

Professional Advisory

Additional Qualifications: Extending Professional Knowledge

The Council of the Ontario College of Teachers approved this professional advisory on extending professional knowledge through additional qualifications on March 28, 2008. This advisory affects all members of the College.

The intent of this advisory is to clarify for members the purpose of the regulated system of Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQs) and Additional Qualifications (AQs) and the important role they play in a teacher's ongoing professional learning. The advisory is an outcome of an intensive review of teachers' qualifications by the College, its members and its education partners.

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Extending Professional Knowledge

Ongoing professional learning is an integral part of teaching. The College mandate includes a requirement to provide for the ongoing education of members. The profession's standards reflect the expectation that all members will participate in ongoing learning. Adding to professional knowledge enhances teaching practice, which improves student learning.

Ongoing learning, as expressed in the College's Professional Learning Framework, covers a wide range of activities that help members expand their knowledge, increase their skills and prepare for career changes. Many valuable courses and opportunities are offered by universities, colleges, teacher federations, principals' organizations, school boards, subject organizations and community organizations.

The regulated system of Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQs) and Additional Qualifications (AQs) is one form of professional learning. ABQs/AQs are recognized in legislation, accredited by the College, offered by providers approved by the College and, when successfully completed, recorded on the member's Certificate of Qualification.

The College works with experts to develop guidelines that providers must use in creating ABQs and AQs. Guidelines establish content, learning expectations, instructional strategies and forms of assessment. The College itself does not conduct courses or programs.

Each year, thousands of members enrol in and complete additional qualification courses. The College is committed to increasing accessibility to these courses because of the unique educational value they offer to College members. Some additional qualifications are recognized for salary purposes.

This advisory presents members with an excellent opportunity to assess their plans for ongoing professional learning.

Additional Qualifications

Additional Basic Qualifications courses allow teachers to add another division or subject area to what they are already qualified to teach. ABQ courses can prepare teachers to teach students at the primary, junior, intermediate or senior level or in technological studies. They can also provide English or French-speaking teachers with the skills to work in the other language.

Additional Qualifications courses allow members to expand their knowledge and skills within the divisions and subjects in which they are already qualified or to acquire knowledge in new subject areas. Specialist and honour specialist courses allow teachers to focus on leadership and curriculum development.

The College's review of teachers' qualifications in 2006 resulted in the creation of 59 new ABQs and AQs and revisions to many existing ones. Out-of-date courses have been dropped and some courses modified to respond to changes to the Ontario curriculum.

The new courses reflect the evolution of the education environment and requests from College members. Some examples are:

- Aboriginal Peoples: Understanding Traditional Teachings, Histories, Current Issues and Cultures
- Enseignement en milieu minoritaire
- Philosophy
- Special Education for Administrators
- Teaching in the Catholic School System
- Teaching and Learning through E-learning.

Members can access a complete list of additional qualifications on the College web site at www.oct.ca.

Qualifications in Regulation

Most additional qualifications are organized into five schedules – A, B, C, D and E – that are part of *Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications*:

- Schedule A: One-session Additional Basic Qualifications courses prepare members to teach in another division or general studies subject area. They also support a teacher's professional practice by extending skills and knowledge in design, delivery and assessment in the division or subject.
- Schedule B: One-session Additional Basic Qualifications courses prepare members to teach additional technological education courses. They support a teacher's professional practice by adding to technical proficiency and pedagogical knowledge and skill.
- Schedule C: One-session Additional Qualifications courses extend teachers' knowledge and skills in design and delivery of specific programs. They also support professional practice by preparing teachers for specific roles.
- Schedule D: Three-part specialist courses develop professional knowledge and teaching practice in a particular subject or in cross or integrated curriculum areas. They enable teachers to explore pedagogy related to a subject area without taking more subject-specific university courses. They also prepare a teacher to assume leadership roles such as co-ordinator or consultant for a particular course or program.
- Schedule E: One-session honour specialist courses in general studies and one-session honour technological education specialist courses develop leadership in teaching practice for design and delivery of particular subject areas. They may allow a teacher to assume leadership roles for particular courses or programs.

