

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Standards and Program Goals

The Bachelor of Professional Studies (B.P.S.) in teacher education is consistent with and reflects the Ontario College of Teachers' Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession (the Standards) as evidenced through the alignment with the Standards to the conceptual framework of the college, the course embedded requirements outlined in course syllabi, and the 10 program goals. Although the Standards are holistically enveloped throughout the content, and pedagogy of the program each course is aligned to one of the Standards:

- **Commitment to Students and to Student Learning.** The commitment to student learning begins with our conceptual framework which seeks to promote service to the greater community and in particular to those less fortunate and in need. The commitment extends throughout courses required field experiences.
- **Professional Knowledge.** The teacher candidates' ability to understand and apply to their teaching Ontario law and policy, foundational knowledge of content, and research in pedagogy is emphasized during the first term of study in the program. Required course work emphasizes foundational knowledge including a wide array of researchers and educational theory.
- **Professional Practice.** The Ontario curriculum and professional practices in teaching emphasize the importance of teachers addressing the needs of all learners as found in a multicultural pluralist society. During the methods courses and methods assistantship, emphasis is placed on overall and specific expectations as they align with content specific methods courses.
- **Leadership in Learning Communities.** Throughout the program in all phases of field experiences and in the student teaching practicum, candidates collaborate with their colleagues and other professionals, with parents/guardians and with other members of the community to enhance school programs and student learning.
- **Ongoing Professional Learning.** The program incorporates the need for teachers to be lifelong learners who continually strive to improve themselves as a means of better serving the needs of their students.

These standards are reflected in the 10 goals of the program. The abilities and experiences of teacher candidates are documented in their program portfolio which requires evidence of successful implementation of learning, a theoretical rationale for why a particular practice did or did not work, and a reflection detailing personal growth and how they believe the experience would impact their future practices. The following program goals are achieved through the combination of course work, practicum experience, and on-going assessment:

1. The teacher candidate understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structure of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students.
2. The teacher candidate understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
3. The teacher candidate understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

4. The teacher candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The teacher candidate encourages an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher candidate uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher candidate plans instruction based on knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, the overall and specific curriculum expectations, and achievement chart (planning courses and assessments).
8. The teacher candidate understands and uses formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner; and implements assessment in accordance with the expectations delineated in the achievement charts.
9. The teacher candidate is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents/ guardians, and other professionals) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
10. The teacher candidate fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents/guardians, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well being.

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The program is also consistent with and reflects the Ontario College of Teachers Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession (Ethical Standards) – standards of care, respect, trust, and integrity. This occurs through the conceptual framework of the program and the integration of professional dispositions.

The conceptual framework of the program is based on the Vincentian mission of the university. Our teacher candidates, therefore, are introduced to the high ethical standards of the profession through the mission of Niagara University – this occurs through both course work and learning experiences in the field which include preservice field placements in the foundations term, teacher assistantship placements during the methods term and student teaching during the final term of study.

Teacher candidates are expected to demonstrate three core dispositional values:

- professional commitment
- professional relationships
- critical thinking and reflective practice

The professional dispositions are directly aligned with the Ethical Standards and serve to extend the standards across courses and field experiences. All teacher candidates are provided with a copy of these dispositions and the respective observable indicators. The candidate keeps one copy and signs and returns a second which is kept on file.

At the end of each term of study, candidates are evaluated by all members of the faculty on these dispositions. Identified issues related to

the Ethical Standards and program dispositions may result in a plan of intervention for continuing enrollment in the program.

Required Field Experiences

Teacher candidates apply theory in practice throughout the program by fulfilling requirements along a continuum of practical experiences. These experiences begin with observations and small group lessons, lead into the application of methods to actual teaching practice, and culminate in full-time teaching during the practica. Teacher candidates complete 75 hours of field experience in the first term of the program. A pair of two-week placements, called Teacher Assistantships, in the second semester resulting in 18 full days prior to the student teaching (practica). These field experiences are tied to course work, organized by program faculty and staff, and supervised by associate teachers and university supervisors.

