

Regulations of the Teacher Qualification Service

A Joint Project of the BC Teacher's Federation
and the BC School Trustees Association

Teacher Qualification Service
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THE TEACHER QUALIFICATION SERVICE

The Teacher Qualification Service was incorporated under the Societies Act of British Columbia on January 27, 1969. Its purpose is to provide an advisory service for teachers, teachers' associations, and school boards, with respect to the evaluation of teachers' professional and academic qualifications for the assignment to teachers of categories based upon qualifications.

Decisions of the TQS are not binding on any school board or teachers' association, except where so provided in a collective agreement or the policies of a school district or teachers' association.

THE TEACHER QUALIFICATION BOARD

The Teacher Qualification Board implements the policies of the TQS. The Board is composed of five members: two appointed by the British Columbia School Trustees Association, two appointed by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation, and a Chair named by these four.

The day-to-day business of the Board is conducted by the Director of Evaluation. The Director is appointed by the Board on such terms and conditions of employment as the Board may decide.

The Board will hear and rule on appeals arising from the decisions of the Director.

REGULATIONS

1.00 General

1.01 In these regulations:

- a) "TQS" means the Teacher Qualification Service;
- b) "Board" means the Teacher Qualification Board;
- c) "Director" means the Director of Evaluation; and,
- d) "acceptable" means acceptable to the Teacher Qualification Service.

1.02 The TQS evaluates only the academic and professional qualifications of teachers who hold a valid BC public school teaching certificate.

- 1.03 The TQS does not evaluate the qualifications of individuals who hold a Letter of Permission issued by the BC College of Teachers (BCCT)/Teacher Regulation Branch.
- 1.04 A category assigned to a teacher by the TQS is valid only so long as their BC public school teaching certificate is valid.
- 1.05 A category assigned by the TQS does not constitute proof of a valid BC public school teaching certificate.
- 1.06 It is the teacher's responsibility to provide the TQS category card to the employer. The TQS does not contact the employer on behalf of the applicant.
- 1.07 All course work and programming used for TQS categorization purposes must be completed at or transferred into a degree granting institution that held accreditation recognized by the TQS at the time the studies were taken.
- 1.08 Where schooling from a non-accredited college or university was required by the Teacher Regulation Branch for the issuance of a BC public school teaching certificate, the TQS will consider that schooling eligible in an initial evaluation for category purposes subject to the regulations and policies of the TQS. That schooling or other schooling from a non-accredited college or university will not be considered for further or future upgrading.

2.00 Category Structure

- 2.01 There are seven TQS categories. Each category is determined on the basis of programs completed after meeting the university entrance requirement (Grade 12) in British Columbia or its equivalent (at the date of first certification in this province) or upon qualification and award of the Ministry of Education Trade Certificate or Professional Certificate based on trade certification and professional studies and on the requirements set out below:

Category One (1)

The requirement for this category is the completion of at least one year of post-secondary schooling.

Category Two (2)

The requirements for this category are one of:

- a) An acceptable program of at least two years of post-secondary academic and professional training; or,
- b) A demonstrated record of knowledge, skills and experience (in an area not generally taught in a university setting) that qualifies an individual for a teaching certificate in a specialized field of teaching in the public school system.

Category Three (3)

The requirements for this category are one of:

- a) An acceptable three-year program of post-secondary academic and professional training, including an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation; or,
- b) Qualification and award of the Ministry of Education Trades Certificate based on trade certification and professional studies.

Category Four (4)

The requirements for this category are one of:

- a) An acceptable four-year B Ed degree or an acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation or an acceptable B Ed degree; or,
- b) An acceptable three-year diploma program containing academic and professional preparation followed by an acceptable degree; or,
- c) Fourth year standing in an acceptable five-year B Ed program, or the completion of an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation and third year standing in an acceptable four-year baccalaureate degree program; or,
- d) Qualification and award of the Ministry of Education Professional Certificate based on trade certification and professional studies.

Category Five (5)

The requirements for this category are one or more acceptable programs totalling five or more years of academic and professional studies.

