

## **Frequently Asked Questions - Professional Development**

1. What is the professional development requirement?

Holders of a Professional teaching certificate in a classroom teaching or school leader title, as well as holders of a Teaching Assistant III certificate, are required to complete professional development hours to maintain the validity of their certificates. Professional certificate holders must complete 175 hours every five years; Teaching Assistant III certificate holders must complete 75 hours every 5 years. Decisions regarding content, delivery and providers of such professional development are within the purview of the employing public school district or BOCES and should be made within the context of the district's professional development plan. [top](#)

2. What is the definition of a "day" for purposes of determining if a certificate holder is employed "90 days or more" by a public school district?

Any day the district determines that the individual is employed by the district, regardless of his/her work schedule or number of hours present, is counted as one day.

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

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Yes, the school district may choose to permit mentoring hours to count toward the professional development obligation, and the number of hours awarded for this activity is determined by the district in consultation with the certificate holder. [top](#)

4. 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 certificate or Teaching Assistant III certificate, he/she is subject to the professional development requirement. [top](#)

5. 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. [top](#)

6. When does the first professional development period for an individual certificate holder begin?

The professional development period for the certificate holder begins on July 1 following the effective date of the certificate. [top](#)

7. 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. [top](#)

8. 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. However, if the on-line study results in the award of college credit from a regionally-accredited college, 15 clock hours must be awarded per semester hour. [top](#)

9. 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?

If the certificate holder teaches less than 90 days in a given school year for any reason, including an approved leave, the required hours are reduced by 10% for each school year during which this is the case. [top](#)

10. 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. [top](#)

11. I am not employed by a public school. How do I report the professional development hours I complete?

You are required to report the hours directly to the Office of Teaching Initiatives each year and maintain records of all the professional development in which you participate, including the provider, the title of activity and the focus of the activity (content or pedagogy). Professional development hours are reported through TEACH, our web-based system. [top](#)

12. How does a certificate holder who is employed by a non-public school, pre-school or day care center meet this requirement?

For all certificate holders who are not employed in a public school district, the hourly requirement is reduced 10 percent for each year of the 5-year professional development period that this is the case. This holds true regardless of the circumstance, be it illness, inability to obtain a position, employment in a non-public school, employment as a teacher in a non-profit community-based preschool or day-care setting, etc.

For example, if a Professional certificate holder works in a non-public school for the first 2 years of a 5-year professional development period, his/her obligation will be reduced by 20%. Twenty percent of 175 hours is 35; therefore, the total hour obligation for this 5-year period for this teacher would be 140 hours (175 minus 35 = 140). This calculation is done automatically by the TEACH system.

13. I am not employed by a public school district. Where can I obtain professional development?

A certificate holder who is not employed by a public school may receive professional development from their employing non-public school, any public school district or BOCES, New York State Teacher Center, college or university, leadership academy, Special Education Teacher Resource Center (SETRC), collective bargaining organization or other regional or statewide professional organization, or a comparable entity outside of New York State. [top](#)

14. 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 based on the teaching assistant's and the district's needs relative to instruction. [top](#)

15. If a "non-public" school employs me, must the school provide professional development for me so that I can fulfill the professional development requirement?

No, but it would be in the school's best interest to do so. It is recommended that the non-public school consult with the local public school about the possibility of participating in the district's professional development activities. (Federal funding mandates require that public schools consult with non-public schools located in the district as to the non-public schools' professional development needs.) [top](#)

16. 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. [top](#)

17. 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. [top](#)

18. 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, regardless of the date any additional Professional certificates may be issued. [top](#)

19. 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.

20. 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. [top](#)

21. 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. [top](#)

22. 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. [top](#)

23. Do non-public schools need to obtain approval of professional development activities for their teachers from the local public school district in which the non-public school is located?

No. [top](#)

24. Will State funded Teacher Centers allow persons who are not employed by the center's member districts to participate in professional development activities at the center?

That decision is up to the individual Teacher Center. [top](#)

25. If I volunteer in a public school, pre-school or day care center, can this service accrue towards my continuing professional development obligation?

No, volunteer service does not count toward the PD requirement. [top](#)

26. 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 for this purpose, the hours may accrue toward the professional development requirement. College coursework from a regionally-accredited college must be credited at 15 clock hours for each semester hour completed. [top](#)

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

It depends 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. [top](#)

28. 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 July 1 date are applicable

toward satisfying the professional development requirement for the five-year professional development period. [top](#)

29. 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. [top](#)

30. 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 should report their professional development hours using the TEACH online system. In extraordinary circumstances, if a certificate holder is unable to report online, he/she should contact the Office of Teaching Initiatives to make other arrangements. [top](#)

31. 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 [Continuing Professional Development District Planning Form \(PDF\)](#).
2. Establish a TEACH account
3. Check their individual record on TEACH 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.

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32. 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 hours 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 number of hours awarded for other activities, such as research, attendance at professional meetings, mentoring, 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. [top](#)

33. Can I report partial/fractional hours of professional development?

Yes, the TEACH system will accept professional development reported in partial hours (i.e. .25 or .50). [top](#)

34. If I teach a college level course, can I count this activity toward fulfillment of the 175 hour professional development requirement to maintain the validity of my Professional certificate?

If you are not employed by a public school district or BOCES, you may report the clock hours spent teaching a college course (either in the content area of your certificate or in pedagogy) but only for the first time you teach that particular course. If you are employed by a public school district or BOCES, the school will determine if this is an acceptable activity for this purpose and will assign the hours to be reported. [top](#)

