

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Related to the Approval of Graduate Programs'
Integration of the NYS DOH Competency Areas into their Curriculum**

Introduction

The New York State Department of Health Bureau of Early Intervention (NYS BEI), through its Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit, implemented a review process for graduate programs that integrate the NYS BEI [Competency Areas for the Delivery of Evidence-Based Evaluations and Services in the New York State Early Intervention Program](#) into their curricula. The NYS BEI issued two documents related to the competency areas to ensure that high quality early intervention evaluations and services are provided to children and their families in the New York State Early Intervention (EI) Program.

If a graduate program meets the requirements of this application, the number of hours associated with the course work completed, when obtained in combination with clinical fieldwork placements in birth to five settings, will be counted towards the **1,000**-clock hour requirement when it is submitted by graduates from such programs as part of their NYS BEI individual provider applications.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the basic requirements for a graduate program to apply?

The basic requirements for a graduate program to apply are as follows:

- a. An institution of higher education (IHE) must include a discipline identified as qualified personnel in NYS DOH Early Intervention regulations (10 NYCRR Section 69-4.1(al)(1)-(28)).
- b. The graduate program is approved by either the NYS Education Department or the NYSED Office of the Professions.
- c. The school, department, or program is accredited.
- d. The graduate program can provide verification of the number of hours per credit for their courses in their institution. A letter from the IHE's registrar or the department responsible for this suffices.
- e. The graduate program can identify and provide contact information for faculty staff primarily responsible for the courses that include the EI competency areas and for the fieldwork placements. These are the people that will be contacted regarding questions about the application if needed.
- f. The graduate program offers one or more courses that integrate the NYS DOH BEI competency areas into their graduate early childhood curriculum and/or offers a specialization in EI, an EI track, or an advance certificate in early intervention that contain courses primarily focused on early intervention best practices and the competency areas.
- g. The graduate program provides and coordinates clinical fieldwork placements for students in birth to five settings (See FAQ #2 for additional examples and information on fieldwork placements).

2. What types of fieldwork placements may be counted toward approval?

- a. All pre-graduate fieldwork placements must be conducted under appropriate supervision as required by the discipline or certification and the graduate program.
- b. Pre-graduate clinical fieldwork experiences working with children with developmental disabilities or delays birth to five and their families may include:
 - Providing evaluations and services to children birth to three and their families across EI settings such as home/community; center-based; clinic-based; facility-based; office-based; and in person or via telehealth.
 - Working with children birth to five with developmental delays or disabilities and their families includes:
 - Observing the child and family during daily routine activities
 - Observing the child's home environment
 - Identifying the child's unique needs and strengths during evaluation and services
 - Interviewing parents and caregivers to gather their own observations and information about their children (e.g., medical history, developmental history, behavior, engagement in activities, concerns, priorities, and resources)
 - Performing evaluations to assess the child's current and ongoing development independently or under supervision as required by the respective license or certification.
 - Delivering therapeutic services
 - Communicating, collaborating with and coaching parents and caregivers
 - Consistently communicating and collaborating with members of the EI team
 - Documenting service delivery and measuring developmental progress.
 - Writing reports
 - Working with families and other clinical team members to develop on an ongoing basis in meetings and via telephone calls to discuss progress and functional outcomes.
 - Providing on-going information to parents and caregivers and using their feedback when partnering with them on new ways to support their children's functioning and engagement during everyday routine activities.
 - Providing services in inclusive settings (settings with typically developing peers) for children birth to five with developmental delays or disabilities and their caregivers. Inclusive settings include but are not limited to:
 - Childcare centers and family childcare centers
 - Places of worship (e.g., that provide play groups and childcare)
 - Play groups
 - Sensory gyms
 - Enrichment programs
 - Libraries
 - Hospitals/NICUs/health clinics
 - Homeless/domestic violence shelters
 - Playgrounds
 - Community-based organizations
 - Delivering services to children in pre-school programs, including 3K and Universal pre-kindergarten programs
 - Delivering services in Early Head Start and Head Start

- Delivering services in 4410 Programs

3. How often does a graduate program need to submit a new application?

- a. Once the graduate program's application is approved, this is good for **five** years. The program is expected to submit a new application when:
 - i. It's time to renew (3 months) prior to the expiration of the current 5-year approval period.
 - ii. When there is a change in the number of EI-focused courses in the program's specialty track or certificate program, or in the number of graduate courses that integrated the NYS DOH BEI competency areas into their master's curriculum.
 - iii. When there is a change in the number of credits and hours for the EI-focused courses in the programs' specialty track or certificate program or in the graduate courses that integrated the NYS DOH BEI competency areas into their master's curriculum.
 - iv. When there is a change in the number of clinical fieldwork placement courses and the number of hours and credits related to them.
- a. The graduate program does not need to submit a new application in these following situations, but should notify and update the NYS DOH BEI Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit whenever there is a change in:
 - i. The faculty staff responsible for the early intervention curriculum and coursework that are the primary and secondary contacts.
 - ii. The certificate or letter that the graduate program issues
 - iii. The approval of the program by the NYS Education Department of the NYSED Office of Professions or the accreditation(s) for the school, department, or program.

4. How do programs figure out how many hours each course carries?

To submit an application, the number of hours that each course carries needs to be identified and documented. Each institution of higher education (IHE) offers courses that are assigned a number of credits. With each credit, there are a number of hours assigned that are equivalent to the number of minutes of instruction and the number of minutes for required supplementary assignments.

