

Frequently Asked Questions About Emerit Professional Certification

GENERAL INQUIRIES

Q: What is Emerit Professional Certification?

Emerit Certification is a recognition process for tourism employees. It tests an employee's level of competence, based on their knowledge of the skills required for their specific occupation and demonstration of these skills on the job.

Q: Who developed Certification and who administers the process now?

*Alberta first developed Certification in 1988 and the process has been adopted and recognized by all provinces and territories. It is coordinated on the national level by the Ottawa based Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC) and is administered in B.C. by **go2**.*

Q: What are the steps in the Certification process?

- ◆ *study the occupational standards for your occupation*
- ◆ *write a multiple-choice exam – on-line or paper-based*
- ◆ *meet a work experience requirement and review the performance skills*
- ◆ *be evaluated on-the-job during a performance evaluation*

Q: What do I get when I've completed the Certification process?

When you have successfully passed the steps listed above you will receive a national certificate and pin and the right to use an industry credential behind your name:

TCP- HRA – Tourism Certified Professional –e.g. Housekeeping/Room Attendant

TCS – Tourism Certified Supervisor

TCM – Tourism Certified Manager

Q: Do I have to be re-certified?

Not at this time, but in the future, because Professional Certification is now an industry registered credential, re-certification may be required.

Q: Which occupations are open for Certification in B.C.?

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ◆ Banquet Server | ◆ Food & Beverage Server | ◆ Tour Guide |
| ◆ Bartender | ◆ Food & Beverage Manager | ◆ Reservations Sales Agent |
| ◆ Campground Operator | ◆ Freshwater Angling Guide | ◆ Sales Manager |
| ◆ Casino Dealer | ◆ Front Desk Agent | ◆ Supervisor |
| ◆ Casino Slot Attendant | ◆ Guest Services Attendant | ◆ Tourism Trainer |
| ◆ Event Co-ordinator | ◆ Heritage Interpreter | ◆ Tourism Visitor/Info Counsellor |
| ◆ Event Manager | ◆ Housekeeping/Room Attendant | ◆ Wine Service |
| | ◆ Line Cook | |

Q: Do I have to be Professionally Certified?

No. Certification is a voluntary recognition process that encourages professional development in your chosen tourism occupation.

Q: What are the benefits of being Certified?

- ◆ *gives you a sense of pride and accomplishment*
- ◆ *validates your job as a career choice*
- ◆ *provides recognition as an industry professional*
- ◆ *sharpens existing skills and provides the opportunity to learn new ones*
- ◆ *demonstrates to potential employers the skills and commitment you bring to the job as an industry certified employee*
- ◆ *increases your professionalism which can lead to opportunities for advancement within a company*

Q: How long does it take to complete Professional Certification?

On average, within 3 to 12 months after you register.

Q: Do I have to finish Professional Certification in a year?

If you are actively trying to complete Certification, the time allowed to finish all the required steps is flexible. For example if you've written the exam and then move, change jobs or require medical care the process can be put on hold while you get reorganized. However, if you have not made any contact or completed any steps in the Certification process within one (1) year of registration, your registration will be made inactive. If you want to continue with Professional Certification after your registration has been made inactive, you will have to re-register, pay the current registration fee and begin the process again.

Q: What is the cost?

The current registration fee of \$315.00 for frontline occupations, \$400.00 for Supervisor and \$680.00 for Manager includes the national exam, performance evaluation, national pin and certificate. Study materials are optional – you may download the standards for free from the www.emerit.ca website or purchase the workbook(s) or on-line modules.

Q: Who else is getting Professionally Certified?

Human Resource Organizations in 9 provinces and 2 territories administer the Professional Certification program for over 25 tourism professions.

Q: Is Certification a program and how is it different from a course at a post-secondary institution or a funded program?

Professional Certification is a recognition/credentialing process that acknowledges your work experience (through a time requirement), knowledge (through a written exam) and job performance (through an on-the-job evaluation). You may take a program through a post-secondary institution or funded program that is based on the national standards and includes the certification exam but you can not be certified until you have worked in the industry, met the work experience requirements and been evaluated on-the-job.

