

Certification Frequently Asked Questions - New Educators

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Q: When will I hear from the MCPS Certification Unit about my certification?

A: The goal is to have new hire file reviews for certification requirements completed during the first semester for educators hired prior to January 1 and during the second semester for educators hired after January 1. After the file review is completed, an email is sent to you with accompanying certification information and instructions on next steps. The general order of file reviews is:

1. Educators eligible for Conditional Degree/Conditional Non Degree or Resident Teacher Certificates
2. Educators with expired or expiring Maryland certificates
3. Title 1 Educators eligible for Standard or Advanced Professional Certificates
4. Educators eligible for Standard or Advanced Professional Certificates
5. All educators with valid Standard or Advanced Professional Certificates expiring after the current school year and all specialists with valid Maryland State Board of Examiners DHMH licenses

NOTE: The above is the timeline the Unit strives to meet; however, there are many factors that may delay this timeline. Just know that we will be in touch with you and you are always free to contact the [Certification Unit](#) with any questions about the process.

Q: When and how will I get my Maryland certificate?

A: After your certification file is complete (no outstanding official transcripts, copies of tests, verification of experience, or other information), then the Certification Unit will instruct you which TEACH application to complete, using the guides provided, via the [Maryland State Department of Education \(MSDE\) Teacher Education Application and Certification Hub \(TEACH\)](#). MCPS will manage your TEACH records and issue your certificate. You will receive an email via TEACH when your certificate is issued.

NOTE: The \$10 certificate fee is automatically deducted from your paycheck or billed to you to pay online via MSDE TEACH so that the MCPS Certification Unit can issue your Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Educator Certificate. MCPS handles ALL your certification needs when you are employed with us.

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Q: Who do I contact if I have a question about my initial salary placement?

A: All questions regarding initial salary placement (salary lane or salary step) must be addressed to the Department of Human Capital Management staffing coordinator that hired you.

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Q: I have a Professional Eligibility Certificate (PEC) from Maryland. Why do I have to pay another certificate fee?

A: The PEC is a certificate for those not yet employed by a Maryland county. Since you are now employed by MCPS, the \$10 certificate fee is automatically deducted from your paycheck or billed to you to pay online via TEACH for the standard or advanced professional certificate as required by the MSDE.

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Q: I have a master's degree, why am not eligible for the Advanced Professional Certificate (APC) from Maryland.

A: In addition to a master's degree, an educator has to have at least three (3) years of verified satisfactory teaching, specialist, or administrator experience and six (6) semester hours of acceptable within five (5) years of qualifying for the APC in order to receive the APC.

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Q: I submitted transcripts on the applicant tracking system (MCPS Careers) or to the staffing team. Why do I have to supply another one?

A: The information you submitted initially may not have included all the necessary course work and/or the degree conferral. In addition, you may have submitted an unofficial document instead of an official document. If you feel you have already submitted the appropriate documentation for the transcript or item we are requesting, please contact the [Certification Unit](#). We will not request documents unless they are needed to obtain your Maryland certificate.

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Q: Do I have to take the test(s) by the dates indicated in my certification notification and/or evaluation and how do I make sure that MCPS gets my scores?

A: Yes, you do and it is imperative that **ALL** required tests be **passed** during the validity period of the Conditional Degree/Non-Degree Certificate (CDC/CND). Register as early as possible and take the test(s) as often as necessary in order to pass. You should designate MSDE as a score recipient and also submit a copy of the test scores to the Certification Unit as soon as you receive the results. MCPS does not receive test scores from ETS and there is no automatic notification when educators take or pass tests. Since the MCPS Certification Unit takes care of all of your certification needs while you are employed, it is your responsibility to ensure that we have all the documents necessary to ensure that your certificate remains valid and in good standing.

PLEASE NOTE: If you need to complete **course work and pass tests** in order to qualify for a regular certificate, please review your contractual requirements for specific due dates.

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Q: What is the difference between a provisional contract and regular contract?

A: MSDE issues two types of contracts. A regular contract is issued once you have met all requirements for standard or advanced certification and we have all the necessary official documents and test verifications. If we are missing the necessary items, you will continue to hold a provisional contract until you have provided the documentation.

If you hold the conditional or resident teacher certificate or you hold a limited DHMH license, you will continue to hold a provisional contract, which expire yearly on June 30th, until you have met all outstanding requirements for full certification/licensure. Once we have received all the necessary, you will receive a regular contract which have a July 1st effective date.

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Q: How do I advance to the next salary level?

A: Please see requirements for advancing to the next salary lane by referring to the [Salary Advancement](#) information page.

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Q: I see ancillary credits on my Maryland certificate. What are ancillary credits?

A: Ancillary credits are additional MSDE coursework requirements that you have completed. You will see the number of MSDE reading credits you have completed and/or if you have completed a course in Introduction to Special Education/Mainstreaming.

MSDE requires educators certified in a teaching subject, regardless of assignment, to complete a specific number of credits in reading depending on their teaching area(s) of certification. See [Reading Coursework Requirement & Info](#) for detailed information and course options. For example, if you are certified to teach Generic Special Education, Infant-3/1-8/6-Adult, but are teaching in middle or high school, you will still need 12 semester hours if you have “Reading 6” in ancillary credits. You will need the remaining 6 semester hours in reading by the expiration of your current Maryland certificate.

MSDE requires educators certified in a specialist (i.e. reading specialist, library media specialist, etc.) or in an administrator/supervisor certification area to complete 3 semester hours in a course of Introduction to Special Education/Mainstreaming. If you have completed this requirement, you will see “Special Education” in ancillary credits. This does NOT mean you are certified to teach special education.

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Q: I think I have already satisfied an outstanding requirement for additional coursework. What do I need to do to rectify this?

A: Some course titles do not reflect the full content of a course. If you feel that you have satisfied a requirement, please submit a course description or syllabus for the course in question along with a written request to the Certification Unit for review for applicability.

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Q: How do I verify if a course or degree that I want to take is applicable toward certification, contingencies, or salary advancement?

A: If you would like to make sure that a course is going to apply toward any certification requirements or salary advancement, please submit a request for consideration via email including:

- Name, employee ID, position, location
- College name, course department/number and title, semester or quarter hours
- A description of the course or if sending via email, a link to the online information about the course and the college
- How you plan to use the course:
 - For Advanced Salary Placement
 - For Maryland Educator Renewal
 - To meet the following specific certificate requirement(s): _____

NOTE: Please address your email or letter to the [Certification Coordinator](#) and allow sufficient response time. You must inform us if a quick response is needed due to pending registration, but in most cases, please allow a few weeks.

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