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Ontario's Teaching Regulator  
L'organisme de réglementation  
de l'enseignement en Ontario

September 22, 2023

The Honourable Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
315 Front Street West  
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Dear Minister Lecce,

**Re: April 17, 2023 Letter to Ontario College of Teachers**

In a letter to the College dated April 17, 2023, the Minister requested that the College undertake a number of initiatives. The College exists to serve the public interest by regulating the teaching profession to protect students. It is in this spirit that the College provides the following update to its initial response of April 24, 2023. This letter outlines the various initiatives that have since been completed, and others that are currently underway that will help to modernize teacher education and certification processes.

Each initiative and the subsequent actions taken are listed according to the direction given in the Minister's letter.

**1. Ensure proficiency of teacher candidates in math, literacy, reading, special education, mental health, the use of technology in the classroom, and leadership skills.**

While faculties develop and offer initial teacher education programs, the College accredits these programs in accordance with requirements set out in the Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs Regulation (O. Reg. 347/02). The Accreditation Resource Guide ("ARG") is a companion to Schedule 1 of these regulatory requirements. The purpose of the ARG is to clarify the intent, through additional information and examples, of the core content that should be included in Ontario teacher education programs in accordance with requirements set out in regulation.

To reflect currency of the provincial context in which elementary and secondary schools operate and priority areas in Ontario education, the College completed a revision of the ARG in the summer of 2023 based on 18 months of consultations and stakeholder input. The updated Guide is now posted on the College's website:

English : [oct-oeeo.ca/Accreditation Resource Guide 2022-2023.pdf](https://oct-oeeo.ca/Accreditation Resource Guide 2022-2023.pdf)

French : [oct-oeeo.ca/Guide d'appui à l'agrément 2022-2023.pdf](https://oct-oeeo.ca/Guide d'appui à l'agrément 2022-2023.pdf)

The input and external review process included the involvement of French and English language stakeholders, representing faculties of education, the Ontario Teachers'

Federation affiliates, the Accreditation Committee and its roster, as well as researchers and Ministry of Education personnel from a variety of units.

The revised ARG underscores accreditation requirements aligned with the Minister's directive as well as Bill 98 priority areas identified in section 17.1 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*. Of critical importance, the ARG articulates requirements that teacher candidates acquire knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices in math, literacy, supporting students with special education needs, mental health, well-being and belonging, the use of information and communication technology as a teaching and learning tool, leadership and many other areas including environmental learning, ecojustice and climate action.

The College is holding technical briefings on the ARG to advise all Faculties of Education and other stakeholders of the changes.

**2. Enable eligible teacher candidates to gain real-life experience by working as a teacher while finishing Initial Teacher Education through a transitional certificate and supporting Ontario's students with the educators they need.**

The College worked with the Ministry and other stakeholders over amendments to the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation (O. Reg. 176/10) to create a new Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration (TCQR). Unlike the temporary certificate, which was targeted at addressing teacher shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the new TCQR is a permanent certificate type available to teacher candidates as follows:

- The TCQR is designed for teacher candidates who have successfully completed at least 30 credits or their equivalent and 40 practicum days of their initial teacher education program.
- The TCQR is valid for 18 months, with the possibility of a one-time, six-month extension that would be granted by the College. Members who hold a TCQR must also maintain their membership in good standing.
- Teacher candidates are eligible to request a TCQR after the College has received a report from their faculty of education.
- Up to 20 days of teaching under a TCQR can be counted towards meeting practicum requirements in the member's teacher education program.

Importantly, the new certificate has been developed in a way that teacher candidates will still be required to complete their initial teacher education programs as accredited. Access to candidates enrolled in teacher education programs who are able to provide occasional/supply teaching coverage lends support to the sector during this critical time of teacher shortage. Requiring teacher candidates to complete the teacher education

program helps to ensure that program graduates will be equipped to maintain the high standards of the teaching profession.

Council approved amendments to the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation in July which were subsequently filed on July 28, 2023 and went into effect on August 30, 2023. To support implementation, the College hosted a number of information sessions with a range of sector partners, raised public awareness through various communication vehicles, developed and published FAQs, and provided key messaging for distribution to stakeholders and teacher candidates.

In a matter of weeks, more than a thousand teacher candidates have applied for a Transitional Certificate. The College expects this to be a highly sought-after certificate type as applications continue to rise.

In addition to the multiple technical adjustments required for the successful launch of the new Transitional Certificate, the existing Transitional Certificate was renamed as the Multi-session Transitional Certificate (MSTCQR) to better reflect the program pathway that leads to this certification. Other than the name change, all other aspects of this certificate remain the same. The Multi-session Transitional Certificate pathway remains a flexible pathway for mid-career professionals to transition to teaching. Eligible MSTCQR holders are able to gain teaching employment income once they have successfully completed the first session of their accredited multi-session teacher education program, which consists of 12 credits and a minimum of 10 days of practicum.

**3. Introducing a new Specialized Experience Certificate for teacher candidates with qualifications in priority areas, including technological education teachers, internationally educated teachers, Indigenous language teachers, and French language teachers.**

While consultations around the creation of a new Specialized Experience Certificate have not yet occurred, the College has made significant progress toward improving the overall licensing experience for teacher candidates with qualifications in priority areas. Meaningful conversations are continuing with Indigenous community members regarding new pathways for Indigenous language applicants.

The College has recently completed consultations about technological education certification requirements with consideration being given to shortened pathways for technological education applicants. Based on these consultations, the College intends to bring forward amendments to the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation regarding work experience and leadership pathway requirements as ways to ensure more technological education teachers are being certified in a shorter timeframe and are retained in the profession.

