May 8, 2020

Subject: Updated Guidance from the Dean About Teacher Certification

Dear Brooklyn College Teacher Candidates,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe and that each of you is anticipating a successful conclusion to this extremely difficult semester. We are near the finish line! I am writing you today to update you on the latest guidance we have received from the New York State Education Department (NYSED) about licensure and exams for educator preparation programs in the state. Below, I will describe the major elements of this new guidance and highlight changes from previous guidance and policy with links to websites where you may find further information and read the guidance in full. Please be assured that the faculty, staff, and administration in the Brooklyn College School of Education will continue to support you as you navigate changing requirements for certification and achieve your goal of becoming a New York State-certified teacher.

Testing Centers Reopen

As of May 1, testing centers in some locations in New York State have opened. This means that the potential exemption from certification testing mentioned in earlier NYSED guidance is no longer an option for any teacher candidates in the state.

Currently, open locations are sparse and subject to change, and scheduled tests are subject to cancellation. We will check availability frequently and post nearby options on the Brooklyn College Educator Certification website starting in mid May.

We also recommend that you check the New York State Teacher Certification Exam (NYSTCE) website often as testing sessions might fill up quickly.

I know that many of you are disappointed about this policy and that the number and location of open testing centers poses a great challenge. I do not expect this policy to be reversed, but both the SOE and CUNY will continue to advocate on your behalf with NYSED and seek answers to your questions for which we do not yet have clarification.

Emergency COVID-19 Certification

To help mitigate the challenges posed by requiring the completion of certification exams, the state has created a new Emergency COVID-19 certificate. This emergency certificate gives eligible candidates one year to complete their certification exams and allows them to be hired for teaching jobs during the 2020-2021 school year before completing any certification exams.
Who is eligible for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate?

Anyone who graduated by or before September 1, 2020, and who has completed all program requirements and certification requirements but has not completed certification exams and the edTPA is eligible for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate. A list of certification requirements (other than the exams and edTPA) may be found on the Brooklyn College Educator Certification website which includes a FAQ page. The full list of eligible certificates and extensions can be found on NYSED’s Office of Teaching Initiatives website.

How should candidates apply for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate?

Candidates must apply for the certificate or extension in their specific program area on or before September 1, 2020, following the usual process found on our Certification website.

They must also apply for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate, in the same certificate title as the certificate or extension sought on or before September 1, 2020. There is no cost to apply for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate, but the application is not yet available. We will let you know when it is, but you may also check the NYSED Office of Teaching Initiatives website to find out about the availability of the application.

Update on edTPA Exemption

As stated in previous guidance, teacher candidates who completed student teaching or a similar clinical experience in Spring 2020 are eligible for what is now being called the “edTPA safety net”—the substitution of the Assessment of Teaching Skills Written (ATS-W) for the edTPA. Eligible candidates who completed clinical experiences similar to student teaching are listed below. The edTPA safety net does not apply to clinical experiences required prior to student teaching.

Who is eligible for the edTPA safety net?

- Teacher certification candidates who completed student teaching in Spring, 2020
- Teacher certification candidates who completed clinical residencies in Spring, 2020 (not offered by Brooklyn College)
- Teacher certification candidates who complete student teaching in Summer, 2020 (not offered by Brooklyn College)
- Teacher certification candidates currently enrolled in a Transitional B/Alternative Certification program and enrolled in Brooklyn College classes in the spring of 2020
- Teacher certification candidates who currently hold an internship certificate

The edTPA safety net is not available to teacher candidates who graduated in December, 2019 or earlier (but the Emergency COVID-19 certificate is). It is also not available at this time to teacher candidates who will student teach after Summer, 2020. (Additional guidance will be provided to teacher candidates enrolled in Transitional B/Alternative Certification programs.) No exceptions can be made.
You will need to go to the following link to confirm your eligibility for the safety net, requested on or before May 15, 2020: https://tinyurl.com/ya2omjrl The list of courses that can be used for the safety net is included at that link.

How does the edTPA safety net work?

Eligible candidates who choose not to complete the edTPA may instead take and pass the ATS-W or use a prior passing score on the ATS-W to substitute for the edTPA. The ATS-W must be taken at a Pearson testing center. Therefore, students who have not already taken and passed the ATS-W and select to take it to replace the edTPA should apply for the Emergency COVID-19 certificate if eligible to allow additional time for testing centers to reopen.

For students who choose to complete the edTPA and wish to do so in a virtual learning environment, please contact Professor Stella Kyprianou at Stella.Kyprianou@brooklyn.cuny.edu. There is a separate application process for this option.

Finishing the Semester

I think of you constantly, and I applaud each and every one of you for persevering during this tremendously challenging semester. I know that the uncertainty about so many things and continually changing policies have been both frustrating and confusing. Thank you for your patience as we navigate these uncharted waters together. You have my assurance that the School of Education at Brooklyn College will continue to communicate with you in multiple ways as we learn new information, and we are committed to supporting you in whatever ways we can as you pursue your goals of graduation and certification.

If you have any questions about certification or licensure, please check our certification website: http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/academics/schools/education/certification.php
For further questions, contact our Certification Officer, Ms. Helen Spencer at hspencer@brooklyn.cuny.edu. For any other concerns, please don’t hesitate to reach out to your professors or to me directly. We are wishing you the very best!

Sincerely,

Dean April Bedford

For more information, please refer to:

New York State Department of Education Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) site
Brooklyn College Educator Certification website
CUNY Teacher Education Programs website