



Variable Term Waivers Due to Emergency Health and Safety Restrictions (COVID-19) April 6, 2020

The current Covid-19 environment presents the educator preparation community with significant challenges. Credential candidates, preparation programs, TK-12 teachers, counselors, and leaders are experiencing a major interruption in the ways in which individual and collective work is undertaken. It has now been determined that schools will remain closed for the remainder of this school year. (For more information check the [California Department of Education website](#)). During this time of significant upheaval, one thing is certain - the education community will need flexibility to successfully navigate these waters.

While it is difficult to predict how schooling may be altered by COVID-19 in 2020-21, schools will continue to need educators in the fall, and students will continue, as always, to need *well prepared* educators.

Many candidates may be unable to complete their preparation this spring, and in anticipation of this the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is creating a pathway that will allow these educators to obtain a Variable Term Waiver (VTW), secure employment and complete their credential requirements during their first year of practice. There will be cost implications for educator preparation programs and local education agencies to provide the support candidates will need to complete preparation and earn a credential. The Commission is organizing a work group to determine funding needs to ensure, to the extent possible, that candidates are able to complete their preparation without incurring additional costs.

This guidance document describes the VTW process, how preparation programs can go about securing waivers for their candidates, and the responsibilities of initial preparation programs and induction programs in supporting candidates on VTWs to complete their licensing requirements and earn the credential for which they have been preparing.

Background

The Commission has the authority to issue Variable Term Waiver documents to allow candidates additional time to complete requirements for educator preparation and credentialing, as outlined in Education Code section 44225, subdivision (m), subsection (2).

VTWs are issued or denied based upon the requirements outlined in Title 5, California Code of Regulations (CCR) sections 80120 - 80125. The VTW option helps address stakeholder concerns around the inability of candidates to complete preparation, particularly with regard to clinical practice hours in the schools and demonstration of readiness to begin practice through performance assessments due to school closures.

Use of the Variable Term Waiver to Address COVID-19 Restrictions

As the current public health crisis related to COVID-19 constitutes an extraordinary and unanticipated circumstance, Commission staff have received multiple inquiries related to possible waivers for impacted individuals. To accommodate these requests, staff is preparing an agenda item for the April 23-24, 2020 Commission meeting that will bring forward official requests from Commission-approved institutions for VTWs for candidates impacted due to the COVID-19 health and safety restrictions.

Institutions sponsoring induction programs for teachers or administrators do not need to apply for a VTW at this time. Institutions sponsoring Intern programs are able to request a one-year extension, and do not need to rely on the VTW process. If you have a question about whether your institution should submit a request for VTW, contact VTW-COVID@ctc.ca.gov.

The VTW related to COVID-19 is most appropriate for the following credential areas:

- Preliminary Multiple and Single Subject
- Preliminary Education Specialist
- Preliminary Administrative Services
- PPS -School Counseling
- PPS - School Psychology
- PPS - School Social Work
- Teacher Librarian
- School Nurse
- Adapted Physical Education
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Any other program that has clinical practice requirements that cannot be met due to COVID-19

All accredited institutions offering Commission-approved educator preparation programs are strongly encouraged to request Variable Term Waivers for their candidates who may not complete their preliminary or initial preparation this year. Such a request will not automatically place these candidates on a waiver, but will ensure that the waiver option is available to the institution to request for its candidates in a timely manner.

Once the Commission authorizes the COVID-19 waiver requests, educator preparation programs will be able to submit the necessary waiver application and required documentation for each of their candidates who need a VTW to the Commission for processing. Once the VTW is issued, it will give the candidate one year of additional time to complete the remaining credential requirements, while also authorizing the individual to teach or provide the services associated with their respective credential. Thereafter, a reissuance of the VTW may be possible for one additional year if compliant with the requirements of CCR section 80124.

Next Steps for Commission-Approved Institutions

Any Commission-approved institution offering one or more of the Commission-approved programs listed above who has candidates that they would like considered for a VTW due to the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions must submit an official request to the Commission. **Requests received by April 10, 2020 (preferred) will be listed in the posted item for consideration at the April Commission meeting. To be considered at the Commission's April 23-24 meeting, all requests must be received no later than April 20, 2020.** Only one request per institution is needed.

