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To: Presidents/Chief Executive Officers of NYS Colleges and Universities

From: William P. Murphy 

Date: May 20, 2020

Subject: Distance Education Flexibility Fall 2020 Semester

Registration of a program in the distance education format is normally required if 50% or more of the program can be completed online. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and consistent with US Department of Education updated guidance, institutions are granted flexibility to offer online courses in programs without triggering the need to add the distance education format to the program for the Fall 2020 semester.

Offering programs in the distance education format (50% or more of the program can be completed online) beyond the Fall 2020 semester will be subject to regular distance education approval requirements, including the submission of program registration applications to NYSED. The need to extend this flexibility will be determined depending upon the COVID-19 emergency timeframe and circumstances.

Professional licensure and educator preparation program clinical experience courses must meet regulatory requirements and students must complete adequate clinical hours to ensure competency.