The Principal's Qualification Program, in two parts, qualifies teachers for positions as vice-principals or principals. In addition, the Principal's Development Course provides opportunities for practising principals and vice-principals to explore their roles in greater depth.

The Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program qualifies members to serve as supervisory officers.

Expectations of Members

Throughout their careers, teachers acquire additional skills and knowledge to take on new assignments and responsibilities.

A change in interests or employment prospects may prompt teachers to add another subject area or division to their qualifications. Changes in technology or in their students' needs may lead teachers to search out courses that add to their knowledge and support their professional practice. A teacher's long-term career plan may include acquiring qualifications to become a consultant, subject area or program co-ordinator, principal or supervisory officer.

Members are responsible for learning what prerequisites are necessary to enrol in courses or programs and to apply for some jobs. Prerequisites are set out in regulation, but faculties of education may impose additional requirements for entry, such as a stronger

subject background or proficiency in the language of study. For example, faculties of education offering ABQs from Schedule A set their own prerequisites for enrolment. Most require at least three full courses in the subject in a postsecondary degree.

Teachers interested in working for a district school board as a subject or program co-ordinator or consultant will find that *Regulation 298/90, Operation of Schools* requires the position to be filled by a teacher with a specialist or honour specialist qualification in the relevant field.

There are provisions in regulation that enable a board to assign teachers to a division or most subject areas outside their qualifications. Where the subject area is specified in legislation, the employer must apply to the College for a Temporary Letter of Approval (TLA) to assign a teacher who does not have that qualification. The College issues a TLA with the proviso that the teacher acquire the qualification. A list of restricted subjects and positions requiring a TLA is available on the College web site at www.oct.ca → [Member's Handbook 2008](#) → [Teacher Education](#) → [Professional Requirements](#).

The scenarios included as part of this advisory give examples of what additional qualifications members may acquire in response to particular teaching assignments or in pursuit of a particular professional interest.

Scenarios

Members of the College look for professional learning opportunities that will continually enhance their teaching. For example, a teacher qualified to teach primary grades might take the three-part Primary Education to build on what they learned in initial teacher education.

Here are some examples of the learning opportunities members of the College might choose.

To increase understanding of the unique aspects of the teaching and learning environment

Whether you work in the Catholic system, in a school in a First Nations community, in a French-language milieu, or in another unique learning environment, courses in Schedule C can provide an orientation to teaching in that environment.

Such courses include Adapting Curriculum for the Catholic School System, Leadership en milieu minoritaire, Teaching Cayuga (or one of six other Native languages), Teaching Combined Grades or Alternative Education.

To expand the range of subjects one can teach at Intermediate/Senior Division level

Teachers with general studies qualifications who want to add to the subjects they are qualified to teach can take an Additional Basic Qualification (ABQ) from Schedule A.

A teacher with technological qualifications wanting to add another technological education qualification can take any other ABQ from Schedule B for teaching Grades 9 and 10, provided the teacher can demonstrate competency in the subject as defined by the faculty of education. To teach Grade 11 and 12 students, a teacher with technological education qualifications must have one year of work experience or one year of academic study in the subject or an equivalent combination, and must demonstrate competency in the area of study.

To extend knowledge of teaching in the French-language system

Teachers who want to extend their knowledge of the unique aspects of teaching in the French-language system could:

- complete an AQ in Schedule C such as Leadership en milieu minoritaire or Enseignement en milieu minoritaire
- complete a Qualification de base additionnelle
- complete the three-part AQ Actualisation linguistique en français / Perfectionnement du français (ALF/PDF) in Schedule D.

To supervise or co-ordinate a subject or department

A teacher wanting to apply to supervise or co-ordinate programs at the board level must hold a specialist or honour specialist qualification in the subject or program area. Specialist or honour specialist AQs are listed in Schedule D and E.

To become a principal

Members of the College wanting to become a principal must successfully complete the Principal's Qualification Program (PQP) Part I and II and a practicum. Prerequisites for the PQP, Part I are:

- five years of teaching experience in an elementary or secondary school
- qualifications in three divisions including the intermediate division
- additional academic learning that ranges from a combination of specialist or honour specialist courses and master's level credits.