Submit an email to VTW-COVID@ctc.ca.gov that includes the following text:

<Insert institution name here> is submitting a waiver request to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for all candidates who have been impacted by the health and safety restrictions related to the COVID-19 public health crisis, and who were:

1. Making appropriate progress towards completion of their program requirements;
2. On track to complete their preparation program by September 1, 2020; and
3. Unable to complete one or more of the following (to be verified in writing by the Commission-approved program upon application):
 - a. Clinical practice hours required for program completion;
 - b. Coursework required for program completion;
 - c. Examinations required for program completion; or
 - d. A performance assessment required for program completion.

[Appendix A](#) provides guidance specifically related to supporting preliminary **teacher candidates** on a VTW enabling them to complete preparation and demonstrate their readiness to begin practice as fully prepared teachers. [Appendix B](#) provides guidance specifically related to supporting preliminary **administrative candidates** on a VTW. [Appendix C](#) provides guidance specifically related to supporting **service credential candidates and all other preparation programs** on a VTW. All appendices also identify roles that preparation programs, Commission-approved induction programs and the Commission itself can play in facilitating candidate completion of credential requirements.

FINAL THOUGHTS: WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO HELP ALL EDUCATORS COMPLETE PREPARATION

When teachers, leaders, and other educators are well prepared, they are more effective and successful with students and stay in the profession longer. Staffing classrooms with teachers who have partial training is arguably better than relying on people with no training. In emergency situations it makes sense to ensure people can enter service earlier or if training is interrupted. For instance, in WWII it was better to have a doctor with some training than none at all; but always with the expectation that the doctor in training would have support to learn their work beside more experienced peers; and when the crisis was over, licensing exams would still determine whether the doctor was fit to serve in the profession at large. This example is illustrative of the ways in which we are thinking about educator preparation in the COVID-19 context.

We have the same responsibility to prepare the 2020 COVID-19 cohort of new educators (teachers, leaders, counselors, nurses, librarians, etc.) as we have had to cohorts in the past. This cohort will miss a significant portion of their supervised clinical experience. They will also have the opportunity to participate in very non-traditional clinical experiences that expose them to unique, crisis-based teaching, learning and leading experiences. Regardless, this cohort deserves additional, focused support when they are back in schools and classrooms.

We should consider the unique and tailored experiences this cohort may bring to their work as new teachers, leaders, counselors, nurses, librarians, etc., (e.g., enhancing virtual instruction, developing curriculum, supporting students and working collaboratively with other educators in non-traditional settings). These aspects of their preparation should be considered unique assets as they begin a new school year that may also require atypical educational practice. In addition, it will make inequities in educational opportunities ever more apparent, as some TK-12 students, candidates, schools and districts do not have access to the virtual environment others do. In short, it is vital that preparation programs seek opportunities for candidates throughout the spring and summer of 2020 to learn about new virtual practice, and to engage in atypical opportunities to connect with teachers, peers, and TK-12 students who would also benefit from their engagement. For candidates who were placed in schools that do not have the capacity for online instruction or other educational services, we must seek alternative ways for them to participate in new learning and be flexible to what comes their way.

This is an unparalleled opportunity for all educators to innovate in an unknown environment. As both teachers and school administrators develop their induction plans and prepare to complete credential requirements in the coming year, they, their preliminary preparation programs and their induction mentors/coaches should identify both the unique assets they bring, based on this COVID-19 experience, as well as their particular needs for support as they begin teaching and leading.

APPENDIX A
Overview of the use of Variable Term Waivers
for Teacher Preparation Programs

For teacher candidates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic many may have one or more of the four parts of their initial (or preliminary) preparation program to finish beyond the 2019-20 academic year. These include their coursework, supervised clinical practice, for General Education candidates the teaching performance assessment (TPA), and for Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA).

