Our thanks to the members of ETFO Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teachers for their help in the development of this document.

Our thanks to Colette Peters for her contribution to the job search and interview preparation portions of this document.
# Table of Contents

- **Getting Started** 1
- **Applying for a Job** 4
- **Obtaining Salary Classification** 5
- **Locating School Boards** 7
- **Volunteering** 13
- **Preparing for the Job Search** 14
- **Know Your Target** 17
- **Developing Your Resume** 19
- **Sample Resume** 23
- **The Cover Letter** 25
- **Sample Cover Letter** 27
- **Interview Preparation** 30
- **Helpful Resources** 35
- **After the Successful Interview** 37
- **Payroll Information** 40
- **An Overview of the Federations** 42
- **Collective Bargaining** 43
- **Contacting Your Federation** 45
- **Professional Boundaries** 48
- **What is an Occasional Teacher** 52
- **The Advantages of Occasional Teaching** 53
- **General Information for Occasional Teachers** 55
Getting Started

Once you have decided to join the teaching profession in Ontario, you must proceed through a number of steps. An overview of the steps is given here, however if you need detailed information you may visit the website at www.oct.ca/IET.

To teach in a publicly funded school in Ontario, you must register with the Ontario College of Teachers (College), the regulatory body responsible for licensure of Ontario’s teachers. Anyone receiving their teacher education outside of Ontario and meeting licensing requirements will be issued an Interim Certificate.

Please download a copy of the Registration Guide for Teachers Educated Outside Ontario, which contains the application form. This guide sets out all requirements in detail.

Read the entire guide before you start. The process can be complicated.

Required documents

You will need to submit some documents with your application and some will be sent to the College by institutions on your behalf.

Teachers of general studies

You must submit the following to the College:

- Signed application form and declaration;
- Photocopy of proof of identity;
- Photocopy of proof of name change, if applicable;
- Original Canadian criminal record check report;
- Copies of teaching certificates from all jurisdictions;
- Non-refundable fee of $345; and
- Copy of Canadian employment authorization if you are not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada.

You must also contact your educational institutions and licensing authorities and ask them to send the following original documents directly to the College:

- Post-secondary academic records;
- Teacher education academic records;
- Statement of professional standing from each jurisdiction in which you have been certified to teach; and
- Proof of language proficiency in English or French, if applicable.

DOCUMENTS MUST BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE COLLEGE FROM THE ISSUING INSTITUTION.
Teachers of technological studies

Teachers of technological studies must submit these documents:

- Signed application form and declaration;
- Photocopy of proof of identity;
- Photocopy of proof of name change, if applicable;
- Original Canadian criminal record check report;
- Copies of teaching certificates from all jurisdictions;
- Non-refundable fee of $345; and
- Copy of Canadian employment authorization if you are not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada.

In addition, you must submit:

- A photocopy of your Ontario Secondary School Diploma (Grade 12) or equivalent;
- Proof of wage-earning experience; and
- Proof of competence.

For more information about wage-earning experience, consult the College website: www.oct.ca/IET.

Translations

Contact the institutions where you completed your education and ask them to send the documents you need directly to the College. The institution should include a cover letter in English or French that has your name and Canadian social insurance number or your College registration number. If the College receives your documents in a language other than English or French, copies will be sent to you. You will have to have these documents translated by an accredited translator from an organization listed on the College website. The translator must include an original signed letter that states that the translation is accurate.

The letter must include the translator's:

- Identification number or seal (or both); and
- Name, address and telephone number.

When you submit the original translation to the College, include:

- The original foreign-language document;
- The translation; and
- The translator's letter.
Evaluation

When the College has all of the necessary documents, your file will be evaluated. If you do not meet all of the requirements, the College will send a letter telling you which additional steps you need to take.

If everything is in order, the College will send you a letter welcoming you to the profession. The letter will also ask for your first year of annual membership fees. Please note that the annual membership fee is based on the calendar year (January 31 to December 31) and is not pro-rated. So, if you join the College in November, you'll be responsible for the fees for the year.

Certification

Upon payment of fees, the College will send you an Interim Certificate of Qualification (ICQ). An ICQ is offered to any teacher who received his/her teacher education outside of Ontario. It is a license to teach in Ontario, with condition(s) attached. When you have fulfilled the conditions attached to your interim certificate, the College will convert it to a permanent Certificate of Qualification.

How long will the process take?

Once the College has all of your documents, it can take as little as four to six weeks to process your application. However, if the College needs more information, the process can take longer.

Your application will be valid for two years. If, at the end of that time, the College has not received all of the documents required to evaluate your application, you will receive a letter giving you an additional 60 days to collect the missing documents. You will also be given the choice of having your file evaluated, even though documents are missing. Although the evaluation will result in no recommendation for certification, you will be told what else, if anything, you require to be certified in the event that all required documents can be obtained. At this time the process ends, and if you still wish to pursue certification, you must apply again.

If problems arise during this process, it is important that you contact Membership Services at the College to explain your concerns and request information regarding next steps.
Applying for a Job

When applying for a position with an Ontario school board, it is advisable to go to the individual board website to determine what method each board is using to accept applications. It is important that you understand the process involved in the board of interest.

Some school boards have created their own on-line system for applications. These can be accessed by visiting the board website and following instructions.

Other boards have chosen to utilize the Applytoeducation website.

What is applytoeducation?

Applytoteach has changed its name to applytoeducation to reflect that administrative and support applicants, as well as teachers, are using the service to apply for positions in school boards.

Applytoeducation is a website (www.applytoeducation.com) in which you are able to search school board job postings and electronically courier your complete application portfolio to employers.

Applytoeducation has been implemented by many boards in an effort to streamline the process. Applytoeducation allows you to:

- Use one application to apply to multiple employers and job postings;
- Update portfolios as often as needed;
- Allow employers to view latest teaching portfolios; and
- Customize your cover letter for each job to which you apply.

The fee is $10 to e-courier your application portfolio to unlimited jobs with one school board and all private employers for one year. Applytoeducation also can send regular job-alert e-mails. You can search jobs and set up a ‘Job Alert’ to be e-mailed when jobs you are interested in are posted.

School board job postings can be viewed at any time free of charge.
Obtaining Salary Classification

The Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO)

Certification (licensing) of Ontario teachers is the responsibility of the Ontario College of Teachers, which issues Ontario Certificates of Qualification and Letters of Eligibility. However, evaluation of the qualifications of Ontario teachers for category placement purposes is the responsibility of the affiliates of the Ontario Teachers’ Federation. For teachers who are members of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA) or l’Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), this evaluation process is carried out by the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO).

The mandate of the Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) is to evaluate the academic and professional qualifications of teachers for salary purposes. A bilingual service, QECO provides a systematic method for teachers to upgrade and improve their category placement.

If you are a member of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association or l’Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, you can contact QECO for information on the evaluation of qualifications for salary purposes.

Regulations

1. A QECO evaluation may be issued only when a teacher has obtained a teaching certificate valid in the schools of Ontario and specified in the QECO Evaluation Program. Regardless of the qualifications a person may hold of an academic or other nature, no evaluation can take place until certification from the Ontario College of Teachers has been obtained.

2. QECO will not evaluate the qualifications of those whose authority to teach is a Letter of Permission.

3. Teachers who have studied outside Ontario shall have their qualifications evaluated on a basis no less favourable but no more favourable than that applied to teachers prepared within the Province of Ontario. Where basic teacher training forms an integral part of the basic university degree, a minimum of five full courses (30 semester hours) may be deducted from the university studies. The acceptability for evaluation purposes of all certificates, diplomas, degrees and courses from outside Ontario shall be at the discretion of QECO.

Special note

QECO evaluates teacher qualifications based upon the documentation supplied by the teacher. QECO exercises its best efforts to advise any teacher, who makes an inquiry as to those qualifications, what would be required to achieve a better rating. However, QECO does not and cannot provide explanations of all possible methods of achieving a better QECO rating. Individual preferences on upgrading and the availability of course offerings often dictate how a teacher will choose to upgrade qualifications. Changes in university or the Ontario College of Teachers policy may also have a bearing on future upgrading.
Consequently, the teacher applicant must make a written inquiry of QECO to determine what effect a course credit or other qualification will have upon the QECO rating. The rating varies according to the qualifications earned and qualifications vary from teacher to teacher.

The information, which is provided with any evaluation, is valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario
1300 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M4T 1X3

Phone: 416-323-1969, or 1-800-385-1030
www.qeco.on.ca

Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF)

If you are a member of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF/FESSO), the evaluation of your qualifications for category placement will be carried out by this organization.

The Certification Rating Statement, issued by the OSSTF/FESSO, ensures that you will receive the correct level of salary for your qualifications. Your Certification Rating Statement will indicate whether you are in group 1, 2, 3, or 4, group 4 being the highest group. Without a Certification Rating Statement, the school board will be entitled to pay a teacher at the lowest salary category.

OSSTF/FESSO has an internal system for providing Certification Rating Statements to its teacher members. All teachers must complete an Application Form #1 for a Certification Rating Statement in order to receive their maximum salary.

Teachers are rated based on their academic backgrounds and trade records according to the Bylaws and Regulations governing the OSSTF/FESSO Certification Plan. These regulations can be found in the OSSTF/FESSO handbook, on the website and are available at OSSTF/FESSO offices.

Changes to these and other guidelines governing the classification of teachers occur on a regular basis. Members should review the recent changes highlighted in this site to determine if a re-evaluation for a new Certification Rating Statement should be requested.

The Federation office is located at:

OSSTF
60 Mobile Drive
Toronto, ON M4A 2P3
Phone: 416-751-8300, or 1-800-267-7867
www.osstf.on.ca
Locating School Boards

There are 72 school boards in Ontario. The following pages outline the names and locations of each school board. Please note that all school boards include the elementary and secondary panels.

Northern Ontario English-Language Public District School Boards

School Boards in the District

1. District School Board Ontario North East
2. Algoma District School Board
3. Rainbow District School Board
4. Near North District School Board
5a. Keewatin-Patricia District School Board
5b. Rainy River District School Board
6a. Lakehead District School Board
6b. Superior-Greenstone District School Board
School Boards in the District

7. Bluewater District School Board
8. Avon Maitland District School Board
9. Greater Essex County District School Board
10. Lambton Kent District School Board
11. Thames Valley District School Board
12. Toronto District School Board
13. Durham District School Board
14. Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
15. Trillium Lakelands District School Board
16. York Region District School Board
17. Simcoe County District School Board
18. Upper Grand District School Board
19. Peel District School Board
20. Halton District School Board
21. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
22. District School Board of Niagara
23. Grand Erie District School Board
24. Waterloo Region District School Board
25. Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
26. Upper Canada District School Board
27. Limestone District School Board
28. Renfrew County District School Board
29. Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board
School Boards in the District

30a. Northeastern Catholic District School Board  
30b. Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board  
31. Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board  
32. Sudbury Catholic District School Board  
33a. Northwest Catholic District School Board  
33b. Kenora Catholic District School Board  
34a. Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board  
34b. Superior North Catholic District School Board
School Boards in the District

35. Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board
36. Huron Perth Catholic District School Board
37. Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board
38. District School Board 38 (London Catholic)
39. St. Clair Catholic District School Board
40. Toronto Catholic District School Board
41. Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board
42. York Catholic District School Board
43. Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
44. Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
45. Durham Catholic District School Board
46. Halton Catholic District School Board
47. Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
48. Wellington Catholic District School Board
49. Waterloo Catholic District School Board
50. Niagara Catholic District School Board
51. Brant Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic District School Board
52. Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
53. Ottawa-Carleton Catholic District School Board
54. Renfrew County Catholic District School Board
55. Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
School Boards in the District

56. Conseil scolaire de district du Nord-Est de l'Ontario
57. Conseil scolaire de district du Grand Nord de l'Ontario
58. Conseil scolaire de district du Centre Sud-Ouest
59. Conseil scolaire de district de l'Est de l'Ontario
School Boards in the District

60a. Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Grandes Rivières
60b. Conseil scolaire de district catholique Franco-Nord
61. Conseil scolaire de district catholique de Nouvel Ontario
62. Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales
63. Conseil scolaire de district des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest
64. Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud
65. Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien
66. Conseil scolaire de district catholique de Centre-Est de l'Ontario
Volunteering

Adjusting to a new life in Canada can be challenging for recent immigrants. Volunteering in your local public school provides an opportunity to become comfortable in your new community, while also learning about the education system in Ontario. Volunteering also provides opportunities to:

- Practice new language skills;
- Develop that sense of attachment and belonging to a new community;
- Make a positive contribution to your community;
- Build self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Gain valuable practical work experience related to your field of study;
- Build understanding of how your skills and experience can benefit Ontario schools;
- Build social and professional networks;
- Gain Canadian work experience; and
- Enhance your resume and perhaps obtain professional references.

