Frequently Asked Questions - Validity: Intern & Level I Certificates

An Intern certificate or a Level I certificate must be converted to the next level certificate by the end of its validity period.

What is certificate validity?

An Intern certificate is valid for a specified calendar period and a Level I certificate is valid for a service time period as specified in CSPG #3 (June 1, 2014). An educator may only be employed/perform service on a valid certificate.

How long is my certificate valid?

- Validity expiration dates are not printed on certificates.
- Emergency permits: valid for one school year from date of issuance to July 31 of the school year issued.
- Intern certificates: valid for three calendar years.
- Level I certificates: Instructional I, Vocational Instructional I, Educational Specialist I, Supervisory I, and Administrative I. Validity is determined by service time and per school entity semester.
- Military Science is valid for 99 years.
- Certificates issued under 1980 and 1987 regulations are valid as follows:
  - Instructional I: six years of service.
  - Alien Provisional: six years of service (no longer issued and converted to non-citizen credential 9/2012).
  - Educational Specialist I: six years of service.
  - Vocational Instructional I: seven years of service.
  - Supervisory I: three years of service.
- Certificates issued under 1999 regulations are valid as follows:
  - Instructional I: six years of service.
  - Educational Specialist I: six years of service.
  - Vocational Instructional I: six years of service.
  - Supervisory and Vocational Supervisor: 99 years of service.
- Administrative certificates issued in accordance with statute and regulations listed below are valid as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credential</th>
<th>Type Code</th>
<th>Years Valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative I: Elementary or Secondary Principal (effective 1980 and 1987)</td>
<td>83/84</td>
<td>Five years of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative (effective 1999)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>99 years of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative I (effective 7/20/2007)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Five years of service beginning 1/1/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Administrative Director</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>99 years of service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Provisional Administrative I certificate holders:

| Provisional Administrative I (effective 6/30/2011) | 72 | Although a provisional certificate is issued with a five-year validity period, certificate holders must complete additional statutory requirements within two years of service on the provisional certificate in order to retain the administrative certificate (see below). |

Within two years of employment as a principal, vice principal or assistant principal, the Provisional Administrative I certificate holder must either:
- Complete an approved administrator preparation program; and
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of school law by presenting evidence of satisfactory achievement on the praxis test required for administrative certification.

OR
- Provide proof of completion of an Introductory Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program approved by PDE; and
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of school law by presenting evidence of satisfactory achievement on the Praxis test required for administrative certification.

Provisional Administrative certificate holders who fail to complete the above requirements within the two-year period may have the provisional certificate annulled by PDE.

Who should I contact for specific questions regarding the validity of my Administrative I five-year Principal certificate?

- Go to www.education.pa.gov.
- Click Help & Contact Info at the bottom of the page.
- Click Submit a Ticket.
- Follow the Instructions.

What is a lapsed (or invalid) certificate?

- A certificate lapses when the valid calendar or service time period ends (as stated in CSPG #3) and the holder has not converted the certificate to the next level certificate.
- Service time is not counted until the certificate is issued and the educator officially begins an appropriate assignment.
- The educator may not be employed/perform service on a lapsed (or invalid) certificate.
- Emergency permits are not issued to lapsed certificate holders.

What is an inactive certificate?

- The certificate becomes inactive when a certified educator has not met the Act 48/Act 45 continuing professional development requirements within the five-year compliance period.
• Certificates can become inactive even when the educator is not employed on the certificate or when the educator is residing outside of Pennsylvania. Please see the Department’s Act 48/45 FAQ.
• A valid certificate must be maintained as active by completing approved continuing professional development requirements.

What service time must be counted against the certificate?

Service on a Level I certificate, in the following types of school entities/institutions or programs, is creditable toward Level II certification and is charged against the validity period of the Level I certificate:

• Public school district
• Intermediate unit (IU)
• Career and technical school (CTC or AVTS)
• Approved private school (APS).
• Pre-K Counts program (effective 2008-09 school year)
• State-owned schools:
  o Scotland School for Veterans Children
  o Scranton State School for the Deaf
• Correctional facilities providing secondary high school diploma programs for school-aged children
• Juvenile correctional facilities or county jails – when employed by a public school entity
• An alternative education after-school program when graduation credit is given

What other conditions affect whether or not my service time counts against my certificate validity?

