



**Ontario College of Teachers
Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario**

Additional Qualification Course Guideline

Special Education Part I

**Schedule D
Regulation 184/97
Teachers' Qualifications**

March 2003

Ce document est disponible en français sous le titre *Ligne directrice du cours menant à la qualification additionnelle en éducation de l'enfance en difficulté, Première partie.*



Additional Qualification Course Guideline Special Education, Part I

1. Introduction

The Ontario College of Teachers is the self-regulatory body for the teaching profession in Ontario. Its mandate is to "provide for the ongoing education of members of the College" (*Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*, Part II Subsection 3 (1) paragraph 6).

In-service professional learning, within the mandate of the College, is identified in *Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications*. This regulation includes courses/programs such as Additional Basic Qualification courses, Additional Qualification courses, the Principal's Qualification Program and the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program. Accredited courses support the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and meet the legislative requirements included in Regulation 184/97.

Successful completion of the Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I listed in Regulation 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* is recorded on the Certificate of Qualification issued to the members of the College.

The underlying purpose of the Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I is to develop skills and knowledge of teachers in the design, delivery, programming and assessment of special education. The Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I supports the expectations outlined in the Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents and other Ministry of Education policies.

In this document, all references to candidates are to teachers enrolled in the Additional Qualification course. References to "students" indicate those in school programs.

2. Background

The Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I is a pre-requisite for assignment as a teacher of a special education class, or as a special education resource or withdrawal teacher, or for those teachers who are placed in charge of the special education program within a school. The course is open to all elementary and secondary school teachers who have a basic qualification in general studies or technological studies.

The College recognizes that candidates working in any of the four publicly funded systems will have a need to explore, in an integrated delivery model, topics and issues of particular relevance to the system that they work in or may work in.

Candidates come to the Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I with an interest in this particular subject matter. Critical to the delivery of special education is the ability of teachers to ensure positive learning experiences for students. Teachers are skilled at combining their knowledge of student development and learning with their understanding of the needs of students identified as exceptional.

The Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I is an introductory course. It focuses on the theory and practice underpinning special education. This course explores the exceptionalities, teaching strategies, program planning and other issues related to teaching and learning in all classrooms. Although this course will be of greatest interest to those teachers who wish to deepen their information regarding students identified as exceptional, all classroom teachers may wish to better prepare themselves for teaching students who have special needs.

3. Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession

A commitment to a clear vision of what it means to be a teacher is at the core of teacher professionalism. The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* provide the focus for ongoing professional learning and are the foundation for the development of the Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I. In addition, *The Professional Learning Framework* supports the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*, articulates the principles on which effective teacher learning is based and acknowledges a range of options to promote continuous professional learning.

4. Learning Expectations

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* have been embedded in the learning expectations for the Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I.

This additional qualification course has the following learning expectations for candidates:

- understanding and implementing Ministry of Education curriculum expectations and Ministry of Education and district school board policies and guidelines
- having the theoretical understanding and foundation necessary to design, implement and assess programs for students identified as exceptional

- creating learning environments conducive to the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral development of students identified as exceptional
- understanding how to use, accommodate and modify expectations, strategies and assessment practices based on the developmental or special needs of students
- working collaboratively with in-school personnel, parents/guardians and the community
- accessing a variety of resources within and beyond the educational system to enhance and support student learning
- demonstrating an openness to innovation and change
- inquiring into practice through reflection, active engagement and collaboration
- demonstrating the ability to integrate information and communication technology into teaching practice
- embedding theory into practice

5. Curriculum Content, Part I

The Additional Qualification course: Special Education, Part I supports the following:

Choices into Action

The Kindergarten Program

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9-10

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11-12

Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12

The Provincial Report Card

Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 1-8, 1998

Guide to the Provincial Report Card, Grades 9-12, 1999

Special Education: A Guide for Educators, 2001

Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning and Implementation, 2000

Ontario Human Rights Code

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Health Care Consent Act, 1996

Successful candidates will demonstrate their understanding and ability to apply the following:

