

Final Report  
March 2008



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers  
Fair Registration  
Practices  
Review





## Ensuring Fair Registration For All

In December 2006, the provincial government passed fair access laws affecting all self-regulated professions in Ontario.

In response, I asked College staff to conduct a thorough review of our registration practices and processes. I wanted to know whether the process of applying to the Ontario College of Teachers for certification was fair, transparent, impartial and objective, particularly for internationally educated teachers.

The Fair Registration Practices Review involved several months of consultation, data gathering, analysis and reflection. Accordingly, this report captures the thoughts, concerns and ideas of newly certified teachers and recent applicants, community groups, government representatives, teacher federations, parents and students we met, and whose voices we heard.

Our consultation results indicate that our practices are consistent with the expectations in Ontario's *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* and the Fair Registration Practices Code and that we are well positioned to begin work with the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. However, as recommendations in the report suggest, we still have work to do.

In the coming months, we will use this feedback to improve our registration process wherever possible. Ontario has high standards for teachers. Ensuring fair registration provides equity of opportunity for those qualified to meet Ontario's high standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Brian P. McGowan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Brian P. McGowan**  
**Registrar and Chief Executive Officer**



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## Context for the Review

The Ontario government passed legislation in 2006 that directly affected the Ontario College of Teachers and its registration and registration appeals practices.

In June, Bill 78, *Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance)* amended the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* to require that “any decisions made with respect to an applicant are transparent to and understandable by that applicant, with due respect to his or her individual circumstances.” The amendments further required that Council make regulations establishing standards, practices and procedures to ensure that such requirements are fulfilled.

In December, Bill 124, *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* was passed with the purpose of ensuring that “regulated professions and individuals applying for registration by regulated professions are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.” All of Ontario’s self-regulatory bodies were affected by this legislation.

The *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* created the Office of the Fairness Commissioner and, with it, the expectation for periodic audits of regulators’ registration practices. The Act also established the Fair Registration Practices Code detailing the specific duties of a regulator with respect to registration processes for all members, including those educated outside Canada.

This final report of the staff work group confirms that the College practices are consistent with the Fair Registration Practices Code. The feedback received from participants in the review sessions and written submissions from stakeholders, community organizations, new College members and recent applicants supports this conclusion.

However, the feedback has also highlighted areas within the College where changes and modifications to practices and processes would better address the needs of applicants seeking licensure from the College. The areas requiring further attention are identified in this report.

The increased focus on facilitating entrance to regulated professions and recognizing credentials and qualifications is not unique to Ontario. This is a global concern as indicated by support for international treaties such as the Lisbon Recognition Convention. This review is one of a number of College initiatives and undertakings designed to enhance the registration process for all applicants.

## Review Activity

In March 2007, the Registrar initiated a comprehensive review of the College's registration practices. A staff work group was established with representatives from every department. An overall plan was developed which focused on:

- establishing an External Advisory Committee
- developing a guide to solicit input to the review
- engaging College members and applicants, community organizations and education stakeholders to obtain feedback on the College's registration practices.

### External Advisory Committee

The External Advisory Committee was led by the Registrar and included government, regulatory and sector representatives. A list of members is attached as Appendix A. The committee's terms of reference were to support the Fair Registration Practices Review by:

1. providing advice and feedback about the review principles and process
2. providing advice and feedback about College materials that may be used in external consultations as part of the review
3. providing advice and feedback about recommendations developed by the College work group on Fair Registration Practices
4. facilitating dissemination of accurate information regarding the review process to the field
5. encouraging stakeholders to participate in consultations and process-related activities.

The committee held its inaugural meeting on July 3, 2007. In addition to receiving presentations on the background and context for the review, the committee reviewed the draft review guide for soliciting input during the review process. The feedback from the committee was incorporated into the plan for engaging input.

The External Advisory Committee received periodic updates on the progress of the review as well as a copy of the interim report reviewed by Council in December 2007. The committee met on February 14, 2008 to discuss the overall findings of the review and provide feedback on the draft final report.

### Review Guide

A background document titled the *Fair Registration Practices Review Guide / Guide de révision des pratiques d'inscription équitables* was developed to elicit feedback from new College members and recent applicants, community organizations assisting newcomers to Canada, third party providers and education stakeholders. Electronic copies of the English and French review guides were posted on CouncilNet on August 20, 2007.

The guide included information on the purpose and context for the review. A discussion of recent government action, reports influencing the creation of the Act and insights from previous consultations with internationally educated teachers were used to situate the review and its objectives. Definitions of the guiding principles for the review were confirmed by the work group and repeated throughout the guide for the benefit of participants.



The main body of the guide followed the Fair Registration Practices Code itself. For each section, a description of what the College currently does was followed by a series of discussion points to stimulate feedback and input from participants. The seven sections were:

1. Information – to provide detailed and appropriate information about registration practices
2. Timely Decisions, Responses and Reasons – to ensure registration decisions are made within a reasonable time and to use written responses containing detailed reasons
3. Internal Review or Appeal – to provide an internal review of a decision or the opportunity for an appeal
4. Qualifications – to provide information about the documentation of qualifications that must accompany an application, including what alternatives are acceptable
5. Assessment of Qualifications – to make its assessment of qualifications transparent, objective, impartial and fair, including those assessments done by third parties
6. Training – to ensure that people who assess qualifications and make decisions about registration or appeals have received the appropriate training
7. Access to Records – to have a process and fee structure to provide applicants with access to their records.

### **Communication**

A news release was issued on August 20, 2007 to highlight the College's intent to review its registration practices. The release included a backgrounder with information on the context for the review and the ways the College currently supports all those applying for membership, including teachers educated outside Canada.

Feedback from the release and throughout the review was positive. The College is seen as the regulator at the forefront of the move towards increased transparency and openness and has responded to several requests for additional information in this area.

### **Review Sessions**

Facilitated review sessions were held in four locations across Ontario at the end of August. The locations were selected based on the population of internationally educated teachers (IETs). The languages of the sessions were similarly based on the population demographics.

Two-hour review sessions were held with internationally educated teachers in the morning and with local community organizations assisting newcomers to Canada in the afternoon. The review guide served as the basis for these discussions. An external facilitator with in-depth knowledge of the College and the teaching profession led these sessions.

The schedule of these sessions was as follows:

- August 20 – Hamilton (English)
- August 22 – Toronto (English)
- August 23 – Toronto (French)
- August 27 – Ottawa (English)
- August 28 – Ottawa (French)
- August 30 – Windsor (English)

A total of 50 local community organizations participated in these sessions. These organizations were chosen based on their interaction with new Canadians more so than their interaction with the College. Roughly half of the participating organizations were familiar with the College and had worked with internationally educated teachers in the past. A detailed list of participating community organizations is included in Appendix B.

Fifty-five internationally educated teachers attended the review sessions with participants representing countries such as Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, France, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Scotland, South Africa, Romania, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. Over 40 per cent of participants were certified teachers with the remainder in the process of obtaining certification.

### **Written Submissions**

A comprehensive review of registration practices requires feedback from all possible audiences impacted by current policies and procedures. The identification of those key audiences was one of the first tasks of the work group. The survey group composition was confirmed with the External Advisory Committee in July 2007.

A variety of individuals and organizations were invited to provide written input based on the review guide and its discussion points and questions. These included:

- internationally educated teachers and community groups that did not attend the review sessions
- internationally educated teachers who had recently been denied certification
- third party providers (for example, language test providers and translators)
- education stakeholders representing parents, students, government and affiliates
- new College members and recent applicants in the native, deaf and hard of hearing, technological and general studies areas.

Two separate forms were prepared for recording feedback. A longer format provided an opportunity for responding to the discussion points and summary questions contained in the guide. This was aimed at audiences with significant, direct experience with the College and its registration processes.

A shorter format, including the summary questions only, was designed for audiences better prepared to give overall impressions of the College's practices. This version, along with the review guide, was also available online.

Invitations to provide a written submission were sent in October to roughly 2,500 individuals representing the groups described above.

## Survey Response

Over 100 individuals participated in the August review sessions. These included a random selection of IETs recently certified by the College, IETs in application processing and local community organizations. French-language representation at these sessions was 25 per cent. At the end of the sessions, participants were offered the opportunity to provide additional feedback via a written submission. Over 20 per cent of participants submitted supplementary comments.