Service time is not counted until the certificate is issued and the educator officially begins an assignment for which the certificate may be used according to certification policies (irrespective of contract, tenure, seniority pay, or retirement) in:

• The state of Pennsylvania
• A new or open vacancy (retirement, resignation, or death)
• A long-term substitute, single assignment for at least 70 days in which service is 50 percent or more of the school day and school week
• Service must be in the area of certification and/or the service must be under the scope of the certificate
• A part-time position in which service is equal to 50 percent or more of the school day and school week, e.g.:
  o 4 of 8 periods per school day
  o 2 ½ days per a five-day week
• A federal programs assignment
• Title I services as a teacher from a public school entity contracted to provide services to a private or registered non-public school
• A program area for which a person is permitted to hold any Level I certificate (e.g., alternative education, gifted enrichment, and in-school suspension)
• An ESL assignment on a School Program Specialist certificate (time is counted against the Instructional I certificate, not the ESL Program Specialist certificate)

Service time does not count against the validity of the certificate when the educator is:

• On approved leave of absence (maternity, medical, FMLA)
• Teaching only adults in correctional facilities
• Employed less than 50 percent of a day and week, e.g.:
  o 3 periods of an 8 period school day
  o 2 days per a five-day week
• Employed as a day-to-day substitute (20 days maximum in one single assignment)
• Employed under an emergency permit or Act 97 waiver
• Employed outside the mandated school year (extended school year or summer school)
• Serving on an Intern certificate (will not count against a Level I certificate)
• Employed in areas which are considered to be outside the educator’s certificate scope, e.g.: an elementary K-6 certified teacher teaches an 8th grade English class; a Physics teacher teaches an Earth & Space Science class
• Employed outside of a public school entity (MH/MR center, hospital, museum, business/industry)
• Employed in another state or foreign country

How do unsatisfactory ratings affect my certificate?

• Unsatisfactory service cannot be used for obtaining a Level II certificate.
• Unsatisfactory service does count against the validity of the Level I certificate.

What if I serve in a Pennsylvania private licensed academic school or a non-public, non-licensed school?

Service time in these school categories may be used for converting a Level I certificate to a Level II certificate. Service time accrued in these school categories is strictly optional service time and will not automatically count against the validity of the Level I certificate.

What if I serve in a Pennsylvania charter school?

• Service time as a principal or assistant principal will count against the validity of the Level I Administrative Certificate (additional PIL requirements may need to be met).
• Service time on the types of Level I certificates listed below will not count against the validity of the certificate in charter schools:
  o Instructional I
  o Educational Specialist I
  o Supervisory I

Note: Service time accrued on the Level I certificates listed above is strictly optional service time and may be used to meet Level II requirements.

How do I count my service time if I serve as a long-term substitute (Instructional or Educational Specialist) and do not work an entire school year?
The service time is counted as:

- 70 days in a single assignment in the certificate area served in one semester = ½ year
- 70 days in a single assignment in the certificate area served across 2 semesters = ½ year
- 70 days in a single assignment in the certificate area served in the 1st semester and 70 days in a single assignment in the certificate area served in the 2nd semester = 1 year
- Holidays, snow days, personal days and sick days are not considered.

If I am serving on an Administrative I (or Supervisory I) certificate, how is my service time calculated?

Effective February 2013, Administrative I Principal K-12 (& Supervisory I), service is counted as follows:

- For 10, 11, and 12 month contracts, SERVICE is counted based on hiring dates:
  - July 1 and September 30 = 1 year
  - October 1 and December 31 = ½ year
  - January 1 and March 31 = ½ year
  - April 1 and June 30 = 0 years
- Service counts against the Administrative I Principal K-12 certificate validity for:
  - Principal
  - Vice Principal
  - Assistant Principal
- Service does NOT count against Administrative I Principal K-12 certificate validity for:
  - Single-Area Supervisor
  - Curriculum & Instruction Supervisor
  - Pupil Personnel Services Supervisor
  - Dean of Students (administrative level)

If I am serving on one of the following certificates issued under the 1999 regulations, do I need to convert it to a Level II certificate?

- Administrative Principal K-12 certificate (type code 78)
- Supervisory certificate (type code 76)

No. These certificates were issued as 99-year permanent certificates. Other PIL requirements may apply for these Principal certificates.

What should be done if the school entity or the educator believes that their certificate is about to lapse or has already lapsed?

- Review the Validity Response Sheet (attached at end of this document).
- Review Basic Education Circular titled Lapsed Certificates, 12-1201, for further procedures.
- Contact the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality:
  - Go to www.education.pa.gov.
  - Click Help and Contact Info at the bottom of the page.
- Click Submit a Ticket.
- Follow the Instructions.

- Complete the Documentation Worksheet for Determining Certificate Validity only if you believe that you may have completed approximately five years of service or more. To find and print the form go to:
  - www.education.state.pa.us.
  - Click Teachers and Administrators.
  - Click Certifications.
  - Click Certification Fees and Forms.
  - Documentation Worksheet for Determining Certificate Validity.
- Fax worksheet to 717-783-6736, or scan and email to kturner@pa.gov.
  - The bureau may take approximately 30 days to review.
  - The bureau may call the school entity to clarify information.
  - An official determination letter will be sent to the contact person at the school entity and to the educator.
  - The call center may be contacted if necessary at 717-728-3224.

Can I apply for an extension of my certificate validity due to extenuating circumstances? Such as:
- Financial hardship
- Critical medical issues
- Family issues

No. There is no provision to extend the validity period on an Intern or Level I certificate for any reason.

If my certificate lapses and I do not convert it to a Level II immediately, do I have to enroll in a new college certificate program and meet new testing requirements?

No. To convert to a Level II certificate, you must finish the credit requirements and any required induction program.

References: CSPG #3 (June 1, 2014); CSPG #7 (February 1, 2013); BEC 12-1201, Lapsed Certificates; Chapter 49. 82-84, 92,102-104,142-143,152; 24 P.S. 11-1109.
Validity Response Sheet

Question 1: **Do the dates listed on my certificate indicate when the certificate will lapse or expire?**

**Responses 1:** The dates that are listed on your certificate do not list an expiration date or lapsing date. The certificate lists a type code, years valid (meaning how many service years may be accrued as explained on the certificate back), and the effective date (certificate issuance date). Intern certificates only lapse according to calendar time.

Question 2: **When will my certificate lapse or expire?**

**Responses 2A:** If you have not completed any service in Pennsylvania since your certificate was issued, then your certificate has not lapsed and you have not accrued service time counting against the certificate validity.

**Response 2B:** If you have accrued service in Pennsylvania since your certificate was issued, then you can read and follow the applicable steps below so that the bureau can assist you further in determining when your certificate will expire or lapse.

Question 3: **Do you have an official list of my service in Pennsylvania?**

**Response 3:** The bureau has access to various pieces of service information, but your Human Resources office has important additional information that is needed to complete the determination process.

Therefore, if you have questions regarding when your Level I certificate may expire or lapse, you need to take the applicable steps listed below to obtain the following pieces of information so that the Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality may assist you further in an expeditious manner.

**Steps to be completed by the educator in this process:**

- Name (former if necessary)
- PPID# - in order to verify your certificate titles and issuance dates
- The name of the school entity for each assignment served; for non-public schools, the specific address, including the county in which it is located
- Contact your former school entity Human Resources office for the following information:
  - The specific years you served with inclusive dates (example: 11/1/2000 to 6/15/2001)
  - The specific title of your teaching assignment including grade levels
  - Your status: full-time, long term substitute, half-time, part-time (40 percent, 60 percent), home school instructor, private tutor, home-bound instructor, contracted (name parties)
  - You should include inclusive dates of school board approved official leave:
    - Maternity
    - Medical
- FMLA
  
  o Notes: Day-to-day substituting does not count; single long term substitute assignments of 70 days or more should be listed with their inclusive dates.
  
  o If you were hired on an hourly wage rather than a salary, include official information of total hours served per semester and per school year. This information may be on record with a school entity payroll office.

**Question 4: When do I need to complete and send the official Documentation Worksheet for Determining Certificate Validity?**

- If you believe that you have completed approximately five years of service or more.
- This form is not used to determine if you are eligible for a Level II certificate.
- This form is used to determine whether or not your Level I certificate is about to lapse or has already lapsed.
- To print this form, go to the home page ([www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)).
  
  o Click on Certification Fees and Forms.
  
  o The page that opens will list Documentation Worksheet for Determining Certificate Validity.
  
  o Print this form with the directions.
- Have your Human Resources office complete this form.
  
  o If there are additional school entities where you accrued former service, contact them for an official letter of service that can be sent with the worksheet.
- Return this information to the bureau with your contact information marked “Attention: Validity.”
- The form may be faxed to 717-783-6736 or scanned and emailed to kturner@pa.gov.

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