

ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN PRESERVICE COURSE WORK AND ON PLACEMENT

This document provides information for teacher candidates in education programs, instructors and professional experiences coordinators, guidance counsellors, educational institutions, education program admission officers, accessibility service providers, teachers, and the public about the essential skills and performance expectations for teacher candidates in initial teacher education programs at Lakehead University. The purposes of the Essential Skills are:

- To provide information to prospective teacher candidates so they can make an informed choice regarding applying to a program;
- To guide teacher candidate efforts toward accomplishing the essential skills and performance expectations;
- To provide prospective and current teacher candidates information to help them decide if they should register with Student Accessibility Services;
- To help teacher candidates, student accessibility advisors, and faculty develop accommodation; and,
- To protect the safety of learners and their learning.

The Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) recognizes four entry-to-practice categories of skills as capturing the components necessary for teaching practice:

1. Communication skills
2. Intra- and inter-personal skills
3. Cognitive and metacognitive skills
4. Supervision skills

These categories represent reasonable and justifiable skill requirements for coursework and practice teaching.

Individuals considering a teaching career in Ontario schools should review this document to assess their ability to demonstrate the requirements for successful completion of a Bachelor of Education degree program. The Essential Skills serve as a benchmark, outlining the requirements to meet the minimum standard necessary to ensure children's safety and learning. Failure to demonstrate any of the Essential Skills may result in removal from the Bachelor of Education degree program, following appropriate due process.

The Ontario Association of Deans of Education welcomes and supports a diverse student body and is committed to fostering

equity and inclusion for all persons. Additionally, the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University emphasizes the historical and contemporary place of Indigenous Peoples within the province and recognizes the importance of acknowledging Indigenous perspectives regarding the Essential Skills.

Individuals with questions about the Essential Skills should contact their Faculty of Education. Educational institutions recognize their duty to work with teacher candidates with documented disabilities and requests for accommodation while protecting their privacy, confidentiality, autonomy, and dignity.

Accommodations ensure equality of access and opportunity for students with disabilities or other Ontario Human Rights Commission protected grounds to fulfill the Essential Skills. Accommodations are provided on a case-by-case basis by student accessibility centres within individual universities. Students in education programs should be aware that provision of accommodation does not guarantee success but, rather, opportunity to successfully meet essential program requirements.

REQUIREMENT 1: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Teacher candidate communicates clearly, non-verbally and verbally (in the language of instruction, orally and in writing), in various contexts. Specifically, the teacher candidate:

- ✓ Speaks with appropriate volume, vocabulary, and expression in the language of instruction at a level that provides for accurate understanding of words and meanings.
- ✓ Communicates effectively to provide instructions and direction that can be understood by others.
- ✓ Clarifies expectations and implied meanings (stated or unspecified details) in course work and on placement.
- ✓ Receives and responds appropriately to oral and written communication from others.

EXAMPLES

The examples do not represent an exhaustive list of expectations, but provide a sample to assist with interpretation.

