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# INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## *The Professional Development Requirement for Certification*

This NYSUT Information Bulletin provides information on meeting the professional development requirements for individuals holding professional certification in a teaching title or level III teaching assistant certification. Holders of these certificates are required to complete and report professional development in order to maintain those credentials. Specifically:

- **Professional certificate holders** must complete 175 clock hours of professional development every five years, and
- **Level III teaching assistants** must complete 75 clock hours of professional development every five years.

**It is important to note that these are the only certificates that require continuing professional development for certification purposes.** All other teaching and teaching assistant certificate types (such as provisional certificates, permanent certificates, initial certificates, transitional certificates, continuing certificates, etc.) do not require completion of professional development in order to maintain a valid certificate.

**This Information Bulletin provides the following additional information to assist NYSUT members in meeting the requirements set forth in Section 80-3.6 of the Commissioner's Regulations:**

- An overview of the professional development requirement for certification;
- Advice for local leaders; and
- Appendices of State Education Department (SED) guidance on this topic.
  - ✓ *Appendix I* - Maintaining Your Certificate-Professional Certificate Holders
  - ✓ *Appendix II* - Maintaining Your Certificate-Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate Holders
  - ✓ *Appendix III* – School District – Roles and Responsibilities
  - ✓ *Appendix IV* - Frequently asked questions
  - ✓ *Appendix V* - Continuing Professional Development Individual Record form

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## **OVERVIEW**

The following provides a brief overview of the professional development requirement. More detailed information can be found in the accompanying appendices.

### ***Who is affected?***

Only individuals who have applied for teacher or teaching assistant certification after February 2, 2004 will have been issued professional or level III teaching assistant certificates requiring continuing professional development.

### ***How much professional development is required?***

Professional certificate holders must complete 175 clock hours of professional development every five years, and level III teaching assistants must complete 75 clock hours of professional development every five years.

### ***When must the professional development occur?***

The professional development must occur during the five year professional development period which is defined in regulation as beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup> after the effective date of the professional or level III certificate. For example, an individual holding a professional certificate that is effective on September 1, 2005 would count professional development hours completed in the period beginning on July 1, 2006 and ending on June 30, 2011.

### ***What type of professional development is acceptable?***

For individuals employed in a public school or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the district's professional development plan (PDP) identifies acceptable professional development. Acceptable professional development is that which is directly related to student learning needs as identified in the school district or BOCES report card.

For individuals employed in nonpublic schools or not regularly employed, professional development must be in the content area of the certificate or in pedagogy related to the certificate. Acceptable professional development in this case could be provided by public schools through their PDP; accredited institutions of higher education; New York state entities such as school districts, BOCES, Teacher Centers, Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) or a comparable entity out-of-state; and professional development provided by an employer offering instruction in any grades kindergarten through grade 12.

### ***Can the professional development requirement be reduced or adjusted?***

Yes. It can be reduced by 10% for each professional development year an individual is not regularly employed by a public school or BOCES. In addition, the hours can be adjusted for good cause upon request to the State Education Department (SED) including, but not be limited to, any of the following reasons: poor health certified by a physician; or a specific physical or mental disability certified by an appropriate health care professional; or extended active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States; or extreme hardship which, in the judgment of SED, makes it impossible for the professional certificate holder to comply with the professional development requirements in a timely manner; or for a certificate holder who is regularly employed by a public school or BOCES, inability to complete the requirement because of the failure of the school to adopt and implement a professional development plan.

***How is professional development reported to the State Education Department?***

If you are employed by a public school or BOCES, the district or BOCES will report all of your professional development hours to SED via the Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) TEACH system. If you are not regularly employed (less than 90 days) by a public school or BOCES, you must report your professional development hours annually to SED. Your school can help you submit your hours online using the OTI TEACH system.