What are some tips to get started as a volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering, but aren't sure where to begin, try asking yourself the following questions to determine what kind of volunteer opportunities will be best suited to you:

- What kind of time commitment are you willing to make? Are you looking for a regular/weekly volunteer commitment or a short-term/one-time opportunity?
- Do you have specific skills or talents you would like to share with a school?
- Would you like to develop a specific skill?
- What are your personal goals? Would you like to re-enter the workforce? Meet new people?
- Do you have a valid criminal background check? If not, check with the school for more information. They may provide you with a form. Please note that the fee is different for those volunteering and those seeking employment. The fee also varies from region to region. Check with your local police department.

In order to be effective, your volunteer position needs to be appropriate for your qualifications; those with qualifications to teach elementary grades should volunteer in an elementary school, and those with secondary qualifications should volunteer in a secondary school.

Check with your local YMCA & other child care centers sponsored by the government for other volunteer opportunities. After school programs may also provide opportunities for volunteering.
Preparing for the Job Search

As you begin your job search, it is very important that you be well prepared. You must clearly understand what you have to offer to an employer, what the employer is looking for to fill this position and how your strengths fit with the employer’s needs.

Some key steps in the job search process have been provided here to help you evaluate your strengths, list your skills and create an effective resume and cover letter. A list of helpful resources has also been included, with a particular focus on those websites with materials related to the Ontario curriculum. Various handbooks written specifically to address the needs of occasional teachers have been suggested as well, since many newly-certified teachers begin their careers as occasional teachers.

Getting started

To begin preparing for your job search, a good first step is to consider all of your strengths, and to use those strengths to develop a self-inventory. A self-inventory looks at the skills you have gained through previous experience. Even if you have a resume and/or cover letter drafted, you can use your self-inventory to improve it.

It is important to consider the following when developing a self-inventory:

- Who am I as a teacher? As a co-worker?
- What strengths do I offer a potential employer?
- What aspects of my previous work experience are most relevant to teaching?
- What special skills or experiences do I bring to the classroom?

In order to draft an effective resume, cover letter, and even give a strong interview, you need to know the answers to these questions. The time you spend on your self-inventory is the foundation for all of the steps that come afterwards in your job search.

Begin your self-inventory by creating some headings under which to list and sort your skills as you reflect on the questions above:

**Job-related skills**

These are the skills you have developed related to the teaching profession, such as lesson planning, assessment design, differentiated instruction, classroom management etc.

**Adaptive skills/personality traits**

These are your personal traits that you use day to day in the workplace; they are what make you “uniquely you” and allow you to be a successful teacher (e.g., enthusiasm, optimism, honesty, compassion)

**Transferable skills**

There are many skills that can be developed in other careers that are relevant to teaching. To name a few: communication, organization, research, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Depending on how much actual teaching experience you have, you may need to also focus on...
this category of skills and think carefully about what you bring to teaching that you have developed in your previous work.

The following chart can be used as a reference to help you uncover your skills and strengths. Using these headings, list the skills you used for each work or volunteer position you have held. Be as thorough as possible. Brainstorm with a fresh perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job-Related Skills (Teaching skills)</th>
<th>Adaptive Skills/Personality Traits</th>
<th>Transferable Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and evaluation – knowledge of a variety of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment tools and their role in driving instruction Instructional strategies – expertise with a variety of instructional strategies that address diverse learning needs Diversity and equity – knowledge required to address diverse needs of students regarding language, learning needs, gender, race, religion, physical and emotional needs, etc. Differentiated Instruction – knowledge required to provide a variety of instruction and assessment strategies to address the diverse needs of students Curriculum – knowledge of ministry curricula and reporting expectations Special Education – understanding of policy and procedure for identifying, teaching and reporting on students with special needs Classroom Management – able to create and maintain a positive learning environment and successfully resolve classroom discipline issues</td>
<td>Enthusiastic – demonstrate desire to work with students and colleagues to improve student achievement Optimistic – expectations for students and self are high, but achievable Confident – demonstrate ability to begin assignment immediately and manage issues appropriately Responsible – demonstrate willingness to perform teaching duties and be accountable to employer, parents, community Adaptable – able to adjust to change and uncertainty with composure and initiative Reflective – able to respond to feedback with reflection and willingness to modify practices if needed Risk-taker – able to demonstrate innovative and creative thinking and to model this behaviour for students Accountable – demonstrate a desire to share information with parents, colleagues and community to improve student achievement Open-minded – willingness to accept suggestions and incorporate the ideas of others Shows initiative – demonstrate an ability to assess situations and identify and apply solutions Sound judgment – able to make sensible decisions Reliable – take responsibility for completion of duties Life-long learner – willingness to set personal learning goals and to seek professional development opportunities pertaining to those goals</td>
<td>Communication – ability to share information in an appropriate manner with students, parents, colleagues and school community Management – able to manage diversity of needs of students and create a positive learning community Problem-solving – ability to recognize a problem, the cause and the solution in a manner that meets the needs of all concerned Organizational – Ability to meet teaching, assessment, and reporting needs as well as those of students Analytical – ability to access situations, make decisions and achieve solutions Team-building – ability to create cooperative learning environment in the classroom and work well with colleagues on initiatives which improve student achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have completed your self-inventory, look for skills that occur again and again. These are the strengths that you will highlight in your resume, cover letter, and interviews. Don’t stop there, though! Ask others for their thoughts about your strengths and skills: co-workers, former employers, friends, relatives. What they say may surprise you or cause you to think more carefully about another skill or trait that you hadn’t considered.

Once it is completed, this self-inventory is a tool that you can often refer to as you draft/revise your resume and cover letter, and as you prepare for interviews. The more detail you have in your self-inventory, the more material you will have for your interview.
Know Your Target

Your self-inventory will help you know yourself, but you also need to know your potential employer and what the employer is looking for. There simply is no replacement for doing your homework to learn about the Ministry of Education, the board, the neighbourhood and the school to which you are applying.

What does the Ministry of Education expect of Ontario teachers?

It is very important that you have knowledge of the ministry’s plan for improving student achievement. Visit www.edu.gov.on.ca for information about ministry directions. In the Publications link, you will find a document entitled Reach Every Student – Energizing Ontario Education. This document outlines the ministry plan for publicly funded education and will provide you with an understanding of the priorities of the ministry and the school boards in Ontario.

There are many other important documents to be found here. They provide valuable information about strategies for literacy, numeracy, curricula, differentiating instruction and the Student Success initiative, to mention just a few. It is important to understand these documents to be successful during your interview and in the classroom.

What are boards looking for in teachers?

What do you know about the board’s mission statement? Does this board have a particular focus on character education, for example? Learning more about your target will guide your thinking about your potential contributions at all levels.

Consider your self-inventory from the perspective of a school board or principal, especially your job-related skills. How have you developed and demonstrated your knowledge of:

- A variety of instructional strategies?
- Assessment methods, including formative and summative?
- Curriculum and program planning?
- Classroom management?
- How to support and accommodate diverse learners?
- How to reach out to parents and the larger school community?

As you continue researching your target, keep going back to your self-inventory and reflecting on the ways in which your skills and qualities meet the needs of the mission statement of the board to which you are applying. Consider how your skills and qualities compliment the board’s specialized priorities and programs. When you see a specific job ad or posting, you can also refer to your self-inventory to determine how your skills and experiences meet the stated requirements of that job.
Advice from a Principal

It is admittedly challenging to adapt to a new culture, new school culture, and possibly, a new language in which to teach. However difficult it may be, try to focus on the assets that you bring to this system and persist. Here is some advice from Michael De Angelis, Secondary School Principal seconded to OISE/UT:

“Do not feel that you have to apologize for your uniqueness. See it as an asset. The richness that you bring to the schools and school districts in Ontario is valued. Additional cultural experience and facility with languages other than the two official languages are definite assets. Always express yourself as a knowledgeable and committed professional.”
Developing Your Resume

Now that you have a clear understanding of what you have to offer to an employer and have researched the directions and expectations of your target school board, you are ready to develop an effective resume.

Your resume is a reflection of you – your skills, education and experience. Make certain you spend the time and effort required to develop a professional document that will help you in your search for a teaching position.

What are the common elements in a resume?

Employers often receive hundreds of applications for a single teaching position. You want to create a resume that attracts attention, and is also well-structured, easy to read and cleanly presented.

1. Headings

Here are the key headings to include in your resume:

**Personal information**
- Include your name, address, telephone number and email address if you regularly check your email
- Do not include other personal information like your social insurance number, health status, marital status, citizenship etc.

**Education**
- List education achievement in order of most recent first
- List date, degree, name of institution and location of institution
- Include special awards, scholarships or bursaries

**Additional qualifications**
- If pertinent to the advertised position, list additional qualifications here
- List date, course title, name of institution

**Work experience**
- List date, position title, organization name and location
- Use bullets to list most important and applicable responsibilities and accomplishments
- Begin bullets with action words (see list of action words below)
- Avoid using personal pronouns
- Include volunteer experiences

**Activities and interests**
- Transferable skills are often demonstrated in this section
- List clubs, professional associations, volunteer experiences, interests and other activities
- Define level of responsibility, duties and any special accomplishments
References

- List three references
- Provide title, organization, telephone number and email address for each
- Be sure you have spoken to references before using their names
- Obtain alternate numbers for references if vacations are a possibility

Other possible headings include professional development, language skills or special skills, extra-curricular or co-curricular activities. (This is not an exhaustive list. These headings should suit your skills and experience, as well as the needs of the school that your experiences and interests may address)

2. Bullets

Action-oriented and detailed bullets are an absolute key. Adding more detail will create interest in your reader and give him/her a better picture of what you have done. Compare the following examples:

- Instructed students in Grade 9 and 11 Mathematics
- Designed and taught grades 9 and 11 Mathematics classes, incorporating a variety of group-based learning strategies
- Evaluated and assessed student performance
- Assessed students’ learning by using various tools, such as questions/discussions, a variety of assignments, homework, rubrics, quizzes, and tests

In each case, the second bullet provides a richer description of what you have done and will create more interest in the reader.

Check that every bullet in your resume begins with an action verb and that it contains at least some detailed information about your job activities. Gear these details towards what you know are expected teaching skills, such as assessment, classroom management, supporting diverse learners. This requires creativity, and lots of time and effort. Please see chart on following page for a list of action words to use in your resume.

3. Format

Don’t underestimate the importance of having a resume that is well-formatted with a good sized font (i.e., 12 pt). Don’t crowd your margins to add more information. Leave a one inch margin around the edge. Hold your resume out at arm’s length or post it on the wall to look at it. It should appear well-organized and spacious enough to be easily read. More is not necessarily better!

4. Avoid errors

Even a single typo can mean your resume ends up in the wrong pile. Proofread your work many times, but also enlist the help of others. If at all possible, have someone in the educational field proofread it for you, as well.
Advice from a Principal

Organize the experiences under the traditional headings found on resumes: Under Educational Experience, list accomplishments wherever they occurred. Also include facility with both official languages and other languages spoken/written. Be sure you have your references ready, both within Canada and from your home country with correct numbers and times individuals can be reached. Once you have put all this information into an accepted format, have someone from the field of education proofread it for you.

Michael De Angelis, Secondary School Principal seconded to OISE/UT
## List of Action Words to Use in Your Resume

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Able</th>
<th>Disseminated</th>
<th>Increased</th>
<th>Ordered</th>
<th>Revised</th>
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*From Employment Handbook For Teachers, Student Services OISE/UT*
Sample Resume

Babak Ahmadi
237 Tiffany Crescent
Mississauga, Ontario L5K 2L0
905-358-7654
e-mail: b.ahmadi@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2001-2002 Bachelor of Education, Intermediate/Senior – Science
Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University

1996-2000 Bachelor of Science, Shahed University
Teheran, Iran
Specialist: Biology

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

2003 July Special Education Part 1, OISE/UT

2004 July Special Education Part 2, OISE/UT

TEACHING AND RELATED EXPERIENCE

2005-2007 CLASSROOM AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER
Montcrest School, Toronto, Ontario
• Designed and delivered special education programming to learning-challenged, gifted and behavioural students in grades 4 through 8
• Designed and delivered curricula for core subjects in grade 7 using differentiated instruction and small group guided instruction
• Evaluated and assessed student achievement using a variety of assessment tools

2002-2005 VOLUNTEER, Robert M. Fisk Senior Public School, Mississauga Ontario
• Assisted teacher with grade 7 students with special needs
• Assisted teacher with preparation of visual aids and symbols for use with students with autism
• Assisted with arts and crafts activities
CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Prepared Junior Choir for Spring Concert
- Prepared Intermediate Choir for Spring Concert as well as District and Provincial competitions

2004-2005  **ARABIC LANGUAGE CLUB**, Mississauga, Ontario
- Volunteer instructor for adults learning Arabic

SPECIAL SKILLS

**Languages:**  Fluent in written and oral in English, French and Arabic

**Music:**  Skilled vocalist and pianist

INTERESTS  Travel, music, tennis, canoeing, reading

REFERENCES

Mr. Paul Metcalfe  Ms Eva Childers  Mrs. Ruth Black
Principal  Vice-Principal  Director Arabic Club
Montcrest School  Robert M. Fisk Senior P.S.  Mississauga, Ontario
254 Avalon Street  84 Forrest Heights Rd.  917 Greenrow Avenue
Mississauga, Ontario  Mississauga, Ontario  Mississauga, Ontario
L5K 2P1  L5K 2P1  L5K 2L0
905-358-2234  905-321-9876  905-358-0987
The Cover Letter

A cover letter is the letter that accompanies your resume and introduces you to the employer. A good cover letter demonstrates your interest in the position and motivates the reader to look at your resume. You want your cover letter to create enough interest that you will be called for an interview. While your resume gives detailed information about your accomplishments in different positions, your credentials and other key skills, it doesn’t have as much power to highlight your strengths, communicate your good fit for a particular position, or convey your passion for teaching. Your cover letter must do that.