Once all parts of the program are successfully completed, the member is eligible to be assigned to a position as a vice-principal or principal.

...Scenarios continued from page 5

To acquire knowledge of students with special needs

College members who have students with special needs in their classroom or who want to accommodate students with special needs can take Special Education, Part I of a three-session AQ in Schedule D. This provides a background for teaching all exceptionalities.

Teachers who want to study a particular area of special needs can take one or more AQs in Schedule C, such as Special Education – Communication – Autism, Special Education – Behaviour, or Special Education – Intellectual – Gifted.

Successfully completed AQs

Once a teacher has successfully completed an AQ or ABQ, the course provider notifies the College, which adds the qualification to the member's record. The completed additional qualification appears on the member's certificate and on the public register.

The additional qualifications listed on a member's certificate are an acknowledgement by the profession and to the public that the member is qualified to teach in the divisions, subject areas and roles indicated. The listed AQs also provide information to course providers that a teacher has the prerequisites that may be required to enrol in some courses.

Additional qualifications courses are designed by teachers for teachers. The courses and programs that make up the system of additional qualifications reflect the experience and pedagogy of the teaching profession in Ontario.

The acquisition of AQs may result in an improvement in the member's salary. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) or the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) evaluate qualifications for salary categories. For more information about which additional qualifications courses are related to salary scales, members should contact QECO or OSSTF Certification.

Commitment to Learning

A commitment to student learning, one of teaching's key professional values, presupposes a commitment to teacher learning.

The *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* describe the beliefs and values that guide the professional judgment and actions of College members. The four ethical standards – care, respect, trust and integrity – establish the core ethics of teaching. Care includes insight for developing students' potential. Respect includes honouring cognitive development. Trust includes inspiring confidence in students and their parents. Integrity includes continual reflection. Ongoing professional learning enhances these attributes.

The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* provide a framework of principles that describes the knowledge, skills and values inherent in the profession. Ongoing professional learning, one of the five standards, is integral to effective practice and to student learning.

The College has developed the *Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession* to place ongoing professional learning in a career-long context. This framework identifies accredited initial and ongoing courses and programs designed to reflect the ethical standards and standards of practice. It also describes the many other ways in which members engage in professional learning to improve their practice and enhance student learning.

The Legislative Context

The College's mandate, set out in the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, emphasizes the importance of supporting and promoting teacher education. The College's mandate is to:

- develop and maintain qualifications for College membership
- provide for the ongoing education of members of the College
- accredit professional teacher education and ongoing education programs for teachers, and
- establish and enforce professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College.

Ontario College of Teachers Act

Two regulations under the Act work together to govern teaching qualifications.

Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications addresses initial and ongoing teachers' qualifications.

Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs sets the parameters of the College's responsibility to accredit teacher education programs in Ontario.

Education Act

Several regulations under the *Education Act* govern qualifications for teaching and supervisory roles and highlight the benefits of additional qualifications:

Regulation 298, Operations of Schools – qualifications for principals, vice-principals and teachers

Regulation 296, Ontario Schools for the Blind and the Deaf – qualifications for teachers of students who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind

Regulation 309, Supervisory Officers – qualifications for supervisory officers

Regulation 98/02, Teacher Learning Plans – the importance of defining professional growth objectives

Regulation 99/02, Teacher Performance Appraisal – the importance of adapting and refining teaching practice through continuous learning

Education-related legislation and regulations are available at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/index.html.

Resources

www.oct.ca → Additional Qualifications

www.oct.ca → Additional Qualifications → Course Providers

www.oct.ca → About the College → Education Legislation → Regulation 184/97, Teachers' Qualifications

www.qeco.on.ca

www.osstf.on.ca → Services

Members should consult their employers' policies to ensure they are familiar with any requirements in their workplace that relate to additional qualifications and teaching assignments.

Adding to professional knowledge
enhances teaching practice,
which improves student learning.

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Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre *Recommandation professionnelle, Qualifications additionnelles : Approfondir la connaissance professionnelle.*