



# Additional Qualification Course Guideline Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist

Schedule D – Teachers' Qualifications Regulation

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Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre de  
*Enseignement aux élèves ayant une cécité ou une vue basse, spécialiste.*

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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 regulatory elements and core concepts 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 students' 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.

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.

When engaging in professional learning, educators are guided by the *Foundations of Professional Practice*.

### 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.

The AQ Course *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist* reflects **adult learning theories and processes** that foster critical reflection, dialogue and inquiry. Instructors facilitate adult learning practice that provide candidates with professional learning experiences related to teaching, learning and assessment of learners.

## 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 and identity. Education in Ontario is complex and dynamic. Ontario's schools are learning communities that reflect the province's diversity. The *Ontario Human Rights Code* serves 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 acknowledges that systemic manifestations of power and privilege have led to multiple forms of oppression, injustices and inequalities. It 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.

### **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action**

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*.

## **Accessibility for All**

Accessibility for all is rooted in the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Accessibility, inclusion, equity and diversity are fundamental to everyday practice for teaching and learning. Accessibility creates opportunities for each learner to fully participate in their learning, showcase their abilities and benefit from all aspects of the education system. The implementation of adaptive strategies, accessible content and inclusive design for teaching and learning honours the strengths and needs of each learner.

## **Learning for All – Special Education**

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



## 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 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 D, Part I/Part II/Specialist (Three Session)

Schedule D (see Appendix 1), three-session specialist Additional Qualification courses, allow educators to:

- enhance subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills as outlined in the *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Part I* course
- extend subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills in the design and implementation of learning opportunities as outlined in the *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Part II* course
- apply the subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills in a leadership role as outlined in the *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist* course.

### Additional Qualification Course Requirements

The AQ course *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist* 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.

*Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist* applies the subject-specific professional practice, knowledge and skills in a leadership role 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

- barriers and systemic biases that may affect access to all areas of the curriculum for students who are blind or have low vision
- differentiated instruction, universal design and the tiered approach in ways that challenge and reject the dominant hegemony of a sighted world.

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

- significance of the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* as theoretical foundations within *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist*
- ethical professional identity, knowledge and leadership, and collective practices as described in the *Foundations of Professional Practice* to inform program planning.

### **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 *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, frameworks, strategies and resources related to teaching students who are Blind/Low Vision
- policies, processes and practices that foster openness to innovation, culturally inclusive pedagogies and the democratization of knowledge
- expanded Core Curriculum/Essential Skills that serves as the framework for educational practice for students with visual impairments including blindness (for example, communication modes and functional academics, orientation and mobility, social interaction, independent living, recreation and leisure, assistive technology, career education, sensory efficiency and self-determination).

### **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.

## Accessibility for All

- ethical responsibilities related to *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act S.O., 2005*
- assistive supports and technologies to facilitate learning and foster inclusion.

## Learning for All - Special Education

- strategies (for example, universal learning design, experiential learning, differentiated instruction and inquiry) and services that respond to the interests and needs of each learner
- inclusive processes to support development and implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEP) including the transition plan for learners that include voices and perspectives of those involved
- interdisciplinary teams to support learning, advocacy and transitions
- adaptation of classroom materials to meet the concept development of learners who are blind or have low vision, including those with additional exceptionalities.

## Application of educational research

- current research and literature associated with professional practices, policies and pedagogies related to teaching students who are Blind/Low Vision
- 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 learning
- educational standards and practices of various organizations that support students who have visual impairment(s) including blindness (for example, Canadian National Standards for the Education of Children and Youth who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Council for Exceptional Children and Canadian National Institute for the Blind [CNIB]).

## 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 *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist*
- theories of development and identity formation that support learner well-being, efficacy and agency
- learning theories to develop learner's profile and identities.

### Learner-centred pedagogy

- processes and practices to understand learner's curiosities and experiences to empower them to reach their learning goals
- programs and processes that link curriculum to each learner's abilities, interests, strengths, inquiries and needs
- strategies that respect the development, identities, choices and well-being of each learner
- factors that influence how students who are blind or have low vision come to know (for example, lived experiences, unique ways of doing and thinking).

### Supports for learners

- policies, processes, practices to support learner's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development
- programs that respond to learner's lived experiences, identities, needs and well-being
- critical pedagogies and practices that support learner well-being and efficacy
- implications that medical information related to students who are blind or have low vision might have on pedagogical practices and strategies
- medical, genetic and eye conditions including Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) to inform program planning, development and implementation.