***What type of professional development records must be maintained by professional and level III teaching certificate holders?***

Individuals must keep personal records of completed professional development that includes the provider name, date and location of the activity, description of the activity, hours completed, and attendance verification. These records must be retained for a minimum of seven years and be made available upon request by SED. See Appendix IV for a Continuing Professional Development Individual Record form that individuals could use for record keeping purposes.

**ADVICE FOR LOCAL LEADERS**

- ↪ Responsibility for certification, including all professional development activities for certification purposes, is an individual's responsibility! Failure to fulfill the professional development requirement for professional and level III teaching assistant certification will lead to a suspended credential.
- ↪ Members should be advised to maintain comprehensive personal records of completed professional development. In addition, members should annually check those personal records against any records maintained or reported by their district.
- ↪ Local leaders should urge the PDP team to ensure that individuals are afforded sufficient opportunities to meet the professional development requirement and that appropriate activities are provided at no cost to members during school hours.
- ↪ Locals should work with districts to ensure members receive documentation of completed professional development that includes all record-keeping components required by SED.
- ↪ Local leaders should ensure that mentoring service is recognized by the district's PDP as satisfying the mentors professional development obligation within any given five year period.
- ↪ Section 80-3.6(h) the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education details an individual's due process rights. This protection is critical in order to challenge determinations by SED that based upon a failure to fulfill the professional development requirement, a credential could be suspended.

# APPENDIX I

From the New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives website  
([www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-prof.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-prof.htm))

## Maintaining Your Certificate - Professional Certificate Holders

**Note:** The first professional development cycle begins on July 1 following the effective date of your Professional teaching certificate.

### Responsibilities

#### If you are employed in a public school...

You must complete 175 hours of professional development every five years. This maintains the validity of the Professional certificate and allows you to continue to teach. The first professional development period begins on July 1 following the effective date of the certificate.

#### If you are not employed in a public school....

You must complete professional development every five years. However, the hourly obligation of 175 hours every 5 years is reduced by 10% for every year of your professional development period during which you are not employed in a public school. Example: If you teach in a nonpublic school for 2 years out of your professional development period, you must complete a total of 140 hours of professional development in that period ( $.20 \times 175 = 35$  hours;  $175$  minus  $35 = 140$  hours). NOTE: This calculation is done automatically and is displayed on your individual professional development record. This maintains the validity of the Professional certificate and allows you to continue to teach. The first professional development period begins on July 1 following the effective date of the certificate.

### Allowable Activities

#### If you are employed in a public school...

Your employing district approves all professional development activities to accrue towards your continuing professional development requirement. You should seek prior approval from your school district of any professional development that you wish to apply toward your professional development obligation. A suggested planning form, [Continuing Professional Development, District Planning Document](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdplanning.pdf) is available at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdplanning.pdf](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdplanning.pdf) for use by you and your district. This document is optional and is not submitted to the Office of Teaching Initiatives.

#### If you are not employed in a public school....

You initiate your own professional development activities; however any professional activity you complete must be in the content or pedagogy of your certificate title in order to accrue towards your continuing professional development obligation.

### Recordkeeping

#### If you are employed in a public school...

You must keep a record of all professional development completed during your professional development period, including that provided by your school district. Required documentation elements include:

- Program/event title
- Accrual of hours of program/activity
- Provider name
- Attendance verification
- Date and location of the program/activity

Records should be kept as current with activity completion as is possible. Records must be kept seven years and be made available to the New York State Education Department in the event of an audit.

**If you are not employed in a public school...**

You must keep a record of all professional development completed during your professional development period. Required documentation elements include:

- Program/event title
- Provider name
- Date and location of the professional development event
- Hours completed, attendance verification
- Content or pedagogical area of the professional development

Records should be kept as current with activity completion as is possible. The Continuing Professional Development, Individual Record (Appendix V), is designed to assist you in recording your professional development hours. Use of this document is optional and not submitted to the Office of Teaching Initiatives. Records must be kept seven years and be made available to the New York State Education Department in the event of an audit.

