

Professional Development Requirements for Certification



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In 2004 the NYS Board of Regents adopted changes to the certification requirements for teachers and teaching assistants. Initial/Professional certificates replaced Provisional/Permanent certificates for classroom teaching titles and Level I-III certificates replaced the Temporary License/Continuing Certificates for Teaching Assistants. Individuals holding professional certification in a teaching title and Level III teaching assistants are required to complete a prescribed number of professional development hours to maintain their certificates.

- **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.

This Fact Sheet provides the following information to assist NYSUT members in meeting the professional development requirements set forth in Section 80-3.6 of the Commissioner's Regulations:

- An overview of the professional development requirement for certification;
- Impact on professional development requirements due to Fall 2014 changes to Part 154 of Commissioner's Regulations (concerning ELLs);
- Key items to consider regarding Professional Development; and
- Links to State Education Department (SED) guidance on this topic.

Overview Of Professional Development Requirements

Who is affected?

Only individuals possessing a professional certificate or a level III teaching assistant certificate are affected.

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 1st after the effective date of the professional or level III certificate (the date actually printed on the certificate). For example, an individual holding a professional certificate that is effective on September 1, 2010 would count professional development hours completed in the period beginning on July 1, 2011 and ending on June 30, 2016.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Do professionally certified teachers or level III teaching assistant need to re-apply to the State Education Department every 5 years to maintain their certificate?

No. Verification of completed hours is done using the TEACH online system and completion of the required hours by itself maintains the certificate.

Impact of Fall 2014 Changes to Part 154 Regulations (ELLs)

At its September 2014 meeting, the Board of Regents unanimously adopted amendments to Part 154 of the Commissioner's Regulations, effective October 1, 2014. Subpart 154-2 describes program and service requirements school districts must comply with for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the 2015-2016 school year, and thereafter.

Beginning in 2015-2016, school districts must provide all teachers and administrators professional development to meet the needs of ELLs. This professional development must be consistent with section 80-3.6 and section 100.2(dd) of commissioner's regulations. Section 80-3.6 addresses the professional development requirement to maintain specific post-2004 certificate titles and section 100.2(dd) addresses the requirements governing professional development plans.

These changes to Part 154 specifically call for school districts to provide:

- 15 percent of professional development hours for all teachers and administrators be specific to the needs of ELLs, language acquisition and cultural competency.
- 50 percent of professional development hours for all Bilingual Education and ESL teachers to be specific to the needs of ELLs, language acquisition and cultural competency.

It is anticipated that an additional set of amendments to Part 154 will be presented at the December 2014 meeting of the Board of Regents that would permit school districts, under certain circumstances (i.e., districts in which English Language Learners make up less than five percent of the district's total student population) to be eligible to apply for a waiver of the two specific professional development requirements listed above.

Key Items to Consider

- 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 maintain personal records of completed professional development hours and annually check those personal records against any records maintained or reported by the employing district.
- Acceptable professional development opportunities must be identified within the employing district's or BOCES' Professional Development Plan (PDP), according to section 100.2(dd) of commissioner's regulations. It is the responsibility of the district/BOCES to ensure access to these identified professional development opportunities at no cost to members, during school hours, unless otherwise collectively bargained. If a PDP does not identify such opportunities, members should work through their locals to identify the appropriate approval process for professional development opportunities.
- Members, working through their locals, should receive documentation or have access to electronic verification of completed professional development hours that includes all record-keeping components required by SED.

- The NYS Education Department recognizes mentoring service as acceptable professional development for the mentor's certification requirements; members, working through their locals, should ensure that mentoring services are included in the districts'/BOCES' PDP.

Section 80-3.6(h) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education details an individual's due process rights to challenge determinations by SED to suspend a credential (certificate) based upon a failure to fulfill the professional development requirement. Members should make themselves aware of these critical protections.

RESOURCES

Maintaining Your Certificate - Professional Certificate Holders

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-prof.html>

Maintaining Your Certificate - Teaching Assistant Level III Certificate Holders

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-ta3.html>

School District - Roles and Responsibilities

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/maintaincert-sd.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/faqpd.html>

State Education Department, Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling>

NYSUT Fact Sheet No: 14-20: Amendments to Commissioner's Regulations Part 154: Services for English Language Learners (ELL)

<http://www.nysut.org/resources/all-listing/2014/october/fact-sheet-amendments-to-commissioners-regulations-part-154-services-for-english-language-learners>