The requirements may be met with one of:

- a) An acceptable five-year B Ed degree or an acceptable four-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation; or,
- b) An acceptable four-year B Ed degree plus either an acceptable graduate degree or an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05); or,
- c) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus either an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation or an acceptable B Ed and either an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05) or another acceptable degree; or,
- d) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable two-year B Ed; or,
- e) A program of **five or more years** of study which contains not less than 150 **acceptable** semester credits (or their equivalent) including an acceptable degree and an acceptable professional program, and which meets the requirement for Professional Certification by the British Columbia College of Teachers. This option only applies to Professional Certificates issued by the British Columbia College of Teachers between September 1, 2000 and March 31, 2008. (See Transition Rule 6.00)
- f) All applicants holding an acceptable graduate degree and valid BC public school teaching certificate will be placed into a minimum of TQS category five (5).

Category Five Plus (5+)

The requirements for this category are two or more acceptable programs totalling six or more years of academic and professional studies.

The requirements may be met with one of:

- a) An acceptable five-year B Ed degree plus an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05) or an acceptable four-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation and an acceptable Integrated Program; or,

- b) An acceptable four-year B Ed degree plus two acceptable Integrated Programs (note Regulation 4.05); or,
- c) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus either an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation or an acceptable B Ed and two acceptable Integrated Programs (note Regulation 4.05); or,
- d) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable two-year B Ed and an Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05); or,
- e) A program of **five or more years** of study which contains not less than 150 **acceptable** semester credits (or their equivalent) including an acceptable degree and an acceptable professional program, and which meets the requirement for Professional Certification by the British Columbia College of Teachers, plus an Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05). This option only applies to Professional Certificates issued by the British Columbia College of Teachers between September 1, 2000 and March 31, 2008. (See Transition Rule 6.00)

Category Six (6)

The requirements for this category are one of:

- a) An acceptable five-year B Ed degree or an acceptable four-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation followed by an acceptable graduate degree; or,
- b) An acceptable four-year B Ed degree followed by an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05) and an acceptable graduate degree or an acceptable graduate degree and another acceptable degree; or,
- c) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable professional program of teacher preparation or an acceptable B Ed followed by an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05) and an acceptable graduate degree or an acceptable graduate degree and another acceptable degree; or,
- d) An acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an acceptable two-year B Ed and an acceptable graduate degree; or,
- e) A program of **five or more years** of study which contains not less than 150 **acceptable** semester credits (or their equivalent) including an acceptable degree and an acceptable professional program, and which meets the requirement for Professional Certification by the British

Columbia College of Teachers plus an acceptable graduate degree. This option only applies to Professional Certificates issued by the British Columbia College of Teachers between September 1, 2000 and March 31, 2008 (see Transition Rule 6.00).

- f) An acceptable graduate degree that contains an initial teacher education program plus an acceptable four-year baccalaureate degree plus an integrated program, or an acceptable 60 semester credit graduate degree that contains an initial teacher education program plus an acceptable three-year baccalaureate degree plus an Integrated Program.

3.00 Category Upgrades

- 3.01 A teacher who has been assigned category three (3) may qualify for a higher category by enrolling in an acceptable degree program and fulfilling all of the requirements of the higher category or fulfilling the requirements of the Ministry of Education Professional Certificate based on trade certification and professional studies.
- 3.02 A teacher who has been assigned category four (4) and who holds an acceptable baccalaureate degree may qualify for category five (5) by completing an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05), a second acceptable baccalaureate degree, or an acceptable graduate degree.
- 3.03 A teacher who has been assigned category four (4) and who holds an acceptable baccalaureate degree may qualify for category five plus (5+) by completing two acceptable Integrated Programs (note Regulation 4.05), or a second acceptable baccalaureate degree and an acceptable Integrated Program.
- 3.04 A teacher who has been assigned category four (4) or five (5) who has already completed an acceptable graduate degree may qualify for category five (5) and/or six (6), respectively, by completing one or two Integrated Program(s) (note Regulation 4.05) or acceptable degrees.
- 3.05 A teacher who has been assigned category five (5) and does not hold an acceptable graduate degree may qualify for category five plus (5+) by completing an acceptable Integrated Program (note Regulation 4.05) or another acceptable undergraduate degree.

