

Guidance Regarding Graduate Intern Hours in Response to School Closures: UPDATED March 18, 2020

Note: This guidance was updated to clarify questions regarding the 1,200-hour requirement.

As both institutions of higher education and pre-K–12 schools close for weeks and potentially months, many have asked how current interns can meet the graduation requirement of 1,200 hours of field supervised experience.

As noted in a previous communication, many interns are placed in districts through employment contracts or internship agreements, and thus they may have to abide by whatever measures their districts take. However, it is the graduate preparation program that typically verifies program completion and recommends individuals for credentials. Thus, determining which activities constitute completion of the internship is at the program’s discretion.

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 have agreed to require a minimum of 800 hours in direct, field-based supervised experiences, with a minimum of 400 hours in a school setting. Programs may employ flexibility on the remainder of hours.

Programs have discretion as to how many nonschool hours spent on such internship tasks as writing reports, making phone calls, researching and creating service delivery plans, planning inservices, etc., may be counted toward the 1,200-hour minimum. Should schools remain closed for the remainder of the year, some interns may still have opportunities to interact with pre-K–12 students and engage in school psychological services, even if in a nontraditional capacity. For those in districts without such opportunities, we encourage graduate programs to identify other ways to ensure that all students who complete the program develop the required knowledge and skills that align with program goals and objectives. These activities may include book studies, structured utilization of various NASP resources (e.g., *Communiqué*, Online Learning Center sessions, NASP podcasts), case study reviews, independent study of particular areas of competency, school-wide prevention planning, district-wide data analysis and program evaluation, and so on. Programs will determine which activities are most appropriate for their students. Again, interns should still accrue 1200 hours - recognizing that a minimum of 800 hours must be field-based, supervised contact hours (with 400 hours minimum in a school setting). Programs may consider similar activities to support completion of practica, which also remains entirely up to each individual program.

NASP will send out a form for graduate programs to distribute to their current interns that will reflect this modified requirement. You can expect to receive this form in the next month. This form must be completed and submitted by individual interns if they ever wish to submit an application for the Nationally Certified School Psychologists (NCSP) credential. **Please share this information with your**

students and other program faculty. It may also be helpful to encourage your students to submit applications for the NCSP as soon as they are eligible, rather than waiting.

Note that while NASP will provide flexibility, state licensing agencies maintain authority over setting requirements for state licenses and certifications to practice. NASP will work with state associations to support advocacy for similar flexibility in the near future, though programs are encouraged to do their best to ensure graduates meet state-level credentialing requirements.

In summary, program faculty retain their obligation to ensure that students who graduate are adequately prepared to enter the workforce as a school psychologist. Interns are expected to engage in meaningful learning experiences through the end of the academic year. The nature of these experiences will be determined by each program and documented on the form that NASP will provide.

We hope everyone stays safe, and we will continue to monitor the evolving situation and adapt as needed while ensuring that we adequately prepare the future professionals in our field.

For further NASP resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit: www.nasponline.org/COVID-19.