A. The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

B. Theoretical Foundations of Special Education, Part I:

- understanding the relevance of the *Education Act*, Ministry of Education curriculum expectations, regulations and relevant policy memoranda and the standards that support special education
- understanding how current and past historical theories, research and best practices impact on students identified as exceptional
- developing an awareness of a broad range of curriculum and delivery models
- understanding the differences between the words “*modification*” and “*accommodation*” and the implications on program development and implementation
- understanding theories of social, emotional, physical, intellectual, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral development of the student
- having an awareness of research and experience-validated practices in order to address the range of abilities (mild, moderate, or severe) of each student identified as exceptional
- understanding the relationship of special education to equity and social justice
- understanding the continuum of various service models such as integration and inclusion, resource room withdrawal, self-contained programs, provincial demonstration schools as they evolved in the development of special education in Ontario
- developing knowledge related to funding issues
- developing knowledge of the various categories and definitions of exceptionalities as defined in Ministry of Education documents: **Behaviour;** **Communication:** Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Language Impairment; Speech Impairment, Learning Disability; **Intellectual:** Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability; Developmental Disability; **Physical:** Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision; **Multiple:** Multiple Exceptionalities
- having an awareness of ethical and legal issues

C. Program Development, Planning and Implementation:

- understanding that all students share elements of ability and disability
- identifying and connecting student strengths, needs and necessary transitions with curriculum objectives by reviewing Ontario Student Records (OSRs), Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Annual Education Plans (AEPs) and assessments

- having an awareness of how to identify a student as “exceptional” for the purpose of an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)
- understanding and learning how to participate in Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) processes and appeals
- knowing how to write, develop and amend an IEP, preferably in a genuine context
- understanding how the IEP is connected to student curriculum and the report card
- knowing how to write modified expectations for an individual student
- knowing how to provide accommodations to the curriculum in order to support and demonstrate learning
- applying appropriate curriculum expectations while maintaining an awareness of specific needs
- learning the characteristics that often describe students who have been identified as exceptional
- recognizing that specific learning strategies and interventions will impact on the social and physical life of the student
- observing and listening to students in order to select appropriate strategies
- observing different kinds of behavior as a response to the demands and stress of being a student identified as exceptional
- understanding that special education is an equity issue by listening to the “voices” of the students identified as exceptional
- managing and documenting information that is pertinent for critical review, IPRCs, transitions and referrals

D. The Learning Environment:

- establishing an accepting, safe, and enabling community of learners
- practicing a variety of age and exceptionality-specific teaching strategies
- having an awareness of and employing effective classroom management strategies to support the learning of all students
- encouraging risk-taking, decision making and independent thinking
- learning how to adapt and modify teaching to meet individual needs
- understanding the impact of medication on student performance
- implementing crisis intervention strategies for all students in structured and unstructured settings
- promoting peer relationships and self management in students in order to foster independence and self-esteem

- identifying factors in a diverse and changing society that impact on individual student's future
- knowing how to contribute to information gathering (background information, assessment information, work samples, etc.) that will inform programming
- acquiring the understanding of what it means to be accountable in the classroom (e.g. in terms of program planning, etc.)
- considering the role of as well as working with educational assistants
- having an awareness of programs and schools outside of regular school sites such as treatment centres and demonstration schools

E. Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation:

- developing and employing instructional and assessment strategies based on the individual learning needs of students
- using candidates' own stages of learning as a tool to understand how students learn
- enhancing and advancing student learning by using appropriate technology and assistive learning devices
- introducing, recognizing and becoming aware of the multiple types, purposes and biases of assessment and evaluation instruments
- maintaining assessment and evaluation that is consistent with the objectives and methods described in the IEP
- having an awareness of the roles of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education (MACSE)

F. School, Parent/Guardian and Community:

- understanding, respecting and being empathetic to parents' knowledge and perspectives
- developing strategies for communicating effectively with parents through consultation
- communicating in language, such as explaining acronyms and explaining jargon, that facilitates parent participation in IPRCs
- supporting students to be self advocates
- becoming an advocate for students and parents
- identifying and accessing appropriate resources and students' services in the community
- encouraging students to involve themselves in the community