**Reporting**

**If you are employed in a public school...**

If you are employed by a school district, the district reports professional development hours on your behalf. It is recommended that this information be reported annually.

**If you are not employed in a public school...**

If you are not employed by a public school district or BOCES during any portion of your professional development period, you must report completed professional development hours directly to the Office of Teaching Initiatives annually.

## APPENDIX II

From the New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives website  
([www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-ta3.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-ta3.htm))

### Maintaining Your Certificate - Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate Holders

**Note:** The first professional development cycle begins on July 1 following the effective date of your Teaching Assistant Level III teaching certificate.

#### Responsibilities

#### **If you are employed in a public school for 90 or more days of any school year in a professional development cycle...**

You must complete 75 hours of professional development every five years. This maintains the validity of this certificate.

#### **If you are not employed in a public school for 90 or more days of any given school year of the professional development cycle and work in a non-public school, special education preschool, or Head Start program ...**

You must complete professional development every five years. However, the hourly obligation of 75 hours every 5 years is reduced by 10% for every year of your professional development cycle during which you are not employed in a public school.

Example: If you work for 2 years out of the five-year professional development cycle, you must complete a total of 60 hours of professional development in that period.

- $.20 \times 75 \text{ hours} = 15$  (10 percent reduction per year)
- $75 - 15 = 60$  hours

Example: If you work for 5 years out of the five-year professional development cycle, you must complete a total of 37.50 hours of professional development hours in that period.

- $.50 \times 75 \text{ hours} = 37.50$  hours (10 percent reduction per year)
- $75 - 37.50 = 37.50$

This maintains the validity of Level III Teaching Assistant certificate and allows you to continue to work.

NOTE: This calculation is done automatically and is displayed on your individual professional development record.

#### Allowable Activities

#### **If you are employed in a public school...**

Your employing school district approves all professional activities to count towards your continuing professional development requirement. You should seek prior approval from your school district for any professional development that you wish to apply toward your professional development requirements. A suggested planning document form, Continuing Professional Development, District Planning Document is available for use by you and your public school district. The document is optional and is **not submitted** to the Office of Teaching Initiatives.

### **If you are not employed in a public school....**

You are responsible for obtaining professional development. If you are employed by a school other than a public school, you are urged to work closely with your school administrators to identify the professional development activities that will enhance your ability to perform the work of a Level III Teaching Assistant. Also, you must obtain continuing professional development from an approved provider, such as: public, or non-public school district, BOCES, State Teacher Resource and Computer Training Center, Special Education Teacher Resources Center (SETRC), institution of higher education, or any comparable entity outside of New York State.

### **Recordkeeping**

#### **If you are employed in a public school...**

You must keep a record of all of your professional development activities during the reporting cycle. You should seek approval from your school district for any professional development activity not sponsored by your school district. Required documentation includes:

- Provider name
- Date and location of activity
- Activity Description
- Hours completed
- Attendance verification

Records should be up-to-date. **You do not submit these forms to the State Education Department.** Records must be kept seven years and be made available to the New York State Education Department in the event of an audit.

#### **If you are not employed in a public school...**

You must keep a record of all of your professional development activities during the reporting cycle. Required documentation includes:

- Provider name
- Date and location of activity
- Activity Description
- Hours completed
- Attendance verification

Records should be up-to-date. **You do not submit these forms to the State Education Department.** Records must be kept seven years and be made available to the New York State Education Department in the event of an audit.

### **Reporting**

#### **If you are employed in a public school...**

If you are employed in a public school, the district will report all of your professional development hours. It is recommended that the district report this information every year.

**If you are not employed in a public school...**

If you are not employed in a public school during any portion of the professional development cycle, you must report your hours directly to the Office of Teaching Initiatives annually through TEACH online services.

**When do I need to start my professional development?**

The first professional development period begins on July 1 following the effective date of the Level III teaching assistant certificate.

**How will my completed professional development hours be reported?**

**If you are employed in a public school...**

If you are employed in a public school district, the district reports professional development hours on your behalf. It is recommended that this information be reported annually.

