



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des enseignantes
et des enseignants
de l'Ontario

Professional Advisory

**Additional Qualifications: Extending Knowledge and
Practice through Ongoing Professional Learning**

UPDATED



Additional Qualifications: Extending Knowledge and Practice through Ongoing Professional Learning

The Council of the College approved a Professional Advisory on Extending Professional Knowledge through Additional Qualifications (AQs) on March 28, 2008. Updates to this Professional Advisory were approved on September 30, 2016 by the College Council and again on November 29, 2023 by the Standards of Practice and Education Committee in order to reflect the current additional qualification system.

This advisory is the outcome of an intensive review of teachers' qualifications by the College, its members and its education partners. It may be read in conjunction with other Professional Advisories to complement ongoing professional learning. Information on the topics covered in this advisory can be found in *Ontario Regulation 176/10, Teachers' Qualifications of the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 (OCTA)*.

Introduction

Ongoing professional learning is an integral part of teaching. It is one of the five Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and reflects the expectation that all members will participate in ongoing learning.

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession



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 is integral to effective practice and to student learning. Participation in Additional Qualification courses is one way in which members engage in professional learning throughout their careers. The ultimate goal of professional learning is enacting teacher

commitment to student success and wellbeing. The intent of this advisory is to clarify for members the purpose of the regulated system of qualifications in a division or subject, commonly referred to as Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQs) and Additional Qualifications (AQs).

This advisory applies to all members of the Ontario College of Teachers, including, but not limited to, teachers, consultants, vice-principals, principals, supervisory officers, directors of education and those working in non-schoolboard positions.

Extending Professional Knowledge and Practice

Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) serve elementary and secondary students both within the province and beyond. School contexts vary, requiring teachers to have knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices to support learning for a diverse range of students. The ever-changing socio-cultural, political, historical, ecological, economic, linguistic, religious, regional, institutional and systemic contexts require members to stay current through ongoing professional 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, broaden their perspectives and prepare for career changes. Pursuing ongoing learning can help members meet their individual professional needs, interests and aspirations while improving their practice and enhancing student learning.

Universities, colleges, teacher federations, principals' organizations, school boards, as well as subject and community organizations offer courses, evidence-based resources and opportunities to support ongoing professional learning.

The regulated system of ABQs and AQs is recognized in legislation. ABQs and AQs are accredited by the College, offered by AQ providers, and when successfully completed, recorded on the member's Certificate of Qualification and Registration (CQR). The CQR of all members is available at oct-oeeo.ca/Findateacher.

The College works with teachers, researchers and subject matter experts to develop guidelines that providers must use in creating ABQ and AQ courses. The guidelines establish the essential professional knowledge, skills and practices in different teaching domains. They also provide a framework for the accreditation of AQ courses and programs. The College itself does not offer courses or programs.

Each year, thousands of members enrol in and complete AQ courses. As an ongoing commitment to the education and professional learning of its members, the College continues to collaborate with its partners to increase availability of AQ courses throughout the province.

Commitment to learning and professional obligation

A commitment to student learning 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 Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession



Can you say this with confidence? A Framework for Self-Reflection

- My words and actions show that I understand and model a commitment to ongoing professional learning that aligns with the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Standards of Practice of the Teaching Profession.
- I am aware that ongoing professional learning is a professional standard for all OCTs.
- I reflect on ways I can engage in professional learning to inform my practice and support student learning and wellbeing.

Planning for Professional Learning

This advisory provides members with information to support the development of their ongoing professional learning plan.

Teacher Performance Appraisals

Ongoing professional learning is one of the competencies assessed in the provincial Teacher Performance Appraisal system (TPA or similar appraisal system) for experienced teachers.

The TPA process is governed by the *Education Act*, Part. X2, and Ontario Regulation 99/02, *Teacher Performance Appraisal* under that Act. Although this regulation is not managed by the College, members can utilize College resources to support the competency statements of the TPA, including that of ongoing professional learning.

