



Additional Qualification Course Guideline Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)

Schedule C – Teachers' Qualifications Regulation

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Preface

Additional Qualification (AQ) course guidelines are designed following extensive consultation and feedback from course providers, course writers and members of the teaching profession.

AQ course guidelines serve as the framework for providers and instructors to develop courses.

AQ course guidelines are organized in the following two sections:

Section A: Additional Qualification Course Foundations

This section outlines the fundamental contexts that are embedded in the content of the AQ course. Education in Ontario embodies these to support educator and learner well-being. These fundamental contexts are essential to foster safe, welcoming and inclusive learning environments for all learners and educators.

Section B: Additional Qualification Course Design

This section identifies the core concepts and related elements that are accreditation requirements for all AQ courses. This section also outlines specific content that allows educators to gain in-depth knowledge and skills related to the AQ course.

In this document, all references to candidates are to educators enrolled in the AQ course. References to learners indicate those enrolled in school programs.

Introduction

The Ontario College of Teachers (the College) is the self-regulating body for the teaching profession in Ontario and is responsible for:

- establishing and enforcing professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College
- providing for the ongoing education of members of the College
- accrediting Additional Qualification (AQ) courses.

The College supports teaching excellence by preparing educators to work in varied and diverse educational contexts and geographical settings:

- English language public school
- French language public school
- English language Catholic school
- French language Catholic school
- First Nations school
- Provincial school
- Private school
- Independent school
- Urban setting
- Rural setting
- Remote setting.

This AQ course guideline provides a framework upon which to develop courses that meet accreditation requirements established in Regulation.

Section A: Additional Qualification Course Foundations

Placing each student's interests and well-being first is at the core of teaching in Ontario.

Professional Learning in Ontario

Professional learning is an integral part of the teaching profession. Educators participate in ongoing professional learning with the goal of improving outcomes for Ontario learners.

Educators complete a four-semester, pre-service teacher education program to become qualified to teach in Ontario. Throughout their career, they continue to engage in professional learning offered in various formats such as sessions offered by Ministry of Education, School Board or community partners, professional reading and Additional Qualification (AQ) courses.

The AQ Course *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)* reflects **adult learning theories and processes** that foster critical reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Instructors provide candidates with professional learning experiences related to teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

AQ courses are designed by educators to inform and enhance professional practice. These courses allow educators to deepen their knowledge and skills in design and delivery of specific programs. They also support professional practice by preparing educators for specific roles within the educational community.

Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession

The *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* describes opportunities and processes that support ongoing professional learning for educators. AQ courses offer an opportunity for educators to inform and advance their professional knowledge, skills, practices and values.

Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession



Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession



Standards based resources can be found on the [College web site](#).

Ontario's Learning Context

Ontario educators recognize that learning is influenced by the individual student's strengths, needs, interests, lived experiences and identities. Education in Ontario is complex and dynamic. Ontario's schools are learning communities that reflect the province's diversity. The *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Education Act* serve as the foundation for equitable, inclusive and accessible education.

The teaching profession in Ontario continues to evolve in response to the current and everchanging diversity of learners. Thus, educators are called upon to follow foundational principles that inform instructional practice. Through ongoing professional learning, educators deepen their understanding of the principles outlined below. In so doing, Ontario educators enhance their professional practice to support each student's learning and well-being.

Anti-Oppression Foundation

An anti-oppression foundation is an approach that supports ensuring that equity and human rights are foundational to all Additional Qualification (AQ) courses and programs available to Ontario educators. An anti-oppression foundation acknowledges that systemic manifestations of power and privilege have led to multiple forms of oppression, injustices, inequities and inequalities. Ongoing teacher education must recognize and address historical contexts which have contributed to various forms of oppression. An anti-oppression foundation recognizes that educator and student learning and well-being are impacted by biases and assumptions related to power and privilege. Educators have a shared ethical and professional responsibility to identify and challenge individual and systemic barriers to support the learning, well-being and inclusion of each learner.

Indigenous Histories, Cultures, Perspectives, and Knowledge Systems in Education

Ontario's educators are responsible to uphold the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and align their professional practice with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). They engage in authentic reconciliatory action by exploring and integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives and knowledge systems, in teaching and learning. Educators, as treaty partners, acknowledge that conversation and collaboration with Indigenous communities will guide them on the reconciliation journey.

Aménagement Linguistique Policy (PAL)

Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the French or English linguistic minority populations of a province the right to instruction in their own language.

In Ontario, the *Aménagement Linguistique* Policy (PAL) outlines the unique mandate of French-Language schools. Educators act as ambassadors and model the French language and francophone culture for learners. Educators deepen their understanding of learners' linguistic and cultural francophone identity. They collectively develop a provincial, national and international sense of belonging to *la Francophonie*.

Learning for All

Educators believe that each student can learn. Educators provide programs and services that respond to each learner's unique strengths and needs. Evidence-based teaching and learning practices that are learner-centred provide equitable opportunities for all. Inclusive learning environments respect the identities of each learner and support their cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

Accessibility for All

Accessibility for all is informed by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. Accessibility, inclusion and equity are fundamental to everyday practice for teaching and learning. Educators advocate for each learner to access and benefit from services and resources within the education system, understanding the unique needs presented by geographical and socioeconomic contexts. Educators design opportunities for each learner to showcase their abilities and fully participate in their learning. The implementation of adaptive strategies, such as assistive technology, accessible content and inclusive design for teaching and learning respect the strengths and needs of each learner.

Special Education

Each learner has their own unique profile. Under the *Education Act*, a learner may be identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) as having behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) must be developed by an interdisciplinary team to reflect the learner's strengths, needs, and abilities, according to Reg. 181/98. As educators are responsible for instruction, assessment and evaluation of all learners, they provide accommodations, modifications, or alternative programming outlined in the IEP.

Accreditation – Program of Additional Qualification

Accreditation requirements for Additional Qualification (AQ) courses are articulated in O. Reg. 347/02: *Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs*, s. 24.

A program of additional qualification may be granted accreditation under this Regulation if the following requirements are satisfied:

1. 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.
2. The program satisfies the requirements of the teachers' qualifications regulation for entry of an additional qualification on the general certificate of qualification and registration of a person who successfully completes the program.
3. The program curriculum is current, references the Ontario curriculum, relevant legislation and government policies and represents a wide knowledge base in the program's area of study.
4. The course content of the program makes appropriate provision for the application of theory in practice.
5. The program's format and structure are appropriate for the course content of the program.
 - 5.1 The program consists of a minimum of 125 hours of work acceptable to the Registrar.
6. There is clear identification of the goals of the program, with a formal testing or assessment mechanism to determine the level of successful completion of the program.
7. The majority of the educators teaching the program have Ontario teaching experience relevant to the program.
8. The provider maintains adequate internal controls to preserve the integrity of student records relating to the program.
9. The provider is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance of the program and, if the program is an existing program, has implemented measures demonstrating that commitment.

O. Reg. 347/02, s. 24; 2009, c. 33, Sched. 13, s. 3 (2); O. Reg. 182/10, s. 8.

Section B: Additional Qualification Course Design

Additional Qualifications (AQs) for educators are identified in O. Reg. 176/10: *Teachers' Qualifications Regulation*. This regulation includes courses that lead to AQs, the Principal's Development Qualification, the Principal's Qualifications, the Primary Division, the Junior Division, the Intermediate Division, the Senior Division, the Supervisory Officer's Development Qualification and the Supervisory Officer's Qualifications. A session of a course leading to an AQ shall consist of a minimum of 125 hours as approved by the Registrar. Successful completion of the course is recorded on the candidate's Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

Additional Qualification – Schedule C (Single-Session)

This schedule C course deepens educators' knowledge and skills in the design and delivery of *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)*.

Additional Qualification Course Requirements

The AQ course *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)* enables candidates to advance their professional practice through focussed learning in the following areas:

- Curriculum Knowledge
- Pedagogical Strategies
- The Learning Environment.