Portfolio Assessment

Teacher candidates are required to complete a comprehensive portfolio that is designed to assess the 10 program goals and the Standards of Professional Practice. During each term of study, teacher candidates successfully complete one entry for each Standard of Professional Practice aligned to each of their core courses. Portfolio submissions are assessed by members of the faculty with feedback provided after each submission. Candidates have a maximum of three attempts to successfully complete the submission (pass or fail). The portfolio requirement includes a reflection as well as evidence of meeting the goal (artifacts). In order to successfully complete the program, all candidates must satisfactorily complete the comprehensive portfolio. Portfolio submissions are completed electronically through the use of Chalk and Wire; an on-line electronic assessment and portfolio storage tool.

Student Teaching Practicum

Students will be assessed on their readiness for the student teaching practicum. Based on this assessment, the student teaching practicum may be delayed until the student is ready.

In order to student teach, students are required to have at least a B in methods courses, passed each of the portfolio standards, completed all field experience hours, and achieved an overall Q.P.A. of 2.5.

Student teaching consists of a 20-week, full-time teaching experience. Teacher candidates complete a pair of ten-week placements that are evaluated by an associate teacher (who is a member in good standing with OCT) and a university supervisor.

The practicum is a comprehensive experience that requires the student's exclusive attention. During the practicum, students are encouraged to register for only six credit hours (the student teaching practicum, three credit hours; and the professional seminar, three credit hours), and, if possible, not to work. It is to the student's advantage that his/her practicum receives the best possible evaluation. The methods class and student teaching are available only to students who have matriculated full time into the teacher education programs.

Teacher candidates must successfully complete the practicum in order to complete the program, receive their degree (B.P.S.) and be recommended to the Ontario College of Teachers for the certificate of qualifications.

Police Check

According to the Criminal Records Act a Vulnerable Sector Screening must be performed for a position, whether paid or volunteer, when that

position is one of authority or trust relative to those persons under the age of 18. Therefore, it is imperative that all students understand and comply with this requirement. Please note that this requirement is aligned with the following and failure to meet the program may jeopardize a student's ability to successfully complete the program.

Field experiences (Impact, Teacher Assistantship, and Practicum) are all requisite parts of the Niagara University Teacher Education program and students must successfully complete each phase in order to maintain eligibility in the program.

1. In order for a student to participate in Field Experiences, all School Boards of Education in Ontario require that the student present to them a "Full Disclosure Vulnerable Sector Criminal Record Check" and "Health and Safety Certificate".
2. That as a teacher candidate, students are required to provide a Criminal Record Check that is satisfactory to the district board in which he or she will be placed prior to the commencement of any duties and it is the responsibility of the student to familiarize himself or herself with the specific procedures and protocols for the district board in which the placements will occur.
3. That the Criminal Record Check must meet all the conditions outlined below:
 - It must have been completed by a police service within the preceding six months.
 - It must include a Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS) including a search of the pardoned Sex Offender Database.
 - It must be an original and must be accepted as valid by your board until the end of the student's specific placement.
4. That it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the above conditions are met and that any cost related to obtaining the Criminal Record Check is solely the responsibility of the applicant.
5. That the police check must be obtained from the Police Service that is responsible for the area in which the student is a resident and that depending on the police department the process may take up to six weeks. In order to avoid delay with placements students should apply as soon as possible as the student may not begin a placement until such a time as he or she has completed the process and submitted the required Full Disclosure Vulnerable Sector Criminal Record Check to the school board.
6. Many school boards insist that the Criminal Record Check includes a section that allows the police to screen for contacts with the Police Service under the Mental Health Act and that this will be on the "Consent to Disclosure Form."
7. It is the student's responsibility to meet WSIB Health and Safety training requirements by completing the Ministry of Labour's worker awareness training webinar/video at www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/training/workers.php (<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/training/workers.php>). Upon completion of the training, a certificate of completion will be generated to be presented at host school boards.
8. The process is dictated by where the student lives and/or by the requirements of the hosting school boards where the student will be placed.

Bachelors

- Intermediate/Senior Division (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/ontario/bps/programs-az/faculty-education/teacher-education-programs/intermediate-senior-division/>)

- Primary/Junior Division (<http://catalog.niagara.edu/ontario/bps/programs-az/faculty-education/teacher-education-programs/primary-junior-division/>)