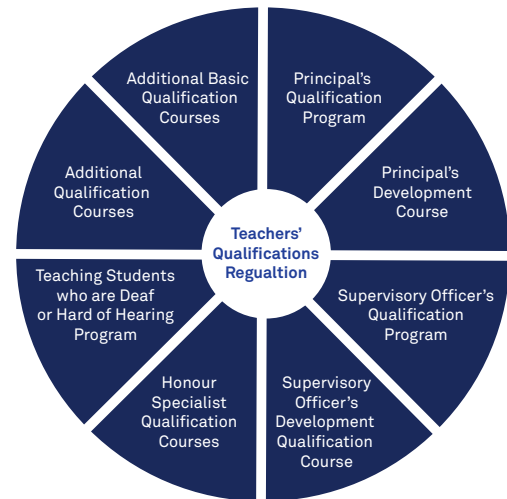
The Ontario Ministry of Education's Annual Learning Plan (ALP or similar teacher learning plan) is a vehicle to support ongoing professional learning in a teacher's evaluation year and for the years between appraisals. Similarly, members in the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) engage in ongoing professional learning as required by S. 268(2) of the *Education Act*. The ALP and NTIP processes provide teachers with opportunities to reflect on their professional learning and growth each year.

Additional Qualifications

ABQ courses allow teachers to add another division or subject area to what they are already qualified to teach. ABQ courses prepare teachers to teach students at the Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior level or in Technological Education. Teachers with qualifications to teach in Ontario's English language schools may take an ABQ course to become qualified to teach in French language schools or vice versa.

AQ courses allow members to expand their knowledge, skills and practices within the divisions in which they are already qualified or to acquire knowledge in a new subject or area of teaching. There are also specialist and Honour Specialist AQ courses for members who wish to focus on leadership and curriculum development.

Additional Qualifications in Regulation



New AQ courses are developed as the education landscape evolves and to address the need for specialized content. Some examples of recently developed AQ courses are:

- Addressing Anti-Black Racism to Change Pedagogy and Practice
- Anti-Audism
- American Sign Language as a Second Language
- Equitable and Inclusive Schools
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit Studies
- Holocaust Education and Countering Antisemitism
- Supervisory Officer's Development Qualification Course
- Teaching Inuktitut

Members can access the Find an AQ tool on the College website (oct-oeeo.ca/findanAQ) to search for the list of AQ courses and the AQ providers offering them.

Teachers' Qualifications Regulation

AQs are organized into schedules according to Ontario Regulation 176/10, *Teachers' Qualifications*:

- Schedule A: One-session ABQ courses prepare members to teach in another division or general education 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 ABQ courses prepare members to teach in a specific technological education subject area. They support a teacher's professional practice by extending knowledge and skills in the design and program delivery of technology programs. These ABQ courses also require teachers to demonstrate their technical competencies in the technological subject-specific area.
- Schedule C: One-session AQ courses extend teachers' knowledge and skills in a particular area of the teaching practice, and in design and delivery of specific program areas. They also support professional practice by preparing teachers for specific roles.
- Schedule D: Three-part specialist AQ 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 coordinator or consultant for a particular course or program.
- Schedule E: One-session Honour Specialist AQ courses are designed to develop capacity for curriculum leadership in a particular subject area. These specialist courses, whether in general education or technological education, enable teachers to expand their knowledge, skills and professional practice for a specific subject, division or program leadership role.

In addition to ABQ and AQ courses, teachers can pursue their ongoing professional learning through specialized AQ programs:

- Principal's Qualifications, Parts 1 and 2, qualify teachers for positions as vice-principals or principals.
- Principal's Development Course provides opportunities for practising principals and vice-principals to explore their roles in greater depth.
- Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program qualifies members to serve as supervisory officers.
- Supervisory Officer's Development Qualification Course provides experienced supervisory officers with opportunities to enhance their professional knowledge and skills in response to the ever-evolving complexities of system-level leadership.