### 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
- differentiated strategies for universal design and access so that students who are blind or have low vision may have their individual learning needs addressed in all curriculum areas throughout their school experience

- Unified English Braille [UEB] – Literary and Technical and Music braille, as well as knowledge of the production of braille resources
- literacy, numeracy and teaching strategies specific to learners who are blind or have low vision and/or have a condition of partial, or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance
- practices that support the multiple uses of braille that meet the needs of students who are blind or have low vision
- Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) in program design and planning complexity and differences associated with learners' vision in relation to planning, developing and implementing programs
- experiential learning within blind/low vision education
- braille acquisition, braille literacy and broad literacy skills and how they inform program planning, development and implementation.

### **Pathway and transition planning**

- processes and practices to support all transitions
- curriculum design using learners' career and life goals
- programs and learning opportunities for all 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
- 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
- development of a sense of belonging for students who are blind or have low vision in the school community through equitable opportunities
- safe and accessible physical learning environments for learners who are blind or have low vision in support of recommendations of orientation and mobility instructors and other paraprofessionals.

### **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 braille and 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 learner 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 as conveyed in the *Foundations of Professional Practice*
- integration of environmentally sustainable policies, pedagogies and practices
- processes that engage learners who are blind and have low vision 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, and the 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 and mentorship with in-school personnel to support learning, well-being and leadership
- teacher leadership in nurturing a commitment to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)
- professional communication/interpersonal teacher leadership skills (for example, communication skills, negotiation and advocacy skills, people-based skills and dealing with difficult/challenging situations).

### **Resources**

Resources to support the development of the AQ Course *Teaching Students Who Are Blind/Low Vision, Specialist* can be found on the [College](#) website and the [Ontario Ministry of Education](#) website.



## Appendix 1

### Continuum Of Learning in Schedule D Additional Qualification (AQ) Courses

#### Considerations

- Consistency across the three Schedule D sessions to:
  - support the development and progression of knowledge, implementation and leadership
  - support candidates who take the sessions from different providers
- Candidates' professional experience and learning needs in relation to the required elements of the AQ course.

#### Schedule D, Part 1

#### Schedule D, Part 2

#### Schedule D, Specialist - Leadership

#### Learning and Applying



#### Applying and Extending



#### Leading and Researching

What do candidates need to know about the subject matter? – Develop content knowledge



What more do candidates need to know? – Deepen knowledge and implementation strategies



How do candidates become leaders in the subject area? - Develop leadership skills

Instructor (expert in the subject area) driven



Instructor and candidate driven



Candidate driven supported by instructor

Instructor leads co-construction of learning goals



Instructors and candidates share responsibility of the learning goals related to the subject matter