4.00 Terms and Definitions

- 4.01 Thirty (30) semester credits are equivalent to 45 quarter credits.

- 4.02 An accredited university or college is an institution sanctioned by an accrediting authority recognized by the TQS.
- 4.03 An academic "year" is one containing a minimum of 30 semester credits (or equivalent) of acceptable course work completed at an accredited university or college.
- 4.04 A professional program is one that contains a minimum of 30 semester credits (or equivalent) of acceptable course work completed at an accredited university or college or teacher training institution and includes a professional component of practice teaching that is acceptable preparation for teaching in British Columbia. Regardless of length, a professional program will count as only one year in assigning a category.
- 4.05 An "Integrated Program" contains a minimum of 30 semester credits of **senior level and/or graduate level** course work. A minimum of 24 of the 30 credits must be senior level or graduate level. Senior level courses are third year university level or higher and undertaken at an accredited university or college. Courses for an Integrated Program can be taken from academic and/or education faculties. At least 20 semester credits must be in an area of study applicable to teaching in the BC public K-12 system. At least 20 of the total of 30 credits must be eligible for inclusion in a degree or diploma as part of a major area of study. Within the Integrated Program, a maximum of six semester credits may be accepted at less than senior level provided they are verifiable prerequisites to senior level course work that is relevant to the BC K-12 public system. (See Policy 4.1)
- 4.06 An Integrated Program acceptable for use in qualifying for category five (5) may also be made up of 30 semester credits (or equivalent) from an on-going graduate degree program. However, applicants qualifying for category five (5) in this manner will not be eligible for a further category upgrade until after the graduate degree has been conferred and either a second Integrated Program or second acceptable degree has been completed.

5.00 General Principles

- 5.01 Categories are assigned on the basis of the "completed programs" approach as determined by standards applicable in British Columbia under the following conditions:
- a) With an acceptable British Columbia degree program, only the completed years of university study within the program shall be counted;
 - b) With a partially completed acceptable British Columbia degree program, the category assigned shall be based upon the number of "years" by which the training is removed from the category assigned to the completed program;

- c) With an acceptable non-degree program only completed "years" of university study or equivalent "years" shall be counted. "Equivalent years" shall be determined by the Board. The maximum category assigned to such a program shall be 3; and,
- d) With an acceptable degree or non-degree program partially or totally completed outside British Columbia, only those university or equivalent "years" taken beyond current university entrance requirements in British Columbia shall be counted.

5.02 The qualifications of teachers who have studied outside the province will be assessed on a basis that is no less favourable but no more favourable than that applied to the qualifications of teachers prepared within British Columbia.

5.03 All credits granted or recognized by a post-secondary institution will not necessarily be accepted for the purposes of assigning a category.

5.04 Where the content of one part of a program overlaps the content of a second program, the common portion shall not be counted twice in assigning a teacher's category.

5.05 a) Categories are assigned on the basis of completed programs taken after meeting university entrance requirements in British Columbia. The acceptable university entrance equivalents are:

Alberta	Grade 12
Saskatchewan	Grade 12
Manitoba	Grade 12
Ontario	(<i>prior to 2004</i>) Grade 13 (<i>as of 2004</i>) Grade 12
Quebec	1st year of CEGEP
New Brunswick	Grade 12
Nova Scotia	Grade 12
Prince Edward Island	Grade 12
Newfoundland	Grade 12
	or 1st year of Memorial University

b) In jurisdictions within Canada where entrance requirements have differed from that indicated above, the university years completed beyond university entrance will be recognized if they are part of an acceptable program at an accredited college or university.

c) In jurisdictions outside Canada, secondary school completion will be evaluated in terms of university entrance standards in British Columbia at the time the category is assigned.

- 5.06 Where an applicant is registered in an acceptable four or five-year degree program, but where no degree has been conferred, the category assigned shall not exceed category four (4).
- 5.07 With the exception of five-year Bachelor of Education programs, baccalaureate degrees shall be evaluated as representing not more than four years of academic and/or professional preparation.
- 5.08 An academic graduate degree that has been awarded without a previous undergraduate degree shall be evaluated as representing no more than four steps in the TQS category system. A graduate degree that contains a teacher education program that has been awarded without a previous undergraduate degree shall be evaluated as representing no more than five steps in the TQS category system.
- 5.09 When the regulations are revised, no previously issued category or credit for courses or programs completed shall be reduced because of the adoption of new regulations.