The components of a cover letter

The heading
- Put your name, address and telephone number at the top of the page
- Below your personal information, put the date
- Below the date, put the contact name, position title, name of the organization and the mailing address
- Salutation – Dear Ms or Mr. followed by the contact name

First paragraph
- State which position you are applying for
- State how you found out about the position
- Indicate that you have researched the board and/or school and explain your reasons for wanting to work there
- Be sure to outline your interest in the position and the board and/or school

Body of letter – 1 or 2 paragraphs
- Explain why you would be the perfect candidate for the position
- Explain the particular benefits that you will bring to the position
- Refer to your transferable skills
- Focus on quality(s) that you feel will distinguish you above the crowd
- Use examples, rather than simply writing a list of qualities
- Any particular expertise sound be highlighted here

Closing paragraph
- Express your desire to meet for an interview
- Thank the contact

Common problems with cover letters

1. Spelling and grammar
   Employers often receive many applications for each position which leaves very little time for thorough examination of each package. If your letter is poorly written, with spelling and grammar errors, the employer may not even look at your resume. Always proofread your letter a number of times and have someone else read it before submitting it to the posting.

2. Formatting
   Don’t overdo the length. If you overfill the page, it will be overwhelming and your good points are less likely to stand out. Writing this kind of letter in such as short space does require lots of practice and looking at many examples to get a sense of the
expectations. Once again, having someone from the educational field proofread this for you is invaluable.

3. **Use the active voice**

Using an active verb tense (often referred to as active voice) makes a strong statement in your cover letter. Consider these two statements:

**Passive voice**

In my position at Calgary College, a training manual on “Behavioural Management for Teachers” was developed and written.

**Active voice**

I developed and wrote a training manual on “Behavioural Management for Teachers” at Calgary College.

The active voice sends a stronger message about your role in the development of the manual, and will be taken very seriously.

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From *Employment Handbook For Teachers* Student Services OISE/UT
Sample Cover Letter

233 Hopeful Lane
Appleby, Ontario S1K 6M7
716-123-4567

May 10, 2008

Ms Irene Leader
Principal
Abercrombie Secondary School
123 Ablestaff Road
Petermore, Ontario B4R 9N3

Dear Ms Leader:

Please accept this application package for the Chemistry teaching position currently available at Abercrombie Secondary School. I am impressed with the direction that your Science department is pursuing and am excited about the possibility of joining your team in this endeavour.

In my previous position as a Chemistry teacher in Ontario, California, I led a writing team in the development of a Chemistry curriculum incorporating differentiated instruction. This was a valuable leadership opportunity, but more importantly, it provided me with an opportunity to test my theories about creative instructional strategies in science labs. The resulting publication was very well received and has been immensely successful in our school district. I am intrigued by the possibility that I can contribute my experience to the new direction that your science department is developing.

I am confident that my experience and enthusiasm, together with my creative approach to teaching Chemistry will compliment your efforts to create a program that will engage students and improve achievement. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this possibility with you at your convenience. Please feel free to contact me at 716-123-4567.

Sincerely,

Brian McAfee
Common pitfalls when writing cover letters

1. **Trying to put “too much” in**

   Many applicants tend to write their cover letters in the form of a list of characteristics. For example: “I am efficient, work well on a team, am organized, a good communicator (both verbal and written), create engaging lessons for my students, believe in diversity, utilize differentiated instruction effectively, and plan a good balance of formative and summative assessment, and have always participated in co-curricular activities.”

   Solution: Aim for a balance in which you draw on examples from your previous experience, such as practicum experience, or previous teaching experience abroad. Aim to show the reader the ways in which you have demonstrated these key qualities in the past and how that makes you a perfect fit for the organization.

   For example (rewriting above example): “While teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students in the XYZ International Academy, I was able to use differentiated instruction and unit plans that incorporated multi-media to successfully engage students who had previously not enjoyed science.”

2. **Voice of letter lacking in confidence**

   For Example: “Using my knowledge of science, I think I would be able to create an effective program to reach students at risk.” Or “I hope to have the opportunity to convince you of my worthiness in a future interview.”

   Solution: Principals want to hire someone who is ready to walk through the doors and teach. You need to project this kind of confidence and use linguistic structures that convey it. As Wally Moffat recommends, “Do NOT use I think, I might, maybe”. Instead, “Make positive statements with action verbs.”

   For Example (rewriting two above statements): “Given my proven track record working with English language learners and students struggling in science, I am eager to join your team of teachers working on a program for at risk students.”
   Or “I welcome the opportunity to speak further with you about my possible contributions to your students and school community.”

   It is important to recognize that the culture of job application procedures and interviews varies from culture to culture. What is expected here in terms of how to present yourself may feel uncomfortably like “bragging” or seem quite inappropriate in the context of your own culture. Trying to become as aware as possible of what the contrasts in expectations are between your country of origin and Canadian culture can help you, but that is only the first step. Speaking to other teachers facing the same challenges is invaluable, both those from your own community and others. Who do you know here in Canada or the States from your own background who has faced these same challenges some time ago? Their advice and feedback can also support you.
Resources to help with writing your cover letter

There are a number of resources available to help you.

*Getting the Job you Want* by Wally Moffat, published in 2000 by the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), has the advantage of focusing on the education field, so it is a very useful resource to those applying to positions in education. Wally Moffat was a board superintendent in charge of hiring, as well as a principal, and took part in an estimated 1,000 interviews over the course of his career. His book is available for $14 online through the link below to the Books Section under Publications of Shop EFTO.

To find this publication, go to; http://shopetfo.etfo.ca/index.aspx?IndexGroupID=9

Career Bookmarks is a section of the website of the Toronto Public Library that provides numerous links to job search and employment-related resources. Go to http://careerbookmarks.torontopubliclibrary.ca/index.html and click on the “Market Yourself” section. Here you will see a link titled ‘Cover Letter’. Click on this link for available resources. There are a number of websites listed in the Cover Letter section, with those of Canadian origin having a flag beside them. Pay special attention to the list at the bottom of available library resources, which include a list of eight related books, including their own annotation to help you decide which is best for you.

Here’s just one example:


This popular author gives lots of hints and samples for creating cover letters. This practical how-to-manual shows you step by step how to create highly effective letters designed to get the interview you want.
Interview Preparation

Once you have been invited for an interview, you will need to focus on preparation for the interview. Use your self-inventory and your research about the organization to write out and think about how you are a perfect fit, whether it is a board level interview to get on the eligible to hire list, or if it is an interview for a specific position. Identify common interview questions and practice them.

You want to be confident and calm in the interview as you give your answers, so Practice, Practice, Practice! Creative ways to practice and get feedback include using the mirror, self-recording (whether audio taping or even using a small digital camera). Can a friend, family member, or colleague/mentor give you a mock interview and some feedback? You could also record the mock interview and evaluate how you feel you did.

It is important that you arrive for your interview appropriately dressed, well-groomed and on time. You may be interviewed by a school team consisting of the principal, vice-principal and one or two staff members, or you may be interviewed at the board level by a panel of interviewers. In both cases, questions may be asked by one or more persons. It is important to make eye contact with each member of the interview team as you answer questions. The interviewers may take notes during the interview. Don’t let this alarm you. Interviewers may be interviewing a number of candidates and need the notes to refer to when decisions are being made.

One key to a successful interview is a positive outlook. Many of the questions may ask you to describe ways in which you managed difficult situations. In your response to these questions, maintain a positive focus on what you did to contribute to a positive outcome.

Throughout the interview, you should aim to convey poise, professionalism and inquisitiveness. It is very important that your answers reflect your interest in students and their needs and that you hold yourself responsible to provide opportunities designed to improve their social and academic achievement. The interviewer will be listening for the consistency between what you are saying and what you submitted in your cover letter and résumé.

List of common interview questions

Personal/general questions
  • Why did you decide to become a teacher?
  • What qualities do you have that an excellent teacher needs?
  • Who are two or three people that you greatly admire, and how did they impact on your decision to become a teacher?
  • What are your strengths?
  • What are your weaknesses? (*Use this question to turn a negative into a positive) (from Wally Moffat, Getting the Job you Want!)

Board level questions
  • Describe a balanced literacy program in your classroom.
  • What makes for an excellent mathematics program?
  • How do you accommodate diversity in your program?
  • What do you do with a student who constantly misbehaves?
• Why have you applied for a teaching position with this board?
• What makes an outstanding teacher?

School/position level questions
• Tell me about a lesson which went well and why it went well.
• If I were to walk into your classroom, how would I know that you valued equity?
• Describe your most challenging discipline problem and how you handled it.
• How do you motivate students to become active learners in your classroom?
• In your classroom, how do you develop responsible citizens?
• Tell me about an experience in or out of the classroom which has prepared you for teaching?
• In your unit planning, describe your unit assessment and evaluation strategies?
• What do you see your role is as a staff member?
• How do you support ESL students?
• What do you do with reluctant readers, particularly boys?
• How do you plan for the first day of school?
• What advice would you give to a new teacher about classroom management?
• Could you describe some of your experiences when collaborating with other staff members? How have you demonstrated collaboration?
• What can you do to prevent misbehaviour or students who are unengaged in learning?
• What would make you a valuable asset to this school?
• How do you go about planning a unit?
• It is the first day of school, and a paper wad hits you in the back. How would you handle this?
• Under what circumstances would you refer a student to the office?
• How would you deal with parents who are accusing you of picking on their child?
• If a large percentage of your students failed a test or assignment, how would you respond?
• How do you prepare report cards?
• In your classroom, how do you help students who are struggling to achieve?
• If you are called as an occasional teacher and find that there is no lesson plan for you to follow, what would you do?

(some of these questions offered by D’Arcy Magee, former Principal)

Sample interview questions with suggestions for the answers

You will want to have a format for answering interview questions. An example of a successful format contains:
• An opening statement introducing your beliefs about the subject of the question
• Supporting statements providing strategies that support your opening statement
• A closing statement summarizing your points and referring to your beliefs in the opening statement.
Sample #1

What are the components of a balanced literacy program?

An example of an opening statement could be, 'Strong literacy skills are the foundation for educational achievement. It is very important that I provide a variety of literacy experiences in the classroom. A balanced literacy program provides variety and supports strong literacy skills.

Supporting statements should address:

1. The components of a balanced literacy program
   - Teacher reading – models appropriate fluency and reading strategies
   - Teacher writing – demonstrates writing strategies used by good writers
   - Shared reading – provides oral reading opportunities without fear of failure
   - Shared writing – models writing strategies and involves students in creative exercise with effective teacher guidance
   - Independent reading – allows students to read text of their choice for pleasure
   - Independent writing – allows practice of writing skills learned
   - Guided reading and writing – allows teacher to work with groups of students with similar needs as determined by assessment

2. Assessment and evaluation strategies used to determine needs of students and improved achievement – be prepared to discuss diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to determine needs and learning achieved, particularly for guided reading and writing groups

3. Classroom Management – be prepared to discuss strategies for ensuring that small groups are able to work independently while you work with one small group of students

The closing statement should summarize the importance of understanding how to effectively create a balanced literacy program and should relate to the opening statement.

Sample #2

Why have you applied for a teaching position with this board?

Begin with an opening statement about the mission statements and programming available in the board, and how they mirror your beliefs about what is important for student achievement. This indicates that you have researched the board, are familiar with board priorities and know how you can fit into this vision.

Supporting statements should address:

- Your philosophy of education (especially how your philosophy corresponds with the mission of the board)
- Give examples of efforts you have made in your work experience that reflect the priorities of the board
- Your personal experience with the board through volunteer work, employment as a lunch monitor, parent of a child who attends school in this board etc.
- Refer to your lifestyle interests (e.g. I want to live in a diverse urban neighbourhood)
End with a closing statement which references your opening statement and sums up how well you fit with the vision of the board.

