



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
de l'Ontario

Additional Qualification Course Guideline Action Research

Schedule C Teachers' Qualifications Regulation

October 2011

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Additional Qualification Course Guideline Action Research

1. Introduction

Successful completion of the course developed from this guideline enables teachers to receive the Additional Qualification: Action Research.

The Additional Qualification Course: Action Research is open to all teachers. Candidates come to the Additional Qualification Course: Action Research with an interest or background in this area and a desire to extend and apply knowledge, skills and practices in the design, implementation, and assessment of these educational programs.

Critical to the implementation of this course is the creation of positive learning experiences that reflect care, professional knowledge, ethical practice, leadership and ongoing learning.

The Ontario College of Teachers recognizes that candidates working in the publicly funded school system, independent/private institutions or First Nations schools will have a need to explore in an integrated delivery model, topics and issues of particular relevance to the context in which they work or may work.

2. Regulatory Context

The College is the self-regulating body for the teaching profession in Ontario. The College's responsibility related to courses leading to additional qualifications includes the following:

- to establish and enforce professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College
- to provide for the ongoing education of members of the College
- to accredit additional qualification courses and more specifically

The program content and expected achievement of persons enrolled in the program match the skills and knowledge reflected in the College's "Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession" and the "Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession" and in the program guidelines issued by the College. (Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs, Part IV, Subsection 24).

Additional qualifications for teachers are identified in the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation. This regulation includes courses that lead to Additional Qualifications, the Principal's Qualifications and the Supervisory Officer's Qualifications. A session of a course leading to an additional qualification shall consist of a minimum of 125 hours of work that is approved by the Registrar. Accredited additional qualification courses reflect the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*.

Successful completion of the course leading to the Additional Qualification: Action Research, listed in Schedule C of the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation is recorded on the Certificate of Qualification and Registration issued to the members of the College.

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

3. The Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice 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 *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* (Appendix 1) provide the focus for ongoing professional learning and are the foundation for the development of the Additional Qualification course: Action Research. In addition, the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* is underpinned by the standards, articulates the principles on which effective teacher learning is based and acknowledges a range of options that promote continuous professional learning.

Standards Resources

The College has developed resources to support the effective integration of the standards within Additional Qualification courses. These resources explore the integration of the standards through a variety of educative and inquiry-based processes. A list of these resources can be found in Appendix 2 and are available through the College website (www.oct.ca). This guideline has been designed to

reflect the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.

4. Course Components

The design, course content and implementation of the Additional Qualification course guideline: Action Research support effective teacher education practices. The following expectations and course components of this guideline support and inform effective professional knowledge and practice within the Additional Qualification course: Action Research.

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* are embedded within the overall expectations for candidates.

This Additional Qualification course has the following overall learning expectations for candidates:

- analyzing, interpreting and implementing Ministry of Education curriculum and district school board policies and guidelines
- having and applying the theoretical understanding necessary to design, implement and assess programs and/or practices
- modelling and adapting expectations, strategies and assessment practices in response to the individual needs of students
- facilitating the creation of learning environments conducive to the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, environmental, linguistic, cultural, spiritual and moral development of the student
- collaborating with in-school personnel, parents/guardians and the community
- accessing and exploring a variety of resources, including technological resources, within and beyond the educational system to enhance professional knowledge in support of student learning
- refining professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection
- exploring a variety of reflective practices, approaches and models
- supporting and modelling ethical practices
- understanding the need to respect and conserve resources in the environment

- understanding how to create and sustain cultures of inquiry
- developing awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Aboriginal) ways of knowing and perspectives
- integrating environmentally respectful perspectives and practices
- creating and sustaining safe, healthy, equitable and inclusive learning environments that honour and respect diversity
- exploring how action research can inform and enhance professional practice
- exploring action research as an instructional methodology for teaching and learning
- exploring a variety of inquiry models and processes.

Candidates will explore and deepen their understanding of the following:

A. Ontario Curriculum and Policies

The Additional Qualification Course: Action Research is aligned with current Ontario curriculum, relevant legislation, government policies and resources. These documents inform and reflect the development and implementation of the Additional Qualification Course: Action Research. These resources can be viewed at www.edu.gov.on.ca.

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

- understanding and embodying care, trust, respect and integrity
- demonstrating commitment to students and student learning
- integrating professional knowledge
- enriching and developing practice through professional inquiry
- supporting leadership in learning communities
- engaging in ongoing professional learning and inquiry.

