

MERIT—Frequently Asked Questions

Washington’s Professional Development Registry



<https://del.wa.gov/providers-educators/merit>

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General MERIT Questions

1. What is MERIT?

MERIT (Managed Education and Registry Information Tool) is Washington's professional development workforce registry system. MERIT is a system of record that helps professionals in the field of early care and education:

- Keep track of their education and training experience
- Find training opportunities by state-approved trainers
- Share their qualifications with current and future employers
- Complete a portable background check application
- Be recognized and receive awards for their professional achievements

2. How do I contact MERIT?

Contact DEL's registry support staff at MERIT@del.wa.gov or call 1.866.482.4325 and choose option 5. Registry staff is available for support Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM. The registry team is committed to responding to your messages within 24 hours. If you contact us on a Friday and we are not able to get back to you within the business day, we will return your message the following Monday.

3. Who should join MERIT?

Washington's professional development registry is designed to support professionals that work with young children and their families in an early care & education or school-age setting. The professional development registry also supports professionals who work with the adults that provide that care. This includes:

- Licensed Family Child Care Home professionals
- Licensed Child Care Center professionals
- School-Age Center professionals
- Head Start professionals
- Early Care and Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) professionals
- State Approved Trainers

4. What are the benefits of joining MERIT?

DEL is working to increase the quality of early care & education and school-age programs around the state. Quality is directly related to a knowledgeable and skilled workforce and Washington’s professional development registry emphasizes the significance of this profession in children and family’s lives. MERIT provides information on career pathways for continued growth and a formalized system to recognize professional development. Washington’s professional development registry allows our state’s system to:

- Monitor Licensing Requirements to keep children and families safe
- Keep track of educators’ ongoing education and training
- Identify gaps and patterns on a regional and state level by evaluating data that is confidentially collected in MERIT
- Raise awareness of the workforce issues that impact early care & education and school-age programs

In MERIT you can:

- Verify and document your education and training experiences
- Share qualifications with current and future employers
- Plan your future education and career goals
- Use verified qualifications to apply for employment or participate in quality initiatives around the state
- Count yourself as a professional in early care & education and school-age services in Washington

5. What do I do if I don’t have access to a computer or the Internet?

We encourage all professionals to complete MERIT records and applications online. If you do not have access to a computer, contact your local library or child care resource & referral agency to find out more about public computer usage. If you are not familiar with computer technology please contact MERIT support at merit@del.wa.gov or at 1-866-482-4325 Option 5.

6. How can I register in MERIT and create my professional record?

Visit <http://merit.del.wa.gov> and select “Sign in or Register” to begin the registration process. For detailed instructions, follow the steps outlined here: <https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ProfessionalDevelopment/Registration%20Information.pdf>.

7. What do I do if I disagree with a decision on a MERIT application?

DEL takes all appeals and concerns seriously and all appeals are handled in a confidential manner. The following items can be appealed if a professional is not satisfied with the decisions provided by the professional development registry team:

- Education application decision
- Continuing education proposal decision
- Denial of trainer application or assigned trainer level
- Denial of training

Updating your Professional Record

8. How do I add employment to my professional record?

You can add your employment in your MERIT account under the “Professional Record” tab. Please follow these instructions to add your employment:

From the Professional Record tab:

- Scroll down to the “Early Care & Education/School-Age Employment Information” section.
- Click on the “+ Click here to add Employment” button.
 - Under “Program(s)” check the box of the population you are serving.
 - Pick your “Job Title”.
 - Search for the Facility/Site by Name or by the Provider/Organization ID.
 - Verify the address and click the blue “Select” button.
 - Enter in your “Employment Start Date”. Do not enter in the “Employment End Date” if still employed.
 - Press the “Save” button.

Once you add your employment your employer will see your information in their “Facility/Site” tab. Once your employment is added your employer will need to confirm your employment status.