Members can find detailed information about Additional Qualification Schedules and Courses at oct-oeeo.ca/AQguidelines.

Admission requirements

Members are responsible for learning specific prerequisite requirements for admission to the AQ courses and programs.

Prerequisites are set out in regulation, but additional qualification course providers may impose further entry requirements such as a stronger subject background or proficiency in the language of study. For example, AQ providers offering ABQs from Schedule A set their own prerequisites for enrolment. Most require at least two full courses in the subject within a postsecondary degree.

Teachers interested in working for a district school board as a subject or program coordinator or consultant will find that Ontario Regulation 298, *Operation of Schools* of the *Education Act* requires the position to be filled by a teacher with a Specialist or Honour Specialist qualification in the relevant field.

College members who hold a Transitional Certificate of Qualification and Registration or a Multi-Session Transitional Certificate of

Qualification and Registration are ineligible to take AQ courses until they have successfully completed their teacher education program. Members who hold either transitional certificate can accrue successful teaching experience required as prerequisites for AQs. However, for an AQ to be awarded, all program requirements must be successfully completed and reported to the College.

Why enrol in an AQ?

Throughout their careers, teachers acquire additional skills, knowledge and perspectives that reflect society's changing nature and improve professional practice. Ongoing professional learning provides opportunities for teachers to take on new assignments and be responsive to the evolving needs of students or school communities.

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 seek courses that add to their knowledge and support their professional practice. A teacher's long-term career plan may include acquiring qualifications to pursue specific leadership roles such as consultant, subject area or program co-ordinator, principal or supervisory officer.

Another reason for the acquisition of AQs is that it may result in an improvement in the member's salary. The Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECCO) evaluates qualifications for salary categories for both elementary and secondary teachers. For more information about which AQ courses are related to salary scales, please visit QECCO's website at qeco.ca.

On the following page, you will find a list of scenarios with additional examples illustrating the reasons why a teacher might opt to enrol in an AQ course.

Successfully completed AQs

The AQs 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.

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

The legislative context

The College's mandate, set out in section 3 of the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996 emphasizes the importance of supporting and promoting teacher education. The College's mandate includes:

- developing and maintaining qualifications for College membership,
- providing for the ongoing education of members of the College,
- accrediting professional teacher education and ongoing education programs for teachers; and
- establishing and enforcing professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College.

Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996

The Teachers' Qualifications Regulation and the Accreditation Regulation under the Act work together to govern teaching qualifications.

Education Act

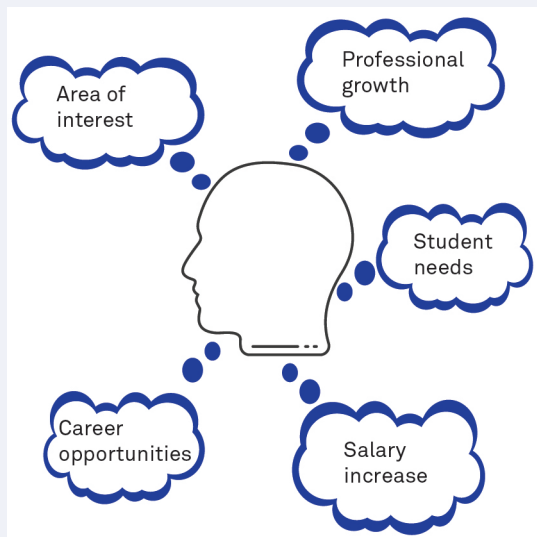
Several regulations under the *Education Act* govern qualifications for teaching and supervisory roles and highlight the benefits of AQs:

- Ontario Regulation 298, *Operation of Schools* – qualifications for principals, vice-principals and teachers (oct-oeeo.ca/Reg298)
- Ontario Regulation 296, *Ontario Schools for the Blind and the Deaf* – qualifications for teachers of students who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind (oct-oeeo.ca/Reg296)
- Ontario Regulation 309, *Supervisory Officers* – qualifications for supervisory officers (oct-oeeo.ca/Reg309)
- Ontario Regulation 98/02, *Teacher Learning Plans* – the importance of defining professional growth objectives (oct-oeeo.ca/Reg98_02)
- Ontario Regulation 99/02, *Teacher Performance Appraisal* – the importance of adapting and refining teaching practice through continuous learning (oct-oeeo.ca/99_02)
- Education-related legislation and regulations are available at oct-oeeo.ca/e_laws.

Scenarios

The scenarios included as part of this advisory give examples of what AQs members may choose in response to particular teaching assignments or in pursuit of a particular professional interest. These scenarios provide insights into why a teacher might choose to enrol in an AQ course. It is important to note that these scenarios are not mutually exclusive. Within each scenario, we also offer recommendations for specific AQ courses that can support the respective goals, along with any necessary admission prerequisites.

The quotes included in this section were extracted from survey responses provided by OCTs who contributed to the development of AQ guidelines between 2021 and 2023. Respondents were queried on their motivations for pursuing AQ courses or programs and the subsequent influence on their contributions to school and/or system leadership.



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

Whether you work in the English public, French public, English Catholic or French Catholic system, in a school in a First Nation community, or in any other education program setting, AQ courses can provide an orientation to teaching in that environment.

Such courses include: Adapting Curriculum for the Catholic School System, Teaching and Learning Through e-Learning, First Nations' School Leader Program: Supporting Indigenous Learning and Holistic Well-Being, or Teaching in a French Immersion Setting.

“These courses gave me insight into current research, challenged or supported my beliefs/thinking around teaching and learning.”

- Retired teacher

To expand the range of subjects one can teach in the Intermediate/Senior Divisions

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

“AQ courses qualified me for the positions I have held, as well as provided the extra knowledge necessary to appropriately fill the role.”

- STEM Coach K-12

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. In order to take an ABQ from Schedule B for teaching 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 related to the subject in that work experience.

To become a board lead

Typically, a teacher wanting to apply to supervise or co-ordinate programs at the board level should hold a Specialist or Honour Specialist qualification in the subject or program area and/or complete the Schedule D Teacher Leadership AQ courses. Specialist or Honour Specialist AQs are listed in Schedule D and E.

“The Teacher Leadership course empowered me to see my potential as a leader in the roles I was already playing and the value of mentoring teachers shoulder-to-shoulder. It gave me courage to develop new programs and provided me with a very solid foundation of shared resources to feel rejuvenated in my profession and surrounded by a professional network beyond my colleagues. This was instrumental given I have been at the same school for 20+ years.”

- Assistant Upper School Director, Teacher Librarian

To become a principal

A member of the College wanting to become a vice-principal or principal must successfully complete Principal's Qualifications, Parts 1 and 2 and a leadership practicum. Prerequisites for Part 1 Principal's Qualifications are:

- an acceptable post-secondary degree or its equivalent,
- five years of successful teaching experience in an elementary or secondary school,
- qualifications in Grades 9 and 10 in a technological education subject from Schedule B or Intermediate division in a general education subject listed in Schedule A, and any two of primary division, junior division and either Grades 11 and 12 in a technological education subject in Schedule B or Senior division in a general education subject from Schedule A, and
- additional academic learning that ranges from two Specialist or Honour Specialist qualifications, or a combination of Specialist or Honour Specialist courses and master's level credits, or post-secondary credits equivalent.

"Thanks to AQ courses I was able to serve staff, students and community in a safe, supportive way." - Principal

To become a supervisory officer

A member of the College wanting to become a supervisory officer must either:

- successfully complete the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program (SOQP) within five years after starting the program,
- possess qualifications and experience that the Registrar considers to be equivalent to the successful completion of the SOQP; or
- possess qualifications and experience that the Registrar considers to be equivalent to the successful completion of some of the modules of the SOQP and completes the remaining modules within five years of starting the program.