- knowing and providing collaboration on a variety of referral processes in school and in the community
- working with volunteers
- explaining and ensuring that parents are able to participate in the development of the IEP

G. Information Technology:

- accessing and using adaptive and assistive information technology to support student learning
- exploring and evaluating a variety of reference and web sites relevant to special education

6. Instructional Practice

In the delivery of this additional qualification course, instructors use strategies that are relevant, meaningful and practical in providing candidates with learning experiences about program, instruction and assessment and evaluation. These include but are not limited to, small group interaction, action research, peer presentations, independent inquiry, problem solving, co-operative learning and direct instruction. Instructors honour the principles of adult learning, recognize candidates' experience and prior learning and respond to individual needs. Important to the course are opportunities for candidates to create support networks and receive feedback from peers and instructors and share the products of their learning with others. Opportunities for professional reading, reflection, communication and expression are also integral parts of the course.

Where possible, experiential learning and authentic school-based experiences are included in the course, for example, classroom observations, action research projects, and case studies. Instructors model effective instructional strategies, respect ethical considerations and employ formative and summative assessment that can be duplicated in candidates' classrooms. Instructors may use technology to support candidates' learning via on-line interactive communications, connections to quality resources and links to other sites.

7. Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates

At the beginning of the course, candidates are provided with the specific expectations and forms of assessment and evaluation that will be used throughout the course.

A balanced approach to candidate assessment and evaluation is used. It includes the combination of self and peer assessment and instructor evaluation and models best

practice. Candidates demonstrate their learning through performance, written and oral assessments. There are opportunities for both formative and summative evaluation.

Central to teachers enrolled in additional qualification courses is the opportunity to be engaged in productive and meaningful work. Assignments and projects will include practical materials that help teachers make the connection between theory and practice. At the same time, assignments must allow candidates flexibility, choice, and individual inquiry opportunities.

Independent Project

Part of the assessment process will include a major independent project over the duration of the course. Expectations of undertaking a project will be provided by the instructors in advance along with assessment instruments and project evaluation criteria. The project will require high level cognitive thinking, research, and the demonstration of communication skills as related to a specific exceptionality or exceptionalities based on experiential practices introduced during Part I.

All participants will participate in the writing of an IEP, considering how it is connected to the Ontario Curriculum, the Report Card and where applicable, Transition Plans.

Other Activities might include:

- investigating an agency that is relevant to the needs of students identified as exceptional
- examining journal studies and discovering components of good research in special education
- visiting an agency and/or a provincial school
- critiquing a special education web site
- observing an IPRC
- investigating in-school procedures and referrals
- engaging in reflective practice through observations, interviews and journal work
- attending a SEAC meeting

A final culminating experience in the course is recommended. This experience may take the form of a written assessment, a research paper, a performance, or a product that is new, meaningful and practical.

Other Assessment Experiences

The following list of assessment strategies is not exhaustive; it is intended to serve as a guide only.

- a) Performance assessment: designing a program appropriate for students identified as exceptional and addressing the modifications required; writing long and short term plans based on curriculum requirements; exploring and comparing two best practices; practising your skills as a reflective practitioner through journals, classroom observation and examination of best practice
- b) Oral presentation: speaking from the point of view of a student identified as exceptional or his or her parent; preparing debates on special education issues; assuming roles in an IPRC; interviewing a parent/guardian of a student identified as exceptional
- c) Portfolio: creating a portfolio of images based on film or photographic media or pieces of artwork that depict a bias towards people who have been identified as exceptional and analyzing the impact of your chosen images; maintaining a professional portfolio
- d) Action research: engaging in action research within the context of special education by reflecting and acting upon a specific inquiry into teaching practice
- e) Written assessment: using a journal, document personal growth of a student identified as exceptional as you reflect on different strategies used or recommended by recent studies; using the persona of a student identified as exceptional and writing from his/her point of view
- f) Written test: responding to cases from a variety of perspectives; providing a case study and posing questions.