



# PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

Date: March 20, 2012

Number: 12-03

Subject: Applying for a Certificate of Clearance

## Summary

An individual who is enrolled in a preliminary teacher preparation program must hold a Certificate of Clearance (COC) prior to beginning daily student teaching or serving as an intern. This alert is a reminder that it is essential that each individual apply for the COC early in the process of applying to the preparation program or immediately upon acceptance. The COC is also required prior to participation in a field experience for both teaching and services credential programs.

## Background

The Certificate of Clearance is a document issued by the Commission to an individual who has completed the Commission's fingerprint and character and identification process, whose moral and professional fitness has been shown to meet the standards as established by law. The Certificate of Clearance provides no authorization, only verification that the holder has completed a professional fitness review. An individual enrolled in a California educator preparation program must obtain a Certificate of Clearance prior to beginning their student teaching or practicum. A COC is valid for five (5) years.

The application for a COC involves the applicant submitting fingerprints through LiveScan and responding to a number of Professional Fitness questions. The applicant's fingerprints are reviewed by both the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). If the individual has any reports of arrest or conviction in these databases, that information is returned to the Commission. In addition, the individual responds either "Yes" or "No" to a number of Professional Fitness Questions.

- If the applicant responds "No" to all of the Professional Fitness questions and there has been no report of arrest or conviction from either the DOJ or FBI, the COC is issued to the individual.
- If the applicant responds "Yes" to any of the Professional Fitness questions on the application or one or more reports of arrest or conviction are returned to the Commission

by the DOJ or the FBI, the Commission's Division of Professional Practices will need to investigate prior to the COC being issued to the individual.

The investigation can take a number of months depending on the circumstances of the specific case and the current workload in the Division of Professional Practices. It is essential that approved preliminary teacher preparation programs (and other educator preparation programs where individuals must hold a COC prior to providing services in the public schools) advise applicants and candidates to apply for the COC well in advance of when student teaching, the internship, or service in the public schools is expected to begin. In addition, the Commission recommends that every program advise applicants about the duty to accurately and fully answer the Professional Fitness questions. An application is signed under penalty of perjury and providing false or misleading information could be cause for denial of the application.

Some teacher preparation programs are now requiring applicants to hold a COC as part of the application process, and are not accepting a candidate officially into the preparation program until the COC has been issued. In addition, many employers are requiring candidates to hold a COC when the candidate visits the public schools early in the preparation program either as an observer or for early field experience.

### ***Reminder***

A common mistake that applicants make is that instead of applying for a Certificate of Clearance (COC), the individual applies for the document he or she is planning to earn upon completion of the teacher preparation or services program. Please remind your applicants that the current COC costs \$27.50 and if the fee is more than \$27.50 then the individual has selected the wrong item.

**Source:** *Education Code sections 44320(d) and 44324*

### **References**

#### ***Approval of Regulations Pertaining to the Certificate of Clearance and Fee***

Coded Correspondence 07-07: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/notices/coded/0707/0707.pdf>

#### ***Online Direct Application for Certificates of Clearance on the Web***

Coded Correspondence 06-0016:

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/notices/coded/060016/060016.pdf>

#### ***Online Look-up - to view the status of an application***

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/lookup.html>

#### ***Educator Misconduct: Frequently Asked Questions.*** <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-discipline/FAQ.html>

#### ***Certificate of Clearance Informational Leaflet***

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl900.pdf>

#### ***Fee Informational Leaflet***

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl659.pdf>

### **Contact Information**

Questions regarding submitting an application for a Certificate of Clearance

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