

Prescribed Professional Learning Courses

Course Practitioner Resource

Professional Boundaries

Investigations and Professional Conduct Department
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Ontario
College of
Teachers
Ordre des
enseignantes et
des enseignants
de l'Ontario

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Introduction

Professional Boundaries is part of a series of prescribed professional learning courses that members of the Ontario College of Teachers may be ordered to complete by the Discipline or Fitness to Practise Committee.

When the Discipline Committee finds a member guilty of professional misconduct or to be incompetent, or the Fitness to Practice Committee finds a member to be incapacitated, the committee may order the Registrar to impose specified terms, conditions or limitations on the certificate held by the member under the *Ontario College of Teacher's Act*. This may include terms requiring the member to successfully complete one or more specified courses, as pre-approved by the Registrar.

The prescribed professional learning courses are aligned with the *Foundations of Professional Practice* to assist members in becoming active and effective teachers and embody the ethical and professional standards of the profession. The courses are also aligned with the guidelines developed by the College for Additional Qualification courses.

Each time a prescribed professional learning course is delivered to a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, it must be pre-approved by the Registrar. This resource details the Registrar's requirements, expectations for professional learning and the course approval process.

Course Approval Process

It is the member's responsibility to find an acceptable course practitioner who demonstrates educational leadership and/or specific expertise. The member may contact the College for practitioner or course recommendations and the College may direct the member to a practitioner who has successfully delivered the course in the past.

Once the member has contacted the practitioner, the practitioner will review the documents that resulted from the **committee proceedings, which will include one or more of the following:**

- **Decision and Order, including Reasons for Decision**
- **Agreed Statement of Facts and Guilty Plea**
- **Statement of Uncontested Facts and Plea of No Contest**
- **Joint Submission on Penalty**

The information contained in these documents will enable the practitioner to tailor the course content to the member's needs and focus on the areas of practice requiring remediation. Appendix 1 contains a learning development plan template that may be useful for this purpose.

An application package containing the following items must be submitted to the Registrar for review and approval:

- ***The Prescribed Professional Learning – Course Approval Form***
(see oct.ca > Members > Complaints and Discipline > Prescribed Professional Learning)
- **A current curriculum vitae for each person instructing or assisting in the delivery of the course that demonstrates educational leadership and/or specific expertise.**

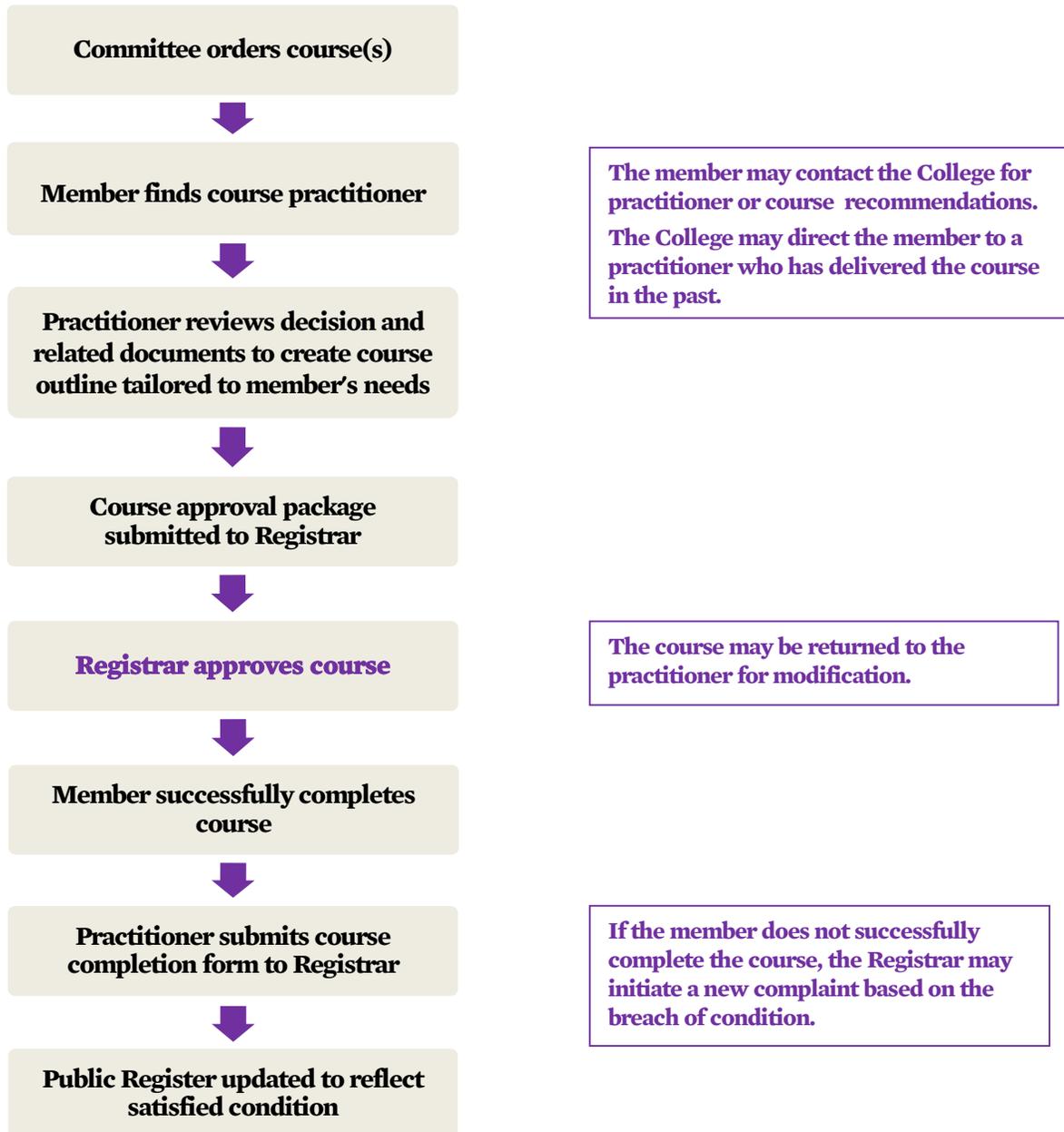
The Registrar will review the application package and either approve the proposed course or return it to the practitioner for modifications. Once approved, the course can be delivered to the member.

