



Memo

Date: January 27, 2022

To: Deans and Directors of Faculties of Education
Registrars, Faculties of Education
General Secretaries, Ontario Teachers' Federation and Affiliates
Directors of Education
Supervisory Officer Organizations
Principals Organizations
Secretaries, School Authorities

Copy: Ministry of Education (various contacts)
Providers of Additional Qualification Programs

From: Dr. Derek Haime, OCT
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **Practical Experience in Programs of Professional Education**

This supersedes the College's June 25, 2020 memorandum.

The Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs Regulation (O. Reg. 347/02) of the Ontario College of Teachers Act ("Act") sets out requirements for the accreditation of programs of professional education in Ontario, which include practice teaching. The purpose of this guideline update is to clarify the criteria used to determine what constitutes practical experience in a program of professional education.

This guideline is of interest to candidates in programs of professional education, as well as faculties of education that deliver the programs and school board personnel who support candidates in their practical experience assignments.

Practical Experience in Programs of Professional Education

What constitutes practical experience in schools or in other situations approved by the Ontario College of Teachers for observation and practice teaching within programs of professional education?

All Ontario faculties, colleges and schools of education require candidates to complete a minimum of 80 days of practical experience in a regular classroom or other setting approved by the College. In most cases, the experience is in schools or classes operated by a district school board.

However, the experience may be in a Provincial School in the case of candidates seeking a Certificate of Qualification and Registration to teach the deaf or hard of hearing. In certain situations, practical experiences may also occur in a private school or in a school operated by an education authority or in another setting approved by the College.

Requirements for Out-of-Country Applicants

Applicants who have completed international teacher education programs are required to have successfully completed 80 days of supervised practice teaching during their program of professional education in an elementary or secondary classroom.

Alternatively, the College may accept evidence of a minimum of 80 days of successful teaching experience as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in the jurisdiction in which the candidate was certified. The College does not accept experience gained as an uncertified teacher or as an educational assistant. The appropriate supervisory official in the jurisdiction where the applicant taught must confirm the successful teaching experience.

Criteria Used to Determine What Constitutes Practical Experience in a Program of Professional Education

To fulfill the requirements of Regulation 347/02 and the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation (O. Reg. 176/10) of the Act, the College requires that (1) a faculty member be appointed as an advisor for the candidate and (2) the practical experience:

- is a minimum of 80 days
- includes observation and practice teaching
- is completed in an instructional setting in schools or other situations that use the Ontario curriculum or in situations approved by the College
- is completed in:
 - English-language schools if the candidate is to be certified to teach in English (or in French as a Second Language) and the candidate is enrolled in an English-language program of professional education; or
 - French-language schools if the candidate is to be certified to teach in French and is enrolled in a French-language program of professional education
- takes place in instructional settings which are related to the areas of concentration of the candidate's program of professional education, that is, in primary (K – Grade 3) and junior (Grade 4 – 6) classrooms for a candidate whose areas of concentration are the primary and junior divisions or in intermediate (Grade 7 – 10) and senior division (Grade 11 – 12) subject-specific classrooms for a candidate whose areas of concentration are the intermediate and senior divisions

- enables candidates to participate in settings related to each division and, where applicable, at least one of the subject areas of the program that are relevant to the candidate's program. Where possible, candidates would be better prepared if they have an opportunity to obtain experience in both subject areas
- is supervised and assessed by an experienced teacher who is a member of the College in good standing. The College recognizes that the determination of a candidate's success in the practicum is informed by the associate teacher's assessment but that the responsibility for final evaluation rests with the faculty member
- is successfully completed and so noted on the transcript sent to the College.

In addition, the College recommends that the practical experience occur in a restricted subject, identified in section 19 of Regulation 298 Operation of Schools, made under the Education Act, only if the candidate's area of concentration in the program of professional education is in such a subject. Further, the College recommends that candidates not be placed in specialized settings such as Special Education where students are congregated for instruction.

The College recognizes that K-12 program delivery occurs in a number of face-to-face, online and blended instructional settings. Effective teaching with technology requires an understanding of how to represent concepts and content in remote learning situations. A candidate's practical experience should reflect the current teaching and learning reality of Ontario classrooms. As a result, it must take into account the instructional situation in which they are placed and may take place in a virtual classroom or other online environment that adheres to the criteria listed above. For example, if a candidate is placed in a school setting where the teaching is occurring remotely/is a virtual classroom, then the candidate's practicum is an opportunity to teach and learn virtually.

Candidates must successfully complete the practicum in order to complete the program of professional education. Deans and directors of programs of professional education will only report successful program completion to the Registrar and will only recommend certification for those candidates who have successfully completed the practicum.

Other Situations Approved by the College

The Registrar uses the following criteria to determine whether a situation is approved for observation and practice teaching:

- the program is delivered in an instructional setting
- students are organized in a class or classes for program delivery
- the Ontario curriculum for elementary and secondary schools is being used

- the language of instruction is English or French or, in the case of a First Nations elementary school, is a Native language identified in the Native Language curriculum policy document or, in the case of a Provincial School is American Sign Language or la Langue des signes québécoise.

These criteria may be met by situations, including but not limited to:

- a private school which has filed a Notice of Intention to Operate a Private School with the Ministry of Education
- settings such as:
 - Royal Ontario Museum
 - Ontario Science Centre
 - Science North
- a school operated by the council of a band or an education authority with responsibility for providing for the educational needs of the members of the band or bands.

Practical Experience Completed During a Concurrent Program

Candidates who are enrolled in a concurrent program of professional education may satisfy the practical experience requirement by observing and practice teaching over the course of the concurrent program. To be eligible, the practical experience must be identified as such and must meet the criteria above.

Candidates Enrolled in Multi-Session Programs of Professional Education

In accordance with Regulation 347/02 and Regulation 176/10, candidates who are enrolled in multi-session programs that lead to a Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration must also meet practicum requirements as outlined above.

When a candidate successfully completes the first session of the program, they are eligible to apply to the College for a Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The first session of these programs must include a practicum of at least 10 days.

For candidates who have been issued a Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration and are employed, the remaining number of practice teaching days must be designated for practicum purposes over the course of the school year(s). The requirement may be met in the classroom for which the candidate is responsible if the teaching experience is supervised and assessed by an experienced teacher (who may be the principal), and the setting enables the candidate to meet the divisional requirements.

A faculty member must be appointed as an advisor to each candidate and the practical experience must:

- take place in instructional settings which are related to the areas of concentration of the candidate's program of professional education
- enable the candidate to observe and/or practice teach in settings related to each division and at least one of the subject areas of the program that are relevant to the candidate's program, where a divisional qualification is being sought.

Practical Experience beyond the Minimum Requirement

Many faculties, colleges or schools of education require that candidates complete more than the 80 days of practical experience set out in the regulation. Subject to the design of the practicum as accredited, and at the discretion of the faculty, the experience beyond the 80 days may be in settings other than those identified above.

I ask that you bring the information provided in this memorandum to the attention of staff in your organization who have responsibility for practice teaching in addition to teacher candidates.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the College at 416-961-8800, (or toll-free in Ontario at 1-888-534-2222), or by email at allaccred@oct.ca.

Sincerely,

Derek Haime, OCT
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

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