With Harvard’s shift to remote teaching there is great change underway, and we recognize that this poses questions and further complexity with respect to licensure practicum work. We are fully committed to working through the circumstances with all HGSE licensure students, prioritizing the population’s health and safety, and upholding our commitment to positive, high-quality learning and training opportunities.

Members of the dean’s office, the academic dean, program directors, and career services are working together, and with MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education officials, to consider the circumstances, and ensure a coordinated, consistent, reasoned response. At this time, our guiding principles and policy on licensure placements are below. Given the rapidly evolving circumstances, we will provide information on a very regular basis as things unfold. Thank you for your patience and flexibility.

1. **HGSE has moved to a virtual instruction model. What does that mean for my practicum commitment?**

   **Am I still supposed to go to my site?**

   *While the University requires us to adopt our teaching model to support community wellness, this does not influence or modify students’ academic requirements, including the fieldwork commitment. Students enrolled in a program that leads to Massachusetts state licensure are obligated to meet those requirements; across HGSE programs, we are not in the position to modify the state requirements, and the state is not granting waivers to higher education programs and partners. Program directors will work with individual students who are unable to fulfill their required on-site hours due to the extenuating circumstances.*

2. **Do I have to continue visiting my school if I feel uncomfortable doing so?**

   *Our top priority is the safety and wellness of our community members. If you feel ill, do not feel comfortable being on-site, or have extenuating health issues that put you at elevated risk, you are not obligated to attend the site. We invite you to speak directly with your program director who can discuss your options; the plan is to work with individual students who are unable to fulfill their required on-site hours due to the extenuating circumstances.*

3. **Why must we continue our fieldwork at schools where there are more than 100 on site? Harvard prohibits gatherings of more than 25 people. This seems like a contradiction.**

   *Harvard University serves more than 20,000 students, and employs upwards of 16,000 faculty and staff. Given its size and scope, and the manner in which individuals consistently gather in intensive ways--in large courses, in labs, cafeterias, dorms, at community events--and also travel regularly, Harvard...*
therefore has a significant role to play in slowing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Most importantly, though, Harvard can deliver instruction online—something that most preK-12 schools cannot do with any degree of ease. Therefore, the University is compelled to do its part to prioritize public health though we understand this is nevertheless disruptive for all members of the community. The university developed its policies for gatherings and social distancing following the latest research and guidance from the CDC and other public health entities.

4. I planned to travel over spring break, but my plans have changed. Should I work at my site instead? We encourage any student to continue working at their field site during spring break if your schedule allows. Though we expect students to make the choice that best serves their particular circumstances, accruing hours during this week will help ensure that students remain on track to fulfill program requirements especially in the event of an unexpected, prolonged interruption to site visits.

5. Instead of moving into a new graduate apartment, I prefer to go home and complete the semester there. Does that mean that I cannot obtain my license? Along with our commitment to protecting the public’s health, we remain committed to helping students achieve their academic and professional goals. We encourage students to speak with their program director to discuss options for completing your degree requirements, including licensure requirements.

6. This semester has become a lot to manage. I no longer wish to obtain a license. Will I still graduate from my program? Please speak with your program director. While we favor fidelity to our program standards and policies, we are committed to exploring options to help ensure program completion amidst this extraordinary circumstance.

7. My school is closing due to a confirmed case of the coronavirus. First, what should I do? Second, how am I supposed to fulfill my hours? Please see the HUHS website for information on what to do if you believe you have been exposed to the Coronavirus. Thereafter, please alert your program director who can advise on options for fulfilling your mandatory licensure hours.

8. My site supervisor or mentor has become ill and will be out indefinitely. What are my options? Please alert your program director as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch with your program director, as well as the Office of Student Affairs, regarding any other questions. Other resources include this website for the latest information specific to HGSE and the University’s dedicated webpage.