- ✓ Changes pitch and volume and uses appropriate wording to emphasize points in a presentation, group discussion, workshop, or other oral communication in a manner that enhances listener understanding (LA, Gr.8, p.140).
- ✓ Chooses appropriate vocabulary and language complexity to explain instructional tasks to different audiences and modifies language use when needed to ensure understanding.
- ✓ Explains a complex procedure to an individual or group using a series of sequential steps (LA, Gr.8, p. 139).
- ✓ Gives instructions that are clear, specific, and concise.
- ✓ Reinforces auditory directions with written or pictorial representations or demonstrations.
- ✓ Gives examples and/or alternatives when providing instructions.
- ✓ Asks questions and repeats key points to explore meaning, clarify content, and to determine the level of shared understanding.
- ✓ Solicits feedback from the audience to check for understanding.
- ✓ Orally responds to what is being said by commenting and questioning in a way that furthers conversation (LA, Gr.8, p.138).
- ✓ Receives oral communication from others without interrupting.
- ✓ Acts on instructor and/or associate teacher feedback in a manner that shows s/he has understood and considered suggestions for improvement.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responds appropriately to nonverbal signals received from others, while considering individual and group differences in both expression and associated meanings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attends to, and analyzes nonverbal communication (e.g. facial expression, postures, gestures eye-contact) to promote further positive interaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reads, comprehends, and writes, observing the conventions of writing (paragraphing, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar) in accordance with the Faculty of Education Language Competency Rubric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clarifies one's interpretation of another's body language. ✓ Uses conventions of writing in coursework and on placement. ✓ Writes with a clear focus and progression of related ideas with support and elaboration that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the writing task.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Models appropriate speech and writing, and provides accurate feedback in real time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Spells correctly words that are regularly used in instruction across the curriculum, and the texts that students are exploring (LA, Gr.8, pp.131/2). ✓ Reads appropriate, familiar texts at a sufficient pace and with sufficient expression to convey the sense of the text to the audience (LA, Gr.1, p.41). ✓ Models [in real time] the use of appropriate punctuation (e.g. commas, periods, quotation marks and more) and parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, possessive pronouns and more) to show the roles each plays in the development of a clear written message (LA, Gr.3, p.72).

REQUIREMENT 2: INTRA- AND INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS

Teacher candidate interacts appropriately with others. Specifically, the teacher candidate:	EXAMPLES The examples do not represent an exhaustive list of expectations, but provide a sample to assist with interpretation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Accepts, interprets and uses multiple forms of feedback (e.g. body language, tone of voice, verbal and written comments) to enact effective change (e.g. demonstrates flexibility, adaptability, and cultural sensitivity). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When receiving feedback from instructors or associate teachers, responds constructively, by enacting change, rather than emotionally. ✓ Monitors others' body language when speaking with others or teaching in order to adapt the conversation or lesson to be more responsive and/or engaging to the audience. ✓ Seeks, interprets, and enacts feedback to continuously improve. ✓ Takes ownership for learning and assumes responsibility for gaps in knowledge/skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintains appropriate interpersonal boundaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Refrains from speaking about others negatively (gossip) or sharing others' personal information. ✓ Speaks calmly, tactfully, and respectfully during times of conflict and when asserting healthy boundaries. ✓ Chooses contextually and culturally appropriate personal information or anecdotes to share with students, colleagues, or parents. ✓ Maintains professional boundaries across all forms of media.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Works cooperatively and effectively with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consults actively, liaises, and negotiates across differences in order to successfully achieve the task at hand. ✓ Works collaboratively with members of a team to set and meet appropriate deadlines, to set and meet group goals, and to share and conclude group tasks equitably. ✓ Listens to others' ideas and takes their opinions into account. ✓ Maintains the consistent approach agreed upon by the group. ✓ Is flexible in their approach.

✓ Models inclusive respectful behaviour.

- ✓ Uses appropriate words, phrases, and terminology, including inclusive and non-discriminatory language (LA, Gr.8, p.189).
- ✓ Resolves instances of exclusionary language use and interprets and explains the necessity for change through culturally appropriate means.
- ✓ Recognizes and resolves microaggressions (e.g. gossiping) and aggressions (e.g. bullying) leaving the dignity of others intact, and models more inclusive behaviours.
- ✓ Treats others with fairness and dignity.
- ✓ Respects diverse views and cultures.

✓ Acts calmly and non-judgmentally in situations that are stressful or involve conflict.

- ✓ Presents and promotes a calm demeanour and models effective behavioural strategies and inclusionary practices.
- ✓ Resolves group disagreements such as not wanting to work with each other or blaming each other (i.e. for lack of productivity).