C. Theoretical Foundations

- understanding theoretical frameworks that underpin action research
- exploring a variety of conceptual frameworks for action research

- using the Ministry curricula documents to help inform action research
- reflecting on personal teaching practice and engaging in professional dialogue on the relationship of theory and practice of action research
- having awareness of policy and/or legislation relevant to action research
- knowing and understanding policies and procedures that are relevant to action research
- integrating the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* as the foundation for teacher professionalism within the additional qualification course Action Research
- exploring a variety of models to identify, collect and analyze data to inform professional practice
- exploring ways of sharing information and understandings arising from action research
- understanding the ethical dimensions related to action research.

D. Teaching and Learning through Action Research

- connecting the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* to the inquiry processes
- identifying and reflecting and identifying on factors that influence teaching and learning in a diverse and changing society
- connecting action research to students' everyday experiences and teachers' professional practice
- engaging in inquiry based curriculum planning, development and implementation
- reflecting on how differentiated instruction and universal design supports the inquiry process for teaching and learning
- utilizing and assessing professional knowledge gained through action research to inform pedagogical practices
- identifying, accessing, integrating and assessing community, print, electronic and collegial resources to support inquiry processes
- understanding how action research can support programme accommodation and modification to meet the needs of all learners.

E. Culture of Inquiry

- exploring ways of creating and maintaining positive, inclusive and safe culture of inquiry
- fostering a collaborative community of learners
- integrating information and communication technology to support action research
- employing a variety of instructional strategies to support the teaching of action research methodology to students.
- understanding how to create and adapt inquiry methodologies in support of teaching and learning
- creating a learning environment that reflects the ethical standards and standards of practice and that is informed by action research.

F. Assessment and Evaluation

- creating fair and equitable assessment and evaluation methods to promote student learning
- integrating multiple assessment methods to support student learning: formative and summative (for example, assessment *as* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning)
- using a range of assessment and evaluation strategies that support the dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development of all students
- understanding and responding to the issues of assessment and evaluation through action research.
- critically reflecting on the insights and understandings gained from engaging in action research.

G. Shared Support for Learning

- understanding the importance of communicating with, involving and supporting parents/guardians
- understanding and employing a variety of effective communication strategies for collaborating with parents/guardians and school and community personnel,
- developing methods to provide continuous, meaningful, detailed and supportive information and feedback to parents/guardians

- understanding and respecting the importance of shared responsibility and partnership as conveyed in the standards and the *Foundations of Professional Practice*.

H. Legal and Ethical Issues

- understanding the ethical dimensions related to action research in education
- understanding ethical protocols and their role in supporting educational action research.

5. Instructional Practice in the Additional Qualification Course: Action Research

In the implementation of this Additional Qualification course, instructors use strategies that are relevant, meaningful and practical in providing candidates with learning experiences about program, instruction, pedagogy and assessment and evaluation. Instructors model the standards, honour the principles of adult learning, recognize candidates' experience and prior learning and respond to individual needs. These may include but are not limited to: small group interaction; action research; presentations; independent inquiry; problem solving; collaborative learning and direct instruction. Important to the course are opportunities for candidates to create support networks and receive feedback from colleagues and instructors and share the products of their learning with others. Opportunities for professional reading, reflection, dialogue and expression are also integral parts of the course.

Where possible, the course includes experiential learning and authentic school-based experiences. Instructors model effective instructional strategies and formative and summative assessment that can be replicated or adapted in the candidate's classroom.

6. Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates

At the beginning of the course, candidates are provided with the specific learning expectations and forms of assessment and evaluation that will be used throughout the course. Instructors will provide opportunities for regular feedback regarding candidates' progress 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 effective practices. A variety of assessment approaches will be used that enable candidates to convey their learning. The course provides opportunities for both formative and summative assessment and evaluation.

Central to teachers enrolled in Additional Qualification courses is the opportunity to be engaged in relevant and meaningful work. Assignments, artefacts and projects enable candidates to make connections between theory and practice. At the same time, assignments must allow candidates flexibility, choice, and individual inquiry opportunities.

Part of the evaluation process may include a major independent project or action research component over the duration of the course. This project is an opportunity for candidates to illustrate a high level of professional knowledge, skills, pedagogy, ethical practices and instructional leadership. Similarly, if a portfolio assignment is used, it will also include reflections and analysis of a candidate's learning over time.