Following successful course completion, the member is responsible for ensuring that the course practitioner completes, signs and sends the *Prescribed Professional Learning – Course Completion Form* to the Registrar.

If you have any questions about the course approval process, please contact the College by email at ppl@oct.ca or by phone at 416-961-8800, ext. 855 or 1-888-534-2222, ext. 855 (toll-free in Ontario).

Overview of Course Approval Process

Please note that every course must be approved by the Registrar, even if it has been delivered to members in the past.



Course Length

The prescribed professional learning course, *Professional Boundaries*, should be comprehensive in scope and should provide sufficient time to internalize and master the expected outcomes. There should be flexibility in length to accommodate learning needs, as well as the specific requirements outlined in the decision of the Discipline or Fitness to Practise Committee.

Course length will be determined by the course practitioner's assessment of the member's needs. The course is considered complete once the learning objectives have been met. This will occur at a minimum of six hours, beyond the time required for the member and practitioner to collaborate on tailoring the course to reflect the areas of the member's performance requiring remediation.

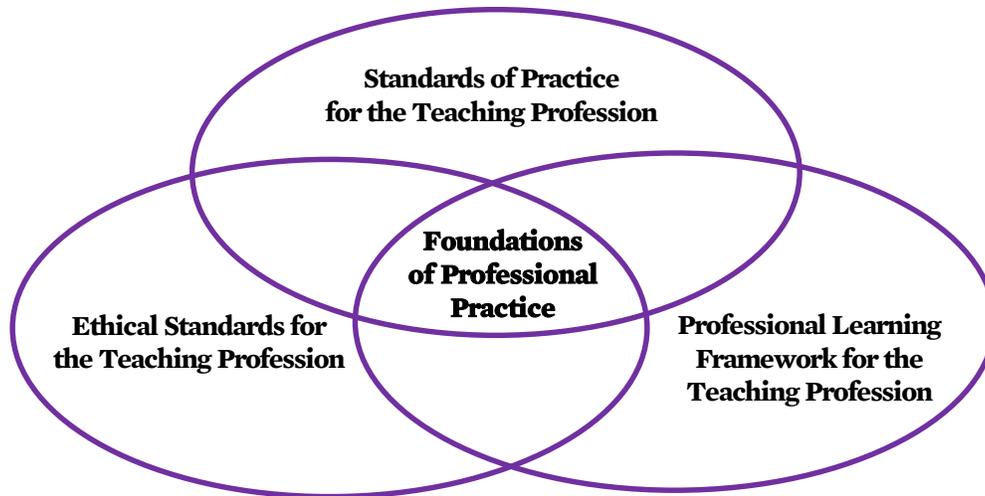
Framework for Professional Learning

The framework below supports and informs professional knowledge, judgment and practice within *Professional Boundaries*, resulting in a holistic, reflective and inquiry-based course.



Foundations of Professional Practice

At the core of teacher professionalism is the Ontario College of Teachers' *Foundations of Professional Practice*, which is composed of the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. The *Foundations of Professional Practice* conveys a provincial vision of what it means to be a teacher in Ontario.



The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* serve as guiding frameworks that underpin the professional knowledge, skills and experiences that teachers require in order to teach effectively within, and contribute to, an environment that fosters *respect, care, trust* and *integrity*. They represent a collective vision of professional practice.

They are also the foundation for the development of the prescribed professional learning courses. The holistic integration of the standards within all course components supports the embodiment of the collective vision of the teaching profession that guides professional knowledge, learning and practice.

The following principles and concepts should be reflected in the course:

- understanding and embodying care, trust, respect and integrity
- fostering commitment to students and student learning
- integrating professional knowledge
- enriching and developing professional practice.

The *Foundations of Professional Practice*, the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* can be found on the College website at www.oct.ca > Public > Professional Standards.

In addition to the *Foundations of Professional Practice*, practitioners should consider the resources and concepts detailed below when tailoring the course and focusing the learning on remediating the conduct that led to the complaint.

A. Theoretical Foundation

The prescribed professional learning courses are based on the theory that knowledge is constructed through experience. Members should have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their existing mental models, rethink old ideas and understandings, develop new outlooks and thereby reframe the world and new experiences.

B. Ontario Context: Relevant Legislation, Policies and Resources

Legislative Compliance

- *Child and Family Services Act*, 1990
- *Ontario's Education Act*, 1990 Part X, Sections 171 (3), 264(1)(c), 265 (a), 267, 298.11 (3)(j)(ii)
- Ontario Regulation 437/97, Professional Misconduct under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996
- *R. v. Audet* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 171; *Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15* [1996] 1 S.C.R. 825; and *Toronto (City) Board of Education v. OSSTF* [1997] 1 S.C.R. 487
- *Safe Schools Act*, 2000
- *Student Protection Act*, 2002
- *Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct*, 2012

College Publications

- *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*, 2000
- *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, 2000
- *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*, 2015
- *Professional Advisory: Professional Misconduct Related to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct*, 2002
- *Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media*, 2011

- *Foundations of Professional Practice, 2012*
- *Essential Advice to the Teaching Profession*

Visit www.oct.ca > Members > Resources for a complete list of College resources.

C. Ethical Practice

- Deepening knowledge of the factors that influence the decision-making process
- Exploring ethical decision-making frameworks
- Discussing an employer's code of conduct and expectations
- Understanding one's ethical obligations to the employer in establishing and maintaining trust
- Making informed and responsible decisions related to ethical practice
- Using ethical frameworks and case studies to reflect on appropriate response to classroom management issues
- Engaging in a process of self-assessment of personal values, morals and ethics that drive decision-making.

D. The Teacher as a Professional

- Reflecting on what comprises professional conduct (for example, professional appearance, implementation of school policies and procedures, verbal and non-verbal language, abstaining from being alone with a student, establishing an open door policy)
 - Establishing and maintaining respectful relationships
 - Deepening cultural awareness and sensitivity
 - Understanding the factors that influence teacher behavior and the resulting impact on students
 - Exercising sound judgment and due care in terms of the teacher's personal versus the professional life
 - Understanding the need to maintain a professional manner and distance with students (the teacher vs. friend role)
 - Knowing and applying legislation and board and school policies with respect to student safety in the context of extra- and co-curricular activities and school functions
 - Understanding the significance of the special duty of care and the factors that affect it
 - Deepening understanding of appropriate actions and reactions when handling sensitive student issues
- 8 • Abstaining from discussing personal or private issues with students

E. Exploring Professional Boundaries

- Deepening an awareness of boundary types (for example, emotional and physical boundaries)
- Setting clear and appropriate boundaries with students
- Developing an understanding and recognition of the difference between boundary crossings and boundary violations
- Understanding relevant legal and professional references
- Demonstrating concern for students by listening attentively and avoiding unnecessary touching (for example, full frontal hugging, uninvited touching, touching that can be interpreted as sexual in nature)
- Recognizing and avoiding potentially problematic situations, such as private encounters with students off school property or closed-door conversations/meetings
- Being aware of the importance of witnesses
- Recognizing cues from students about their level of comfort and respecting individual needs for personal space
- Understanding cultural norms that may influence interpretation of teacher behavior.

F. Use of Digital Technology

- Recognizing professional vulnerability associated with any form of social media and understanding the boundaries of appropriate interactions with students
- Deepening understanding of criminal and civil law implications
- Deepening understanding of privacy concerns and exercising prudence in keeping professional life and private life separate and ensuring that communication is kept in the public domain.

G. Personal and Professional Resilience

- Deepening understanding of the importance of Emotional Intelligence (self-awareness and empathy)
- Fostering self-regulation (controlling emotions, inappropriate thoughts or behaviours)
- Creating new behaviours that promote mutual respect
- Developing and cultivating learning strategies and support structures (for example, mentoring by a colleague).

Instructional Practice

In the delivery of prescribed professional learning courses, practitioners should use strategies that are relevant, meaningful and practical in providing members with authentic and relevant learning experiences.

These may include, but are not limited to vignettes, case studies, problem solving exercises and direct instruction. Practitioners should model the principles of the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Standards of Practice of the Teaching Profession*, honour the principles of adult learning and respond to individual needs.

Professional reading materials, supports and resources, coupled with reflective practice, should also be integral components of the course.

Course delivery can include a blended model of face-to-face and online learning, as approved by the Registrar.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes for the prescribed professional learning courses are based on the competency statements outlined in Ontario Regulation 99/02, Schedule 1, *Teacher Performance Appraisal*.

These statements are a description of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to reflect the standards set out in the Ontario College of Teachers' *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.

The standards of practice represent a collective vision of professionalism that guides the daily practices of members of the Ontario College of Teachers; aligning the expected outcomes of the prescribed professional learning courses with the competency statements helps members embody the ethical and professional standards. There are 16 competency statements within the five domains of the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession*.

The course practitioner, in collaboration with the member, will determine the expected outcomes, which are tailored to the areas of the member's performance requiring remediation.

Commitment to Pupils and Pupil Learning

- Teachers demonstrate commitment to the well-being and development of all pupils
- Teachers are dedicated in their efforts to teach and support pupil learning and achievement
- Teachers treat all pupils equitably and with respect
- Teachers provide an environment for learning that encourages pupils to be problem solvers, decision-makers, life-long learners and contributing members of a changing society.

Professional Knowledge

- Teachers know their subject matter
- Teachers know a variety of effective and assessment practices
- Teachers know a variety of effective classroom management strategies
- Teachers know how pupils learn and factors that influence pupil learning and achievement.

Teaching Practice

- **Teachers use their professional knowledge and understanding of pupils, curriculum, legislation, teaching practices and classroom management strategies to promote the learning and achievement of their pupils**
- **Teachers communicate effectively with pupils, parents and colleagues**
- **Teachers conduct ongoing assessment of their pupils' progress, evaluate their achievement and report results to pupils and parents regularly**
- **Teachers adapt and refine their teaching practices through continuous learning and reflection, using a variety of sources and resources**
- **Teachers use appropriate technology in their teaching practices and related professional responsibilities.**

Leadership and Community

- **Teachers collaborate with other teachers and school colleagues to create and sustain learning communities in their classrooms and in their schools**
- **Teachers work with professionals, parents and members of the community to enhance pupil learning, pupil achievement and school programs.**

Ongoing Professional Learning

- **Teachers engage in ongoing professional learning and apply it to improve their teaching practices.**

Assessment and Evaluation

Practitioners should require the member to complete an evaluation component that demonstrates an understanding of content covered, coupled with a commitment to ethical and professional practice. This evaluation component may include one or more of the following:

- **Completion of self-assessment tools to identify areas for growth and change**
- **Critical reflection on, and inquiry into, professional practice through the use and analysis of vignettes and case studies**
- **Completion of a professional learning development plan (see Appendix 1 for an example) to help implement required changes in practice**
- **Other assessment components, as required by the course practitioner**
- **Other assessment components, as required by the Registrar, which may include assessment by a psychologist or an interview.**

Resources

Courses should use a variety of resources that enhance adult learning, which may include:

- reading materials (professional journals, articles, books)
- reflective checklists
- video and audio materials
- case study analysis
- legal summaries
- a bibliography of recommended reading as follow up
- web references
- access to professional supports and resources
- online learning.

College Resources

The *Prescribed Professional Learning Course Practitioner Resource* has been designed to reflect the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, the *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession*. These resources support the development of professional knowledge and judgment through reflective practice and a variety of educative, research and inquiry-based processes.

Visit www.oct.ca > Members > Resources for a complete list of College resources.

NASDTEC Resources

Model Code of Ethics for Educators

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), based in the United States, represents professional standards boards and commissions, state departments of education, the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity and the provinces of Alberta and Ontario, which are responsible for the preparation, licensure and discipline of educational personnel. The purpose of the association is to exercise leadership in matters related to the preparation and certification of professional school personnel.

NASDTEC created the Model Code of Ethics for Educators (MCEE) to provide educators with a framework for ethical understanding and decision-making. The MCEE establishes best practice, mindfulness, self-reflection and decision-making, setting the groundwork for self-regulation and self-accountability. More information about the MCEE can be found at nasdtec.net > Model Code of Ethics.

Prevention and Correction: Overview Course

This course, offered by NASDTEC, emphasizes the environmental, educational and social demands that influence an educator's daily decisions. Many of these decisions conflict with personal, organizational, technological and social factors. Poor decisions – no matter how well intentioned – may result in adverse consequences that not impact the educator, but also the school's students and the community.

The *Prevention and Correction: Overview* course provides an option for licensing agencies and school districts to support those educators whose conflicting decisions have resulted in a need for intervention. Integrated into this course is an emphasis on ethics as informed by the NASDTEC Model Code of Ethics.

More information about the course can be found at www.nasdtec.net > Resources > The Academy: Online Courses.

References

Legislative Compliance

- *Accepting Schools Act*, 2012
- *Child and Family Services Act*, 1990
- *Education Act*, 1990
- *Education Amendment Act (Keeping Our Kids Safe at School)*, 2009 (Bill 157)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, 1990
- *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996
- *Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct*, 2012
- *R. v. Audet* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 171; *Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15* [1996] 1 S.C.R. 825; and *Toronto (City) Board of Education v. OSSTF* [1997] 1 S.C.R. 487
- *Regulation 98/02, Teacher Learning Plans*
- *Regulation 99/02, Teacher Performance Appraisal*
- *Ryan's Law*, 2015
- *Safe Schools Act*, 2000 (Bill 81)
- *Student Protection Act*, 2002
- *Sabrina's Law*, 2005

Ministry of Education Policy and Resource Documents

- *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It*, 2013
- *Growing Success – The Kindergarten Addendum*, 2010
- *K-12, School Effectiveness Framework: A support for school improvement and student success*, 2013
- *Learning for All: A guide for effective assessment and instruction for all students, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, 2013
- *Making Ontario's Schools Safe and Accepting*, 2016
- *New Teacher Induction Program: Classroom Management* resource
www.edu.gov.on.ca > New Teacher Induction Program > Resources > Professional Development
- **Policy/Program Memorandum 9: Reporting of Children in Need of Protection**
- **Policy/Program Memorandum 120: Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education**
- **Policy/Program Memorandum 123: Safe Arrivals**
- **Policy/Program Memorandum 144: Bullying Prevention and Intervention**
- *Safe Schools Policy and Practice: An Agenda for Action*, 2006
- *Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Manual*, 2010

- *Shaping Safer Schools: A bullying prevention action plan, 2005*
- *Promoting a Positive School Climate: A resource for schools, 2013*
- *School Climate Surveys* (www.edu.on.ca > Parents > Safe and Accepting Schools > Positive School Climate > Positive School Climate Surveys)

College Publications

- *Casebook Guide for Teacher Education, 2006*
- *Classroom Management Additional Qualification Guideline (currently under development)*
- *Duty to Report, 2015*
- *Essential Advice to the Teaching Profession, 2016*
- *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, 2000*
- *Exploring Ethical Professional Relationships*
- *Foundations of Professional Practice, 2012*
- *Inquiring into the Ethical Dimensions of Professional Practice*
- *Living the Standards: Booklets 1-6, 2007*
- *Professional Advisory: Professional Misconduct Related to Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct, 2002*
- *Professional Advisory: Additional Qualification - Extending Professional Knowledge, 2008*
- *Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media, 2011*
- *Professional Advisory: Safety in Learning Environments: A Shared Responsibility, 2013*
- *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession, 2015*
- *Safety in Learning Environments - A Shared Responsibility, 2013*
- *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession, 2000*
- *Standards in Practice: A Resource for Educators, 2006*
- *Using the Case Method in Induction, 2008*

Appendix 1

Prescribed Professional Learning Development Plan