Through online and distance learning, some candidates may complete coursework and/or clinical practice by end of summer 2020. Depending on how much of their performance assessment has been completed, General Education candidates may also be able to complete this credential requirement. As of the end of March, approximately two-thirds of teacher and administrator candidates have completed their performance assessments and submitted them for scoring. Approximately 5,000 candidates are registered for the CalTPA, edTPA or CalAPA but have not yet completed or submitted the assessment for scoring. Some number of these candidates will likely complete by the end of summer 2020, and the remainder will be eligible for Variable Term Waivers (VTW), allowing them to complete performance assessments within the next year.

If a Teacher Candidate is Hired on a VTW by a School District in 2020-21

- The teacher preparation program submitted a waiver application to the Commission and the candidate obtained the VTW enabling them to secure a teaching position and enroll in a Commission-approved Teacher Induction Program.
- Teacher preparation programs support VTW teacher completion of the TPA and any unfinished coursework, and recommend VTW teachers for a Preliminary Teaching Credential when they have completed all credential requirements.
- Induction Programs support VTW teachers who need to complete supervised clinical practice during the first semester of teaching on the VTW.
- Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates are responsible for taking and passing the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) during the year of teaching on the VTW.

If a Teacher Candidate is Not Hired by a School District in 2020-21

- A teacher candidate who is not hired in 2020-21, may be on a VTW, will continue to complete all needed requirements for licensing through their preparation program.
- Teacher preparation programs will support candidate completion of the TPA, any remaining coursework, and supervised clinical practice in a new student teaching placement.
- Multiple Subject and Education Specialist candidates are responsible for taking and passing the RICA.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Education Community

Teacher Preparation

Preliminary teacher preparation programs will:

- Assist candidates in developing their Individual Development Plans ([Program Standard 6](#)) for use in their induction program;
- Support candidates during their induction program to complete coursework and the TPA;
- Connect with induction program leadership and induction mentors/coaches;
- Monitor candidate progress in collaboration with induction program; and
- Recommend candidates for the preliminary credential.

What this might look like:

- Create opportunities for candidates to finish coursework via online options.
- Work with candidates to develop their Individual Development Plan, so that it reflects the extra supports a mentor/coach should be aware of when supporting candidates who were not able to complete clinical practice.
- Run a virtual TPA support course during the 2020-21 year for candidates to learn about the remaining tasks and rubrics and engage in peer review and online office hours.
- Support candidates in remediation of their TPA as needed.
- Communicate with candidates and induction mentors/coaches on candidate's progress.
- Track completion of the candidates' preparation (courses, TPA, clinical practice and RICA) and recommend the candidate, when appropriate, for a preliminary credential.

Induction Programs

Induction programs will provide additional supports and supervision during the first semester, or longer as needed, of a candidate's teaching. There will be flexibility around how this is done, so that TK-12 schools can make the best decisions for them and their new teachers on VTWs. These support activities should be integrated into the new teacher's individualized induction plan and a significant focus of the work between the new teacher and mentor/coach during the first year of induction.

What this might look like:

- For the first semester of teaching (roughly what the candidate missed in spring 2020), site/district-based mentors/coaches help the new teacher prepare for the year, visit weekly for in-class supervisory support, and be on-hand for consultation after class.
- Provide time for online TPA training opportunities for mentors/coaches who are supporting VTW beginning teachers so that mentors/coaches understand the support the beginning teacher should receive.

- After the first semester, if the candidate has passed the TPA or the mentor and site administrator determine the candidate does not need to continue the additional supervisory supports, candidates continue with the induction program phase of their preparation. Otherwise the site may choose to continue with supervisory supports.
- The candidate's mentor and teacher preparation program connect periodically to discuss progress and completion of the extra supervisory supports.

Employing Community

Local education agencies will:

- Be able to hire teachers who hold a VTW.
- Connect with the preliminary teacher preparation program to understand the remaining credential requirements the candidate must complete. What this might look like:
- Understand that the VTW candidate will need to complete some portion of their initial preparation and possibly the TPA during the first year of service.
- Communicate with candidates and preparation programs on candidates' progress.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Commission

Staff will be bringing an agenda item to the Commission's April 2020 meeting that will consider how program standards can be amended, during the COVID-19, to allow for the flexibility that preliminary teacher preparation programs, teacher induction programs, and local education agencies require at this time. In addition, the Commission will continue to work with the education community to support and problem solve as needed.