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

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

- a) Written assignment: reflecting critically on issues arising from articles, publications, research and/or other resources related to action research
- b) Presentation: developing a digital story, presenting an issue related to or arising from action research
- c) Portfolio: creating an action research portfolio
- d) Inquiry project: engaging in an action research project by reflecting and acting upon a specific inquiry into teaching practice
- e) Independent project: addressing any aspect of the course that is approved by the instructor
- f) Instructional resource: developing a meaningful resource that will support instruction and pedagogy
- g) Reflective writing: reflecting on professional practice through journal writing, or writing a case or vignette that will support instruction and pedagogy

Appendix 1

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* represent a vision of professional practice. At the heart of a strong and effective teaching profession is a commitment to students and their learning. Members of the Ontario College of Teachers, in their position of trust, demonstrate responsibility in their relationships with students, parents, guardians, colleagues, educational partners, other professionals, the environment and the public.

The Purposes of the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:

- to inspire members to reflect and uphold the honour and dignity of the teaching profession
- to identify the ethical responsibilities and commitments in the teaching profession
- to guide ethical decisions and actions in the teaching profession
- to promote public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession are:

Care

The ethical standard of *Care* includes compassion, acceptance, interest and insight for developing students' potential. Members express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice.

Respect

Intrinsic to the ethical standard of *Respect* are trust and fair-mindedness. Members honour human dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development. In their professional practice, they model respect for spiritual and cultural values, social justice, confidentiality, freedom, democracy and the environment.

Trust

The ethical standard of *Trust* embodies fairness, openness and honesty. Members' professional relationships with students, colleagues, parents, guardians and the public are based on trust.

Integrity

Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in the ethical standard of *Integrity*. Continual reflection assists members in exercising integrity in their professional commitments and responsibilities.

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* provide a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills, and values inherent in Ontario's teaching profession. These standards articulate the goals and aspirations of the profession. These standards convey a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of members of the Ontario College of Teachers.

The Purposes of the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:

- to inspire a shared vision for the teaching profession
- to identify the values, knowledge and skills that are distinctive to the teaching profession
- to guide the professional judgment and actions of the teaching profession
- to promote a common language that fosters an understanding of what it means to be a member of the teaching profession.

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession are:

Commitment to Students and Student Learning

Members are dedicated in their care and commitment to students. They treat students equitably and with respect and are sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning. Members facilitate the development of students as contributing citizens of Canadian society.

Professional Knowledge

Members strive to be current in their professional knowledge and recognize its relationship to practice. They understand and reflect on student development, learning theory, pedagogy, curriculum, ethics, educational research and related policies and legislation to inform professional judgment in practice.

Professional Practice

Members apply professional knowledge and experience to promote student learning. They use appropriate pedagogy, assessment and evaluation, resources and technology in planning for and responding to the needs of individual students and learning communities. Members refine their

professional practice through ongoing inquiry, dialogue and reflection.

Leadership in Learning Communities

Members promote and participate in the creation of collaborative, safe and supportive learning communities. They recognize their shared responsibilities and their leadership roles in order to facilitate student success. Members maintain and uphold the principles of the ethical standards in these learning communities.

Ongoing Professional Learning

Members recognize that a commitment to ongoing professional learning is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Professional practice and self-directed learning are informed by experience, research, collaboration and knowledge.

Appendix 2

Standards Resources

Information pertaining to the following standards resources is available through the College web site at www.oct.ca.

Allard, C.C., Goldblatt, P.F., Kembal, J.I., Kendrick, S.A., Millen, K.J., & Smith, D.M. (2007). Becoming a reflective community of practice. *Reflective Practice* (8)3, 299-314.

Cherubini, L., Smith, D., Goldblatt, P., Engemann, J., & Kitchen, J. (2008). *Learning from experience: Supporting beginning and mentor teachers*. Toronto, ON: Ontario College of Teachers.

Goldblatt, P.F., & Smith, D. (2004). Illuminating and facilitating professional knowledge through casework. *European Journal of Teacher Education* (27)3, 334-354.

Goldblatt, P.F., & Smith, D. (2005). (Eds.). *Cases for teacher development: Preparing for the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2003). *Standards in practice: Fostering professional inquiry*. [Resource kit 1]. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2006). *Foundations of professional practice*. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2008). *Living the standards*. [Resource kit 2]. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ontario College of Teachers. (2010). *A self-reflective professional learning tool*. Toronto, ON: Author.

Ontario College of Teachers (Producer). (2010). *Voices of wisdom* [DVD]. Toronto, ON: Author.

Smith, D., & Goldblatt, P.F. (Eds.). (2006). *Casebook guide for teacher education*. Toronto, ON: Ontario College of Teachers.

Smith, D. & Goldblatt, P. (Eds.). (2009). *Exploring leadership and ethical practice through professional inquiry*. Québec City, QC: Les Presses de l'Université Laval.

Smith, D. (2010, spring). Developing leaders using case inquiry. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly*, 4(2), 104-124.