



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCE AND PROTECTION ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (EHAC)

March 24, 2020

Dear Program Directors,

Please see the following for guidance regarding maintenance of EHAC accreditation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Accreditation deadlines:

Annual Update Survey – deadline extended to April 30, 2020

The deadline for completion of the Annual Update Survey has been extended to April 30, 2020. If a degree program is unable to submit their survey by April 30, 2020, they need to submit a status update and proposed completion deadline for any additional extension beyond April 30. This can be accomplished through a brief email sent to executive.director@nehspac.org.

Site Visit Completion for programs currently undergoing reaccreditation – We have two programs still needing visits. The site visit leads will be working with program coordinators and faculty to accommodate remote visits.

- ### **2. Field Experience/Internship requirements**
- EHAC accredited degree programs require students to have a 180-clock hour field practicum, internship or equivalent experience in the Environmental Health field. COVID-19 has the potential to disrupt the traditional way we administer our internship programs/courses. EHAC encourages Program Directors and departments to explore “out of the box” options for meeting the internship requirement. These creative solutions still need to include a significant amount of time invested in the effort and be Environmental Health oriented.

Potential internship ideas could include:

- Pursue remote opportunities for students to provide logistical support to local public health departments dealing with the COVID-19 crisis (ensuring that students function in some meaningful way that doesn't increase their risk of exposure); or
- Utilization of online resources (some are free) to develop additional EH knowledge and skills with an attached activity that assesses the student's potential application of these skills to the EH field (e.g. FEMA's Incident Command Center and National Incident Management System (NIMS) training <https://training.fema.gov/nims/> - please note that this website is under maintenance on March 24, 2020).

Major departures from the internship requirements (including credit waivers) need to be preapproved by EHAC. However, we are aware of the many difficulties that degree programs are experiencing and are committed to finding a solution that works. Programs

can contact Leslie Mitchell by email at executive.director@nehspac.org or by phone at 206-522-5272 to discuss planned changes. Requests to out-right waive the internship requirement will be considered only as a last resort.

3. Move to Virtual Classes, Program Delivery Methods:

EHAC understands the need for programs to temporarily modify program delivery methods in order to safeguard their communities and students during the current health crisis caused by COVID-19. It is not necessary to report any short term (current or summer semester/quarter) changes to program delivery or content to us. Programs may want to consider creative options through which to expose the students to hands on experience (e.g., YouTube videos, checked out equipment, etc.) for lab based courses. Should the changes or modifications to the program become permanent, please refer to the EHAC [Undergraduate Requirements for Accreditation](#) or [Graduate Guidelines for Accreditation](#) to formally notify us of any changes during the period of accreditation.

4. Grading and Credit Hours:

EHAC accreditation will not be impacted by short term grading and credit hour related changes made by degree programs/administration due to challenges related to the 2020 Pandemic. It is not necessary to report any short term (current or summer semester) changes to grading processes.

5. EHAC Annual Council Meeting – scheduled for July 11-12, 2020

EHAC's Annual Meeting of the Council is scheduled to take place on July 11 and 12, 2020, just prior to the 2020 NEHA AEC. As of today, NEHA is planning to hold the AEC in New York, however this status may change in the near future. In the meantime, the EHAC Board is considering alternatives to a face-to-face meeting and will communicate changes as they develop.

Due to this uncertainty, the EHAC Board is recommending:

- Delaying the purchase of plane tickets to New York if you are planning to attend the Council meeting; and
- Ensuring that any hotel reservation you make can be cancelled without penalty.

The above information will be posted on EHAC's website. Any updates will be sent via email and posted directly on our website. Please feel free to contact Leslie Mitchell with any concerns or questions at 206-522-5272 or executive.director@nehspac.org.

Please be well,



Tania Busch Isaksen, PhD, MPH
EHAC General Chair