Licensure and/or Certification(s)**

#### **Response to School Closure – COVID-19 Emergency as of Thursday, 3/26/20**

*Please send questions to [Lisa.M.Sandler@mass.gov](mailto:Lisa.M.Sandler@mass.gov)*

**Note:** This information is current as of Thursday afternoon, 3/26/20. Many of the boards (including Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC-R, and Sheetmetal) are scheduled to meet next week to make decisions regarding potentially flexibility in light of the COVID-19 emergency. We will update this guidance as soon as information is available. We appreciate your patience.

#### **Massachusetts Board of Cosmetology and Barbering**

In summary, the Board is allowing *temporary distance-based learning plans for the COVID-19 crisis*. Districts need to notify the Board that they are closed and submit their plan for distance-based education. Here is the Board's memo to license holders, including schools, particularly, #4 below: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-guidance-memo-for-licensed-cosmetology-barbering-professionals/download>.

*All Licensees under the Board of Registration of Cosmetology and Barbering:* In response to the escalating coronavirus issue, The Board of Cosmetology and Barbering ("Board") has prepared the following information for all licensees:

1. All licensees, including individual practitioners, shop/salon owners, and school owners should monitor their local Board of Health, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for up-to-date information on the coronavirus. Make sure to follow any and all directives from your local, state, and federal public health agencies on working or operating your business.
2. All shops and schools should comply strictly with the Board's sanitation requirements found in 240 CMR 3.03. If your local, state, or federal public health agency advises stricter sanitation guidelines, please incorporate these into your operations.
3. Salons/shops and schools should follow any guidance from their local, state, and federal public health agencies on closures and/or limiting customers. If schools must close, they should be flexible on adjusting student contracts to incorporate appropriately modified end dates.
4. If a school closes, it must submit notification of its closure and detailed plans for any distance-based learning to [cosmetologyandbarberingboard@mass.gov](mailto:cosmetologyandbarberingboard@mass.gov). The distance-based learning plan must include qualitative and quantitative measurements of education. Schools must update the Board every 30 days from its original notification on any changes to its distance-based learning plan and closure status.
5. Accredited schools should follow any guidelines issued by NACCAS: <http://www.naccas.org> or their appropriate accrediting agency. Title IV Schools should

follow the US Department of Education's guidelines on suspending operations:  
<https://ifap.ed.gov/electronicannouncements/030520Guidance4interruptionsrelated2CoronavirusCOVID19>

Please contact the Board at [cosmetologyandbarberingboard@mass.gov](mailto:cosmetologyandbarberingboard@mass.gov) if you have any questions. Please also use the following links to stay informed:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets>
- <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus?src=feature>

Please continue to be safe during this unfolding situation. Thank you.

### **Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing**

The following link to the website provides information regarding approval of nursing programs and the general conduct thereof - <https://www.mass.gov/doc/244-cmr-6-approval-of-nursing-education-programs-and-the-general-conduct-thereof/download>

Please note the following:

(4) Curriculum.

- a) Program faculty shall develop a nursing curriculum plan which shall provide a variety of learning experiences consistent with the program's mission or philosophy and objectives or goals. The sciences, arts, humanities, and foundations of the profession shall be an integral part of the nursing curriculum plan.
- b) The curriculum shall:
  - (1) extend over a period of time sufficient to provide essential, sequenced learning experiences which enable a student to develop nursing competence. For Practical Nursing programs, this period of time shall be a minimum of 40 academic weeks;
  - (2) be based on an organized pattern of instruction consistent with principles of learning and educational practice;
  - (3) provide instruction in the discipline of nursing, appropriate to the Registered Nurse or Practical Nurse level, across the lifespan and include content relevant to national and local health care needs;
  - (4) be designed in accordance with generally accepted academic standards and credit hours for Registered Nursing programs, and include a minimum of 1080 hours of theory, laboratory and clinical practice for Practical Nursing programs. A minimum of 945 hours shall be allocated to nursing courses in Practical Nursing programs, of which a minimum of 540 hours shall be for clinical experiences; and
  - (5) identify the level of student achievement expected at defined points in the program.

Please be advised that the response of the Board to individual practice inquiries represent the Board's interpretation of the legal scope of nursing practice. This response is valid only in the context in which it is rendered; it does not have general applicability, as do statutes, regulations or advisory rulings on nursing practice.

**We thank you for your time and patience as we continue to work together during this health crisis.**

**Board of Registration in Dentistry**

Information coming soon.

**Department of Early Education and Care**

Information coming soon.

**Board of State Examiners of Electricians**

Information coming soon.

**Nurse Aide Registry Program and Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality:**

Information coming soon.

**State Board of Examiners of Plumbers and Gas Fitters**

Information coming soon.

**State Board of Examiners of Sheetmetal (HVAC-R)**

Information coming soon.