Aim to convey poise, professionalism, interest in young people, inquisitiveness, your educational philosophy. The interviewer will be listening for the consistency between what you are saying and what you submitted in your cover letter and resume.

*Michael De Angelis, Secondary School Principal seconded to OISE/UT*

**Sample #3**

If I were to walk into your class, what would I see happening? What would you be doing and what would students be doing?

Your opening statement should reflect your knowledge of student-centred learning, engaging students in active learning and the value of critical thinking and student inquiry.

Supporting statements should reinforce the opening statement and provide examples. Points to consider in this answer:

- Student engagement through use of a variety of instructional strategies and opportunities for all learners to be engaged demonstrating your knowledge of learning styles and the need for inclusivity
- Variety of resources chosen to support learning
- Opportunities for students to practice the skills taught or demonstrate the knowledge they have gained by the utilization of formative and summative assessments/evaluations
- Interaction between you and the students which facilitates student inquiry
- Enthusiasm of students as they pursue knowledge would be evident
- Evidence of learning visible through discussion and student work displayed in classroom

Closing statement summarizes and refers to opening statement.

Adapted from statements of *Michael De Angelis, Secondary School Principal seconded to OISE/UT*

**Resources that may be used when preparing for interview**

1. Wally Moffat’s book (mentioned in the Cover Letter section) has some very helpful hints for interviews that are specifically directed towards teachers. There are, however, lots of general resources that could help you become familiar with the expectations for interviews in Canada/North American more generally.

2. The Toronto Public Library’s Career Bookmarks has a “Market Yourself” section: Click on Interview Techniques to find lots of online resources, as well as some helpful books listed at the bottom of the page. Looking at examples of answers to tough questions, for example, can help you better understand the culture of Canadian job interviews. Here are two of the many books, including their annotations.

http://careerbookmarks.torontopubliclibrary.ca/secondary_pages/market_yourself_frame.html

33

This book provides tips that apply to all interview questions, giving answers that ring true, answers that are direct, and answers that don’t wander, but speak precisely to the questions the interviewer asks.


This 70 minute video is useful for both beginning and experienced job searchers.
Helpful Resources

The links and resources below provide a wealth of information about the Ontario Curriculum, useful resource documents, and some supports for occasional teachers. Keep exploring the pages listed below, and you’re sure to find even more!

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education website provides a wealth of helpful information. Go to http://www.edu.gov.on.ca, and choose the publications link on the right side of the screen. Choose the link for teachers to go to publications that support Ontario teachers. From this site, you can access curriculum documents, exemplars for assessment, literacy and numeracy documents providing strategies and policy, code of conduct information, information about the provincial report card, special education procedure and many more helpful documents.

Ontario College of Teachers

With the increasing trend of underemployment of English language teachers in Ontario not likely to improve in the near future, the new reality for teachers starting out is a number of years of occasional teaching before landing a permanent contract. The most current information about this trend can be found on the College website at www.oct.ca in a report entitled Transition to Teaching 2007. Although this report can be an upsetting read, it is important to be aware of the realities of the job market. The section from pages 30-39 focuses particularly on outcomes for internationally educated teachers and the challenges they face.

Curriculum Services Canada

This website offers many resources for classroom teachers. Go to http://curriculum.org/ and click on classroom resources on the left side of the page. On the left side of the page, under classroom resources, you can access free teacher-developed resources. These include assessment tools, literacy support documents and lesson plans for all grades and all subjects. There is also a link to secondary school course profiles that includes unit and lesson plans, as well as assessment strategies. These resources will give you a better sense of curriculum and planning that is being used in Ontario classrooms.

Teacher federation websites

These sites offer many publications of interest to those who are entering the profession as an occasional teacher. Don't limit yourself to one website to support your search for a job as an occasional teacher. There are many relevant resources available on other sites. Here is just a sampling:

- Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

  The ETFO site can be accessed by going to http://www.etfo.ca/Pages/default.aspx. On the left side of the page, there is a link to resources. When you click on this link, you have the option of clicking on resources for occasional teachers. A publication of interest to those beginning as occasional teachers is entitled The Occasion to Lead: A Resource Guide for Occasional Teachers. This publication has a bit of everything: an introduction to the teachers’ federations and important workplace issues, professional resources, and
lots of practical tips for occasional teachers about classroom management, discipline and emergency lesson plans.

For those wanting to gain insight into school workplace culture, the subject index at http://www.etfo.ca/SubjectIndex/Pages/default.aspx#G provides countless brief articles, such as “Advice for Members – Workplace Relations” or “Dealing with Conflict” or “Staff-Principal Relations.”

**Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA)**

Located at [www.oecta.on.ca](http://www.oecta.on.ca/index.htm), the OECTA website contains a publication entitled *Essential Information for Occasional Teachers: Practical Advice and Support to Occasional Teachers and the Teachers They are Replacing*. This document can be accessed by clicking on the bar entitled For Teachers located at the top of the page.

This helpful handbook has a section on Professional Boundaries that covers relations with students, parents, and your colleagues. Other helpful sections include a Daily To Do list for the Occasional Teacher, and an information form that can facilitate communication between an occasional teacher and the regular classroom teacher.

This site also contains a publication entitled *How to Build Your Teaching Portfolio* that can be found in the list on the right side of the page. Although many employers prefer that candidates not bring portfolios to interviews, you never know when you will encounter one who would like to see some of your work. This page has a number of separate documents that you can download, such as “Creating your Teaching Portfolio” which provides some concrete suggestions on what to include in your teacher portfolio.

**Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF)**


This document provides some very practical advice and is a resource on many topics. ‘Getting Hired’ provides particularly helpful tips on where to locate the information that you need to help with your job search. The section entitled, ‘How Students View Occasional Teachers’ provides insight into the school culture here and the challenges faced by occasional teachers. ‘Establishing Rapport with the Students’ provides concrete and detailed advice on classroom management and appropriate discipline. Finally, ‘You and the Law’ provides an effective overview of many legal issues particularly relevant to occasional teachers in Ontario.

**Other Resources**

New Canadian Teachers and Non-Native Speaking Teacher’s Resource Site at [http://newcanadianteachers.oise.utoronto.ca/](http://newcanadianteachers.oise.utoronto.ca/)

[www.lessonplanspage.com](http://www.lessonplanspage.com)

[www.ctf-fce.ca](http://www.ctf-fce.ca)

[www.sitesforteachers.com](http://www.sitesforteachers.com)

[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca)

[www.thecanadianteacher.com](http://www.thecanadianteacher.com)
After the Successful Interview

Forms required

Each Ontario school board may require different forms when offering employment. These are some of the general ones expected:

- Criminal background check, including Vulnerable Sector background check
- TB Test
- WHMIS – Training for Hazardous Material
- Certificate of Good Health
- Certificate of standing (Letter of Permission, Certificate of Qualification from the Ontario College of Teachers etc.)
- Social Insurance Number (S.I.N.)
- Cheque marked VOID from your chequing account (if the board pays electronically)

Your first assignments

After being hired by a school board, you will most likely be placed on the occasional teachers’ list. Your first assignments will likely be short term, but you may be able to apply for a long term assignment when the opportunity presents itself. Keep in mind that each board has a procedure for long term assignment postings, so be sure to examine your board’s procedure in this matter.

‘Short term’ refers to any number of days of occasional teaching that is less than the board definition of a long term assignment. Often these short term occasional positions are a day or less in length. You will most likely be ‘called’ by some type of call-out (automated) system for short term work.

Call out procedures: How will I be notified of an assignment?

Most district school boards in Ontario have an automated telephone call out system. The board may provide a manual for their call out system.

An unfilled job will be posted in the system. The system will call out for an occasional teacher to fill the position. The system will describe the position including, date, school, grade, teacher, subject and any special instructions. It will give you a chance to listen to the job then ask you to accept or decline the job.

Each system operates in a different manner. The system may ask you why you are declining the job. It may also allow you to forward your calls temporarily to another number for convenience. Many other factors and variables are designed into each system such as internet acceptance of jobs, special requesting, number of days posted, ability to keep track of completed assignment.

The definition of a long-term occasional position (LTO) and the method of filling the position may vary in each district school board. LTOs may be posted on line or on staff room bulletin boards. Check with your employer to determine the procedure used for filling occasional positions and posting LTO positions.
Duties of short term occasional teachers

• Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the assignment time and report to the office to receive instructions. Responsibilities will include teaching and supervision.

• Follow the regular teacher’s timetable, using the daybook and/or the timetable as guides to maintain established routines to the best of your ability.

• Be prepared to provide meaningful learning experiences.

• In elementary schools, remain until the children are dismissed and have safely left the school, with the full understanding that the class must remain until the end of the school day.

• Mark such objective work as would normally be evaluated during a regular school day.

• Leave a record of the work covered by the class(es). Indicate what the class completed and any areas of difficulty encountered by students.

• Report any accident or unusual occurrence to the Principal or designate (keep a diary for yourself). Report to the school office prior to leaving the school!

• If you are injured, be advised that an Accident Incident Form must be completed with 72 hours of the incident.

• If you are involved in a violent incident report it to the office. It may be necessary to fill out a violent incident report.

Long term assignments

The number of days constituting a long term assignment will vary according to the collective agreement with each board. You will also be required to sign a contract for your assignment. For salary purposes you must have your QECO rating in order to be classified on the pay grid.

Some additional responsibilities that may apply for long term teachers may include the following:

• Keeping a record book of student achievement;
• Writing report cards;
• Scheduling and completing parent/teacher interviews;
• Performing assessment and evaluation according to your board initiatives;
• Keeping OSR (Ontario Student Record) up to date;
• Attending staff meetings;
• Engaging in school wide activities;
• Providing collegial support;
• Establishing and maintaining long range plan; and
• Participating in NTIP (New Teacher Induction Program).

New Teacher Induction Program
The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) supports the growth and professional development of new teachers. It is the second step in a continuum of professional development for teachers to support effective teaching, learning, and assessment practices. It provides a full year of professional support so that new teachers can develop the requisite skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve success as experienced teachers in Ontario.

For the purposes of NTIP, new teachers are defined as all new teachers (including teachers trained out-of-province) certified by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) who have been hired into permanent positions, both full-time or part-time, by a school board, school authority or provincial school to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario on or after the start of the 2005-06 school year. Beginning in September 2007, LTOs also have access to NTIP at participating boards.

For more information on the NTIP program visit www.edu.gov.on.ca.

**Probationary and permanent hiring**

Check with your board as to how you may apply for probationary and permanent positions. They may be posted on a board website or they may be posted on the schools’ bulletin board. Additionally, candidates may be chosen from a priority list and offered the position.

**Annual Learning Plan**

Once you are hired on a contract, there is an appraisal program that you must follow. Every year, in consultation with the principal, all teachers, other than new teachers, are legally required to prepare an Annual Learning Plan (ALP). This ALP must include the teacher’s professional growth objectives, proposed action plan, and timelines for achieving those objectives. O.Reg. 97/07, s.1.

Both the principal and teacher must review and sign the ALP. Each retains a copy.

Each year after the first year, the teacher shall, in consultation with the appropriate principal:

- Review the teacher’s learning plan from the previous year, the teacher’s learning and growth over the previous year, and the summative report of the teacher’s most recent performance appraisal under Part X.2 of the Act; and
- Update the teacher’s learning plan for the purposes of the current year, if necessary, taking into account the results of the review under clause (a). O.Reg.97/07, s.1.

In an evaluation year for a teacher, the consultation required under subsection (2) must include a meeting between the teacher and the appropriate principal in the course of the teacher’s performance appraisal for the year under Part X.2 of the Act. O.Reg. 97/07, s.1. In a year that is not an evaluation year for a teacher, the teacher and the appropriate principal shall meet to discuss the learning plan for the year if either of them requests it. O.Reg. 97/07, s.1. The teacher and the appropriate principal shall each sign the teacher’s learning plan for the year and each of them shall retain a copy. O.Reg. 97/07, s.1

More details are also available in the Ministry’s resource document *Supporting Teaching Excellence: Teacher Performance Appraisal Manual*.

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**Payroll Information**

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OTPP (Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan)
Contributions & Funding
Teachers contribute a percentage of their salary to their future pension. Contributions are matched by the Ontario government and designated employers on behalf of all members.
Who contributes?
All eligible members are required to contribute to the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan. As soon as they start teaching, their employer will deduct pension contributions from their pay. Contributions are matched by the Ontario government on behalf of all members. Contributions are tax deductible and will be reflected on their T4 slips.
Who sets the contribution rate?
The Ontario Teachers’ Federation and the Ontario government, the plan’s co-sponsors, must ensure the plan has enough money to pay for all the benefits earned by plan members every year. They set the contribution rate and negotiate benefit levels.
Income Tax
Federal tax rates for 2007 are:
15.5% on the first $37,178 of taxable income
+ 22% on the next $37,179 of taxable income (on the portion of taxable income between $37,178 and $74,357)
+ 26% on the next $46,530 of taxable income (on the portion of taxable income between $74,357 and $120,887)
+ 29% of taxable income over $120,887.

