

Certificates and Certificate Status: What do They Mean?

Certification Verification Cards

Every year the College mails out certification confirmation cards to new certificate holders and to those certificate holders who have paid their annual fees. The bulk of these cards are mailed in July, following the June 30 deadline for paying annual fees. These cards are issued to show that, at the time of issue, the certificate holder was in good standing and the certificate was valid. These cards are therefore simply a snapshot taken at a particular point in time.

More accurate is the public register on the College website. It shows the current status of any certificate holder. A change to the status of a certificate holder will show on the website within approximately 24 hours of the change being made. However, due to privacy concerns, the public register cannot distinguish between educators who have the same name, a relatively common occurrence when the register holds nearly 100,000 names. If employers cannot positively identify the certificate holder from the public register, they should contact the College. Also, if a discipline matter is before the College, the register cannot be changed until such time as the case is concluded through a hearing or by agreement and a disciplinary outcome is imposed. Employers should again contact the College directly if there are any concerns regarding a potential employee.

However, even the public register may not tell an employer whether or not an applicant for employment has actually received a certificate as a new member of the profession. A certificate may be issued with a validity date one or two months in the future. These members-to-be will not be listed on the website until the validity date is reached. Therefore, for new certificate holders, it is best to ask for a copy of the newly-issued certificate.

Practising and Non-Practising Status

All valid BCCT certificates will fall into one of two categories, practising and non-practising. Non-practising status can be conferred voluntarily on certificate holders provided they agree that they will not accept employment in BC in a K-12 school system, or any other system that leads to BC graduation or for which a teaching certificate is required. Whenever the certificate holder wishes to return to practising status and therefore be eligible to accept employment, they simply pay the extra fees online and return to practising status immediately, though the public register, because it is synchronized every night, may take up to 24 hours to show the change.

As employers, all your certified employees must be in the practising category. If you have employees who are not in the practising category, they may be in violation of their non-practising undertaking and may have breached the Standards. No one should be employed while on non-practising status and an employer who hires a non-practising certificate holder may also be in breach of the Standards.

The public register provides information related to practising status. When employers upload their lists of employees or submit lists for the purposes of paying the annual College fee, the College will send reports back to the districts to inform them of any non-practising employees who appear on the list. It is then up to the employer, in accordance with the School Act, to ensure that the status is corrected by having the employee upgrade to practising status. This can be done on the Members' Area of the website by paying the difference in the fee.

Valid and Invalid Standing

Certificate holders on the public register are categorized as either valid or invalid. If a registrant is categorized as invalid it may mean that a certificate has

1. expired, that is the certificate had a termination date that has now passed, or
2. been cancelled for non-payment of fees, or
3. been suspended or cancelled through the discipline process.

In order to determine which situation applies to an employee or an applicant for employment, the employer must contact the College. In the near future, if a certificate has been suspended or cancelled through the discipline process, the public register will link to the discipline record of the certificate holder. However, this service is not available now. I will be in touch with you once the new process is available.

Eligible and Ineligible Status

If a certificate is invalid, it will also be ineligible to be either practicing or non-practising. In other words, the designation of practicing or non-practising has no meaning when a certificate is invalid. However there are very rare situations in which a certificate will be valid but the status is ineligible. This occurs when a certificate holder makes an undertaking with the College that they will not use their certificate for employment.