Invitations for written submissions were focused on two distinct categories – non-IET College members and recent applicants and IETs who had recently been denied certification.

Invitations to non-IETs included recent applicants and new College members in the general studies, technological studies, native studies and deaf and hard of hearing areas. A random listing of participants was generated and including a French- to English-language ratio of 25:75, the split by subject area was:

- 72 per cent general studies
- 26 per cent technological studies
- 1 per cent native studies
- 1 per cent deaf and hard of hearing.

IETs who had recently been denied certification were offered the opportunity to provide detailed feedback based on their more advanced dealings with the College. A total of 465 invitations were mailed and based on the available pool of participants, French-language representation was 5 per cent.

Other groups invited to provide a written submission included education stakeholders, community organizations at the provincial level and third party providers such as translation and credential assessment organizations. Close to 90 organizations received an invitation with French-language representation at 30 per cent.

The response rate to the request for written submissions was 10 percent. These respondents included:

- IETs who had been recently denied certification
- provincially-based community organizations and third party providers
- education stakeholders including the federations and affiliates, trustees, parents, and education registrars. Twenty per cent of the education stakeholders invited to participate provided written feedback.

The submissions from the above groups were based on the longer feedback format and included detailed responses and suggestions.

Limited response to the online survey by non-IETs contributed to the low overall response rate of four per cent. Of those invited to respond to the online survey, only two per cent completed the survey. The highest response rate was from the deaf and hard of hearing area at 18 per cent. No native studies replies were received; three per cent of technological studies invitees responded and one per cent of those invited in the general studies area responded.

While it is tempting to assume this is an indicator that the registration process is less of a concern for these groups, other factors should be considered. The survey tool itself may have been problematic although the College received no specific complaints. The survey timing of October/November may also have been a constraint for respondents.

In conclusion, while a four per cent response rate would not be deemed a representative sample in pure statistical sampling, the staff work group did not seek to design a scientific survey. The goal of the survey tool was to solicit input from all those having experience with the registration process, especially those with unique perspectives. This was achieved and the insights so gained will help to guide any further actions.

## What We Heard

A significant majority of respondents agreed – the College’s registration practices are transparent, impartial, objective and fair.

Internationally educated teachers and community organizations confirmed that understanding the process does not mean it is easy to complete. Most respondents understood – some even appreciated – Ontario’s high standards for its teachers, but still felt registering was onerous and lengthy. Internationally educated teachers unanimously agreed that obtaining the required documents from their country of origin presented the greatest challenge for them.

Applicants to specific areas of study, for example technological studies and teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, agreed that the recognition of their specialized qualifications lengthened an already complex registration process. Applicants from other Canadian provinces also understood the registration process, but encountered obstacles in the recognition of their out-of-province credentials when moving between jurisdictions.

Education stakeholders commended the College’s work to date in increasing transparency and objectivity in the licensing process. Their experience of working with some applicants concurrently or immediately following the granting of College membership allowed for specific suggestions from a distinct perspective.

While many respondents seem pleased with the College’s processes and procedures, there are areas for further attention. Language proficiency, recognition of credentials, document expectations where originals are not available, further improving relations with applicants and members and working to refine communication materials are areas respondents collectively noted. The detailed comments and suggestions grouped by section of the Fair Registration Practices Code are included in Appendix C.

An underlying theme to the feedback was for the College to view the registration process from the applicant’s perspective. Many participants felt that this review was a strong step towards understanding the obstacles encountered by all College applicants and specific issues faced by international applicants.

## Registration Appeals Committee Review

The College's Registration Appeals Committee, with its particular expertise and insight into the registration appeals process, was offered the opportunity to provide comments and review the feedback from respondents related to the Internal Review or Appeals section of the code.

The committee's feedback mirrored that of respondents, notably:

- additional information about the opportunity to appeal and the specific process should be available at all stages and not just after an applicant is denied certification
- information about the utility of the committee should be shared, for example, confirming the committee does not simply uphold decisions but can and does receive new information that can lead to changes in registration decisions
- the committee supported options for oral and written presentations and highlighted the importance of clarity to the appellant when communicating the process
- the appeals option and process could be communicated to current members and those in school leadership positions through summary statistics or articles in the College's publications and other available forums.

