



Frequently Asked Questions on the Professional Certificate for Administrators

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Q: What is the Professional Certificate for Administrators?

A: All certified educators in Washington are required to follow a professional path that includes both an entry-level certificate and an advanced second-level certificate, as well as continuing professional development for certificate renewal. The Professional Certificate is a second-tier certificate that follows the entry-level residency certificate.

Administrator Pro Cert represents the next stage of the state's move toward performance-based educator preparation programs. (The state has previously implemented the professional certificate for teachers, and similar programs for Educational Staff Associates are in the early planning stages.) Program requirements, which center on completion of a Professional Growth Plan (PGP), are aligned with state and national standards for administrators. For administrators, Pro Cert offers the opportunity for individualized, job-embedded professional development.

Q: Who is required to earn the Professional Certificate?

A: Principals and assistant principals who hold a residency principal certificate, and program administrators who hold a residency program administrator certificate, are expected to earn the Professional Certificate.

Q: I have an Initial Certificate – will I have to earn a Professional Certificate?

A: No – if you hold an Initial Certificate, you can follow the former pathway of earning a Continuing Certificate.

Q: How much time do I have to complete a Pro Cert program?

A: At the time residency certificates are issued, they have no expiration date. Once you serve two years in that role for a Washington public or state-approved private school, the certificate acquires a five-year expiration date from that point. (For example, if you earned your residency principal certificate in May, 2004, and began your first principal job in fall, 2005, your certificate would remain undated until June 2007. Its expiration date at that point would be 2012.) In addition, if you are enrolled in a Pro Cert program at the time your residency certificate is due to expire; you can get an additional two-year extension.

Q: I have a principal certificate but am currently serving as an assistant principal. Does that count toward by “two years in that role?”

A: Yes.

Q: I have a program administrator certificate. How does the expiration date apply to me?

A: The same rules apply. Once you serve two years in the role, your certificate acquires a five-year expiration date. Note: Because the program administrator certificate is not required for any specific administrative job, the role is not as clearly defined as the principalship. In general, program administrators are considered to be those who direct staff members and/or manage a function, a program, or a supporting service in a school or

district (includes administrative assistants, directors, supervisors and coordinators of school or district-wide programs).

Q: I have a principal residency certificate, but I'm currently serving as a program administrator in the district. How does this affect my expiration date?

A: It has no impact. Because you're serving in a role for which the principal certificate is not required, the certificate will remain undated as long as you keep your current position.

Q: I received a residency principal certificate in 2004; why does it show an expiration date?

A: The residency certificate was originally designed as a five-year certificate, and some of the certificates issued early in the process do show an expiration date. However, you can exchange the dated certificate for one with no expiration date.

Q: I recently earned a superintendent certificate. Will I need to earn a Professional Certificate?

A: No. At this point, Washington does not require the Professional Certificate for superintendents, and there are no immediate plans to do so. (The Professional Educator Standards Board will be reviewing the status of superintendent certification in 2007-08.) After you begin serving as superintendent, you would eventually have to earn a Continuing Certificate.

Q: Who is eligible to enter a Pro Cert program?

A: Anyone who has served two years in the role and who currently holds a contract for which the certificate is appropriate. Thus, if you have a principal certificate and have served two years as a principal and/or assistant principal, and currently hold a contract as a principal or assistant principal with a Washington public or state-approved private school, you are eligible to enter a program. Or if you have a program administrator certificate, hold a contract as a program administrator, and have served two years in that role, you are eligible.

Q: Where can I find a program?

A: A number of universities with residency administrator programs are in the process of developing a Professional Certificate program proposal, which must be approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board. We anticipate that several programs will be available by fall of 2007. Watch this site for updates as they become available.

Q: Where can I find more information about administrator Pro Cert programs?

A: The OSPI website has a copy of the report that was presented to the Professional Educator Standards Board this summer. It describes in some detail what a typical Pro Cert program will involve. The report can be found at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/certification/profed/profcertforadmin.aspx>