Candidates develop learning goals to bring their knowledge to others

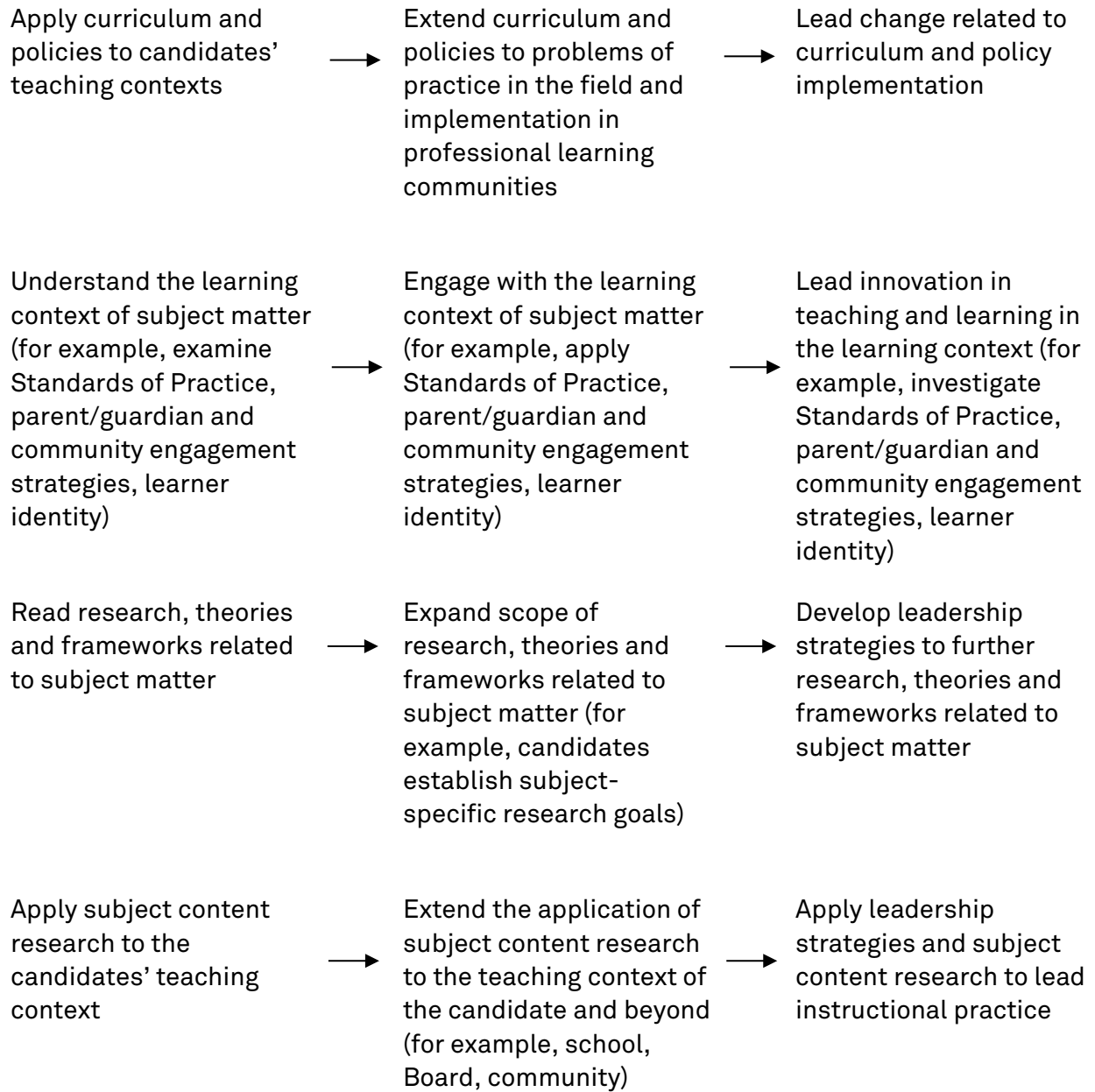
Understand pertinent legislation and policies



Dig deeper/Investigate into pertinent legislation and policies



Analyze pertinent legislation and policies and measure impact at school and system level



## **Continuum of Learning in Schedule D Additional Qualification (AQ) Courses**

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Compliant Text:*

### **Schedule D, Part 1**

*This is the first level on a three-level continuum as outlined in the columns above.*

#### **Learning and Applying**

- What do candidates need to know about the subject matter? – Develop content knowledge
- Instructor (expert in the subject area) driven
- Instructor leads co-construction of learning goals
- Understand pertinent legislation and policies
- Apply curriculum and policies to candidates' teaching contexts
- Understand the learning context of subject matter (for example, examine Standards of Practice, parent/guardian and community engagement strategies, learner identity)
- Read research, theories and frameworks related to subject matter
- Apply subject content research to the candidates' teaching context.

### **Schedule D, Part 2**

*This is the second level on a three-level continuum as outlined in the columns above.*

#### **Applying and Extending**

- What more do candidates need to know? – Deepen knowledge and implementation strategies
- Instructor and candidate driven
- Instructors and candidates share responsibility of the learning goals related to the subject matter
- Dig deeper/Investigate into pertinent legislation and policies
- Extend curriculum and policies to problems of practice in the field and implementation in professional learning communities
- Engage with the learning context of subject matter (for example, apply Standards of Practice, parent/guardian and community engagement strategies, learner identity)
- Expand scope of research, theories and frameworks related to subject matter (for example, candidates establish subject-specific research goals)
- Extend the application of subject content research
- to the teaching context of the candidate and beyond (for example, school, Board, community).

## **Schedule D, Specialist – Leadership**

*This is the third level on a three-level continuum as outlined in the columns above.*

### **Leading and Researching**

- How do candidates become leaders in the subject area? - Develop leadership skills
- Candidate driven supported by instructor,
- Candidates develop learning goals to bring their knowledge to others
- Analyze pertinent legislation and policies and measure impact at school and system level
- Lead change related to curriculum and policy implementation
- Lead innovation in teaching and learning in the learning context (for example, investigate Standards of Practice, parent/guardian and community engagement strategies, learner identity)
- Develop leadership strategies to further research, theories and frameworks related to subject matter
- Apply leadership strategies and subject content research to lead instructional practice.



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