Canada Pension Plan contribution rates
How much is paid into the Canada Pension Plan?
The amount teachers pay is based on their salary. If, during a year, a teacher contributed too much or earned less than a set minimum amount, the teacher would receive a refund of contributions when an income tax return had been filed.
Teachers only pay contributions on their annual earnings between the minimum and a set maximum level (these are called "pensionable" earnings).
The minimum level is frozen at $3,500. The maximum level is adjusted each January, based on increases in the average wage.
What benefits does the Canada Pension Plan provide?
The Canada Pension Plan is a contributory, earnings-related social insurance program. It ensures a measure of protection to a contributor and his or her family against the loss of income due to retirement, disability and death.
There are three kinds of Canada Pension Plan benefits:

- Disability benefits (which include benefits for disabled contributors and benefits for their dependent children);
- Retirement pension; and
- Survivor benefits (which include the death benefit, the survivor’s pension and the children's benefit).

The Canada Pension Plan operates throughout Canada, although the province of Quebec has its own similar program, the Quebec Pension Plan. The Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan work together to ensure that all contributors are protected.
Who pays into the Canada Pension Plan?
With very few exceptions, every person in Canada over the age of 18 who earns a salary must pay into the Canada Pension Plan. The individual and the employer each pay half of the contributions. If self-employed, the individual pays both portions.

Electronic payroll

Ask the employer what payment method is currently in place (electronic or manual). Usually it is an electronic system that deposits pay directly into the teachers’ bank accounts. This requires that teachers have chequing accounts for which they can provide a void cheque, so the employer can deposit the money directly into their accounts. It is also beneficial to ask for a pay schedule as it will vary from board to board.

Payroll deductions

The following will be deducted from a teacher’s salary:
• Union Dues;
• Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan contribution;
• Income Tax; and
• Canada Pension Plan contribution;

Union dues

Under the Education Act, a teacher who works in the public education system is represented by a union. Based on this statutory representation, the representing union collects dues to support union activities.
Union dues are deducted directly from members’ pay cheques by school boards and submitted to the appropriate union.

How are your dues spent?

Dues are used to provide funds to operate union locals, and to provide programs and support to the members through the provincial offices.
An Overview of the Federations

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL
Approximately 29 million members
348 teacher organizations in 166 countries

CANADIAN TEACHERS’ FEDERATION
Representing over 215,000 members

ONTARIO TEACHERS’ FEDERATION
Approximately 144,000 members in 4 affiliated bodies

Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens
Approximately 7,500 members

Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario
Approximately 70,000 members

Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association
Approximately 36,000 members

Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation
Approximately 36,000 members
Collective Bargaining

A collective agreement is a written contract of employment covering a group of employees who are represented by a trade union. This agreement contains provisions governing the terms and conditions of employment. It also contains the rights, privileges and duties of the employer, the trade union and the employees.

What is collective bargaining?

Collective bargaining is a process in which a trade union and an employer negotiate a new collective agreement or the renewal of a previous collective agreement. In this process, the parties usually focus on such issues as wages, working conditions, grievance procedures and fringe benefits.

What happens if, during negotiations, the employer and the union cannot agree on the terms of a collective agreement?

Either the employer or the union may ask the Minister of Labour to appoint a conciliation officer. This officer will then try to help them reach an agreement (See Section 18 of the Labour Relations Act, 1995).

The following are some of the job-related items that are negotiated through collective bargaining:

Your salary

It is not set by law. In fact, teachers are exempt from the law which provides minimum wage protection to most other workers in this province. The fact that a teacher’s salary often rises each year, and that there is an experience grid which causes it to rise even further in your first ten or so years of teaching, is due to collective bargaining.

The coverage received for prescription glasses, prescription drugs, dental services, hearing aids, and semi-private hospital room care is negotiated at the bargaining table. So, too, is the life insurance policy and long-term disability coverage.

Your sick leave entitlement

The employer is not obligated to provide paid time off when the employee is sick, unless the collective agreement stipulates otherwise. By the same token, any retirement gratuity that may be received as a result of banked sick leave is a result of the collective agreement.

The way you spend your work day

The general framework in the Education Act with respect to school day and student instructional time leaves some room for collective bargaining. Therefore, your collective agreement can cover the instructional day, preparation time, supervision time, and an overall limit to the working day.
The way jobs are allocated

For teachers, transfer, seniority, and lay-off provisions are all subject to collective bargaining. So, too, are the rights of part-time teachers. For occasional teachers, the size of the call-out list, the right to remain on the list, the system of call-out, and the posting and allocation of long-term positions are all bargainable items.

Protection from arbitrary discipline

One of the most important parts of the collective agreement is the “just cause” clause. This clause ensures secure job tenure. In order to discharge or discipline a teacher, the employer must be prepared to demonstrate just cause for this action.

An evolving process

Collective bargaining is an ongoing process which continually evolves, gaining more protections and better working conditions for education workers over time.

Collective bargaining fills in gaps in existing laws and responds to changing realities. In addition to covering specific areas where teachers are not protected by law (such as minimum wage and maximum hours of work), the collective agreement can provide additional protection beyond the basics already provided by human rights law and occupational health and safety legislation. For example, some bargainers have begun to incorporate provisions to help protect teachers from communicable diseases in the workplace (such as Fifth Disease).

Rights and responsibilities

Statutory provisions

1. Every teacher is entitled to a forty (40) minute uninterrupted lunch period.

2. In Ontario, the Employment Standards Act defines the leave period as 17 weeks for pregnancy leave and 35 weeks for parental leave. Teachers are required to provide a minimum of two weeks written notice of the date the pregnancy leave will begin. The written notification must include a certificate from a legally qualified medical practitioner stating the expected date of birth. This minimum notice does not apply if the birth occurs earlier than the expected date of birth.

   In the case of a parental leave, teachers must provide at least two weeks written notice of the date the leave is to begin. This does not apply if the child comes into custody, care, and control for the first time sooner than expected.

   To qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, the Employment Insurance Act requires at least 600 hours of insurable employment in the 52-week period preceding the claim.

   For information about EI benefits or to apply on-line, visit the HRSDC website at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca.
Contacting Your Federation

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

ETFO is the professional and protective organization for elementary teachers. In total, ETFO represents over 70,000 teachers, occasional teachers, and education workers employed in the public elementary schools of Ontario.

ETFO can be contacted at:

400 University Avenue,
Suite 1000
Toronto, ON
M5G 1V2

Phone: 416-962-3836
Toll free: 1-888-838-3836
Fax: 416-642-2424
www.etfo.ca

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO)

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is a trade union representing almost 60,000 members.

The union works to protect its diverse membership which is represented in 140 bargaining units across the province.

OSSTF/FEESO bargaining units represent both English and French members in elementary and secondary school workplaces, private schools, consortia offering support services to school boards and universities.

OSSTF/FEESO can be contacted at:

60 Mobile Drive
Toronto, ON
M4A 2P3

Phone: 416-751-8300
Toll Free: 1-800-267-7867
Fax: 416-751-3394
www.osstf.ca
Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA)

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA) represents 36,000 men and women who teach in all grades in the publicly funded English Roman Catholic schools in Ontario. OECTA is affiliated with the Ontario Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation and Education International.

OECTA can be contacted at:

65 St. Clair Avenue East,  
Suite 400  
Toronto, ON  
M4T 2Y8

Phone: 416-925-2493  
Toll Free: 1-800-268-7230  
Fax: 416-925-7764  
www.oecta.on.ca

Ontario Teachers’ Federation

The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the official liaison between the teachers of the province and the Minister of Education. Representatives of OTF meet with officials of the Ministry of Education on a regular basis to discuss matters of an educational or professional nature. OTF is a member of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and sends representatives to national, international and provincial educational conferences.

OTF/FEO can be contacted at:

1300 Yonge Street,  
Suite 200  
Toronto, ON  
M4T 1X3

Phone: 416-966-3424  
Toll Free: 1-800-268-7061  
Fax: 416-966-5450  
www.otffeo.on.ca
Canadian Teachers’ Federation

As the national bilingual umbrella organization for teachers in this country, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) has 16 provincial and territorial Member organizations and one Affiliate Member representing over 215,000 teachers across Canada. CTF’s major areas of concern include: defending public education; promoting the teaching profession; providing support to Member organizations and teachers across Canada; addressing societal issues that affect the health and well-being of children and youth in Canada and abroad; and providing assistance and support to teacher colleagues in developing countries.

CTF can be contacted at:

2490 Don Reid Drive
Ottawa, ON
K1H 1E1

Telephone: 613-232-1505
Toll Free Line: 1-866-283-1505
Fax: 613-232-1886
www.ctf-fce.ca

Association des enseignantes et des enseignantes franco-ontariens (AEFO)

AEFO is a French-language labour organization whose members work in Ontario's French-language, Catholic and public, elementary and secondary schools and in other French-language establishments in Ontario. AEFO has some 8,000 members who work in about 450 schools and other workplaces.

AEFO can be contacted at:

681, chemin Belfast
Ottawa, ON
K1G 0Z4

Tél. : 613-244-2336,
Sans frais : 1-800-267-4217
Téléc. : 613- 563-7718, 1-888-609-7718
www.aefo.on.ca
Professional Boundaries

With students

Your students deserve to be treated with respect and care. The relationship between teacher and student is one that is:

- Friendly, but professional
- Frank, but considerate
- Helpful, but non-invasive

Regardless of the age of the student, teachers are in a position of trust and should take great care to avoid relationships with students that cross professional boundaries.

Unacceptable behaviour

In general, activities that take a teacher beyond the expectations of the employer could easily qualify as boundary violations. These include:

- Becoming too personally involved with students – for example, taking on the role of friend, confidante, surrogate parent.
- Seeing or meeting students in private or non-school settings.
- Writing or exchanging notes, letters or emails.
- Serving as a confidante with regard to a student’s decision about his/her personal issues.
- Giving gifts or money to students.
- Inviting students to one’s home or cottage.
- Having students stay overnight in one’s home or cottage.
- Driving individual students to or from school.
- Giving one student undue attention.
- Being alone with a student in any situation other than an emergency situation.
- Sharing your personal problems with students.
- Sharing personal information about a student with a third party.
- Being alone with a student.

Always

- Speak calmly
- Use positive phrases
- Remain professional
- Be non-judgmental
- Be non-racial
- Be reflective
- Re-state and re-phrase for understanding
- Be polite and respectful
- Be receptive
- Be open, honest, fair
- Think before you speak; take a deep breath
- Empathize
Never

- Swear
- Threaten
- Intimidate
- Be sarcastic
- Use personal attack
- Dwell on past incidents
- Raise your voice
- Use slanderous language
- Demean
- Trivialize
- Say things you will later regret

Almost any teacher can fall victim to lack of understanding of professional boundaries. This can translate into serious mistakes – career threatening ones – in the management of teacher-student relationships.

What makes the issue of professional boundaries an important and dangerous one for teachers is the fact that teachers are responsible for recognizing in themselves whether they are ‘at risk’ of crossing boundaries and, if they are, subsequently addressing this issue.

Further, teachers have a responsibility to address this issue when they witness a colleague who may be crossing boundaries. Administrators and colleagues need to recognize danger signals in other teachers’ interactions and intervene. In serious situations, reporting suspicion of child abuse may be required.

Any act of professional misconduct can lead to disciplinary measures being taken by the Ontario College of Teachers. Even an unfounded allegation of professional misconduct could be permanently damaging to a teacher, his or her family and the profession.

With parents/guardians

Parents and guardians deserve respect as the primary caregivers of the children they entrust to our care. In reporting to parents either orally or in writing, be open and honest, informative, considerate and helpful.

In difficult situations with parents or guardians, do not tolerate abuse.

- Terminate the meeting politely but firmly.
- Offer to resume discussion when the parent or guardian is prepared to proceed in a calm, reasonable, non-abusive manner.

When socializing with parents or guardians, be aware of boundaries and professional standards.
Always

- Ensure your Principal sees notes sent to parents about the entire class and sensitive issues.
- Make factual comments rather than interpretations or hearsay.
- Write notes when you are calm rather than in the heat of the moment.
- Keep copies of all communications sent.
- Pay attention to grammar and spelling.

Never

- Write anything in haste that could be misinterpreted.
- Threaten, use negatives.
- Be tactless.
- Communicate in written form when a verbal discussion would suffice.

With colleagues

Your colleagues deserve the same respect as professionals that you do. At school, the relationship between colleagues is a professional one.

- Seek to resolve conflicts with colleagues personally, privately and directly before seeking third party assistance within the school or board.
- Every person has the right to a workplace free from all forms of harassment.
- If you feel the obligation to make an adverse report, provide your colleague with a written account.

