

Summer 2020 - Exemption Process for In-Person Practice Experiences

April 22, 2020

Because University educational activities are remote for this summer, practice experiences (e.g., internships, practicums, and residencies) should be remote. Rare exceptions can be made; those exceptions will require school-level review and permission and must prioritize the safety of the student – that includes outlining details for how the student will be able to maintain physical distancing during the practice experience. If the PA Stay at Home order changes, the committee will review the situation and recommend a revised policy and revised exceptions as appropriate.

The school-level review process will be conducted on a case-by-case basis by a committee established to review these cases. The committee includes Jessie Burke, Eleanor Feingold, and Kevin Broom.

Exemption requests should include a brief written request submitted to Jessie Burke, associate dean for education (jgburke@pitt.edu). Each request should include the following:

1. Describe the practice experience. Which student will be involved? Which Pitt faculty are engaged in monitoring the experience? Who provides the local oversight of the experience? Include email and phone contact information for all involved.
2. Provide the rationale for this practice experience. Is this specific activity required for graduation/certification?
3. If this involves an organization/group outside of Pitt, what is the previous experience of the school/program working with this outside group?
4. What COVID-19-related risks are involved? What are the risks from the actual activity? How will students travel to and from the practicum site? Is the student in a high-risk group?
5. A statement from the student indicating that they understand the associated risks and are interested in pursuing the practice experience.

Principles:

1. This is a temporary measure. Once University educational activities resume in person, practice experiences will no longer require special approval.
2. Student safety is the highest priority.
 - a) Students should be able to opt out of a particular experience if they have concerns about their own safety, although we cannot guarantee that this will not affect time to degree.
 - b) Students engaging in these programs should be given information about how to raise any safety concerns (either anonymously or not).
 - c) Programs should assess the risk of a particular experience to the specific students engaging in it and communicate this risk assessment to the student (for example, if at high risk).
3. Priority should be given to students needing these experiences for graduation and/or certification.
4. If parts of the experience can be made virtual/remote, they should be.