



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

Memo

Date: June 2, 2023

To: Council of the Ontario College of Teachers

From: Linda Lacroix, OCT
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Subject: New Certificate Proposal

The Minister of Education's April 17, 2023 letter to the Chair of Council and the Registrar (see "Correspondence" on the June 8, 2023 Council Agenda) outlines a number of requests related to teacher education and certification.

Among the priorities was the development of a new permanent certificate to replace the outgoing temporary certificate, which was a time-limited response to teacher shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the temporary certificate, the new transitional certificate will allow students enrolled in initial teacher education programs in Ontario ("teacher candidates") to work in publicly funded schools as occasional/supply teachers while completing their studies. The new certificate is intended to help address significant and ongoing teacher shortages by leveraging individuals who are already enrolled in teacher education programs across the province.

Currently, teacher candidates can obtain a temporary certificate which allows them to gain employment in a publicly funded school as a teacher while completing their teacher education program. However, the temporary certificate model is set to end in December 2023. In contrast with the temporary certificate, the new transitional certificate would be a permanent certification pathway.

The College has been working with the Ministry of Education, and consulting with the Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADe), the Independent Ontario Deans and Directors of Education (IODDE) and the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), on what the criteria for the new transitional certificate would be and when teacher candidates would be eligible to apply for it.

Council's Role in Amending Regulations

To bring a new transitional certificate into existence will require amendments to Ontario Regulation 176/10 (Teachers' Qualifications). At its meeting on June 8, 2023, Council will be asked to provide general direction to College staff to work with Ministry of Education staff on regulatory language that would bring a new certificate into being. Council will then be convened this summer to review and formally approve the proposed amendments.

Eligibility Options for New Certificate

The options for eligibility are set out below. It should be noted that a full 4-semester program of initial teacher education in Ontario includes 60 credits and 80 practicum days.

- Option 1: Eligibility *early* in the teacher education program
Successful completion of 15 credits and minimum 20 practicum days (approximately 25% of program completed)
- Option 2: Eligibility in the *middle* of the teacher education program
Successful completion of 30 credits and minimum 40 practicum days (approximately 50% of program completed)
- Option 3: Eligibility *late* in the teacher education program
Successful completion of 45 credits and minimum 60 practicum days (approximately 75% of program completed)

Additional details about each option and its respective benefits and risks are attached in Appendix A to assist Council.

Seeking Council Support for Option 2

After hearing feedback on various options from the Ministry, OADE, IODDE and CODE, College staff is seeking Council's support to draft regulatory language that would bring **Option 2** into effect. Council is being asked to support Option 2 on the basis that completion of initial teacher education programs will remain a priority, and that hiring and mentoring supports for teacher candidates working on this new certificate will be put in place (see below for additional details).

This approach is reflective of OADE and IODDE concerns that allowing teacher candidates to become certified too early could compromise the integrity of teacher education programs and their ability to be delivered as accredited. Certifying candidates too early in the program could also present a risk of lack of preparedness to manage a classroom, associated risks to student safety, and the long-term retention of teacher candidates in the profession. In the April 17, 2023 letter, the Minister also asked for teacher education programs to require that teacher candidates graduate with proficiency in math, literacy, reading, special education, mental health, use of technology in the classroom and leadership skills. Teacher candidates certified too early in their program may not have sufficient time to appropriately cover these topics prior to entering the classroom in an unsupervised assignment.

The compromise approach of Option 2 also reflects perspectives from the Ministry and CODE that the school system needs teacher candidates to fill occasional teacher gaps that are expected to persist into the 2023-2024 school year and beyond. Given this feedback, and in light of immediate and critical labour shortages, Option 3 (late-program teacher candidates) is not believed to be viable at this time.

Mid-program teacher candidates (Option 2), however, could help alleviate persistent teacher shortages and ensure students are being taught by individuals who have some teacher education preparation rather than individuals with no formal teacher training. Option 2 also helps mitigate the risk that teacher candidates will be unprepared by ensuring that they have completed the equivalent of two semesters of coursework (i.e. half their program) and half the required supervised practical classroom experience (i.e. practicum days).

In all options, a final benefit is that teacher candidates would be subject to the College's jurisdiction while working on a transitional certificate, while the College has no jurisdiction over members of the public working in classrooms today.

School Boards, the Ministry, Faculties of Education and the College will all have a role to play in the preparation, mentoring and support of teacher candidates while on the new certificate. The College expects the Ministry and school boards to prioritize program completion irrespective of the option selected. The College suggests Option 2 with the expectation that additional supports for teacher candidates on this new certificate will be put in place, such as the New Teacher Induction Program (which is an existing program that provides new teachers with professional learning and mentoring when they are hired by school boards).

The College is also committed to working with the Ministry and Faculties to expand the availability of existing teacher education program models that can also help address shortage issues, such as the multi-session program.

The explicit credit counts (30 credits) and practicum days (at least 40 days) in the eligibility criteria for the certificate associated with Option 2 will support consistency in implementation across the Faculties of Education and streamline their reporting of candidates to the College for certification.

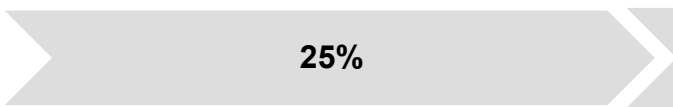
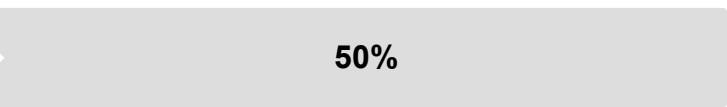
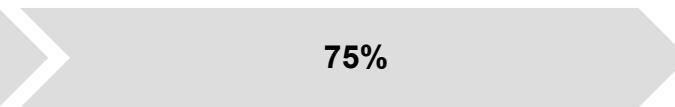
Finally, the new transitional certificate would be eligible for conversion to a general certificate upon program completion.

Request for Council Direction

Should Council provide the direction requested, the College will begin working with the Ministry of Education to develop draft regulatory amendments. These draft regulatory amendments would then be presented to Council for review at a special meeting in summer 2023 to allow for implementation for the start of the September 2023 school year.

Council is therefore asked to support Option 2 at its June 8, 2023 meeting and to direct College staff to work with Ministry counterparts on draft regulation amendments for Council to consider and formally approve at a Council meeting to be scheduled.

Appendix A - New Transitional Certificate for Teacher Candidates Enrolled in Accredited Initial Teacher Education Programs in Ontario

	Option 1: Teacher Candidates Eligible Early in Program	Option 2: Teacher Candidates Eligible in Middle of Program	Option 3: Teacher Candidates Eligible Late in Program
Approximate Program Completion	 25%	 50%	 75%
Eligibility Criteria	Successful completion of 15 credits and a minimum of 20 practicum days	Successful completion of 30 credits and a minimum of 40 practicum days	Successful completion of 45 credits and a minimum of 60 practicum days
Candidate Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential pool of 8,000 eligible teacher candidates in both first and second years of program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential pool of 4,000 eligible teacher candidates in second year of program; available September 1, 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential pool of 4,000 eligible teacher candidates in latter half of second year of program; available January 1, 2024.
Duration of Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate valid for 24 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate valid for 18 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate valid for 12 months.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides largest pool of teacher candidates to fill occasional teaching positions (e.g. 'supply' teachers) at schools. Candidates learn early the roles and responsibilities that come with being a member of the profession. Although minimal, teacher candidates have completed some elements of the teacher education program. Less reliance on uncertified individuals to fill daily occasional roles in schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides significant pool of teacher candidates to fill daily occasional teaching positions at schools. Faculties would have more time to prepare teacher candidates with critical foundation in theory and practice. Teacher candidates would also have half of their practicum requirement completed by this stage. Better aligns with the entry to practice requirements for internationally educated applicants (who can be certified after the equivalent of one year of a program with a condition to complete the remaining year). Moderate level of teacher education program elements/certification requirements met by this stage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides significant pool of teacher candidates to fill daily occasional teaching positions at schools. Highest level of teacher education program elements/certification requirements met. Teacher candidates would have the greatest amount of time with coursework and mentored practicum with more foundation in theory and practice. Teacher candidates would have most practice teaching experience completed before they begin teaching a full day without Associate Teacher support. Least chance of disruption to program completion. Greatest likelihood that program will be completed by candidates as accredited.

	Option 1: Teacher Candidates Eligible Early in Program	Option 2: Teacher Candidates Eligible in Middle of Program	Option 3: Teacher Candidates Eligible Late in Program
Approximate Program Completion	25%	50%	75%
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest potential to undermine teacher education and disrupt normal program delivery as accredited. • Teacher candidates are most likely with this option to jeopardize program completion. • Significant concern from Faculties about preparedness to teach in this option. Least amount of preparation and readiness time prior to entering the classroom. • Highest risk to student safety due to relative lack of preparedness. • Highest degree of long-term retention challenges should teacher candidates be subject to complaints, discipline or other negative experiences. Teacher candidates will have less chance to determine if they are suited for the profession or improve their skillset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely for program to still be delivered as accredited without teacher candidates refusing to complete program. • Lower risk to student safety due to teacher candidates having completed half of the mentored practicum days and coursework, including a greater likelihood of training on managing the learning environment and education law. • Moderate degree of retention challenges should teacher candidates be subject to complaints, discipline or other negative experiences without mentorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option conflicts with feedback re: the critical need to have a large pool of teacher candidates available earlier in the school year to address the daily occasional teaching shortage (i.e. there would be fewer teacher candidates eligible in September to December 2023 under this model). • Lowest risk to student safety due to higher preparedness of teacher candidates, including completing coursework on managing the learning environment and education law. • Lowest degree of retention challenges should teacher candidates be subject to complaints, discipline or negative experiences without mentorship.