9. How do I update my employment?

You can change your job title in your MERIT account under the “Professional Record” sub tab. Please follow these instructions to change your job title:

From the Professional Record tab:

- Scroll down to the “Early Care & Education/School-Age Employment Information” section.
- Click on the  button next to your current employment.
 - Under the box “Employment End Date” enter in your last day in your current role.
 - Click the blue “Save” button.
- Click on the “+ Click here to add Employment” button.
 - Under “Program(s)” check the box of the population you are serving.
 - Pick your “Job Title”.
 - Search for the Facility/Site by Name or by the Provider/Organization ID.
 - Verify the address and click the blue “Select” button.
 - Enter in your “Employment Start Date”. Do not enter in the “Employment End Date” if still employed.
 - Press the blue “Save” button.

Once you add your employment your employer will see your information in their “Facility/Site” tab. Once your employment is added your employer will need to confirm your employment status.

10. How do I add Health and Safety information to my professional record?

Your Health and Safety Information can be self-entered on the “Professional Record” page. In order to add your Health and Safety Information please follow these instructions:

- Login to MERIT.
- Click on the “My Record” tab.
- Click on the “Professional Record” sub tab.
- Scroll down to the “Health and Safety Information” section.
- Click on the blue “+ Click here to add Health and Safety Information” button.
 - Choose your “Training Type”.
 - Enter your “Completed Date”.
 - Enter your “Expiration Date” if applicable.
 - Click on the orange “Save” button.

Your employer can confirm your Health and Safety Trainings in their Facility/Site tab.

11. How is training added to my MERIT professional record?

A State-Approved Trainer is required to add a training to your MERIT account within 30 days of the completion date. If the training is not listed on your MERIT account within 30 days of the completion date please reach out to the Trainer to request that the training be listed on your MERIT account.

Please follow these instructions to find the Trainer’s contact information if needed:

- Login to MERIT.
- Click on the “Find Training” tab.
- Click on the blue “Trainers >>” button in the “Find State-Approved Trainers” box.
- Enter the first and last name of the trainer listed on the certificate.
- Click on the blue “Search” button.
- You can either call or email the trainer using the information listed on this page.

If you are unable to contact the State Approved Trainer that delivered the training, please contact the Training Team at training@del.wa.gov.

Child Care Licensees

12. How do I register my child care facility?

Log into your MERIT account and select the “Applications” tab. From there, select “Facility Registration”. Complete the required fields.

For detailed instructions, see [Facility Registration Guide](#).

13. How do add an additional designee to my facility?

Sign into MERIT and select the “Facility/Site” tab at the top of the page. From the employee roster, select the “edit” icon to the right of the employee that you want to appoint as your designee. Check the box that reads “Allow user to apply for Additional Designee”, then click “Save”.

Once you select the employee you want to designate as the Additional Designee, they will need to log into their MERIT account and finish the process. From the “Applications” tab, select the “Facility/Site” registration and complete the steps.

For detailed instructions, see [Facility/Site Access: Additional Designee](#).

14. How do I confirm my staff’s employment in MERIT?

Sign into MERIT and select the “Facility/Site” tab. Within the employee roster, select the “Edit” icon to the right of the staff member that you want to confirm employment for. Check the “Confirmed” box and then click save.

For detailed instructions, see [Employment Confirmation](#).

Portable Background Check

15. How do I submit a Portable Background Check application?

You must have a STARS ID Number before applying for a Portable Background Check application. Please verify that your first name, last name, date of birth, and gender matches what is listed on your ID. If your information in MERIT doesn't match your ID please send a copy of your ID to merit@del.wa.gov. Please follow these instructions to submit a Portable Background Check:

- Login to MERIT.
- Click on the "My Applications" tab.
- Click on the blue link labeled "Portable Background Check".
- Complete and submit the application.
- Pay the \$12 fee.

Once you pay the Portable Background Check fee you will receive a fingerprint email in 3-5 days. If you do not receive the fingerprint email within this timeframe please contact our Background Check Team at backgroundcheck@del.wa.gov.