The College continues to support initiatives that help to increase the supply of French-language teachers, including working diligently on the initial and general accreditation of French-language teacher education programs as well as the accreditation of French as a Second Language offerings in English-language teacher education programs. The College applauds recent announcements to increase the number of French-language teachers in the province.

In the spirit of right touch regulation, the College has made a number of policy changes within the registration process. Examples include updated registration processes for language proficiency, degree equivalency, teaching experience, and practicum day requirements. Consequently, as of August 31, 2023 the College had surpassed—by a significant margin—the number of internationally educated teachers licensed in the current year compared to the total number in 2022. These changes have contributed to a greater supply of internationally educated teachers being licensed to teach while continuing to maintain the high standards of the teaching profession.

The College will continue to work with interested and affected stakeholders on initiatives that help to increase the supply of teachers, including participating on the Teacher Supply and Demand Action Table and related Steering Committee.

The College looks forward to receiving direction from the Ministry of Education regarding the intent and purpose of a Specialized Experience Certificate through accredited programs of initial teacher education.

**4. Cut the timeframe for the certification of new teacher candidates in half and align with the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act to reduce time for domestic mobility and internationally educated candidates (e.g., 50 days).**

The College worked with the Ministry to make amendments to the Fair Registration Practices Regulation (O. Reg. 271/09), which established an aggressive timeline for certifying new teacher candidates, including a reduction to 60 business days for internationally educated candidates. This is a monumental departure from the current certification requirements under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act* (FARPACTA) and the earlier iteration of the Fair Registration Practices Regulation.

FARPACTA requirements, which only recently came into force on July 1, 2023, allow all other regulated professions *six months* to make a registration decision for an internationally trained individual. The original timeline in the College's own Fair Registration Practices Regulation was *120 days*. Although this new certification timeline will go into effect on December 31, 2023, the most recent report to the Ministry of Education team demonstrates that the College is now certifying internationally educated

teachers in an average of 120 calendar days – a significant decrease from previous months and already well below FARPACTA requirements.

The College remains a leader by certifying Ontario graduates well within FARPACTA timelines (i.e. within days of application completion) and Labour Mobility Applicants from across the country within 30 business days. A certification timeline of 60 business days for internationally educated applicants positions the College as having the most accelerated certification timeline of any regulated profession in Ontario.

In addition to the items above, the Minister directed the College to work with representatives of the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) on initiatives that will require consultation with many partners in the education sector. These included:

**5. Identify opportunities for accelerated Initial Teacher Education programs to attract skilled professionals and individuals with unique training as teacher candidates.**

In recent consultations, the College observed that there may be a lack of awareness surrounding pathways that already exist to attract skilled professionals and individuals with unique training as teacher candidates. The College appreciates the Ministry's interest in raising awareness about these pathways with Faculties of Education. The College would also be pleased to work with faculties on developing new pathways/delivery models.

The College also recognizes that Deans of Education have identified increased funding for enrollment spaces as an opportunity for increased numbers of teacher candidates in general, as well as those with specialized technological or French-language expertise. They have signaled that existing initial teacher education programs have significant waitlists of eligible candidates, including those with specialized technological or French-language expertise for whom they have no enrollment space. This means that prospective teachers with appropriate experience and qualifications are being turned away because faculties do not have funding or approval to open up additional spaces in their programs. While this falls outside the College's mandate, it is in the public interest to encourage faculties, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to work together to find a solution that will enable more individuals to enroll in initial teacher education programs. The College will work to support Faculties that have been recently identified as having increased enrollment caps for their French-language teacher education programs, namely Université d'Ottawa and Université de l'Ontario français.

The College has also heard from Deans of Education that they are willing to explore alternative program delivery models if these programs are appropriately funded. This initiative also falls outside the College's mandate, but the College supports efforts that could lead to the availability of a variety of program delivery models that would help

make it easier for individuals (including mid-career professionals) to complete an initial teacher education program. Having a variety of program types allows for heightened flexibility and more pathways for career changers.

In support of innovation and flexibility in accredited programs, the College is committed to prioritizing program change requests from faculties.

**6. Reform divisional structures of Initial Teacher Education to reflect new teacher qualifications and to align with other Canadian jurisdictions, making it easier for educators trained in Canada to work in Ontario classrooms.**

In late-spring 2023, the Ministry of Education set a schedule of consultations involving the College, OADE and Independent Ontario Deans and Directors of Education (IODDE). Each session has been dedicated to dealing with a specific matter from the April 17, 2023 letter. The Ministry has not yet held consultations around divisional structures but the College understands that this topic is on the horizon for this fall.

It is important to note that divisional structures are integrated into numerous facets of the education system. While part of the conversation may originate at the Ministry's working group, significant consultation with a number of partners will be required to determine the best pathway to reform. The College participates in the Reimagining Teacher Education Working Group with many of these educational stakeholders and discussions at that table may well inform subsequent actions. In the interim, the College welcomes any feedback that can be shared and will work diligently to implement any necessary reforms once the Ministry has determined a direction.

The College appreciates the Minister's continued interest in – and support for – enhancing education in Ontario. To further this discussion, the College kindly requests a meeting with you at your earliest convenience, and will reach out to your staff to make appropriate arrangements.

Sincerely,



Diana Miles  
Chair of Council

DM/LL/AT/kb-pgt



Linda Lacroix, OCT/EAO  
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer