The Board may grant a discretionary variance to authorize a provider or program to:

- meet a requirement in a manner other than as specified in rule or
- waive the requirement entirely when the application of the requirement would result in undue hardship.

A provider may request a discretionary variance by using a form developed by the Board.
Expectations for Unit & Program Review

Each provider is responsible for tracking program variances in EPPAS and maintaining all records related to variances. Beginning July 1, 2022, units must apply for discretionary variances related to new rule, if needed. Units may apply for discretionary variances before July 1, 2022. The Board is not accepting discretionary variance requests specific to Standard 24 (qualifications for methods instructors) at this time.

Submit updated program variances in EPPAS upon the first PERCA submission after 2021 rule is adopted, starting fall 2021.

In order to receive a new variance before it expires, PELSB recommends that the unit apply for the new variance at least 60 days before expiration.

Limitations

The Board may not grant a discretionary variance request seeking to waive a requirement that is required by state statute. For example, the Board cannot approve any of the following requests:

- Implement a non-research-based curriculum,$^1$
- Waive student teaching in its entirety,$^2$
- Waive all forms of program assessment,$^3$
- Waive requirement that teacher educators have experiences in B-12 schools,$^4$ and
- Waive or vary the requirement that cooperating teachers serving in public schools are licensed, have three years of experience, and are not on an improvement plan.$^5$

Examples

Under 2014 rule, variances were most commonly sought for the following reasons:

- to vary student teaching to allow for less than full-time but for a longer duration
- teacher educators with different qualifications from what is prescribed in rule
- to have fewer than the average credit load
- for dual programs: to vary the length of student teaching and credit load

Types of Variances and Approval Processes

Below are the primary types of variance requests and the approval process. Please note that each variance request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the inclusion of an example below does not necessarily indicate that the Board will approve such variance request in every circumstance.

[6] Note: 2021 rule does not specify how programs determine credit hours for courses or learning experiences.
## Variance Type

**Unit Level:** A provider may request a variance be applied unit-wide. A provider may have philosophical reasons to vary rule as well as practical ones based on unique characteristics.

Examples:
- Waiver from the requirements specific to the designated school partnership
- To use a unit-wide alternative to the Board-adopted performance assessment

**Individual:** A provider may request a variance for a teacher candidate, group of candidates, or a teacher educator. These are often situation-specific.

Examples:
- Changes in field experiences due to COVID-19
- Individual candidate needing flexibility with student teaching based on personal and/or professional variables

**Program-Level:** A provider may request a program-wide variance for an individual program. This variance is not to address a unique situation but rather, is part of the program design.

Examples:
- A program designed to support Tier 2 teachers move up the tiers, seeking to vary clinical experiences
- Seeking that a Work-Based Learning program can enroll candidates who do not hold a teaching license but hold a school counseling license
- Seeking that an Early Childhood program can have non-licensed cooperating teachers in a private school setting with listed alternative qualifications

## Approval Process

1. **(Recommended, but optional)** Consult with Teacher Education Specialists about the variance request you are considering to learn if similar ones have been approved and if there are any statutory reasons a request may not be considered by the Board.
2. Submit completed variance request to Teacher Education Specialists a minimum of 5 days prior to the Teacher Preparation Committee.
3. The Teacher Preparation Committee will discuss each submitted request and make a recommendation. If public comment is an option, it will be noted on the agenda.
4. The Teacher Preparation Committee recommendation will be forwarded to the full Board.
5. The Board will vote whether to approve or deny the variance request at a Board Meeting. A provider may request to speak to the full Board related to its request.

1. **(Recommended, but optional)** Consult with Teacher Education Specialists about the variance request you are considering to learn if similar ones have been approved and if there are any statutory reasons a request may not be considered by the Board.
2. Upload the Discretionary Variance request to EPPAS as a program attachment. Submit program application in EPPAS.
3. RIPA would be externally reviewed one or two times to ensure teacher standards are met. PERCAs are audited by Board staff.
4. Program Review Panel reviews and makes a recommendation.
5. Teacher Preparation Committee reviews and makes a recommendation.
6. The Board will vote whether to approve or deny the variance request.