

How is a complaint dealt with?

Before acting on a complaint, the superintendent will assess whether the complaint actually involves an issue of competence. If so, the superintendent will initiate an investigation after having advised both the complainant and the teacher involved.

The superintendent must report to the executive secretary of the Association if the superintendent concludes that

- a) the teacher is failing to meet the Teaching Quality Standard;
- b) the Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy has been followed; and
- c) the teacher's suitability for certification is in question,

That action will trigger a hearing by a hearing committee drawn from the Association's Professional Practice Review Committee.

A hearing committee is composed of two classroom teachers, one principal or vice-principal, one central office administrator and a member of the public. Hearings are generally open to the public.

If the superintendent concludes that there is no basis to question the teacher's professional competence, the process terminates, unless the complainant requests a review of that decision. Such a request must be submitted in writing to the executive secretary of the Association and must include reasons and a payment of \$250. The decision would then be reviewed by the Association's Professional Practice Complainant Appeal Committee and the committee will either uphold the superintendent's decision or order a hearing.

What happens to an incompetent teacher?

If the hearing committee of the Professional Practice Review Committee finds that a teacher's practice does not meet the Teaching Quality Standard, it may cancel or suspend the teacher's membership in the Association, recommend that the minister of education cancel or suspend the teacher's teaching certificate or make any other order it considers appropriate. Before a decision is handed down, a teacher may voluntarily request that his or her certificate be cancelled.

Decisions of a hearing committee of the Professional Practice Review Committee may be appealed to the Professional Practice Appeal Committee.

How are teachers' rights protected?

Every teacher has the right to be treated fairly. A teacher who is subject to practice review will be informed at each stage of the process and may request representation by the Association in accordance with Association policy. The entire process must abide by principles of due process and natural justice.

For assistance and further information about practice review, contact Member Services at 780-447-9400 (Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta).

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Practice REVIEW

*Alberta's teachers
upholding standards of
professional competence*



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

Why Practice Review?

On any school day, more than 36,000 teachers across Alberta practise their profession with skill and dedication. Unfortunately, there are also a very small number of teachers who may not meet the Teaching Quality Standard—the expectations set out for teachers' practice of their profession.

Practice review is a means of assessing the professional practice of teachers who are active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association whose professional competence has been called into question. Practice review is about protecting students, maintaining public confidence in Alberta's schools and upholding the integrity of the teaching profession.

Is practice review new?

Practice review is not new. Previously, the minister of education was responsible for dealing with concerns about teachers' professional practice.

Currently, responsibility for practice review of teachers who are active members of the Alberta Teachers' Association rests with the Association. The minister retains responsibility for reviewing the practice of teachers working in private and charter schools.

How is competent professional practice defined?

The expectations for teachers' professional practice are set out in Alberta Education's Teaching Quality Standard.

The Teaching Quality Standard defines the knowledge, skills and attributes that all teachers are expected to demonstrate as they complete their professional preparation, enter the profession and progress through their careers.

Alberta Education's Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5 supports and reinforces the Teaching Quality Standard by setting out basic expectations for monitoring teachers' professional practice. Each school board will have its own local approach but must still abide by the provincial policy.

More information about Policy 2.1.5 can be found on the Association's website, www.teachers.ab.ca, and on Alberta Education's site at www.education.alberta.ca.

The Association also offers a variety of online resources, tools and professional development programs to help teachers improve their professional practice.

What constitutes incompetent professional practice?

Incompetent professional practice is defined by the inability of a teacher to consistently meet the requirements of the Teaching Quality Standard.

This goes beyond unsatisfactory performance, which might relate to a failure to meet expectations in one particular aspect of teaching practice or in a particular circumstance. In such cases, the appropriate response would be to help the teacher improve his or her practice, offer a more appropriate teaching assignment or seek some remedy other than practice review.

Similarly, if a teacher fails to demonstrate competent professional practice because of an underlying medical condition, this is a matter to be dealt with as a medical disability.

Who can make a complaint and to whom is it made?

Any person can make a complaint concerning the professional competence of a teacher to that teacher's superintendent.

In addition, a superintendent who has reasonable grounds to question the professional competence of a teacher may initiate an investigation.