

Editing—Certified

Preparing for the Editors Canada Professional Certification Tests

Certification Steering Committee

June 10, 2017



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Certification Step by Step

1. Know what professional certification is —and isn't
2. Register
3. Prepare
4. Pack up and get ready
5. Write
6. Celebrate!

Know What Professional Certification Is— and Isn't



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Certificate Program vs. Certification

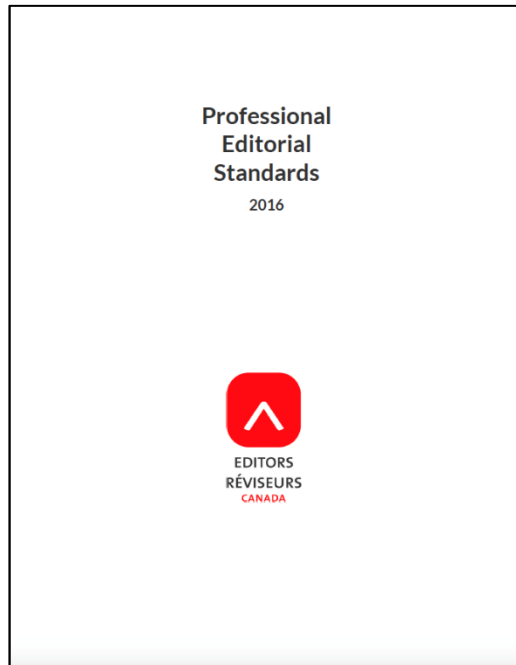
Certificate Program	Certification
Training	Professional designation
Demonstrates education in a particular field	Demonstrates ability to apply training and knowledge
Open to newcomers and experienced professionals	Aimed at experienced professionals
Indicates completion of a set course or series of courses	Indicates skill mastery, as measured against a set of standards
Involves completing program requirements	Involves passing an exam
Awarded by an educational institution	Administered by a professional association
—	Includes credential maintenance, to ensure that professionals stay current in their fields through continuing education

Editors Canada Professional Certification

- Program launched in 2006
 - For editors of written material who work in English
 - Open to Editors Canada members and non-members
- Credentials give editors official recognition of the excellence of their knowledge and skills
- To earn a credential, a candidate must pass a test
- Ongoing professional development is required of those who hold one or more credentials

Editors Canada

Professional Editorial Standards



- Regularly updated and widely available
 - Revised in 2016
 - Available for free download at www.editors.ca
- A checklist for what editors do
 - Outlines the knowledge and skills an editor must have to edit at a professional level with minimal supervision
 - Applies to editing in all print media
- The basis for Editors Canada's Professional Certification Program

Why Certify?

- Provides objective proof of excellence
 - To yourself
 - To your peers
 - To employers and clients
- Provides professional development
 - Allows you to identify strengths and any gaps in your knowledge and skills
- Provides differentiation
 - Helps you distinguish yourself from your competition
- Attests to your professionalism as an editor
- Enhances the status of editing as a profession

Editing Experience and Professional Certification

- Experience in editing is an important part of *readiness* to take the tests, but doesn't guarantee that you'll pass
- A professional credential is proof of your ability to apply the national occupational standards for editing
- Preparation is your key to success

Sample Question 1

For which of the following is permission for use definitely NOT required?

- a) A half-page excerpt from a paper in an online journal, quoted in an academic essay
- b) A three-line poem, quoted in its entirety by a character in a novel
- c) Ten lines from a 20-line poem, quoted by the writer of a book review
- d) Two verses of a popular song recorded in the last two years, quoted in a teachers' resource guide

Register



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Are You Ready?

- There are no formal prerequisites
- Editors Canada recommends that you have at least five years of full-time experience
- Consider your own situation:
 - Full-time or part-time as an editor?
 - Freelance or in-house? (Professional certification is valuable for both)
 - Breadth of experience?
 - Variety of media?

Who Can Take the Tests?

- Anyone is welcome to take the professional certification tests
 - Members or non-members
 - Canadians or non-Canadians
- The benefits of Editors Canada's Professional Certification Program are recognized worldwide
- You must travel to one of the Canadian cities where the tests are offered **OR** request permission to write a test elsewhere at least 10 weeks before the regular test date
- The program is designed to test the skills of editors working in Canada, but it is not limited to Canadian English
 - Most of the standards are common to editorial practices in other countries

Test Format

- There are four certification tests:
 - Structural editing
 - Stylistic editing
 - Copy editing
 - Proofreading
- Editors may be certified in one or more of these types of editing
- To earn the designation of certified professional editor (CPE), you must pass all four tests

Test Format (Continued)

- All tests follow the same format
- All tests are three hours long
- All tests are open-book
- Candidates can bring one dictionary, *Editing Canadian English*, and up to three style guides to the tests
- Candidates will receive a list of approved resources after registering

Test Format (Continued)