What this might look like:

- Inform the educator preparation community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Inform the K-12 (employer) community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Determine the need for and possibly develop a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between preliminary teacher preparation programs and districts to support teachers on VTWs.
- Work with the induction community to define supervisory supports for teacher candidates completing requirements while employed and enrolled in an induction program.
- Provide training to the induction community in the areas of supervised Clinical Practice and TPA development.
- Advocate for funding support with the state, as necessary to minimize impacts on candidates and preparation programs.

APPENDIX B
Overview of the use of Variable Term Waivers for
Preliminary Administrative Services Preparation Programs

For leadership candidates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, many may have one or more of the three parts of their preliminary administrative services credentialing (PASC) program to finish beyond the 2019-20 academic year. These items include coursework, supervised fieldwork, and the administrator performance assessment (CalAPA).

Through online and distance learning, some candidates may complete coursework and/or fieldwork by the end of summer 2020. Depending on how much of their performance assessment has been completed, PASC candidates may also be able to complete this credential requirement. As of the end of March, approximately half of administrative services credential candidates who have registered for one or more cycles of the CalAPA have completed and passed their performance assessment. Just over 1,700 PASC candidates are registered for the CalAPA but have not yet completed or submitted the assessment for scoring. Some number of these candidates will likely complete by the end of summer 2020, and the remainder will be eligible for Variable Term Waivers (VTWs), which allows them to complete the CalAPA within the next year.

If an Administrative Services Credential Candidate is Hired on a VTW by a School District, County Office or other education agency in 2020-21

- The PASC program submitted a waiver application to the Commission and the candidate obtained the VTW enabling them to secure a leadership position and enroll in a Commission-approved Clear Administrative Services Credential Induction Program.
- PASC programs support VTW administrators' completion of the CalAPA and any unfinished coursework, and recommend VTW candidates for a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential when they have completed all credential requirements.
- Clear Administrative Services Credential Induction Programs (CASC) support VTW administrators who need to complete supervised fieldwork during the first semester of administrative service on the VTW.

If an Administrative Services Credential Candidate is Not Hired by a School District, County Office or other education agency in 2020-21

- An administrative services candidate who is not hired in 2020-21 is allowed to be on a VTW and will continue to complete all needed requirements for licensing through their preliminary preparation programs.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Education Community

Administrative Services Credential Preparation Programs

PASC preparation programs will:

April 6, 2020

- Assist candidates in developing an Individual Transition Document for use in their induction programs;
- Support candidates during their induction programs to complete coursework and the CalAPA;
- Connect with induction program leadership and the induction coaches;
- Monitor candidate progress in collaboration with the induction program; and
- Recommend candidates for the preliminary administrative services credential.

What this might look like:

- Create opportunities for candidates to finish coursework via online options.
- Work with candidates to develop an Individual Transition Document, so that it reflects the extra supports a coach should be aware of when supporting candidates who were not able to complete fieldwork.
- Run a virtual CalAPA support course during the 2020-21 year for candidates to learn about the remaining tasks and rubrics and engage in peer review and online office hours.
- Support candidates in remediation of their CalAPA as needed.
- Communicate with candidates and coaches on candidates' progress.
- Track completion of each candidate's progress and recommend the candidate, when appropriate, for a preliminary administrative services credential.

Clear Administrative Services Credentialing Induction Programs

CASC programs will provide additional supports and supervision during the first semester, or longer as needed, of a candidate's administrative job responsibilities. There will be flexibility around how this is done, so that TK-12 schools and districts can make the best decisions for them and their new administrators on the VTW. These support activities should be integrated into the new administrator's individualized induction plan (IIP) and a significant focus of the work between the new administrator and induction coach during the first year of induction.

What this might look like:

- For the first semester of an administrator's employment (roughly what the candidate missed in spring 2020), site/district-based coaches help the new administrator prepare for the year, visit weekly for support, and be on-hand for consultation.
- Provide time for online CalAPA training opportunities for coaches who are supporting beginning administrators serving on a VTW so that coaches understand the support the beginning administrator should receive.