- Q: If I have graduated from a hospitality program am I already certified?**
No, Professional Certification is awarded nationally through go2 and the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC). A certificate or diploma is granted by the institution where the program was completed.
- Q I've never worked in the industry but want to, will Certification get me a job?**
With Certification you need to be working in the occupation in order to meet the work experience requirement and complete the process. However, you can study and write the exam before you get a job. This will give you thorough knowledge of the occupation you would like to do and show your potential employer that you are committed and serious about professionalism.
- Q: I've worked in the industry for several years and have my work experience hours but I'm not working right now, can I still register for Certification?**
You could register for the Occupational Knowledge Exam, the first step of certification, and then when you're employed and settled in your new job register for the Performance Evaluation and complete the process.

WRITTEN EXAM INQUIRIES

- Q: What is the Occupational Knowledge Exam?**
The Occupational Knowledge Exam tests your knowledge of the skills required to perform a specific occupation. Upon successful completion of the exam you will receive a national certificate and have credit towards Professional Certification.
- Q: Do I have to have work experience or be working to write the exam?**
No.
- Q: What does it cost if I just want to write the exam and not register for Certification?**
The cost is \$115.00 for a paper-based or an on-line exam. To study for the exam you can download the occupational standards for free from the www.emerit.ca website or purchase the occupation specific workbook(s).
- Q: What if I change my mind, can I register for Certification later?**
Yes, you can pay the evaluation fee and switch your registration to full Certification. However, this must be done within a reasonable time frame because if the standards have been updated and there is a new certification process in place since you wrote your exam, you would then need to write the new exam so you are in the most current certification process.
- Q: What is the exam like?**
The exam is multiple-choice and you are asked to choose the best answer from four (4) choices. All the questions are taken from the occupational standards and you can write the exam either paper-based or on-line.

Q: How long do I have to write the exam?
You have up to four hours to complete the exam. If you need to have the exam given orally a longer time limit is allowed. The average time to write is between 1½ and 2½ hours.

Q: Where can I write the exam - do I have to travel to your office or can I write the exam at home?
You will need to have a person in authority proctor the exam for you and we have a variety of locations around the province to write at. We can also work with your employer or instructor to have you write your exam there.

Q: How many questions are there?
Each occupation varies in number between 100 to 150.

| Occupation | Exam Questions |
|--|----------------|
| Bartender | 100 |
| Campground Operator | 150 |
| Casino Dealer | 100 |
| Casino Slot Attendant | 100 |
| Director of Sales & Marketing | 110 |
| Event Co-ordinator | 100 |
| Event Manager | 100 |
| Food & Beverage Manager | 100 |
| Food & Beverage Server/Banquet Server | 100 |
| Freshwater Angling Guide | 100 |
| Front Desk Agent | 150 |
| Guest Services Attendant | 100 |
| Heritage Interpreter | 100 |
| Housekeeping/Room Attendant | 100 |
| Hunting Guide | 100 |
| Line Cook | 100 |
| Local Tour Guide | 100 |
| Reservations Sales Agent | 100 |
| Sales Manager | 100 |
| Taxicab Driver | 100 |
| Tour Director | 100 |
| Tourism Essentials | 80 |
| Tourism Trainer | 150 |
| Tourism/Visitor Information Counsellor | 100 |
| Wine Service | 100 |

Q: If I fail the exam, can I write again?
Yes, the re-write fee is \$40.00 for paper-based and \$20.00 for on-line. You can re-write as many times as you need to pass.

Q: What if I have problems reading/writing English?
The exam can be given orally in English and is also available in both English and French for the written exam. The exam is also available on-line orally for Bartender, Food & Beverage Server, Freshwater Angling Guide, Housekeeping Room Attendant, Hunting Guide, Line Cook and Tourism Essentials.

Q: If I'm enrolled in Certification, do I have to write the exam first or can I be evaluated first?
The exam is completed first. If you don't pass the exam you can be evaluated before re-writing but you must then re-write and pass the exam before you can be certified.