This AQ course is designed and delivered using adult learning instructional practices.

The purpose of this AQ course is to enhance pedagogical practice related to teaching students with communication needs (autism spectrum disorders). This includes believing that all students can learn by:

- recognizing that each learner has unique strengths, perspectives, assets, interests and lived experiences
- fostering equitable, inclusive and enabling environments
- sharing responsibility with parents, families, guardians, caregivers, colleagues and community partners to support each learner's journey
- supporting learner well-being.

Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders) develops and applies candidates' subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills in the following required elements:

Anti-Oppression Foundation

- theories and pedagogies about multiple forms of oppression applied to the design, assessment and implementation of programs and practices
- addressing individual and systemic biases, discrimination and barriers as well as manifestations of power and privilege associated with teaching and learning students with communication needs (autism spectrum disorders)
- addressing disproportionate representation of learners from equity seeking groups within specialized programs
- critical pedagogy as a theoretical foundation for the design, assessment and implementation of programs and practices
- practices that challenge dominant discourses and assumptions related to ableism and disability.

The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession

- significance of the Ethical Standards and the Standards of Practice as theoretical foundations to support learners with autism spectrum disorders
- ethical professional identity, knowledge, leadership, advocacy and collective practices to inform program planning
- practices associated with the vision of educators as co-inquirers and researchers working alongside empowered learners in the co-creation of democratic, knowledge-rich learning environments.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives and knowledge systems

- meaningful inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, perspectives and knowledge systems in teaching and learning processes
- knowledge of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (TRC)
- awareness of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

Current Ontario curriculum and related Ministry of Education policies, frameworks, guidelines, strategies and resources:

- Ontario curriculum, policies (for example, Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12: A Policy and Resource Guide (2017), Policy Program Memorandum n° 140 and n° 156), frameworks, strategies and resources related to *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)*
- assessment, evaluation and reporting practices that align with the principles and processes of Ontario's curriculum, frameworks and policy documents (for example, Learning for all: a guide to effective assessment and instruction for all students, kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013))
- policies, processes and practices that foster openness to innovation, culturally inclusive pedagogies and the democratization of knowledge
- understanding safety related resources, guidelines and standards.

Current Ontario legislation and regulation:

- relevant legislation (for example, Ontario Human Rights Code, Anti-Racism Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 15 and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) and policies at the municipal, provincial, federal and international levels that support human rights and privacy for all
- candidates' legal obligations and ethical responsibilities according to current provincial legislation, policies and practices.

Learning for All

- processes and program planning that provide equitable opportunities for each learner
- strategies that respond to the strengths, identities, needs and interests of each learner (for example, Applied Behavioural Analysis, alternative curriculum, differentiated instruction, universal learning design and experiential learning)
- practices to understand learner's curiosities and experiences to empower them to reach their learning goals
- concept of holistic learner and its implications for teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders.

Accessibility for All

- ethical responsibilities related to the *Ontario Human Rights Code and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act S.O., 2005*
- advocacy for resources and services that respond to the cognitive, social, emotional, physical and contextual needs of each learner
- adaptive strategies, assistive supports and technologies to facilitate learning and foster inclusion
- strategies to address ableism that exists in processes and practices.

Special Education

- ethical responsibilities related to development, implementation and monitoring of learner's Individual Education Plan (IEP), safety plan, and transition plan
- programs, strategies and services that support the identified learner in achieving individual goals outlined in their respective plans
- interdisciplinary teams to support learning, advocacy and transitions
- identification of and responsive planning for the intersection of literacy and learner exceptionalities
- strategies to develop literacy skills to support learners along their education pathways.

Educational research

- current research and literature associated with professional practices, policies and pedagogies in the field of autism spectrum disorders
- research that reflects society's diverse changing nature and influence on learning and well-being
- theoretical foundation for the design, assessment and implementation of programs and practices in support of the learning and well-being of learner with an autism spectrum disorder
- research and theories related to literacy within the context of teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders (for example, evidence-based reading instruction and interventions, functional literacy).