**If you are not employed in a public school...**

If you are not employed in a public school district or BOCES during any portion of your professional development period, you must report completed professional development hours directly to the Office of Teaching Initiatives through TEACH online services. It is recommended that this information be reported annually.

**How do I report to the TEACH system if I do not have a computer?**

**If you are employed in a public school...**

Your school district will report your hours on OTI TEACH system.

**If you are not employed in a public school...**

You will need to work with your school to help you submit your hours electronically, or access computers available in public libraries.

## APPENDIX III

Excerpts from the New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives website  
([www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-sd.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-sd.htm) & [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/memo06-022006p.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/memo06-022006p.htm))

### School District - Roles and Responsibilities

- Planning and provision of appropriate professional development for Professional and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders in district professional development plans.
- Maintains record of professional development completed by regularly employed individuals subject to the professional development requirement and who participate in district-sponsored professional development. "Regularly Employed" means employed more than 90 days in a given school year. Such records must include:
  - Name of the certificate holder
  - Teacher Certification Identification number
  - Program/event title
  - Clock hours or its equivalent completed for each program/event
- Verifies with the certificate holder and reports annually to the Office of Teaching Initiatives, completion of professional development by all regularly employed certificate holders who are subject to the professional development requirement for certification.

It is recommended that the district consult with the certificate holder and jointly consider and approve activities, events, and coursework identified by the certificate holder to be completed each school year. This includes professional development completed by the certificate holder that is not district-sponsored, for example, a graduate course related to the teacher's certificate area. It is recommended that such consultation occur annually at a minimum, and thereafter as frequently as needed, as on the occasion of an adjustment to planned activities.

Format and procedures for recordkeeping for required professional development are locally determined.

#### Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Guidance on recordkeeping and reporting the professional development completed by teachers and teaching assistants in your schools

#### District recordkeeping responsibilities

**What is a school district's responsibility for maintaining records of professional development that the district provides to teachers with Professional certificates and Level III teaching assistants employed in our schools?**

If you provide professional development to teachers and teaching assistants in your schools, you must maintain a record of professional development completed by district teachers and teaching assistants who are required to complete this requirement. This record must include:

- certificate numbers,
- professional development program/event titles, and
- clock hours completed for individual for each program/event.

**What is a school district’s responsibility for maintaining records of professional development that the district approves but does not provide?**

For professional development that you approve but do not provide, you must maintain a record of the number of hours of professional development completed by teachers with Professional certificates and Level III teaching assistants in your schools.

**District reporting responsibilities**

**What information are we required to report to the New York State Education Department and how frequently are we required to submit reports?**

Annually, you must report to the Office of Higher Education’s Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) the **number of all** approved professional development hours completed by each teacher and teaching assistant who is employed by the district and subject to the professional development requirement, regardless of the professional development provider.

**Will the number of hours of professional development we report as having been completed by our teachers and teaching assistants become part of their certification records?**

Yes, all hours of completed professional development reported by school districts will become part of the certificate holder’s certification record maintained by the Office of Higher Education’s Office of Teaching Initiatives. Teachers with Professional certificates and Level III teaching assistants must complete the required number of hours of professional development every five years for their certificates to remain valid.

**Can we submit reports of professional development completed electronically to the Office of Higher Education’s Office of Teaching Initiatives?**

Yes, school administrators and certain individual certificate holders can now report completed professional development hours on-line directly via the new TEACH computer system ([www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/)). Previously, school districts identified designees who were given access to the TEACH computer system and directions for entering professional development records. The TEACH public school training guide is also available on the Web at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/resourcesd.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/teach/resourcesd.htm). Please see your designated school district user for additional information on submitting professional development reports on-line.

## APPENDIX IV

The following frequently asked questions on the professional development requirement are excerpts from the New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives website ([www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faqpd.htm](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faqpd.htm))

**Can mentoring service constitute 100% of the 175 hours to be completed within a given five-year period?**

Yes, the public school district may choose to permit mentoring hours to count toward the professional development obligation.