This is usually defined by the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. For example, one credit for a course may require at least 15 hours of instruction. Therefore, in this example, a 3-credit course would require 45 hours (e.g., 15 hours x 3 credits = 45 hours). This may vary across institutions depending on their academic calendar. Typically, the number of credits and hours are available via the registrar or the department at your university responsible for tracking credits and hours for courses for students.

5. What are the different types of courses that may be considered in the application? How can a program determine how many credits, or instructional hours, apply for each course?

There are different ways graduate programs may integrate the NYS DOH BEI competency areas into their master- or doctoral- level courses across disciplines. The number of courses may be influenced by many factors. For example, the structure of the courses and the number of the courses is affected by the number of faculty that have the knowledge and experience about early intervention best practices and the competency areas. The syllabus may also be influenced by the mandatory content requirements needed to become certified or licensed professionals across disciplines. Therefore, the range of courses covering early intervention subject matter may vary across programs.

Some graduate programs may integrate the competency areas within one or more of their early childhood courses in their graduate master- or doctoral-level program. In this example, when a program considers the number of hours per course in this scenario, the program must consider what proportion of the instruction hours (e.g., one course = 3 credits = 45 instructional hours) are allocated to the early intervention competency areas. Based on the syllabus and topics covered in this course, how many instructional hours are focused primarily on the NYS DOH BEI competency areas.

For example, based on the curriculum for this course in typical and atypical early childhood development birth to five, 30 instruction hours (or $30/45 = 67\%$) are focused on birth to three EI competencies. In another graduate course in the same program on early childhood brain development, the number of instructional hours covering EI birth to three competencies is 35 out of 45 hours in the course (or $35/45 = 78\%$). In one more example, another graduate program may have only one course that covers all the five competency areas in early intervention. Here, 45 out of 45 instructional hours are utilized for this course ($45/45 = 100\%$).

Other graduate programs across disciplines may decide to create a specialization in early intervention or a specialty track or a certificate program in early intervention. In this example, the graduate courses focus primarily on early intervention competencies areas and birth to three best practices. The number of instructional hours for a 3-credit course equivalent to 45 hours will probably be higher because they are concentrating primarily on the birth to three population. So, if the Specialization in Early Intervention program has a course about the importance and significance of the parent-child dyad in fostering social-emotional development and attachment, 45 hours or 100% ($45/45$) of their instructional hours may cover the EI evidence-based best practices and competency areas.

6. Why must the graduate program issue a certificate or letter for their graduates? Why must graduates submit this certificate or letter with their application to the NYS DOH BEI Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit?

Once a graduate program has been approved for including the NYS DOH BEI Competency Areas into their curriculum, it is important to support graduates' application to become approved early intervention providers by issuing a certificate, letter, or other documentation.

The certificate or letter will indicate that the applicant is a graduate from NYS DOH BEI approved program.

Graduates will submit this certificate, letter, or other documentation with their application to become an approved NYS Early Intervention provider to the NYS BEI's Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit. NYS BEI's Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit will count the hours submitted on the certificate, letter, or other documentation towards the 1,000-clock-hour experience requirement.

Prior to the implementation of this process, only fieldwork placement hours were counted towards individual provider approval.

The required elements for this documentation are provided in the **BEI Application for Graduate Programs**. These elements include:

- a. The titles and number of graduate pre-service courses which cover the EI competency areas, the number of credits per course, the number of hours for each course, and the total number of hours of coursework completed.
- b. For this example, a Specialization in Early Intervention program may consist of six courses with 3-credits for each course. For this university program, a 3-credit course is equivalent to 45 hours. Therefore, six courses X 45 hours equals 270 hours.
- c. In another example in a different university, there is one graduate course covering birth to three development that covers all five EI competency areas. In this graduate program, the course comes with 3-credits which are equivalent to 2,250 minutes or 37.5 hours. Therefore, 1 course x 37.5 hours equals 37.5 hours.
- d. The total number of hours of field work placement performed by the students as part of the coursework covering the EI competency areas.
- e. Signature by the chairperson of the graduate program and/or the graduate program director and/or the faculty or staff persons responsible for the curricula covering the EI competency areas, including their contact information.

7. Are graduate programs expected to list their program on their university website?

To support workforce capacity and introduce early intervention as a career pathway earlier, all programs approved by the NYS DOH BEI's Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit will be listed on the NYS DOH BEI [Competency Areas for the Delivery of Evidence-Based Evaluations and Services in the New York State Early Intervention Program](#) webpage.

While it is not a requirement, graduate programs typically post their master- and doctoral-level programs on their university's website. It is recommended that graduate programs that receive the NYS DOH BEI approval include this information on their webpage to attract those interested in working in Early Intervention and early childhood.

8. May graduate programs be approved based solely on their accreditation(s)?

Not all accredited graduate programs cover early intervention and the competency areas. Therefore, the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Early Intervention (NYS BEI), through its Provider Approval, Due Process, and Monitoring Unit has created this process.

9. May several graduate programs that partner together to jointly provide courses that cover the EI competency areas in their University submit one application?

Graduate programs are set up in different ways. While the structure of some graduate programs may necessitate the submission of an individual program-specific application, there are interdisciplinary programs across NYS, and other programs may cross list courses with other departments. Therefore, programs may partner to apply, but they will need to ensure that graduates are taking the courses identified and the associated fieldwork placements.

For example, a university may have physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, and early childhood education graduate programs. The university decides to create an inter-disciplinary program with four courses that covers the early intervention competencies and fieldwork placements that students from each of their four graduate programs may participate in called Preparation for Early Intervention (PEI). The university should submit an application under their inter-disciplinary program, PEI, and they would have to identify which programs participate in this project. The university should ensure that each student that participated in the PEI project fulfilled their course requirements and fieldwork placements before they issue the student the certificate.