## Conclusions

As the feedback affirms, current College practice is reflective of requirements of the Fair Registration Practices Code contained in the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*. Within each section of the code, College practice and process is consistent with – according to most respondents – the principles of fairness, transparency and objectivity. A compendium of recent changes to College registration practices is included in Appendix D. Ongoing results of these practices will be reported annually to the Fairness Commissioner and made available to auditors during the scheduled reviews.

As noted earlier in the report, the feedback also highlights areas where the College could do more to support applicants. Adjustments to process or the introduction of new practices could better serve applicants to the College and uphold the standards of Ontario's education system.

The staff work group, therefore, recommends that the Registrar consider the following areas for further attention.

### 1. Non-regulatory implications: Changes to administration practices in keeping with the Fair Registration Practices Code:

#### Information

- ensure information on the web site is clear, plain language and widely available

#### Timely Decisions, Responses and Reasons

- enable all applicants to track the progress of their application online
- provide clear timelines and associated costs for each phase of the registration process

#### Internal Review or Appeal

- provide additional information to all applicants on the appeal process
- enable applicants to appeal registration decisions orally or in writing

#### Qualifications

- review the means by which the College can be assured an applicant has not been suspended etc. in another jurisdiction (for example, a Statement of Professional Standing)
- ensure that the College provides clear information on the provision of alternate documents required to prove qualifications

#### Assessment of Qualifications

- meet with third party service providers to ensure that practices are fair, for example, the administration of language proficiency tests by approved test providers
- ensure that staff work groups within the College receive the feedback from this review related to the assessment of qualifications

#### Training

- publicize and enhance the training of all appropriate staff and Council members involved in the registration and registration appeals process

#### Access to Records

- examine alternatives for those who cannot afford fees for access to records.

2. Regulatory implications: Changes to College policies in keeping with the Fair Registration Practices Code:

Qualifications

- Registrar initiate a process to review i) the relevance of 194 days’ teaching experience as required by O. Reg. 184/97 and ii) investigate the development of an orientation program
- Registrar initiate a process to review i) the Statement of Professional Standing (SOPS) as required by O. Reg. 184/97 and ii) determine alternative documents that would be acceptable to the Registrar.

Assessment of Qualifications

- Registrar initiate a process to investigate acceptable alternative methods of recognizing prior teaching experience.

Access to Records

- Registrar initiate a process to review i) the assumptions leading to the current fee of \$24/document as established in the College Bylaws and ii) investigate alternative cost arrangements e.g.: multiple document requests from one individual when providing true, certified copies.

## Next Steps

This final report serves as the record of activity for the College’s Fair Registration Practices Review. In addition to the above-mentioned areas for further attention, the work group recommends that the development of any action items flowing from these areas be communicated through the Registrar’s Report as presented at each Council meeting. Action items requiring regulatory or policy change will come before Council for approval.

The work group also recommends that the Registrar use the feedback obtained through the review to develop regulatory options to address the requirements of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* as revised in 2006. In keeping with the policy development process, the Registrar will bring such options for regulatory development or changes to existing legislation forward to Council.

The *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* imposes many requirements on the College with regard to its registration practices. The Fair Registration Practices work group commends the College on its commitment to ensuring its registration and registration appeals processes are fair, transparent, objective and impartial.



## APPENDIX A

### External Advisory Committee Members

Lindy Amato – Ontario Teachers’ Federation /  
Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l’Ontario

Paul Anthony – Ministry of Education / Ministère de l’Éducation

Marie-Josée Berger – Ontario Association of Deans of Education

Carole Drouin – Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques

Brian McGowan – Ontario College of Teachers /  
Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l’Ontario

Carol Norton-Sargent – Teach in Ontario / Enseigner en Ontario

Tom Warner – Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario

Geoff Williams – Council of Ontario Directors of Education

## APPENDIX B

### Review Session Participants – Local Community Organizations

Participants included the College’s partners in the Teach in Ontario bridging program – Skills for Change, LASI World Skills, and Windsor Women Working with Immigrant Women. The remaining partner, Ontario Teachers’ Federation, is represented on the External Advisory Committee. These groups brought the regional perspectives from their respective centres to the discussions. The YM/YWCA was also able to bring regional perspectives through participants from various centres.

Some of the other organizations who attended included:

- ACCESS Employment Services
- Accreditation Assistance Access Centre
- Guelph and District Multicultural Centre
- India Rainbow Community Services of Peel
- Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency of Ottawa-Carleton
- London Urban Services Organization
- Niagara Immigrant Employment Council
- Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
- Women’s Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc.

Some of the French-language community organizations who attended included:

- Association marocaine de Toronto
- Conseil économique et social d’Ottawa-Carleton
- Institut de leadership des femmes de l’Ontario
- Organisme communautaire des services aux immigrants d’Ottawa
- Réseau de chercheuses Africaines

## APPENDIX C

### Summary of Specific Stakeholder Input by Theme

The following feedback is grouped into the headings of the Fair Registration Practices Code from the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act*.

#### 1. Information:

- Overall, IETs found the information provided by the College to be clear and they understood the requirements for certification.
- Community organizations and education stakeholders said the registration information was clear and suggested it had become more detailed and appropriate over the past ten years.
- Education stakeholders noted there were some discrepancies in terminology between printed material and information on the web site.
- Both electronic and hard-copy formats were favoured by applicants although supplementing that information with a face-to-face, personal discussion was deemed to be the most useful.
- Community organizations found some applicants were overwhelmed by the written information, particularly those from more “oral” cultures. They suggested offering increased opportunities for personal discussions with the College or with trained counsellors within community organizations. Education stakeholders suggested revising the format of online material to make it more user-friendly.
- Participants felt the fees for registration were clearly stated although some suggested that prior knowledge of the additional fees typically incurred to procure their documents would have been helpful.
- Education stakeholders wondered whether materials such as the registration guide could be translated into languages other than French or English.
- Information sessions held regularly by the College were supported by IETs, community organizations and education stakeholders. Stakeholders noted that holding sessions in areas other than Toronto should be investigated.
- Several respondents noted the pre-service information sessions, while very beneficial, should be held earlier in the academic year and should clarify items such as the required letters of employment for technological studies applicants.

#### 2. Timely Decisions, Responses and Reasons:

- IETs confirmed that the College provides detailed and clear written reasons for its registration decisions. Some education stakeholders, however, suggested additional clarification would be helpful to applicants, particularly related to terms and conditions and the timelines for their completion.
- The main obstacle faced by the majority of participants was obtaining documents from their country of origin. The Statement of Professional Standing was most frequently cited as difficult to obtain, particularly in countries without a licensing body for teachers.
- Community organizations speaking on behalf of their clients agreed that acquiring documents presented the biggest obstacle for applicants. Education stakeholders suggested a preliminary review of non-original documents to confirm appropriateness would ensure applicants are pursuing the correct original documents.
- IETs confirmed that the ability to view the status of their application online – for example, which documents had been received by the College – would be beneficial.
- Education stakeholders agreed that the College’s four-to-six week review goal for evaluating a completed documentation file was reasonable. They noted an estimated timeline of the overall registration process might be helpful to all applicants.

### 3. Internal Review or Appeal:

- Both IETs and community organizations found the appeal process transparent, impartial and objective.
- Education stakeholders suggested that additional information on the appeal process be available to all applicants, not only to those who had been denied certification. One also suggested that more information on how individuals hearing the appeal are separate from those involved with the evaluation decision would improve transparency and objectivity.
- Respondents were mixed on whether an oral or written appeal was the better approach. Supporters of a written approach appreciated knowing there was a record of their arguments and agreed it was less stressful than presenting to a panel, often in a second language. Supporters of the oral approach felt that being available to respond immediately to questions or provide clarification was advantageous. They agreed an oral presentation offered the opportunity to personally explain any extenuating circumstances.
- Regardless of the approach favoured, participants agreed that having a choice in appeal format was in itself impartial, objective and fair.
- In response to why people might not appeal a decision, many IETs and one education stakeholder noted applicants may feel the appeal is futile and simply one more hurdle to deal with.
- Education stakeholders noted that the fee may be too high for IETs and encouraged the College to assess the cost of the appeal process.

### 4. Qualifications:

- The provision of documents to prove qualifications was the area that caused international applicants the most difficulty. The Statement of Professional Standing in particular, was difficult to obtain from home countries and caused the most confusion for education authorities abroad. Participants suggested the College develop a template to facilitate obtaining this document in an acceptable format. Education stakeholders suggested an affidavit attesting to an applicant's qualifications could be acceptable.
- The majority of IETs and community organizations agreed that extenuating circumstances require alternatives for acceptable documentation. Education stakeholders suggested the College create and maintain a listing of those countries where it is impossible to obtain documentation.
- Community organizations and individuals understood the documentation requirements of the College. They questioned, however, the need to either repeat or enhance the requirements imposed by other institutions. For example, they perceived overlap in requests for a criminal record check by Canadian immigration, the College and school boards/employers. They also cited the language proficiency test and the fact that immigration requires a 'general' level while the College requires an 'academic' level test score.
- One respondent noted that more stringent requirements for registering as a teacher of the deaf were necessary and that the assessment of such qualifications requires specialized knowledge in deaf education.
- An applicant to the technological studies area questioned why documentation requirements were more complex for this area than others and felt additional flexibility should be explored by the College.
- Education stakeholders commended the College on its expanded country-specific section on the web site
- Community groups suggested that in addition to the country profiles explaining what documents are required and the terminology used in the originating country, examples of unacceptable documents, including why they are unacceptable, would be useful for applicants.

- Ontario applicants expressed frustration at the duplication required in obtaining transcripts and other required documents for various sources such as teachers' unions and salary classification at OSSTF/QECO. Many suggested improving the exchange of documents between organizations.

#### 5. Assessment of Qualifications:

- Most IETs felt the assessment practices were objective and fair. A few however, described the requirements as imposing Canadian standards on other countries either in terms of documentation or archiving. Examples provided were requiring a Statement of Professional Standing from a country that does not normally provide one, or requiring employment records beyond the timeframe an originating country might keep them.
- Education stakeholders agreed that the College assesses applicants in a fair, transparent, objective and impartial manner.
- Several applicants from other Canadian provinces expressed concern that their credentials and professional experience were not recognized by the College in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Participants with Interim Certificates of Qualification (ICQ) questioned the reasonableness of the 194 days' teaching experience (as required by Regulation 184/97) to convert an ICQ into a Certificate of Qualification. While it was understood that the 194 days fulfills the practicum component, respondents suggested it should be aligned with the number of practice teaching days required at an Ontario university.
- IETs who had scheduled an appointment with Membership Services to review their personal files appreciated this opportunity to have decisions explained to them in person.
- Language proficiency tests were an oft-cited obstacle for IET applicants who, for the most part, understood the need for high language standards but described the frustration of having to achieve the high test scores in all elements of the test each time.
- Education stakeholders were unclear as to why some test providers and specific language tests were acceptable while others were not.

#### 6. Training:

- Participants said it was important to have evaluators who are knowledgeable about the practices in specific geographical areas.
- Community organizations and education stakeholders almost unanimously confirmed that the "cultural proficiency" of evaluators is paramount. They agreed that not only is knowledge of the specific country important, but also knowledge of the immigration process and the typical immigration experience.
- Education stakeholders applauded the College on the extensive professional training and continuing development undertaken by staff and panels hearing registration appeals. They suggested this information should be shared in printed materials or on the web site for the benefit of applicants.

#### 7. Access to Records:

- Both IETs and community organizations felt the process to request a personal record was clear and easily understood. They differed, however, on the fee requirement. IETs understood the need for the fee, although some suggested a sliding scale based on the number of documents requested. Community organizations expressed concern about the \$24 per document fee.
- Education stakeholders also expressed concern about the cost per document. They felt applicants should be advised to keep copies of documents for themselves and to clarify that such original documents would be needed for future steps such as salary classification with OSSTF/QECO.

## APPENDIX D

### Compendium of Recent Changes to College Registration Practices

In recent years, the College has introduced new policies and adjustments to practices that support fair, transparent and open registration and registration appeals practices. This compendium of such practices, delineated along the lines of the Fair Registration Practices Code, provides a baseline from which the College will work to implement the feedback obtained during the Fair Registration Practices Review.

1. Information – the code requires the College to provide detailed and appropriate information about registration practices.

#### What the College does

The College publishes information on the registration process on our web site.

Information on the requirements for certification and the documents needed can also be obtained in printed registration guides, by contacting Client Services, by attending one of several information sessions, or arranging a personal meeting. All this information is provided in English and French.

Information includes details on the process, the amount of time a credential evaluation normally takes, the documents needed for certification, and the fee.

Should an applicant have difficulty obtaining documents from another country, the College can make inquiries for them. We currently have such letters in several languages (for example, Albanian, Arabic, Farsi-Persian, Hebrew, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian).

The College holds monthly information sessions for internationally educated teachers to discuss the process and answer questions.

The College web site has information on how to obtain academic records, statements of professional standing and teacher certification documents from each of some 90 countries.

There is a free sharing of information between the College and the Teach in Ontario bridging program to ensure requests for help or intervention are handled quickly.

Teach in Ontario, the bridge training program for the teaching profession is jointly funded by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The College is a partner along with: Ontario Teachers' Federation, Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) World Skills, Skills for Change and Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women.

Teach in Ontario provides internationally educated teachers with information on the certification process and other assistance, including:

- personalized support in English and French in consultation centres in Toronto, Ottawa and Windsor
- help obtaining the documents needed for certification
- a six-week employment preparation program
- English-language upgrading courses.

2. Timely Decisions, Responses and Reasons – the code requires the College to ensure registration decisions are made within a reasonable time and to use written responses containing detailed reasons.

**What the College does**

First, staff reviews the applicant’s file to ensure it has all the required documents. The documents include those submitted by the applicant and those sent directly to the College by the granting institution. If the file is incomplete, the College communicates with the applicant, including a list of the outstanding documents.

Once the file is complete, College staff evaluate it within four to six weeks. If the applicant meets the criteria, the College writes to the applicant immediately. If the criteria are not met, a committee of staff evaluators reviews the file to see if any other options are available. The file is also reviewed by the Manager of Evaluation Services. If this review confirms the first, the College sends a letter from the Registrar to the applicant that includes details of the decision and the reasons for it. The letter also outlines further steps the applicant may take.

In early 2007, the College introduced a pilot process to evaluate the academic and professional components of an applicant’s file while evidence of language proficiency is still outstanding. This enables the College to provide the applicant with information on any additional qualifications they may require, which they can earn while upgrading their language skills or waiting for the language test.

3. Internal Review or Appeal – the code requires the College to provide an internal review of a decision or the opportunity for an appeal.

**What the College does**

The College reviews every unsuccessful application before sending the decision to the applicant.

The College includes information in the letter about how to appeal if the decision is to deny certification, or in an insert with the letter if the decision is to impose terms, conditions or limitations. Applicants who have been denied certification also receive the College’s Credential assessment brochure, which outlines the appeals process in detail and includes an appeals application.

The Registration Appeals Committee, composed of elected and appointed members of the College Council who were not part of the initial decision, rules on the appeal.

The fee for an appeal is \$99 and the timeframe is four months. This is a College-subsidized fee as it is below the cost recovery threshold.

When the College receives an application for a review by the Registration Appeals Committee, staff send a letter to the appellant that acknowledges receipt, includes copies of the material the College used in making the decision, and sets a deadline for the appellant to respond.

The Registration Appeals Committee reviews all the material, including the submission from the appellant, and prepares a written decision comprised of a backgrounder,

summary of materials and the reasons for the decision. The committee members sign the decision. The College sends this package, which includes a cover letter from the Registrar informing the appellant of the outcome of the review and any further steps the appellant can take.

4. Qualifications – the code requires the College to provide information about the documentation of qualifications that must accompany an application, including what alternatives are acceptable.

### **What the College does**

Regulation 184/97, Teachers Qualifications says the College must receive a teaching certificate and transcript of teacher education programs, evidence of academic or technological qualifications and a statement of professional standing that says the applicant has not been suspended or cancelled. The College Council recently confirmed these requirements, based on an extensive review of teachers' qualifications.

Information on the documents required for more than 90 countries is on the College web site. Some of these include alternatives.

Examples of alternatives are a photocopy of one-time-issue transcripts and a verification letter received directly from the granting institution or one year of teaching experience in lieu of confirmation of the practicum component of the teacher education program.

Where applicants need help obtaining documents or in exceptional circumstances, the College may contact institutions, international ministries or embassies on the applicant's behalf. The College considers exceptional circumstances to be when war or the political climate have prevented the institution from operating or when applicants fear persecution if they apply for the original documents themselves.

The College offers a monthly information session for applicants who require assistance obtaining documents to outline the assistance the College can provide.

5. Assessment of Qualifications – the code requires the College to make its assessment of qualifications transparent, objective, impartial and fair, including those assessments done by third parties.

### **What the College does**

The College certifies teachers based on these requirements:

- completion of a postsecondary degree and one-year program of teacher education. The program of teacher education must have at least 40 per cent methodology, 20 per cent education foundations and 20 per cent practice teaching. The remaining 20 per cent can be in a complementary area of teacher education.
- statement of professional standing from any jurisdiction where the applicant was certified/authorized to teach
- proof of language proficiency in English or French when the applicant's teacher education was in another language.

The College sends applicants who have been denied certification a detailed report on their file and a 16-page credential assessment brochure that outlines requirements, alternatives and options, including detailed information on appeals.

The College accepts language proficiency results that meet the minimum scores established by the College from Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Test pour étudiants et stagiaires au Canada (TESTCan). Copies of documents received in a language other than French or English are sent to the applicant for translation. The College accepts translations from translators certified by the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) and COSTI Immigrant Services, which are recognized internationally in their field.

The College has quality control measures to ensure fairness. For example, the College keeps sample documents from a variety of countries so that staff can compare them to new documents to confirm they are authentic. At random, staff will contact institutions to find out if a document is authentic. And the College engages in an ongoing exchange of information with embassies, ministries, faculties of education, and other professional associations outside Ontario.

The College has introduced a practice that allows up to 60 per cent of a program of initial teacher education completed by distance education to be accepted. You will find more information on teacher education programs earned through distance education on our website.

6. Training – the code requires the College to ensure that the people who assess qualifications and make decisions about registration or appeals have received the appropriate training.

### **What the College does**

College staff receive professional training in document assessment and evaluation, for example from World Education Services (WES). They also have access to a College handbook and training manual that is continually updated.

Representatives from the College participate in the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) conferences. These sessions revolve around the best practices in records management, credential assessment, admissions, enrolment management, administrative information technology and student services. They also provide a forum for discussing policy initiation and its development, interpretation and implementation at the institutional level and in the global educational community.

The College is a member of the Teacher Certification Registrars of Canada Committee. The Committee has reviewed and updated Canada's Labour Mobility Agreement in Principle, signed in 2001 by each province and territory, to facilitate better mobility of all teachers across Canada. The updated agreement will be presented to the Deputy Ministers of Canada at their February 2008 meeting.

The College has an extensive collection of resource materials. This includes historical and contemporary literature relating to about 120 countries.



Senior officers provide guidance, oversight and peer training. Staff also expand their knowledge of the entire process through cross-training and rotation among units. This ensures experience and expertise in evaluating credentials for Ontario and out-of-province or out-of-country applicants, as well as in areas such as special education or deaf and hard of hearing.

The College provides initial and on-going training for members of the Registration Appeals Committee in evaluation practices, decision writing, international education systems and relevant legislation.

Sessions on building intercultural competence are provided to College staff and members of the Registration Appeals Committee.

7. Access to Records – the code requires the College to have a process and fee structure to provide applicants with access to their records.

### **What the College does**

The form to request personal information is on the College web site. This form includes the cost for the service (\$24 per document) and the maximum estimated time (30 days). Normally, it takes five to seven days to fill a request. The service includes the opportunity to have the College send documents, including translated versions, to a third party.

Under certain circumstances, the College will not provide the information. These circumstances are detailed on the form and are in keeping with the College's privacy policy. Although not bound by the federal Privacy Act, the College has taken steps to protect information where other individuals are involved or where the information is subject to another Act or court order.





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– Brian P. McGowan, Registrar and CEO



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