- **Part A (⅓ of marks)**
 - Short-answer, multiple-choice, true-or-false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank questions
 - Assesses knowledge of the fundamentals of editing (section A of *Professional Editorial Standards*)
- **Part B (⅔ of marks)**
 - A test passage preceded by a scenario that tells you what to do
 - Assesses knowledge and skills in the standards for the area of editing being tested: structural editing, stylistic editing, copy editing, or proofreading (sections B, C, D, or E of *Professional Editorial Standards*)
 - Involves using the Track Changes and Comment tools in Word on a PC for structural editing, stylistic editing, and copy editing; involves using hard-copy markup for proofreading
 - May include other tasks, such as writing a letter to an author or developing a style sheet

Upcoming Tests

- Saturday, November 18, 2017
 - Copy editing 10 am to 1 pm
 - Stylistic editing 2:30 to 5:30 pm
- November 2018 (date to be determined)
 - Proofreading
 - Structural editing
- Demand and resources permitting, tests will be offered in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax
- To write a test elsewhere, you must request permission in writing at least 10 weeks before the regular test date
- Registration opens in July

Sample Question 2

When setting a schedule for a publication, you must remember that:

- a) Copy editing occurs before proofreading
- b) Copy editing is less important than proofreading
- c) Copy editing occurs after proofreading
- d) Copy editing and proofreading take the same amount of time

Prepare

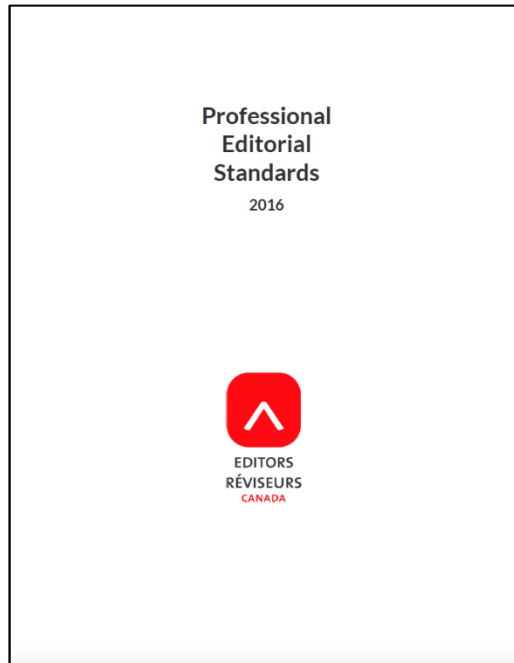


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Basic Preparation Materials

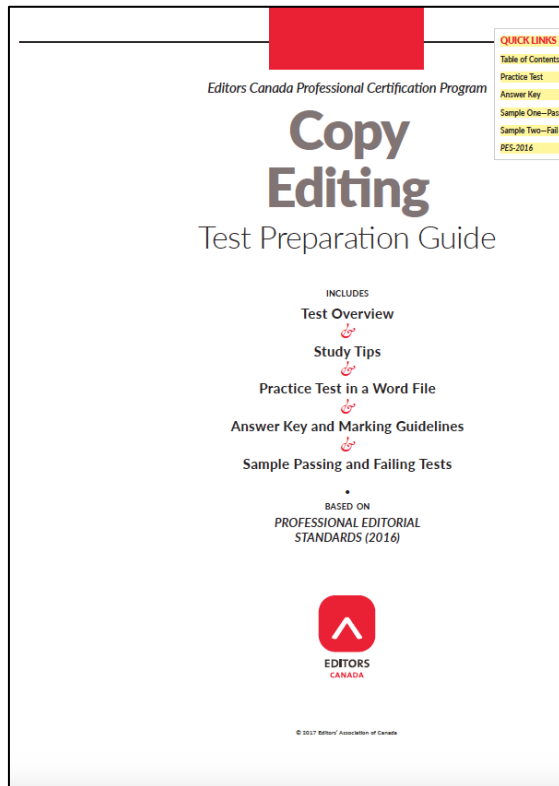
- *Professional Editorial Standards*
 - Start with an in-depth review of the standards that will be tested, assessing your ability to apply them
- Editors Canada *Test Preparation Guide*
 - Work through the document, taking the practice test and using the answer key to mark your test, then studying the sample passing and failing tests

Professional Editorial Standards



- Know what standards will be examined in the test you're registered to write
 - Which standards do you feel strong in?
 - Which standards do you need to learn more about?
 - Which standards do you need to practice?
- Use your answers as a basis for your preparation plan

Test Preparation Guides



- Each *Test Preparation Guide* includes:
 - Information about the Professional Certification Program
 - Information about the test and marking process
 - A practice test
 - An answer key
 - Two sample tests, one that passes and one that fails
- To use the *Test Preparation Guide*:
 - Review the introductory material
 - Write the practice test *within the allotted time*
 - Compare your finished test with the answer key and the two sample tests
 - Determine which areas you need to focus on
 - Redo the practice test at a later date, to assess your progress

Other Preparation Suggestions

- *Meeting Professional Editorial Standards*
- Books about grammar, punctuation, style, usage, proofreading, editing, publishing, writing, plain language, and copyright
- Course material from seminars you've taken
- Editors Canada seminars and webinars
- College and university courses

See www.editors.ca/certification/preparation.html



More Preparation Ideas

- Review all of the books you plan to use during the test
 - Become familiar with where to find things
 - Study at least one of the style guides in depth, so you can easily find information during the test
- Refresh your test-taking skills
 - Look for information on test-taking skills, including tips for preparing mentally

See www.editors.ca/certification/preparation.html

Advantages of Preparing Alone

- During the actual test, there's no collaboration, so time spent practising alone will help prepare you for the real setting
- When preparing alone, you can devote the bulk of your time to honing the skills in your personal areas of weakness
- You don't have scheduling conflicts

Advantages of Preparing With Others

- Partners can help keep one another motivated and on track
- You can swap practice work with a partner for marking and review
- You can share ideas and strategies with others
- You can share perspectives and knowledge about different editing fields

Finding Preparation Partners

- Post a message to editing groups on LinkedIn and/or Facebook
- Send a message on the Editors Canada listserv
- Attend branch speaker nights, and network
- Look around this room!

Preparation Schedule

- Plan your preparation time
 - Create a work-back schedule, just as you would for a project
- Cramming is not a helpful way to prepare
 - This is a test geared to applying your knowledge, so you need to practise your skills
- Doing a little at a time will give you enough time to read, understand, practise, and review the material, without putting unreasonable or unrealistic demands on your time

Practise, Practise, Practise

- The scenario and test passage are worth about two-thirds of the total test mark
- To be successful, you will need be able to apply your editing skills effectively
- If your editing experience is concentrated in a particular subject area, practise editing less familiar content—this may help you feel more at ease during the test

Practise, Practise, Practise (Continued)

- Time yourself—in a test setting, speed is crucial
- Work on increasing your editing speed
- Note which areas give you the most trouble, and spend extra time on them
- Practise other tasks, such as writing a letter to an author or creating a style sheet

Pack Up and Get Ready



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Gather Your Resources

- One major dictionary, such as:
 - *Canadian Oxford*
 - *Merriam-Webster*
 - *Concise Oxford*
- Up to three style guides, such as:
 - *Chicago Manual of Style*
 - *Canadian Press Stylebook and Caps & Spelling* (counts as one)
 - *The Canadian Style*

Prepare Mentally

- Be clear about what you need to do to minimize stress on test day
 - Trouble getting organized and out the door?
Prepare everything ahead of time
 - Worried about finding the venue? Leave lots of travel time, or even do a dry run
 - Test anxiety? Try relaxation or breathing techniques, to help keep yourself calm

Pack Your Bag

- Pens or pencils to make notes
- Pica ruler
- Earplugs, glasses, seat and/or back cushion, bottled drinking water, and other comforts
- Reference books
- If you wish to bring anything else, check with the Editors Canada office at least 15 business days before the test date

Tips from Certified Editors— Before the Test

- Look up the test venue, and find out how to get there
- Know ahead of time how to find the test room
- Plan out your transit route, and figure out what time you'll need to leave home
- Find the parking lot you'll use, and determine how (and how much) you'll have to pay

Tips from Certified Editors— Before the Test (Continued)

- Use document flags to help yourself find key information quickly in your reference books
- Practice using Word on a PC, if you're not used to it
- Be sure you know standard copy editing and proofreading marks
- Pack everything ahead of time

Sample Question 3

True or false?

An imposition is the arrangement of pages on a press sheet that will put them in the proper order when the sheet is printed and folded.

Write



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Budget Your Time

- Time management is crucial to your success
 - Read through the whole test, and plan your time
 - Don't do more than you're asked to do
 - Don't waste precious time struggling with a question that's worth only a couple of marks
 - Remember, Part B (the test passage) is worth about twice as much as Part A (the short answers), so don't spend more than 45 to 60 minutes on Part A

Tips from Certified Editors— On Test Day

- Dress in layers: being too hot or too cold can affect your concentration
- Allow lots of time to get to the test site and find parking
- Eat something nutritious before the test
- Use the bathroom right before the test
- Quickly read through test before you begin; you may notice something in one section that will help you with another
- Scan the test to see how many marks are allotted to each question, and plan your time accordingly
- Use deep breathing and other relaxation techniques to stay calm
- If you're stuck on a question, make a note to come back to it, and move on

RDMs

- RDMs = really dumb mistakes
 - Not following the instructions
 - Doing the wrong kind of editing (e.g., copy editing on a proofreading test, or structural editing on a copy editing test)
 - Introducing errors
 - Making a style decision, recording it on style sheet . . . and then not following that style in the test passage
 - Making a rude, snarky, or otherwise inappropriate comment in a query or author letter (or even addressed to the markers)
 - Ambiguous, unclear markup

Celebrate!



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Want to Know More?

For more information about
the Editors Canada
Professional Certification Program,
visit www.editors.ca
and click on “Certification”