REQUIREMENT 3: COGNITIVE AND METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

Teacher candidate learns, and recalls in a timely manner, the discipline's content and points of understanding (concepts, postulates and methods), and demonstrates effective executive functioning skills (e.g. planning, problem solving, and self-control). Specifically, the teacher candidate:

- ✓ Learns new material on a given topic within a subject to the level (depth and breadth) required for instruction (as outlined in the curriculum documents).

- ✓ Plans, organizes and prioritizes academic/job tasks to meet program requirements.

EXAMPLES

The examples do not represent an exhaustive list of expectations, but provide a sample to assist with interpretation.

- ✓ Recognises when specific curricular material is insufficiently understood for teaching, and uses strategies to broaden and deepen subject knowledge.
- ✓ Uses appropriate words, phrases, and terminology from a full range of subject-specific vocabulary and communication genres (e.g., symbols in mathematics, figurative language in language arts). (See e.g., LA, Gr. 8, p.139).
- ✓ Locates, articulates, and describes the major disciplinary concepts and processes (e.g., matter, structure and function in science) underlying a given topic (See e.g., Sc, Gr. 9-10, 11-12, p. 5).
- ✓ In the primary-junior division, achieves a minimum proficiency of 75% on the Primary-Junior division Math Competency Exam.
- ✓ Accesses subject specific content and a variety of resources as needed.

- ✓ Sets goals, prioritizes, and makes decisions to complete program requirements to meet deadlines (e.g. assignment deadlines, documentation for placement, and lesson plan submission during placement).
- ✓ Uses effective time management strategies to meet program requirements (including regular attendance and punctuality).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Responds to unanticipated problems in a timely manner with an appropriate and justifiable course of action and professional demeanour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Plans for the unexpected, reflects on the issue, consults others, and executes a plan. ✓ Uses positive strategies to resolve conflict (e.g. resolves group conflicts collectively). ✓ Recognises when a course of action (e.g. in course assignments, presentations, delivering lessons) is ineffective and implements an alternative strategy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sustains ongoing effort and perseveres through challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Works with instructor's feedback and/or strategies for improvement to complete work in a timely manner. ✓ Balances workload to submit assignments on time. ✓ Actively engages in coursework in ways that make meaning to the teacher candidate. ✓ Develops and enacts goals in the Post-Placement Learning Plan. ✓ Responds proactively to unexpected absences.

REQUIREMENT 4: SUPERVISION SKILLS

Teacher candidate maintains awareness of others so as to ensure a safe environment.

Specifically, the teacher candidate:

- ✓ Establishes a comfortable and safe learning environment, attends to the learners and their environment, and takes appropriate action in order to maintain a safe environment.
- ✓ Manages multiple job duties simultaneously so as to ensure a safe environment.
- ✓ Works effectively in the presence of distracting stimuli so as to ensure a safe environment.

EXAMPLES

The examples do not represent an exhaustive list of expectations, but provide a sample to assist with interpretation.

- ✓ Identifies, processes, and responds to critical elements of one's environment.
- ✓ Establishes and practices clear rules and routines to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment.
- ✓ Identifies potential hazards in the environment and carries out appropriate follow-up action.
- ✓ Plans ahead to anticipate time management and safety issues.
- ✓ Maintains focus on the task at hand while also monitoring other elements in the environment.
- ✓ Prioritizes and switches between multiple tasks as needed.
- ✓ Maintains focus on the students and the environment despite interruptions and distractions.
- ✓ Is flexible in the face of interruptions and distractions.
- ✓ Introduces alternative strategies as a problem-solving measure in challenging environments.
- ✓ When using centres, the teacher candidate has materials and supplies available at the centres and monitors all groups of students.

✓ Moves about the classroom, manages materials and supplies, and supervises learners during classroom activities.

- ✓ When teaching physical education, the teacher candidate meets the supervision requirements of The Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines during instruction.
- ✓ A science teacher purposefully moves around the laboratory to ensure that materials and equipment are being used appropriately, and/or safely, in accordance with Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System.
- ✓ Attends to learner behaviour at all times.

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