Prerequisites for obtaining the SOQP are:

- an acceptable post-secondary degree or its equivalent,
- five years of successful teaching experience in an elementary or secondary school
- qualifications in Grades 9 and 10 in a technological education subject from Schedule B or Intermediate division in a general education subject listed in Schedule A, and any two of primary division, junior division and either Grades 11 and 12 in a technological education subject in Schedule B or Senior division in a general education subject from Schedule A, or qualifications deemed equivalent,
- a master's degree or doctorate or qualification that the Registrar deems equivalent; and
- one or more of Principal qualifications, additional academic learning, experience and qualifications that includes a combination of Specialist or Honour Specialist courses that the Registrar considers to be equivalent.

"The AQs I've done have allowed me to become a better teacher and a more qualified and knowledgeable team leader. They have allowed me to better communicate expectations and act as a bridge between admin and my fellow colleagues."
- *Teacher*

To expand knowledge and practice for working with students with special education needs

College members who want to develop additional skills, knowledge and practices to support students with special education needs can take Special Education AQ courses in Schedule D. These courses provide a background for supporting students with a range of learning needs or exceptionalities.

Teachers who want to enhance their practice in a particular area of special education can take one or more AQs in Schedule C, such as Teaching Students with Behavioural Needs, Teaching Students with Intellectual Needs (Giftedness) or Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders).

Teachers who want to extend their knowledge of teaching within the Ontario context and be responsive to the unique learning needs of students within their school community could:

Complete a Schedule C AQ, one-session course or courses in the following areas:

- Student Assessment & Evaluation; Teaching Students with Behavioural Needs; Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders); Learning Disability; Speech and Language); The Learning Environment

Complete a Schedule D AQ, three-session course(s) in the following areas:

- Anti-Black Racism, Equitable and Inclusive Schools; Kindergarten; Mathematics, Primary/Junior; Special Education; Reading; Teaching English Language Learners

To increase your salary

Some AQs are recognized for salary purposes. Members should consult their employers' policies to ensure they are familiar with any requirements in their workplace that relate to AQs and teaching assignments.

“As a younger teacher, AQ courses assisted me in increasing my compensation via QECO level changes. They also assisted me to encourage colleagues in staying current in their careers.”

- Executive Superintendent of Education

To fulfill complementary course conditions

With the introduction of the four-semester teacher education program on September 1, 2015, some members' certificates may be subject to complementary education course conditions in order to address the duration requirements of the program. A complementary education course is a course chosen by the member to support methodology coursework. If a member completes a Schedule C course, they will have the option to either: (1) Use the course to fulfill a complementary education course condition on their certificate or (2) have the course appear as a qualification on their certificate.

Resources

Refer to the following resources, where you may find answers and additional insights to deepen your understanding of Additional Qualifications.

Ontario College of Teachers

Additional Qualifications (oct-ooeo.ca/AQs)

Course Providers (oct-ooeo.ca/AQproviders)

Education Legislation, Regulations and Bylaws (oct-ooeo.ca/legislation)

The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession (oct-ooeo.ca/standards)

Find an AQ (oct-ooeo.ca/findanAQ)

The Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession (oct-ooeo.ca/PLF)

SOQP PLAR Application Guide (oct-ooeo.ca/soqp_plar)

Professional Advisories (oct-ooeo.ca/professionaladvisories)

Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario

qeco.on.ca (oct-ooeo.ca/qeco)

Ministry of Education

Teacher Assignment in Ontario Schools: A Resource Guide (oct-ooeo.ca/teacher_assignment)



**Ontario
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Ontario's Teaching Regulator

Cette publication est également disponible en français sous le titre
*Recommandation professionnelle : Qualifications additionnelles : Approfondir
les connaissances et développer la pratique par le perfectionnement
professionnel continu*

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