**If a teacher comes from another state, is he/she subject to the professional development requirement?**

If the individual applies for and receives a New York State Professional teaching certificate or Teaching Assistant III, he/she is subject to the professional development requirement.

**Does the continuing professional development requirement also apply to those who receive a Professional or Teaching Assistant III certificate through individual evaluation?**

Yes, ALL individuals who apply for and receive one of these certificates are subject to the professional development requirement.

**Do courses delivered on-line through a website accrue toward the professional development?**

Yes, if a public school district approves the course for the certificate holders in that district.

**If the district does allow on-line professional development offerings, how does the district calculate the number of hours that will accrue for the course?**

This is determined by the employing school district in consultation with the certificate holder.

**What happens when a Professional or Teaching Assistant III certificate holder takes an approved leave of absence and does not teach for a portion of the 5-year professional development period?**

For the certificate holder who is not teaching in a public school for a portion of the professional development period, the required hours are reduced by 10% for each school year that the individual is not employed by the public school.

**How does an individual meet the professional development requirement if he or she leaves the State during the professional development period or is unable to find employment in New York State?**

If the certificate holder wishes to maintain the validity of his/her New York State Professional or Teaching Assistant III certificate, he/she must satisfy the professional development requirement. If he/she is not employed in a NYS public school, the required hours are reduced by 10 percent for each year that this is the case.

**For Level III teaching assistant certificate holders, do the required professional development activities need to focus on a particular content area or pedagogy skill?**

No, it is recommended that the certificate holder and district jointly determine the activities after consideration of the teacher assistant's and the district's needs relative to instruction.

**Can I complete the 175 hours at any time during the first 5 years, or must I complete 35 hours each year?**

Regulations do not specify that any portion of the required hours be completed annually. However, it is recommended that certificate holders maintain a steady progression of professional development activities over the five-year period and not take on an overwhelming number of activities in any one year.

**If I complete more than the required number of professional development hours during a 5 year professional development period, may I "roll over" the extra hours to the next 5 year period?**

No.

**What if I hold two Professional certificates in different areas? Do I have to do double the hours?**

No, you need only complete total of 175 hours for each 5-year professional development period. The cycle begins on July 1 following the issuance of your first Professional certificate and continues on that 5-year cycle.

**What if I am National Board certified-must I still complete 175 hours of professional development every 5 years?**

If you obtain your National Board certification in the area of your Professional certificate during a 5-year professional development period, the National Board certification process satisfies the entire requirement for that cycle. However, if you obtained National Board certification prior to the 5-year period, you are not exempted from the required 175 hours for that period. Further, obtaining National Board certification during a given professional development period.

**If I teach in a charter school, am I exempt from the professional development requirement?**

If you hold a Professional or Teaching Assistant III certificate, you must maintain your certification by accruing professional development hours. However, the number of required hours is prorated, as it is for individuals not employed in a public school.

**In New York City, who is responsible for providing professional development for certificate holders subject to the professional development requirement?**

Provision of professional development for all City teachers is a responsibility of the New York City Department of Education.

**In New York City, is record keeping and reporting of completed professional development considered a district responsibility or a New York City Department of Education responsibility?**

It is expected that the New York City Department of Education will report to the Office of Teaching Initiatives on behalf of all teachers in its employ who fall within the provisions of this requirement.

**If I volunteer in a public school, pre-school or day-care center and am not employed in a public school, can this service accrue towards my continuing professional development obligation?**

No.

**If a public school district employs me, may I use college coursework to satisfy the professional development requirement, or am I restricted to district professional development offerings?**

If your district approves the college coursework, the hours may accrue toward the professional development requirement.

**Are school librarians obligated to complete 175 hours of professional development to maintain their teaching certificates?**

It will depend on the title and type of the certificate held. If an individual attains a Professional certificate in the title of library media specialist, he/she is subject to the professional development requirement.

**How far back do we have to go in logging professional development hours?**

Counting of professional development hours begins on the July 1 after the issuance date of the individual's Professional or Teaching Assistant III certificate. Activities on and after this date are applicable toward satisfying the certificate holder's professional development for the five-year professional development period, which runs from July 1 to June 30 of each subsequent year.

**Can we report professional development activities that were completed by the individual before this July 1 date?**

No, hours completed before the beginning date of the professional development period are not applicable toward meeting the requirement and should not be reported.

**Is it a requirement to log professional development hours on-line?**

Public school districts are required to report professional development hours for their employees online. Individuals not employed by a public school district are encouraged to report their professional development hours using the online TEACH system, but are not required to do so.

**Are individual teachers responsible for making sure their professional development hours are entered into their records by the school district?**

While it is the district's responsibility to report hours, it is in the interest of every Professional certificate and Teaching Assistant III certificate holder to verify that their professional development hours are reported and that their individual record is complete. We suggest that certificate holders:

1. Develop their personal professional development plan in consultation with their district, and obtain the district's approval before embarking on professional development activities. A suggested (optional) format for planning can be found at [www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdplanning.pdf](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdplanning.pdf).
2. Check their individual record periodically to verify that the completed hours are being reported by their school district (at least annually). Questions or discrepancies should be resolved with the district immediately. Certificate holders should not wait until the end of their five-year professional development cycle to resolve any issues.

**What counts as a professional development hour? Is an hour spent in a professional meeting comparable to an hour spent on research, or an hour in an inservice workshop, etc.?**

Generally, professional development activity may be considered to accrue according to the number of clock hours spent in the activity, e.g., inservice workshop, conference session, etc. However, the employing public school district has the discretion to set the research, attendance at professional meetings, etc. In the case of credit-bearing college courses, Commissioner's Regulations stipulate that each semester hour of credit is equal to 15 hours of professional development, and each quarter hour of credit is equal to 10 hours of professional development. For individuals not employed by a public school district, the professional development hours should equal the clock hours spent in the workshop, course, etc.

**Can I report partial/fractional hours of professional development?**

No, the TEACH system will only accept professional development reported as full hours.

# APPENDIX V

New York State Education Department  
Office of Teaching Initiatives

## Continuing Professional Development Individual Record

**Directions:** This form is provided for use by individuals holding either a Professional certificate or a Teaching Assistant Level III certificate. This purpose is to assist you in maintaining a record of professional development activities you complete in accordance with certification requirements.

1. Document activities in the table below. Self-reporting is required only for those years in which you are not employed by a public school district 90 days or more.
2. Keep registration forms, and/or other documentation with this record. Documentation must be retained for seven years.
3. DO NOT submit this form to the Office of Teaching Initiatives. On-line reporting will become available soon through the Office of Teaching Initiatives Web site, which will allow you to report electronically the information recorded on this form.

Name:						
Certificate Title:						
Five-Year Professional Development Period:						
July 1, 200 ____ through June 30, 200 ___ Employed by a public school district 90+ days?    Yes    No						
July 1, 200 ____ through June 30, 200 ___ Employed by a public school district 90+ days?    Yes    No						
July 1, 200 ____ through June 30, 200 ___ Employed by a public school district 90+ days?    Yes    No						
July 1, 200 ____ through June 30, 200 ___ Employed by a public school district 90+ days?    Yes    No						
(If you answered Yes for any year, do not use this form for activities completed that year. The district will report on your behalf.)						
Title of Program	Program Sponsor	Sponsor Category*	Date(s)	Location	Content/Pedagogy Area	Clock Hours

\* Sponsor Categories: 1= Public school district, 2= Nonpublic school, 3= BOCES, 4= Teacher Center, 5= SETRC, 6=College/University

**DO NOT SUBMIT THIS FORM. PLEASE KEEP FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS**