



Ontario  
Certified  
Teacher  
OCT  
Your  
Professional  
Designation

**OCT  
signifies your  
membership in  
Ontario's self-  
regulated teaching  
profession.**

Teachers belong to a community of highly educated, responsible and caring practitioners who are committed to the growth and development of Ontario students.

The designation will be applied to member certificates, both in print and on our online public register.

### **The Designation**

College Council has approved the use of a professional designation in September 2008 by certified, qualified College members in good standing. The decision was based on consultations with College members that showed overwhelming support for a professional designation as one tool that would help enhance respect for the teaching profession.

Ontario Certified Teacher – or OCT – is the designation in English and is granted by the Council of the Ontario College of Teachers.

Enseignante agréée de l'Ontario, enseignant agréé de l'Ontario – or EAO – is the equivalent French terminology for use by French-language College members.

### **The Purpose of Professional Designation**

OCT distinguishes you as a qualified teaching professional who has been certified to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

The OCT designation protects the public interest in public education. It is a statement of accountability that, as a teaching professional, you:

- are licensed by Ontario's regulatory body for teaching
- possess a distinct knowledge base and skill set
- engage in professional learning throughout your career
- belong to a community of highly educated, responsible and caring practitioners who are committed to the growth and development of Ontario students.

### **Committed to Professional Standards**

The OCT designation tells students, parents and the public that your professional practice is guided and informed by the ethical standards and standards of practice. It is also a symbol of the respect, trust, care and integrity you demonstrate daily in your interactions with students, parents, the public and other professionals. Consistent and proper use of the designation reinforces that sense of professionalism.

The more you use your professional designation, the more its meaning will be recognized as a symbol of professionalism in teaching.

## College use

The College will use the professional designation in its ongoing communication with members and the public. The designation will be applied to member certificates, both in print and on our online public register. You will see examples of its use in *Professionally Speaking* and all references to members in our paper correspondence as well as our electronic newsletter and e-mails.

## Your use as a Member

### Business cards

You are encouraged to use OCT on your business cards. The designation should immediately follow your name, separated by a comma, and precede any additional academic or other professional qualifications you may hold. For example: Joan Smith, OCT, PhD, BA. Please check with your board or employer regarding its particular style considerations.

### Handwritten notes

As a classroom teacher, you often send handwritten notes home to parents. Feel free to use your OCT designation when signing off. In handwritten form, the designation should follow your member's name and/or signature, be written in all caps – OCT – and be separated from your name by a comma.

Handwritten use of the OCT designation is a powerful signal to parents and community members that you belong to a recognized profession and demonstrate the distinct knowledge, skills, trust and responsibility inherent in teaching.

### Personal e-mail signatures

You can use OCT in the signature block on your outbound e-mail messages. As on business cards, your designation should immediately follow your name, separated by a comma, and precede other academic or professional qualifications. The OCT designation is sufficient in a font similar to the name. Use of the OCT icon is unnecessary.

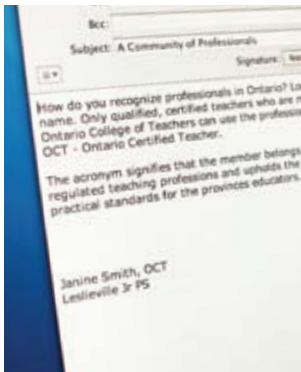
### Additional uses

As a certified Ontario teacher, you are also encouraged to use your professional designation:

- next to your name on report cards
- when being quoted by the media
- in articles you submit to professional publications
- in your memos and PowerPoint presentations
- in trade and conference publications profiling you as a guest speaker or presenter
- in brochures, magazines, annual reports, books and on web sites where you are providing professional expertise or comment.



Use the OCT designation after your name on your card.



Use the OCT designation after your name on your e-mail address.

It is your responsibility as a member to use good judgment in the application of the professional designation.

For more information, please visit [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca).

To report misuse, please phone Investigations and Hearings at 416-961-8800 or toll-free in Ontario at 1-888-534-2222.

### Exercise caution

The professional designation is a trademarked symbol granted by College Council and must not be used in a careless or cavalier manner that might discredit you, other professionals or the teaching profession.

It is your responsibility as a member to use good judgment in the application of the professional designation.

### Enforcement

OCT and EAO are registered trademarks of the Ontario College of Teachers. Unauthorized use is strictly prohibited. Only Ontario College of Teachers members in good standing can use the designation.

Through its discipline process or legal means, the College will prosecute to the fullest possible extent examples of blatant misuse of the OCT designation by unqualified individuals.

Inappropriate use by teachers or by others pretending to be certified, qualified teachers will be subject to a range of penalties up to and including fines under provincial laws, federal trademark legislation and under Criminal Code definitions of fraud, misrepresentation and/or personation.

The College's discipline process will apply to members for alleged abuse of the OCT designation. Enforcement in the case of non-members would follow a three-step process involving a letter of warning, a cease and desist order and legal sanctions.

## Inappropriate use

### Please avoid:

- enabling others to use your name and designation for reproduction in print or electronic form without your prior permission
- allowing inappropriate uses of your professional designation to stand without correction or without bringing it to the attention of the Ontario College of Teachers
- defacing, satirizing or maligning your designation, its purpose or its connection to the College or Ontario's teaching profession.

# Frequently Asked Questions



Your membership card, updated annually upon receipt of your fee, is proof of your membership in the College and your privilege to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

## **Q. How will the College enforce the correct use of the professional designation?**

A. The College's process for discipline will apply to members who are alleged to have abused the OCT designation. Non-members who use the designation to falsify their professional standing will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

## **Q. Can I use OCT next to my name as a presenter at a conference, on any books I author or in any work I do as a consultant?**

A. Yes, by all means, as long as you are a member in good standing with the College.

## **Q. What happens if a member falls out of good standing and their name appears in a print or online publication with the professional designation?**

A. If your teaching certificate has been revoked, if you have retired or if you have failed to pay your membership fee, you cannot use the professional designation and you may be subject to professional misconduct and/or legal charges.

## **Q. Do conference presenters who lose the privilege to use the professional designation have a duty/responsibility to inform conference organizers, publishers or others that they are no longer eligible to use the designation?**

A. Yes. Those who are ineligible to use the professional designation will be prosecuted for unauthorized use.

## **Q. Shouldn't my PhD appear first on my business card?**

A. No. All academic degrees should follow your professional designation. Academic degrees are conferred by universities upon successful completion of course work in a specific area of study. The OCT designation signifies your certification with the regulatory body for the teaching profession and the right to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools and school systems. Its proper use signifies your association with the recognized community of teaching professionals in Ontario.

## **Q. Can I decide to include OCT after my name in handwritten notes I send home to parents?**

A. Yes. It is appropriate and encouraged to use the designation as a symbol of professionalism in your correspondence.



Ontario teachers – like other professionals – now have a professional designation they can use. It's a first for Canadian teachers and a new mark of professionalism.

OCT is an appropriate description of you as an individual certified teacher and as a member of the collective of Ontario's teachers

**Q. Can retired teachers still use the OCT designation?**

A. Yes, if they maintain their good standing status with the College by paying their annual membership fees.

**Q. Is OCT a lifetime designation?**

A. No. Its use is limited only to members who are in good standing with the College. Members who do not pay their membership fees, who resign, or who for disciplinary reasons have been suspended or have had their teaching certificate revoked are ineligible to use the designation.

**Q. What if I stop working for my board, or change my place of employment? Can I still use the professional designation?**

A. Yes. The designation is not tied to employment. If you are a member in good standing with the College, the designation follows you wherever you work.

**Q. Can private or independent school teachers use the designation?**

A. They can if they are certified, qualified members of the Ontario College of Teachers. By choice, many are, even though they are not required to be by law.

**Q. Can teachers who work in non-classroom settings use the professional designation?**

A. Yes. All College members in good standing, including those in administrative positions such as principals, vice-principals and supervisory officers are encouraged to use the OCT designation.

**Q. What do I do if I see somebody using the professional designation incorrectly?**

A. Please report any misuse of the professional designation to the College's Investigations and Hearings Department. The College could also litigate under trademark laws.

**Q. I frequently refer to the College as OCT. Isn't it confusing to use the same term for the professional designation?**

A. OCT is an appropriate description of you as an individual certified teacher and as a member of the collective of Ontario's teachers, which has been granted powers to self-regulate by Ontario's legislature. The College comprises more than 220,000 OCTs, professionals like you who are certified to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

This guide is intended to help you, as a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, use your professional designation to reflect your membership in a community of professionals.



Ontario  
College of  
Teachers

Ordre des  
enseignantes et  
des enseignants  
de l'Ontario

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre de *Enseignante agréée de l'Ontario* / *Enseignant agréé de l'Ontario* / *EAO* / *Votre titre professionnel*.

For additional information:  
Ontario College of Teachers  
E-mail: [info@oct.ca](mailto:info@oct.ca)  
[www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca)

To report misuse, please  
phone Investigations and  
Hearings at 416-961-8800  
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