



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers

Ordre des  
enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

# **Additional Qualification Course Guideline Outdoor Experiential Education**

## **Schedule C Regulation 184/97 Teachers' Qualifications**

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# **Additional qualification course Guideline Outdoor Experiential Education**

## **1. Introduction**

Successful completion of the course developed from this guideline enables teachers to receive the Additional Qualification: Outdoor Experiential Education.

The Additional Qualification Course: Outdoor Experiential Education is open to all teachers. Candidates come to the Additional Qualification Course: Outdoor Experiential Education 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 the program.

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 Qualification 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 or programs 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 Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications. This regulation includes courses/programs that lead to Additional Qualifications, Additional Basic 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*.

Successful completion of the course leading to the Additional Qualification: Outdoor Experiential Education, listed in Schedule C of Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications is recorded on the Certificate of Qualification 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: Outdoor Experiential Education. 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 and programs. 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](http://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: Outdoor Experiential Education 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: Outdoor Experiential Education.

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, 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
- supporting and modelling ethical practices
- understanding the need to respect and conserve resources in the environment
- understanding how to create and sustain professional learning communities.

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

**A. Ontario Curriculum and Policies**

The Additional Qualification Course: Outdoor Experiential Education 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: Outdoor Experiential Education. These resources can be viewed at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca).

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

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

**C. Theoretical Foundations of Outdoor Experiential Education**

- understanding the knowledge, skills and dispositions particular to outdoor experiential education as well as the similarities to, and differences from, related fields
- exploring a variety of conceptual frameworks in outdoor experiential education (for example, Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, social constructivism)
- understanding the historical and philosophical foundations of outdoor experiential education
- understanding the current Ministry curricula documents which serve as the underpinnings of outdoor experiential education
- having awareness of policy and/or legislation relevant to outdoor experiential education
- knowing and understanding specific outdoor experiential education policies and procedures that are relevant to providing a safe and effective environment for learners (for example, industry standards, best practices in

risk management, additional qualifications/certifications necessary for leadership in certain outdoor settings)

- knowing and understanding effective hazard assessment and risk management strategies in outdoor environments as well as personal abilities and limitations in various outdoor environments and contexts
- understanding that outdoor experiential education addresses multiple learning outcomes (for example, character, environment, health and wellbeing, curriculum):
  - with reference to character, understanding that significant personal and social growth occurs through participation in outdoor experiential education
  - with reference to the environment, understanding that repeated and purposeful teacher-led outdoor experiential education is a vital support for the ecological literacy necessary for a sustainable future
  - with reference to health and wellbeing, understanding that a growing body of research points to outdoor experiential education providing substantial benefits in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual, social and cultural wellbeing
- with reference to curriculum, understanding that outdoor experiential education can broaden and deepen all subject areas particularly when applied to local settings in integrated and transdisciplinary ways
- with respect to curriculum, introducing different cultural and knowledge perspectives (for example, those of Canadian indigenous populations)
- understanding the particular benefits of outdoor experiential education for members of at-risk groups and for those with special needs
- understanding the outdoors (both natural and constructed environments) as the fundamental milieu in which outdoor experiential education takes place
- understanding that an overarching purpose of outdoor experiential education is to encourage sustainability and social and environmental justice
- understanding the context and relevant theories of the learner (for example, multiple intelligences, including naturalist)
- understanding theories of exceptionality as they relate to the learner engaged in outdoor experiential education
- 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: Outdoor Experiential Education

- developing awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (Aboriginal) ways of knowing and perspectives
- providing a holistic and inclusive educational program that builds on learners' abilities and enables them to reach their potential.

#### **D. Program Planning, Development and Implementation**

- creating and maintaining positive, accepting and emotionally safe learning communities through effective facilitation of team building and initiative activities as well as through facilitation of different levels of challenge for different learners
- developing and applying effective outdoor experiential education framing and debriefing strategies
- developing sound judgement and decision making skills with regard to health and safety issues in the outdoors as well as risk management practices particular to outdoor experiential education
- developing an awareness of where to acquire specialized outdoor risk management skills
- developing an awareness of the appropriate level of skill, qualification and certification to lead groups in various outdoor activities and excursions
- connecting outdoor experiential education to students' everyday experiences through ongoing and effective transfer of learning
- engaging in curriculum planning, development and implementation that addresses the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains of the learner
- engaging in curriculum planning and resource development that is inclusive and diverse
- identifying historical, present and future factors in a diverse and changing society that impact on students participating in outdoor experiential education
- integrating differentiated instruction and universal design in the planning, development and implementation of learning experiences
- utilizing and assessing professional knowledge to inform pedagogical practices