References

Hamilton-Wentworth ETFO Occasional Teacher Local (2005); Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teacher General Information Guide.

OECTA Provincial Counseling and Member Services Department (2002); Relationships: Appropriate and Professional.
Professional boundaries - resources

The Federations provide numerous Professional Relation Service (PRS) Bulletins related to the workplace. The following PRSs have been created by ETFO and can be found under the section “Advice for Members” on the website.

- Professional Learning Communities
- EQAO testing
- Dealing With Conflict
- Workplace Harassment and Bullying
- Other Teaching Roles - Are You Protected
- New Teacher Induction Program
- Use of Member's Own Vehicle
- Teachers Acting in Advisory Roles
- Resolving Staff-Principal Concerns
- Workplace Accommodations
- Epipen Fact Sheet - Sabrina’s Law
- Tutoring and Conflict of Interest
- Pregnancy and Parental Leaves
- Notice of Resignation
- Electronic Communications
- Attitude – It’s Everything
- Working with Support Personnel
- Reporting Workplace Accidents
- Health and Safety - The 3Rs
- Making an Adverse Report on another Member
- Fifths Disease and You
- Employment Insurance Benefits
- Members as Witnesses in Court Proceedings
- Criminal Background Checks
- Money in Schools
- The Different Roles of Teachers
- Allegations of Sexual Misconduct
- The Student Protection Act
- The Special Education Teacher and Student Aggression
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- Teacher Performance Appraisal
- Professional Boundaries

What is an Occasional Teacher
Occasional teachers are those whose names are placed on the Board’s Occasional Teachers' List.

- The average student can expect to work with occasional teachers for a combined total of 7 to 10 instructional days in a school year.
- This means that in one large urban board in Ontario, employing approximately 2000 teachers, occasional teachers taught the equivalent work load of 100 full-time secondary teachers in one year.
- There is no single type. They reflect a wide range of experience and backgrounds.
- They include many young graduates of Faculties of Education, waiting for a full-time teaching position.
- At the other end of the spectrum are retired teachers who choose to stay in the classroom.
- There are also many experienced teachers who have chosen to leave full-time teaching positions but wish to remain within the educational system as occasional teachers. These are individuals who have made a commitment to this type of teaching.

The Advantages of Occasional Teaching
In spite of the well-known disadvantages of occasional teaching, there are many reasons why people choose this option.

- Occasional teaching can be very rewarding if you enjoy teenagers. Don't make a final decision until you've given yourself enough time to get to know the students.
- Occasional teaching is interesting and challenging work, and offers the chance to exercise knowledge and creativity.
- It's a good route for someone seeking a full-time position. It "opens the door", and lets administrators see what you can do.
- Occasional teaching provides the opportunity to experiment with different teaching strategies.
- Because of the flexible time schedule, occasional teaching is a good choice for someone with school-age children. Daily hours and holidays will be the same, and if there is sickness or a family emergency, the occasional teacher can choose not to work.
- The job is finished each day when school is over. With no preparation, more time is left for the occasional teacher's other interests. Obviously, this does not apply to occasional teachers on long-term assignments.
- Occasional teaching provides freedom rather than security. Being locked into a contract may prevent you from taking holidays with your spouse, for instance.
- The daily wage is higher than that of most other part-time work.

Here's how one occasional describes the profession:

"I love substituting. At first I was paranoid of kids with strange names and odd looks. I mean spiked hair and chains aren't a part of my usual social scene. But I came to realize that people are all the same, just dressed in different clothes. There still are the bubbly kids, the complainers, the joiners, the loners, the athletes, the musicians. In fact, now that I know I can handle them,

I think I enjoy the "characters" the most. I remember one student complete with black leather jacket, three day's stubble, heavy black boots, and several chains from ear to shoulder. He was late, he told me, because he was thrown from a moving car at lunch. He continued with outrageous stories about being evicted from several apartments, trying the Mensa exam, watching a stabbing, and cutting a "heavy metal" record. I have no idea how much of it was true, but he had a real sparkle in his eye, and was fun to have in class. Somehow these types challenge me to examine what is important in life, so I find meeting up with them rather refreshing.

I'm rarely bored. I usually have something interesting packed in my briefcase, and I know I can always get something new in the school library. And if I'm getting burnt out, I stay at home, or take the day to go shopping, or to an art gallery. It's nice to have the choice."
And I'm sure learning a lot. Last year I taught in fourteen different departments at four different schools. I learned a little about a lot of things I never would have explored on my own... about the effect of the Ice Age on North America, the business of rock music, a typical day in the life of a South East Asian family, and transportation of the future.

I even had a chance to brush up on my French again, and play the trumpet, which I haven't touched since high school. I feel like I'm the Trivial Pursuit Champion of the world. At this point I'm not looking for a full-time job. I really enjoy being an occasional teacher!"
Options for Occasional Teachers

If you are hoping to move into a full-time contract, it is important to remember that each teaching assignment is another opportunity to show a potential employer what you will bring to the school. It is in your best interest to demonstrate initiative, flexibility and enthusiasm at every opportunity.

Working as an Occasional Teacher allows for flexible working conditions. Here are some options to consider:

If you choose to teach one subject in one school:

• You'll be called occasionally.

If you choose to teach one subject in many schools:

• You'll be called a little more often.
• You'll see many different approaches to your subject area.
• You'll sort out which school you feel most comfortable in.

If you choose to teach many subjects in one school:

• You'll be called several times a week after you become established.
• You'll get to know the students as you teach them Geography one day, Math the next and so on.
• After a couple of weeks, there will be one student in each class whom you've met before. They'll spread the word about what you expect.
• This is a good option to consider if you want to feel you are part of a staff, or you are hoping for a full-time job.

If you choose to teach all subjects in many schools:

• This is a good option when you want to work as often as possible. It's a good way to decide which school interests you for a full-time position.
• You'll make many contacts with people to help you in your career.

The Call-Out System

The more you are available on a full-time basis, the better your chances of getting regular work. Whether you choose one school or many, your own subject area or many, it is best to be available as often as possible at first, both to build up your confidence, and to get established. Of course, if child-care presents a problem or you have another part-time job, you may have different priorities.

According to the latest OSSTF data:
• September is the lightest month for calls for Occasional Teachers.
• October-February indicate an increase in calls of about 58% over September.
• March through June indicate a 90% increase in calls over October through February and a 200% increase over September.

Waiting

Patience will be required while waiting for calls to work initially. Occasional teachers who are known in the board as competent and reliable will be called first. If you aren't getting work, call or go in person to let them know you are still interested.

The Call

You may get called in advance if there is a certain day when a large group of teachers will be taking in-service training. More likely, advance notice will mean the night before. But the majority of calls will come around seven in the morning.

Have a pad and pen ready so that you can sound alert even though you've just woken up. Try to sound enthusiastic even if it's not an exciting assignment - remember, they have to know how wonderful you are before you can start calling the shots.

Follow up

At the end of your first day, make a point of seeing your vice-principal or principal (or calling the dispatcher), to let them know you look forward to another day of work. (Remember the first day is the worst - and it's over now.) That way you are registering as a person, not just as a name on the Occasional Teachers’ List. If the reception seems positive, ask if there are any days in the near future when they already know they will need a substitute. Tell them you'll look forward to hearing from them. (It will get better.)

Long Term Assignments

Short-term/casual assignments are usually one day or two at the most, unless a teacher has a serious illness.

You have to be a known quantity before you will be seriously considered for long-term/extended assignments where you teach the same classes for many consecutive days. Depending on the collective agreement, long-term assignments are usually for a minimum of nine to twelve days. In most cases, the board is aware that the teacher will be absent and hires accordingly for a month, three months, a semester, or even a year. Then an interview procedure is established to fill that vacancy. Be sure to let school personnel know that you would be interested in long-term employment so that they keep you informed if vacancies occur. Also ask the school secretary where vacancies are posted in the school.

Even if you have a week's assignment, there will be preparation involved, but preparation time is compensated for in long-term assignments. At that point you move from a daily rate to the salary scale for regular classroom teachers. If you are considering this type of work at any time in the future, be sure to ask your previous employer for your Record of Teaching Experience, and present it to the Personnel Department. That way you can be paid
according to your years of experience. Check the collective agreement to see how long you need to teach to accumulate experience that will change your grid position.
Secondary School Occasional Teaching

Also known as *high school*, a secondary school usually offers classes from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Secondary schools are either semestered or non-semestered.

In a semestered school, the academic year is split into two halves. Each of these halves is referred to as a semester. In a semestered school, students usually study four courses from September to January (1st semester) and four courses from February to June (2nd semester). Report cards are given in the middle and at the end of each semester. Final exams are at the end of each semester.

In a non-semestered school, students study the same eight courses all year, from September to June. The year is divided into three terms. Report cards are given at the end of each term and final exams are held at the end of the year. Some schools also have exams at the end of each term.

Upon the successful completion of a course, students are awarded a credit. In order to graduate from secondary school, students must meet the criteria outlined by Ontario’s secondary school curriculum policy. This requires that students complete at least thirty credits of which 18 are deemed compulsory. Students are also required to pass a literacy assessment and participate in 40 hours of community work in order to gain a secondary school diploma.

The day-to-day operation of a secondary school differs significantly from that of an elementary school. The secondary school day is scheduled on a rotary basis, with students and teachers moving to different learning situations or classrooms throughout the day. Each student is given a personal timetable of classes at the beginning of the school year or semester. Secondary school days are divided into blocks of time called periods that may vary in length from school to school. A lunch break is scheduled in the middle of the day, and a short home room period occurs at some point during to take care of class business. Our students can provide us with some interesting (and very subjective, of course) insights into occasional teachers. Here are some impressions of occasional teachers gathered from a group of senior students.

**How students describe effective occasional teachers**

Senior students have offered ideas about what constitutes effective occasional teachers:

- Ones that actually teach
- Pretty quick upstairs
- Able to relate to age group they're teaching
- Confident, not suspicious of students’ motives
- Good knowledge of English
- Look presentable
- Sense of humour
- Not too nervous/uptight
- Don't try too hard to be one of the students
- Don't try too hard to maintain strict control
- Can laugh at themselves
- Know what they're talking about/know their subject
• Don't force ideas on students
• Aren't obnoxious and cynical
• Understand and have a genuine interest in teens
• Have control over class but don't have a forceful nature
• Can be humorous and serious
• Don't anticipate the worst
• Create a relaxed atmosphere
• Show enthusiasm and work with students
• No stupid jokes
• Don't have a forceful nature
• Aren't two-faced
• Not prejudiced
• Write their name on board
• Must not yell because it makes us rebel
• Must not patronize or be condescending
• Are prepared for class and follow instructions
• Are firm with everyone
• Not scared of class
• Don't use threats
• Look confident
• Pronounce last names properly
• Show respect for students/school regulations/rules
• Patient

If students were occasional teachers, the first thing they'd do...

• Crack a joke
• Introduce myself
• Be easy going
• Explain circumstances of my being there
• Be friendly - don't set a negative attitude
• Explain the plan for the day/period but no lectures
• Show up two minutes late - make class wait so they don't run away
• Talk about myself
• Be easygoing but firm
• Get everyone's attention
• Do something out of the ordinary (e.g. class participation)
• Sit back and study them (the class)
• Have a conversation with the class
• Show them who's the boss, in a respectful way
• Figure out who the troublemakers are
• Write my name in big letters on the board
• Lay down the law
• Make a good impression in the first five minutes or the rest of the class will be awful

Students hate it when occasional teachers...
• Say "I'll send you to the office"
• Talk to us when we're supposed to be working
• Ramble on about their past or their personal problems and family
• Let students take control
• Insult the class
• Say they're going to "tell on you"
• Treat students like babies
• Act like "king of the hill" or defensively
• Write bad notes to the regular teacher
• Tell kids to write their name on a paper if they're acting up
• Tell kids to sit in their regular seats
• Ask what the work is for that period
• Threaten to keep you after school
• Try to be your regular teacher
• Don't let students go to the washroom
• Hang over you when you're working
• When you ask a question and they say "figure it out for yourself"
• When you need some equipment and they won't find it
• When they are too strict and don't let you do things the regular teacher allows
• When they say "you're the worst class I have ever supplied for"
• Tell bad jokes
• Don't listen to students' advice
• Say "this class is rowdy" when it is obvious
• Lecture class on personal hygiene
• Say "quiet... please"

Tricks students play on occasional teachers...

• Change time on clocks
• Use different names
• Sign in for other students
• Draw caricature of supply teacher on board
• Mimic behind their back
• Make excuses to be dismissed - guidance appointment, etc.
• Fake attendance
• Switch seats
• Shoot elastics
• Hide chalk
• Throw things - paper, spitballs, chalk, etc.
• Cough at five second intervals
Establishing a Positive Learning Environment

Schools do not exist in isolation. They mirror societal changes and shape the values, beliefs and attitudes of the students. Contemporary schools must deal with an expanding array of social problems. As a result, schools have become institutions providing broad social services as well as centres for learning traditional academic subjects.

Today’s youth have very different life experiences than we had as teenagers. If society is different today, then the roles of the schools and the occasional teachers must also be different. We must reassess what we are teaching, how we are teaching it and provide a secure climate in which to teach it.

Research suggests that the best learning environment is one in which rules and expectations are clearly understood and consistently applied. Security, acceptance and predictability are the cornerstones of the learning process. In creating a positive learning environment, occasional teachers must establish conditions which maximize opportunities for all students by establishing rules, developing responsibility and encouraging excellence.

Classroom discipline is defined as "the business of enforcing classroom standards and building patterns of cooperation in order to maximize learning and minimize disruption". The way an Occasional Teacher manages a classroom will determine how much time is spent learning and how much time is spent handling disruptive or inappropriate behaviour. It is essential that occasional teachers have options that allow them to deal with a wide range of behaviour situations.

Tips for establishing a positive learning environment

Establishing a positive environment in the classroom goes a long way towards ensuring a successful teaching experience. Here are some general guidelines to follow:

• Begin classes on time.
• Be prepared. Many students complete their assignments before the period ends. Have a variety of learning material available that the students would enjoy. Build self-esteem.
• Make a seating plan to learn students’ names.
• Be courteous.
• Give special attention to those who appear in need.
• Let students know what is expected of them in the classroom.
• Praise students when appropriate.
• Create situations in which students can experience success.
• Never ridicule or embarrass students.
• Assertion controls and dissipates aggression.
• Do not argue with students.
• Maintain constant, clear ground rules and state them in a positive way.
• Stop misbehaviour before it gets out of hand.
• A light-hearted response can often defuse tense situations.
• If you are firm, fair and honest with students, they will come to your rescue.
• If unacceptable behaviour is widespread, concentrate on the ringleader. If you can win him/her over, others will follow.
• Do not cause the student to feel stupid.
• Do not make the student feel powerless.
• Do not make the student feel guilty and ashamed.

Establishing rapport with the students

Before the bell

Often the most challenging part of your day as an occasional teacher is before the bell rings at the beginning of the class. Be kind to yourself; give yourself lots of time to find the key, find the room (or rooms, if the regular teacher teaches in a number of rooms), and find the work before the students arrive. The message then is “I am in charge of this space.” The students then enter your space.

Sometimes, however, you will not be able to get to the room before the students. (Nobody told you that Portable 6 is behind Portable 11 on the far side of the parking lot.) When you finally enter the classroom, breathe deeply, move slowly. If you look frazzled, you don’t look like you are in control.

You might start by saying “My apologies for being late. Please take your seats. I will start the class in three minutes.” Most students are happy to sit and chat until you are ready. Hopefully, you will find the material you need in an obvious place and you will be ready to begin before the class loses interest.

Actors know the important message that a character’s costume sends to the audience even before they say their first word. If the message you want to send is that you are the adult in charge, it is a good idea not to dress in the same way as the students.

Introductions

We all experience some level of anxiety when we encounter an unknown situation. The students will want to know where their ‘real’ teacher is.

You might start with something like “Ms. Jones is attending meetings today, but she will stop in the school at the end of the day to pick up your assignments and she will be back tomorrow. I’m Mr. Smith and I am a Science teacher. I do have some knowledge of the topic we are studying today.”

There are many ways to find out who your students are:

• You may find that you can best get to know the students’ names and take attendance by reading out the class list. “Raise your hand when I call your name. Let me know if you are called a name other than the one on my list, and I’m sure I’ll need some help with pronunciations.” As they respond, try to establish eye contact with each student.
• If you are fortunate enough to find a seating plan, you may find it easier to take attendance using this.
• A seating plan with photos is a precious gift to an occasional teacher. With it, you can convince your charges that you can read minds. Just make sure you transfer the information to the official attendance forms that you send to the school office.
If you have a long oral lesson to present, you may not want to spend five minutes of prime teaching time going through the class list. There are other ways to take attendance:

- As they are working on assignments, move from student to student, checking off names.
- Quickly draw a free-hand grid on a piece of paper and pass or take it around so that students can add their name to this seating plan.

The advantage of these methods is that you will be moving among the students as they do their written work, helping them stay on task. However, in a class where the students need a lot of individual help, you may not have time for both tasks.

**Getting started on an assignment**

A lesson plan that consists of ‘Read Chapter 6 and answer questions 1-10’ often presents a hard grind for an occasional teacher. We may encounter hard-working senior students who will welcome the opportunity to get ahead with their homework, but many classes will need all your skills to get them — and keep them — focused.

Remember that some students may feel anxious about their ability to understand the assignment or to have the knowledge to complete it. The fear of being embarrassed in front of their classmates may make them behave in unacceptable ways. You want to send the message that you are the professional in charge, but also that you are friendly and respectful of the students and pleased to help them with their work and that, with the students’ cooperation, the class will be a pleasant experience for everyone.

Hopefully, you have had time to read over the instructions, to locate the questions to be answered and at least skim the reading assignment to make sure the answers are there. If not, you may be wise to explain and assign just the first step, get the class settled into that task, and then talk about and assign the rest when you feel you understand it.

Present the assignment by writing the instructions on the board or handing out the copied sheets, then explaining the instructions to the class and asking for questions. For your information, and perhaps to make the students feel more comfortable, you may want to ask them some questions about what they have recently learned on this topic in class.

Let them know when the assignment is due. If there is no deadline, and it seems appropriate, you may wish to tell them that all work is due at the end of class. Of course, this does suggest that you will look over the papers and put a check mark here and there.

**Getting the students settled into the task is the biggest challenge.**

You might try one of these approaches:

- "Some people find it difficult to read when there is talking in the room. This will be a talk-free zone for 10 minutes to give everyone a chance to get the reading done." Often, once the students become engaged in the work, the quiet will extend beyond the ten minutes.
- I will give you until 9:30 to write the answers to the first three questions. Then we will do questions 4 and 5 together." This divides the work into manageable parts and gives a time line.
• “At 10 o’clock I will collect what you have finished, and then we will move on to something else.” Again, this gives a time line and lets the students know that someone is interested in how they are doing.

In the first few minutes after the students are given an assignment, it is crucial that you give the job of getting them settled your full attention. This is not the time to do the attendance, fill out other paperwork, or even go looking for a student’s lost work. Most students will understand if you ask them to wait for five minutes for your help with something like this. There is never a time when you are with a class to settle back with the morning newspaper.

If someone needs a text book, see if the teacher has left an extra copy, or let the student go to her locker. (Make sure you know her name.) By the time she returns, everyone else will be settled down. If she doesn’t return promptly, make sure to call the office as a concerned teacher, to report her disappearance.

If a student needs a pencil or paper, he can usually borrow from a neighbour. Many occasional teachers stock their briefcases with such supplies. They find this effort well rewarded by a smoothly running class.

Once the class becomes generally focussed on the task, then turn your attention to those students who may need special help.

If the student is a ‘talker’, you have a number of options:

• See if making eye contact will settle the student down.
• If not, try standing beside the student while he/she works. Tell the student’s audience that he has work to do. Moving the student away from the audience might help, but first let the student know that this will be the consequence of his/her behaviour.
• Make a contract with the student about how much to accomplish by the end of the period.
• If the student has a short attention span and just can’t sit still, see if the information sheet left by the teacher indicates a learning problem. Set smaller goals for the student. Find ways for him/her to take a break.
• If the student seems to be making several false starts on the problem, before too long, he/she will have the paper crumpled, ready to lob into the basket. Obviously, he/she has trouble with the assignment. First, check to determine if the student has understood the task. Perhaps he/she has misread the instructions and thinks the task is much too difficult. If the assignment deals with a long reading passage, the student who is a poor reader may need extra help, but may not ask for it. Once you find out where the problem lies, it may be a simple thing to help the student be successful.
• If the student is a ‘sleeper’, encourage him/her to get started. Tell the student that you want to see what has been accomplished by the end of the period.
• If the student is the confrontational type, it may be better to ignore him/her than risk upheaval. At least the student is not disrupting the class, and he/she may have problems of which you are unaware.
• Sometimes a conflict between two students prevents them from doing their work. If, in your good judgment, this situation looks like it is moving toward becoming a classroom safety issue, call upon an administrator to remove them from class. Make sure that you know where the phone or intercom is located in each room you visit and that you know the buttons to push to reach emergency help.
Remember that the most important factor in establishing rapport with the students and getting them to complete their assignment is to be approachable and enthusiastic. The students have to want to work for you and need to realize that when you give them a direction or instruction, you expect to be obeyed.

**Group work**

Here the Occasional Teacher is at a disadvantage because you don’t know which students work well together. You are wise to keep the groups small and provide as much physical space between the groups as possible. By assigning various roles within the group, you can help each student to become involved in the process. Asking for a brief oral report on their progress after half an hour may help the discussion to stay on topic.

If part of your assignment is to place the students in their groups, you could try the old-fashioned method of starting at one side of the room and ‘numbering off’. Some occasional teachers carry with them as part of their survival kit a set of small numbered cards. These can be used in many situations where a random selection must be made. Letting the students choose their own groups works well with some classes, but be on the alert for the poor soul whom nobody wants in their group.

**Supervising a test**

When administering a test, you need some special procedures. Space the students around the room, with all books under their desks, and give them clear instructions and expectations:

- Remind them that there should be no talking at all.
- If they encounter any difficulty, they are to ask for your help rather than a neighbour.
- Any deviation from this policy will result in their test being removed.
- When finished, turn their test over on their desk and go quietly to other work.
- During the test, walk amongst the students, or watch the class from the back of the room.

**Taking the class to the library**

As an Occasional Teacher, you will be required to take a class to the school library from time to time, which may present a challenging situation. As your students mix with the other students using the library, how do you recognize them, and how do you make sure they are all there? Here are a few suggestions:

- Travel together as a group to the library and ask the students to wait just inside the door for further instructions.
- If working with a senior class, ask them to find you five minutes before the end of the period and add their signature to a list which also includes a short summary of what they worked on during the class.

**Oral lesson**

Here you have the advantage over the regular teacher. Because you are a novelty, you may be able to keep their attention longer. If you have a lot of material to cover, you might consider dividing it into two or three parts, with other activities in between.

A well-run discussion can be great. Try not to insert your opinion too often.
If you are teaching an algebra course and math is not your subject, call upon one of the more able students in the class to work out a question on the board, explaining her procedure to her classmates.

If the class you are teaching is “too cool” to answer questions, don’t plead with them to put up their hands. A 10-minute lecture-style presentation of the material in which you do all the talking will be much more interesting and better paced than an oral lesson where you keep waiting for answers that never come.

**Working with disruptive students during a lesson.**

Whereas you cannot force a student to answer questions in an oral lesson, you can insist that he does not talk or otherwise disrupt the class when you or a classmate is talking. How you handle such a student depends on the circumstances and your own style, but never threaten a consequence that you are not prepared to impose.

Putting a student into a situation where in order to comply with your wishes he feels he will belittle himself in front of his classmates is never a good idea. A light approach and a bit of humour will often get the student on side more effectively. It really helps if you have learned his name. Give the student a graceful way to comply, and he just might see reason. Don’t become involved in a confrontation that you feel you must ‘win’. Aim for a win-win result.

Here are some examples of statements that can be used to diffuse uncomfortable situations:

- “This class has been called to order. Johnny, please take your place so that we can proceed with today’s agenda.”
- “Suzie, I’m really looking forward to hearing your ideas on this topic, but right now Sally is speaking. It will be your turn next.”

Then there are the students whose behaviour is just plain unacceptable; those who have a classmate in a stranglehold when you walk into the room, or whose language burns your ears. Once in a while your only option is to send the offending student to the office. This can be tricky if the student decides not to go quietly. Things might go more smoothly if you first ask the student to step into the hall, and then give him his marching orders. You really should know the name of the student that you are putting out, and you should immediately contact the office to let them know the student is coming.

**Some common student comments heard by occasional teachers**

I have nothing to do.

Yes, all my work is finished.

No, I don’t have any other homework.

No, I don’t have a book to read.

Sometimes the most we can do is persuade this student to sit quietly and let the others get on with their work. However, you might try these suggestions:
• Sit down with this student and go over the work he/she has finished. If the work is well done, the student might be interested in helping another student who is struggling with the assignment.
• Carry with you copies of:
  o high interest/easy read short stories;
  o photocopies of puzzles, word-search or other mind games;
  o photocopies of quizzes from magazines, the kind that determine whether you are an extrovert or an introvert, or the characteristics of your perfect mate.