Application of theories of learning and teaching

- theories and practices related to pedagogy and andragogy that support learning within an inclusive environment
- theoretical frameworks and fundamental principles underpinning autism spectrum disorders
- theories of development and identity formation that support learner well-being, efficacy and agency
- learning theories to develop learner's profile and identities
- science and principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to support learning and well-being.

Supports for learners

- policies, processes, practices to support learners' cognitive, social, emotional and physical development
- strategies that respect the development and choices of each learner with autism spectrum disorders
- programs that respond to learners' lived experiences, identities, needs and well-being
- practices that respond to linguistic abilities of learners
- critical pedagogies and practices that monitor and support learners' well-being and efficacy
- processes to foster a community of empowered learners
- influence of sensory needs on learning and well-being in learning environments
- curation of learning materials (for example, reading, numeracy) that support learners' multiple ability levels, interests and curiosities.

Teaching, assessing and evaluating

- program design and implementation that align with the principles and processes of Ontario curriculum and related policies
- culturally inclusive processes and practices to provide learning opportunities that respect the learning styles, voices and perspectives of each learner
- assessment and evaluation processes and practices to:
 - provide feedback to learners and adjust instruction (*assessment for learning*)
 - develop learners' capacity to be independent, autonomous learners (*assessment as learning*)
 - make informed professional judgments about the quality of learning (*assessment of learning*)
- instructional strategies to emphasize the importance of inquiry-based learning and transferable skills
- concept of "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorders and its implications for teaching and learning
- alternative curriculum and programming that support the learning and well-being of learners with autism spectrum disorders (for example, life skills, vocational skills and work placements)
- instructional and assessment strategies that have been informed by the IEP
- evidence-based instruction as a key component of literacy and numeracy development within the context of teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders (for example, Response to Intervention (RTI)/Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) models)
- strategies to identify and address signs of reading difficulties and potential disabilities.

Pathway and transition planning

- processes and practices to support all transitions
- curriculum design using learners' career and life goals
- implications of autism spectrum disorders on program planning and learning opportunities for each identified learner's pathways
- practices that develop the transferable skills to support lifelong learning.

Safe, equitable and inclusive learning environments

- policies and processes to create and maintain inclusive learning environments that respect diversity and encourage critical thinking (for example, gender neutral language and resources in various formats)
- inclusive learning environments that facilitate learning and foster learner agency and perspectives
- practices that support safe and healthy learning environments for learners as well as families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians
- evaluation of the learning environment to address various sensory needs to support learning and well-being.

Teaching and learning through e-Learning principles

- integration of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning
- technological and communication resources to enhance professional knowledge in support of learning and agency
- ethical use of technology in support of learners' safety, privacy and well-being.

Culturally responsive and relevant pedagogical practices

- culturally responsive and relevant practices that reflect understanding of learners' diverse identities
- culturally inclusive resources that support learning to foster engagement and well-being
- awareness of cultural appropriation and cultural appreciation.

Social justice and democratic citizenship

- policies related to democratic citizenship within local, national and global contexts
- processes and practices that foster learners' voice and choice, respect diversity and promote social justice
- strategies for consensus-building, participatory democracy and empowerment within schools and the community.

Environmental sustainability

- shared responsibility and partnership to foster ecological justice
- integration of environmentally sustainable policies, pedagogies and practices
- processes that engage learners as active global citizens in supporting environmental and economic sustainability.

Shared responsibility for learning

- processes and practices to foster communication and collaboration with learners, families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians, agencies and the school community to support learning
- partnerships with families, caregivers, guardians, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Knowledge Guardians that value shared decision-making, confidentiality, advocacy and leadership.

Communities of professional learning

- professional learning communities that promote critical pedagogy and collective efficacy
- research and leadership to advance professional practice through ongoing collaborative inquiry, dialogue and innovation
- processes, practices and strategies to foster collaboration with in-school personnel to support learning, well-being and leadership.

Resources

Resources to support the development of the AQ Course *Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)* can be found on the [College](#) website and the [Ontario Ministry of Education](#) website.



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