- understanding the importance of developing and applying a personal knowledge of the natural and cultural history of the area in which candidates will provide outdoor experiential education
- identifying, accessing, integrating and assessing community, print, electronic and collegial resources specific to outdoor experiential education
- including social and environmental themes and issues relevant to the local community
- identifying and implementing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary curricular opportunities
- designing and experiencing outdoor experiential education programs in diverse settings
- identifying, accessing and participating in research which highlights the efficacy of outdoor experiential education in support of student achievement and ongoing program development
- understanding the staffing, budgetary and time management skills particular to outdoor experiential education
- applying the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* to inform a program planning framework

#### **E. Instructional Strategies and the Learning Environment**

- reflecting on personal teaching practice and engaging in professional dialogue on the relationship of theory and practice in the teaching of outdoor experiential education
- fostering social cohesiveness and a collaborative community of learners
- integrating information and communication technology to support student learning
- employing a variety of instructional strategies with emphasis on direct experience that are appropriate to the learner
- recognizing and utilizing the unique “teachable moments” in outdoor experiential education settings
- adapting, modifying and accommodating instruction in the outdoors to meet the needs of all learners
- employing instructional strategies that foster and model ecological literacy and that honour and sustain the natural and built environment



- creating a learning environment appropriate to the outdoor experiential education context that reflects the ethical standards of care, respect, trust and integrity
- using pedagogies that reflect the professional identity of educators as described in the standards and in the *Foundations of Professional Practice*.

#### **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, summative, diagnostic (for example, assessment *as* learning, assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning)
- use a range of assessment and evaluation strategies that support the dignity, emotional wellness and cognitive development of all students and that are appropriate to outdoor experiential education
- understanding particular program models of outdoor experiential education such as intermediate and senior division interdisciplinary programs, and ensuring that out of the classroom experiences are integrated into ongoing assessment and evaluation.

#### **G. Shared Support for Learners**

- understanding the importance of communicating with, involving and supporting parents/guardians and school and community personnel
- understanding and employing a variety of effective communication strategies for collaborating with parents/guardians as well as school and community personnel
- developing methods to provide continuous, meaningful, detailed and supportive information and feedback to parents/guardians, specifically including risk management
- understanding and respecting the importance of shared responsibility and partnership as conveyed in the standards and the *Foundations of Professional Practice*
- understanding the importance of educating about and advocating for outdoor experiential education and the values that this learning promotes
- understanding the diverse ways of funding outdoor experiential education excursions.

## **5. Instructional Practice in the Additional Basic Qualification Course: Outdoor Experiential Education.**

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 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, experiential learning and authentic school-based experiences are included in the course, for example, classroom observations, practicum experiences, course residential retreats and action research projects. 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. Opportunities will be provided by instructors 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) Performance assessment: designing a sample unit which includes a culminating activity and appropriate assessment and evaluation tools, incorporates a variety of technologies and resources relevant to the study of outdoor experiential education, and is based on Ministry of Education expectations
- b) Written assignment: reflecting critically on issues arising from articles, publications, research and/or other resources related to the teaching or practice of outdoor experiential education
- c) Presentation: developing a digital story, presenting an issue related to the teaching and learning of outdoor experiential education
- d) Portfolio: creating a portfolio of practical resources, artefacts, photographs and recording critical reflections for each component related to outdoor experiential education
- e) Action research: engaging in action research by reflecting and action upon a specific inquiry into teaching practice related to outdoor experiential education
- f) Independent Project: addressing any aspect of the course that is approved by the instructor
- g) Instructional resource: developing a meaningful resource that will support instruction and pedagogy related to the teaching and learning of outdoor experiential education

- h) Reflective writing: reflecting on professional practice through journal-writing, environmental autobiography, or writing a case or vignette that will support instruction and pedagogy related to the teaching and learning of outdoor experiential education.

## 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](http://www.oct.ca).

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

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.

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