6.00 Transition Rule

6.01 Paragraph e) of Regulation 2.01, categories five (5), five plus (5+), and six (6) respectively, is only applicable to applicants who have obtained Professional Certificates from the BC College of Teachers under acceptable degree requirements implemented September 1, 2000 (and in effect until March 31, 2008).

7.00 Procedures for Obtaining a Category

- 7.01 A category card is issued only upon the formal application of the teacher concerned.
- 7.02 An applicant is fully and solely responsible for ensuring that all of the documentation required for their inquiry/application is accurate and received by the TQS office.
- 7.03 Evaluations are made in accordance with these regulations and are based upon transcripts, letters, or documents, bearing the official seal of the issuing institution and the signature of the responsible issuing officer. Diplomas, certificates, and statements of marks, as issued to students are not acceptable.
- 7.04 An application for a category or a category upgrade must be accompanied by:

- a) A completed TQS application form;
 - b) Proof of the highest BC teaching certificate to which the applicant is entitled; and,
 - c) Official documents (or notarized copies thereof) from all universities and colleges attended by the applicant.
 - d) First time applicants to the TQS will be issued a TQS category card provided that it is their intention to apply for a position in the BC public school system. In order to obtain any future cards or services from the TQS, applicants will be required to provide proof of current employment in the BC public school system.
- 7.05 A separate transcript is required from each institution attended. A secondary school transcript may be necessary, but is generally not required of individuals who have enrolled in or completed a British Columbia college and/or university undergraduate program.
- 7.06 Subject to a grace period, applications with all supporting documentation which are received in the TQS office after November 30 and **before March 31** are assigned a category effective the intervening January 1 provided all of the academic and professional work required for the category is completed by December 31 (January 31 for graduate degrees).
- 7.07 Subject to a grace period, applications with all supporting documentation which are received in the TQS office after March 31 and **before June 30** are assigned a category effective May 1 of that calendar year provided that all of the academic and professional work required for the category is completed by April 30 (May 31 for graduate degrees).
- 7.08 Subject to a grace period, applications with all supporting documentation which are received in the TQS office after June 30 and **before November 30** are assigned a category effective September 1 of that calendar year provided all of the academic and professional work required for the category is completed by August 31 (September 30 for graduate degrees).

8.00 Reviews and Appeals

- 8.01 A teacher, the teacher's association, the teacher's school board, or the Board, may at any time request the Director to review the category assigned to that teacher by the TQS and the Director shall carry out that review and shall notify the requesting party that the teacher's category has been confirmed or revised and the reasons for that decision.

- 8.02 The Director may at any time undertake a review of the category assigned by the TQS to a teacher upon being apprised of or discovering that an error has been or may have been made in assigning a category to a teacher. If, as the result of such review, the Director determines that an incorrect category has been assigned, the Director shall revise the category and issue a new category card.
- 8.03 If, following a review by the Director, a teacher, the teacher's association, or the teacher's board of school trustees, is not satisfied with the decision of the Director regarding the category assigned the teacher, the party may appeal that decision to the Board.
- 8.04 An appeal must be in the form of a letter clearly marked "Appeal" addressed to the Chair, Teacher Qualification Board, at the Teacher Qualification Service office. The letter should outline the grounds on which the appeal is based.
- 8.05 All appeals will be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Board.
- 8.06 The Board will review the entire case and may confirm, raise, or lower, the category that has been appealed. Following the Board's consideration of the appeal, the Chair of the Board will advise the appellant of the Board's decision and the reasons for it.
- 8.07 In the event a review or appeal results in the assignment of a different category, the effective date of the new category shall be established in accordance with Board policy in effect on the date of such new assignment. (A copy of the policy is available at www.tqs.bc.ca.)
- 8.08 The Board will reconsider an appeal decision only upon presentation of new evidence.