16. Can an employer pay for their employees' Portable Background Check application?

If you need to pay for an employee's Portable Background Check you can do this on your "Facility/Site" tab in your MERIT account. Please follow these instructions:

- Login to MERIT.
- Click on the "Facility/Site" tab.
- Within this tab, click on the "Make PBC Payments" tab.
- Select the checkbox beside the names of the employees you wish to pay for then click 'Pay by electronic check' to be directed to US Bank or 'Pay by credit/debit card' to be directed to Payeezy to complete the transaction.

17. How do I print out my Portable Background Check certificate?

If you have a cleared Portable Background Check you can print out your certificate by follow these instructions:

- Login to your MERIT account.
- Go to the "My Record" tab.
- Go to the "Professional Record" sub tab.
- Find the box labeled "Personal Data". In the box you will see your username. Underneath your username you will see your Portable Background Check information. Underneath that you will see a blue link labeled "Click here to view and print your Portable Background Check Certificate". Please click on this link and you will be able to print out your certificate.

Education Verification

18. How do I verify my education in MERIT and receive an education award?

Log into your MERIT account and select the “My Education” tab. Next, select “Complete my Education Application” and enter in your information. For detailed instructions, follow the steps outlined here: https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ProfessionalDevelopment/Complete_your_Education_Application_in_MERIT.pdf.

Reminder: All former names listed on your degrees, diplomas, certificates, and transcripts must be listed in your MERIT account.

19. What if I earned my education in a country besides the United States?

Follow the steps outlined here to determine if your education needs to be evaluated: https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ProfessionalDevelopment/Completing_the_Education_Application_for_Foreign_Degrees.pdf

State Approved Trainer

20. Can I register as a State Approved Trainer in MERIT if I’m a K-12 or higher education teacher?

If you teach for the K-12 system, ESD or higher education, you can register as a state-approved trainer. Follow these steps to get started:

1. Log into MERIT and click on the "Applications" tab.
2. Select the State Approved Trainer Application.
3. Choose either Higher Education Trainer or K-12/ESD Educator, and then proceed with the registration pages.

Download the [K-12/ESD](#) or [Higher Education](#) Employment Verification form.

21. How do I complete the conference/special events application?

Log into MERIT and select the “Applications” tab. From there, click on “Conference/Special Event Application”. Complete the required fields. For detailed instructions, see [Conference/Special Event Guide](#).

State-Approved Training

22. How can I find training in MERIT?

Log into [MERIT](#) and click on the “Find Training” tab or the “Search MERIT” tab. You can search for training by a variety of methods, i.e. training date, location, age group focus, training delivery method, or trainer. All trainings and trainers listed in MERIT are state-approved for STARS training.

23. Is there financial assistance to help with the cost of training?

DEL offers reimbursement for State Approved Training costs for professionals currently employed in DEL licensed or certified facilities on a first-come, first-serve basis. To see if you qualify and instructions on how to apply,

view: https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ProfessionalDevelopment/MERIT_Facility_Registration.pdf

24. Can I receive STARS hours for college coursework?

You may receive STARS credit for college coursework that is taken directly from the early childhood department of an accredited institution of higher education. Each quarter credit is accepted for 10 STARS hours; each semester credit is accepted for 15 STARS hours. To request that this information be added to your continuing education training history, please send a signed request to DEL that includes your STARS ID, a copy of your transcripts, and an official course description. Your transcripts must include your name, the college/university name, dates of courses completed and credits earned. Official descriptions can include copies of the course catalog or a course syllabus; handwritten descriptions are not accepted.

Contact Information

MERIT mailing address:

Department of Early Learning
Attn: MERIT
PO Box 40970
Olympia, WA 98504-0970

Mailing address for educational documents such as transcripts:

Centralia College CFS
Attn: MERIT
600 Centralia College Blvd
Centralia, WA 98531-4035

Other methods of contact:

Website: merit.del.wa.gov
Email: merit@del.wa.gov
Phone: 1.866.482.4325, option 5