WORK EXPERIENCE INQUIRIES

Q: Does work experience count?
Yes! In order to become certified, you must have a minimum amount of work experience in your specific occupation. Volunteer hours and job practicum's count the same as paid work experience, as long as you are performing the required skills.

| Occupation | Requirement |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Banquet Server | 600 hours |
| Bartender | 600 hours |
| Campground Operator | 2 years |
| Casino Dealer | 6 months |
| Casino Slot Attendant | 3 months or 500 hours |
| Director of Sales & Marketing | 1 year |
| Event Co-ordinator | 1500 hours |
| Event Manager | 3500 hours + Event Coordinator |
| Food & Beverage Manager | 2 years in the Food Industry 1 year as a Supervisor |
| Food & Beverage Server | 500 hours |
| Freshwater Angling Guide | 60 field days |
| Front Desk Agent | 1000 hours |
| Guest Services Attendant | 600 hours |
| Heritage Interpreter | 900 hours |
| Housekeeping/Room Attendant | 500 hours |
| Hunting Guide | 60 field days |
| Line Cook | 6 months or 600 hours |
| Local Tour Guide | 15 tours over 2 years or 60 hrs. |
| Reservations Sales Agent | 500 hours |
| Sales Manager | 1 year |
| Taxicab Driver | 6 months |
| Tour Director | 4 tours over minimum 28 days |

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| Tourism Trainer | 1500 hours |
| Tourism/Visitor Information Counsellor | 400 hours |
| Wine Service | 500 hours + BAR/FBS exam |

- Q: How far back can I go with my work experience?**
Work experience within the last five years is recognized. It's important that your experience is current because the hospitality industry changes so rapidly.
- Q: What kind of experience counts?**
Your experience must be in a position where you are actually performing the skills required for your occupation. For example with Food & Beverage Servers you must be performing table service, i.e. taking orders, providing menu knowledge, serving food and presenting guest cheques.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION INQUIRIES

- Q: What is a performance evaluation?**
An Industry Evaluator will come to your workplace to observe you on-the-job. They have a very specific list of skills from the standards that they need to observe. Depending on the occupation, the evaluation is carried out through one or more of the following processes: incognito observation; direct observation; interview; case study or role-play. In many cases you will not know you are being evaluated.
- Q: Who is an Industry Evaluator and what kind of experience and training do they have?**
Evaluators are trained, industry professionals committed to professional development. They are either certified in an occupation or have passed the written exam and completed a 1-day training seminar.
- Q: Do I have to know how to perform everything in the standards even if it's not part of my job?**
Yes. Professional certification recognizes tourism employees for having a wide range of knowledge and skills in a particular occupation. Although you may not perform all the skills in your present job, you must still know and be able to demonstrate the required skills during an interview. The reason for this is that you may not always work where you do now and if you are certified your new employer will expect you to be able to perform the skills assigned to your occupation.
- Q: How will the Industry Evaluator behave?**
Evaluators behave as a normal customer and objectively observe you under normal working conditions. They will not set up a situation to trick you or ask you to perform any duties that are different from the standards. If you suddenly become swamped with customers they will take that into consideration.

- Q: If our house policy is different than the standards, will I fail?**
No. House policies always take precedent. You will be asked to perform or describe the skill to the industry standard in a brief interview with the Evaluator.
- Q: What will I receive after the evaluation?**
You will receive a letter with the Evaluator's comments and if you are successful you will receive the national certificate and pin.
- Q: How long will it take to receive the results?**
On average it will be between 3-4 weeks before you receive the comments in the Mail for paper based exams and a few days for online exams
- Q: What if I fail or disagree with the Industry Evaluator's comments?**
You can submit an appeal to go2 along with the \$100.00 review fee. Your appeal will be reviewed and if it is awarded in your favour, the \$100.00 fee will be refunded to you.
- Q: If I fail and agree with the Industry Evaluator's decision can I still be re-evaluated?**
Yes. The re-evaluation cost is \$100.00. A different Industry Evaluator, one who has no knowledge that you were ever evaluated and failed, will evaluate you.
- Q: Now that I'm "Certified" is there anything else I can do?**
If you have successfully passed all the evaluation skills you have the opportunity to be trained as an Industry Evaluator.
- Q: What are the benefits of being an evaluator?**
- ◆ *opportunity to observe a wide variety of properties and service styles*
 - ◆ *improve your observation and writing skills*
 - ◆ *make a difference in your industry and promote professionalism*
 - ◆ *be recognized by management for your commitment*