If the candidate has passed the CalAPA or the coach and employer representative determine the candidate does not need to continue with additional supervisory supports after the first semester, candidates continue with the routine induction program phase of their preparation. Otherwise the site employer may choose to continue with supervisory supports.

- The candidate’s coach, preparation program, and employer representative connect periodically to discuss progress and completion of the extra supervisory supports.

Employing Community

Local education agencies will:

- Be able to hire administrators who hold a VTW.
- Connect with the preliminary administrative services preparation program to understand the remaining credential requirements the candidate must complete.

What this might look like:

- Understand that the VTW candidate will need to complete some portion of their initial preparation and possibly the CalAPA during the first year of service.
- Communicate with candidates and preparation programs on candidates’ progress.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Commission

Staff will be bringing an agenda item to the Commission’s April 2020 meeting that will consider how program standards can be amended, during the COVID-19, to allow for the flexibility that PASC programs, CASC induction programs, and local education agencies require at this time. In addition, the Commission will continue to work with the education community to support and problem solve as needed.

What this might look like:

- Inform the educator preparation community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Inform the K-12 (employer) community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Determine the need for and possibly develop a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between preliminary educator preparation programs and districts to support candidates on VTW.
- Work with the induction community to define supervisory supports for candidates completing requirements while employed and enrolled in an induction program.
- Provide training to the induction community in the areas of supervised fieldwork and CalAPA development.
- Advocate for funding support with the state, as necessary to minimize impacts on candidates and preparation programs.

APPENDIX C
Overview of the use of Variable Term Waivers for
Pupil Personnel Services, Speech-Language Pathology, School Nurse, Teacher librarian and
other Preparation Programs Not Addressed in Appendices A and B

For candidates impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, many may have one or more of the three parts of their initial (or preliminary) preparation program to finish beyond the 2019-20 academic year. These include their coursework, supervised fieldwork, and assessments-- both program-embedded and standardized, if required for the credential.

Through online and distance learning, some candidates may complete coursework and/or fieldwork by end of summer 2020. Otherwise these candidates will be eligible for Variable Term Waivers (VTW), allowing them to complete credential requirements within the next year while employed as an educator.

If a Credential Candidate is Hired on a VTW by a School District in 2020-21

- The program submitted a waiver application to the Commission and the candidate obtained the VTW enabling them to secure a position.
- Programs support VTW candidate completion of any unfinished coursework and fieldwork, and recommend VTW candidates for a credential when they have completed all credential requirements.

If a Credential Candidate is Not Hired by a School District in 2020-21

- A candidate who is not hired in 2020-21, is allowed to be on a VTW, and will continue to complete all needed requirements for licensing through their preparation program.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Education Community

Credential Preparation Program

Preparation programs will:

- Monitor candidate progress in collaboration with the employer; and
- Recommend candidates for the credential, when appropriate.

What this might look like:

- Create opportunities for candidates to finish coursework via online options and/or fieldwork requirements.
- Communicate with candidates and employers on candidates' progress.
- Track completion of each candidate's progress and recommend the candidate, when appropriate, for the credential.

Employing Community

Local education agencies will:

- Be able to hire individuals who hold a VTW
- Connect with the preparation program to understand the remaining credential requirements the candidate must complete.

What this might look like:

- Understand that the VTW candidate will need to complete some portion of their initial preparation during the first year of service.
- Communicate with candidates and preparation programs on candidates' progress.

Proposed Responsibilities of the Commission

Staff will be bringing an agenda item to the Commission's April 2020 meeting that will consider how program standards can be amended, during the COVID-19, to allow for the flexibility that educator preparation programs, educator induction programs, and local education agencies require at this time. In addition, the Commission will continue to work with the education community to support and problem solve as needed.

What this might look like:

- Inform the educator preparation community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Inform the K-12 (employer) community about the Variable Term Waiver process.
- Determine the need for and possibly develop a sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between educator preparation programs and districts to support candidates on VTW.
- Advocate for funding support with the state, as necessary, to minimize impacts on candidates and preparation programs.