Students leaving the room

Washroom

Washroom breaks are given at the discretion of the Occasional Teacher and may be cancelled completely if abused. Students ask to be excused more often when they are being taught by an Occasional Teacher than when their regular teacher is present. It is more difficult for occasional teachers to keep track of students moving in and out of the classroom than it is for the teacher who sees them every day.

However, before you adopt a “no break” policy, there are other arguments that you should consider. Today’s students are very aware of their rights as individuals and may very well protest such a rule. You do not know these students or their needs; your refusal could lead to embarrassment for everyone.

Here are a few ways that you can respond positively to “May I go to the washroom?” and still keep things running smoothly in the classroom.

• Be certain to take attendance and explain the assignment before anyone leaves.
• Ask to see the work they have accomplished. If they have produced very little, perhaps they need help in getting started. You might even feel comfortable asking them to finish the first answer before they go to the washroom.
• Allow only one student to leave at a time, or your class will soon be wandering the halls together.
• A “sign-out” sheet is essential. It should list: name, homeroom, destination, time out and time in. Remind them that you expect them back in a reasonable time (five minutes, for instance) and after that you will be filing a “missing person’s report” with the office. And then do it. When the students hear you call the office, future excursions will be nipped in the bud.

Locker

Most of the same considerations apply to students’ requests to go to their lockers. Often the things they need can be borrowed from a classmate. (Carrying a small packet of tissues in your briefcase might be a good investment.)

Do not allow a student to get something from her locker for someone who appears at the door. Simply say that she will not be available to help them until after class.

Library
If individual students ask permission to go to the library to get a free reading book for English or information for a project and the regular teacher has left no instructions, rely on your highly-developed teacher instincts to decide if you will say yes.

If you decide to give the students permission, be sure they “sign out” and know when they are expected to return to class.

**Special Education Resource Centre**

Some students regularly go to the Special Education facilities to work on assignments. Hopefully, the regular teacher will have left you a note indicating a student’s need to either be withdrawn from the class or to have a resource person come into the class.

**Students who arrive late**

If a student arrives late, tell him/her to take his/her usual seat and carry on with the lesson. Tell the student privately that you will be leaving a note for the regular teacher regarding the late arrival. Then explain the assignment if he/she has missed that part of the class and stand by the student until the work begins.

If the student is more than twenty minutes late with no “admit slip”, ask her to report to the attendance office to get one. Always make sure that you are being consistent with the school’s policy for lateness.

**Dismissing the class**

As the end of the period approaches, you may sense a certain restlessness among your charges. Make sure that you know to the exact minute when the bell will ring; you can be sure the students do. Sometimes the wall clock is ahead or behind the bell system. You, as a truly astute occasional teacher, noticed this when the bell went to start the class and will time your count-down accordingly.

If the door has been open during the class, close it now. Insist that the students stay sitting in their own desks until the bell goes. They may be in the habit of lining up at the door before the bell, but this is not a good idea for an Occasional Teacher who will not be there the next day to reprimand any who “escape”.

Remind students to make sure that their names are on any work that they are handing in. Either ask them to pass their work forward or assign a couple of the more restless students to collect all the papers.

If the class has been working well and they need extra time, you might amend the due-date to the start of the next class, providing that the teacher has not given other specific instructions. Remind the students to copy the assignment from the board.

Ask the students to clean up any garbage around or in their desks and deposit it in the waste container on their way out.

There are many ways to fill that last minute or two after everything is done. You may find it a good time to talk about the school’s rugby team’s success this season or the rock video you saw on television last night. You may be more comfortable if they chat quietly among themselves.
Like any good host, wish the departing students a good day, addressing as many as you can by name.

**Home room**

Home room may take place at different times in different schools and it may be with students you teach or a class that you see only briefly. No matter which, the challenge remains the same – to get through everything expected of you in record time.

Ask a student to distribute the various notes sent from the office to students in the class.

If there are written announcements, ask one student to check off the ones appropriate for the class. These should be read to the class, either by you or one of the students.

If there are announcements over the P.A., you may have to remind the class that the room must be quiet enough so that everyone can hear them. This may require your full attention and other “bookkeeping” duties may have to wait until later. You will also want to make it clear by your example that one stands still and silent for the national anthem.

Your most important homeroom duty is to record attendance. If this class is staying with you for a subject period, there is less time pressure, but if they are with you for only ten minutes, you may wish to start checking off names as the students enter the room before the bell rings.

**Working with different ages and course designations**

Learn to vary your approach based on the grade and course designation level of the class:

**Grades 9 and 10**

- Usually very active and need a variety of activities within the period.
- Generally need a more structured class; work best using worksheets or specific questions.
- Group-work needs to be closely monitored, with groups not larger than four people.
- Need a chance to move and talk as part of the assignment, or else a short break after intensive work.

**Grades 11 and 12**

Senior students are often capable of much more self-directed work habits. The maturity level of senior students generally results in little need for redirection and close monitoring if the lesson begins promptly and expectations have been clearly stated.

**Discipline**

Discipline is essential to success in occasional teaching.

- Be firm, without developing a siege mentality. A sense of humour can be one of your most effective control techniques.

- Be consistent and fair; make sure the same rules apply to all students.
• If you see a trouble-maker from a previous class, talk to him as he enters the class and let him know that you are expecting good behaviour.

• Learn to deal with disruptive students on your own if possible. A build-up of minor problems could be dealt with during a teacher-student conference at lunch or after school. Although this may seem a lot to ask of an occasional teacher, it will quickly establish your reputation with both students and administrators. If the student chooses not to come, then be sure to enlist the help of the Vice-Principal.

Realize that sometimes a difficult class isn't your fault. Perhaps the assignment is too difficult, or the problem student is having trouble in other classes as well, or perhaps it's just a collection of very difficult kids. Effective discipline is essential in establishing rapport with students.

If you are in control, you are on your way to becoming an effective Occasional Teacher.

Resource: OSSTF, Survival Skills for Occasional Teachers
Going to a different school on a regular basis means that you will have to be prepared for a variety of situations and circumstances. Here is some helpful information to ensure success as an occasional teacher.

**Upon arrival at the school**

- Check-in at the office to announce your arrival.
- Introduce yourself to the Secretary and/or the Principal.
- Introduce yourself to the staff members working near you, in conjunction with you, or in the same division.
- Pick up the keys to the classroom.
- Locate the classroom and other rooms you may need through the day. A school map may be provided to you or there may be one in the classroom.
- Be sure to locate the staff room, workroom, and the staff washroom.
- Familiarize yourself with the attendance routines.

**Preparing for the day**

It is to your advantage to be well prepared before the day starts. The following are some suggestions that may help you prepare for the day prior to the students' arrival.

- Familiarize yourself with the day/lesson plan.
- Perform any necessary tasks to execute the lessons, such as photocopying, cutting, reading information in a textbook, acquiring any necessary audiovisual equipment.
- Find a seating plan; if there isn't one, be prepared to make one.
- Familiarize yourself with school safety routines (ex. fire drills and lockdown procedures).
- Familiarize yourself with any school policies and procedures, for instance, yard duty or on-call supervision schedule, school timetable and school discipline policy.
- Familiarize yourself with classroom routines including where to meet students at arrival times, prayers, procedures for using the washroom, getting drinks, going to lockers, lunch, recess and snacks.
- Find a class list and either prepare ahead of time, or have the students make their own name tags.
- Review any behaviour plans that exist to ensure you will maintain consistency for those students involved.
- Identify students with high needs, allergies, and those requiring medication. It is a good idea to identify those students as soon as they enter the classroom.
- Review the in-school support program timetable for things such as Special Education and ESL.
- Find out if you need to collect anything from the students, like money for trips or homework.
- Find out if there any special events happening in the school, for example: hotdog day, school assembly, or a special visitor.

**Day / Lesson Plan**

If a day/lesson plan has been left, try to follow it as closely as possible. Sometimes it may be necessary to make amendments to that daily plan, for reasons such as time constraints, safety, or it may be inappropriate for your comfort level and/or physical ability.
You will have to make a professional judgment about amending the classroom teacher’s plan. If you do have to make an amendment to the plan; ensure that you leave a polite, factual note for the absent teacher.

If a day/lesson plan has not been left or cannot be found, you will want to have some lessons that you will be able to use until a day/lesson plan is made available to you. Please see the section on Useful Websites for Occasional Teachers to assist you with building your own “tool box.”

**Classroom routines and procedures / classroom management / continuity**

Review the established classroom routines, rules and expectations. Try to follow the rules and routines as closely as possible in order to maintain consistency for the students. Often there will be helpful students in the classroom who will be able to assist you, if needed.

Sometimes students also need to leave the classroom to assist other classes. Ensure that you know when students are leaving the classroom, for what purpose, to where and for how long.

During the day you will want to maintain an atmosphere of respect and courtesy. The following are some suggestions to help make the day pass successfully:

- Try to maintain a positive attitude with a light sense of humour.
- Avoid power struggles/arguments with students.
- Be courteous.
- Give special attention to those who appear in need.
- Praise students when appropriate.
- Never ridicule or embarrass students.

**End of the day**

Here are some guidelines to help you end your day on a positive note:

- Ensure that students have completed their usual end of day activities, such as filling out day planners, reviewing homework expectations.
- Distribute newsletters or any notes that need to go home with students.
- Ask the students to assist with tidying the room according to established classroom procedures.
- End with positive comments to the class and perhaps to specific individuals.

**After students have been dismissed**

There are several things that you will want to do before leaving the classroom. You may find this list helpful:
• Finish tidying the room, if necessary.
• Collect all your own teaching resources and personal effects.
• Thank staff who assisted you during the day.
• Check-in at the office and return the classroom keys.
• As a courtesy, say goodbye to the school Secretary and/or Principal before departure.

Write a note to the Classroom Teacher

Leave the absent teacher a positive and factual note regarding how the day went. The absent teacher needs to know what happened during the day and where to start when he/she returns. It is helpful when a clear and detailed outline of the day is provided. The note to the classroom teacher may include:

• Anecdotal comments about the day and the students - be truthful but positive;
• A list of students who were helpful;
• A list of students who were absent or late;
• Make reference to and attach any notes sent in by parents/guardians;
• A list of students who brought in money and for what reason;
• An explanation of what work was completed and what work still needs to be finished;
• A review of material with which students had difficulty;
• An explanation of any disruptions to the day (for example, an unexpected assembly or fire drill);
• If you were unable to follow the prepared lesson plans provide an explanation as to why and a copy of the lesson you gave; and
• Sign your name and date the note.

Managing the class

There are some basic tips for setting a positive classroom environment:

• Greet students at the door and make eye contact;
• Have a friendly message on the blackboard with your name;
• Follow the classroom routines;
• Discuss and list your expectations for their work and behaviour;
• Outline the plan for the class or the day;
• Have students put their names on a seating plan or create a name card if the teacher did not leave a seating plan; and
• Always be firm, fair and flexible

ALWAYS SET THE PROPER TONE

MOTIVATE, DON’T DEVASTATE

Behavioural Issues

In order to have a successful day, it is vital that the classroom be calm and orderly. Students can’t learn if they are not attentive. Here are some basic guidelines for maintaining a positive learning atmosphere:
• Establish a method of getting attention. There are many methods for accomplishing this, depending on the grade level you are teaching (for example, stop speaking, ask for student attention to be on the speaker, flick the lights on and off, use rhythmic clapping);
• Establish a rapport with the students;
• Get to know the names of the students; and
• Move around the room regularly; don’t sit at the teacher’s desk.

When the going gets tough

When the classroom environment is becoming noisy and unruly:

• Stay calm, move slowly, be quiet and relax;
• Make eye contact;
• If you must talk, lower your voice rather than raise it;
• Keep the situation in perspective;
• Avoid threats you can’t or don’t want to carry out;
• Avoid public confrontation;
• Be consistent;
• Deal internally with as much as possible, use the office like you would a 911 call; and
• Remember that schools have a “Hands Off Policy.”

Get to know the staff. This includes the Principal, Vice Principal, the head secretary, personnel in the guidance department, the teacher librarian, the caretaker and the cleaning staff.

Checklist for Occasional Teachers

Occasional teachers often work in a number of different schools, each with their own policies and procedures. For the safety of the students and your personal success as an occasional teacher, it is important to check your understanding of these policies and procedures. This checklist can be used as a reminder of information needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Special needs accommodations/modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Make note of students who leave the classroom for program support or those who need in-class accommodation. For example: a differentiated work assignment, additional time, computer support or learning aids such as an FM system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Special health concerns</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are there students in your class who have medical concerns? What are those medical concerns? If a situation occurs, what is the procedure? Who is to be contacted? Where is the individual medical information form with picture, if available? Is there a school policy regarding food brought into the school?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Opening exercises/announcements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Make note of the regular routine for anthem, announcements, prayers, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Check supervision duties. Note any special instructions (for example, is there a vest worn while on duty, a sash whistle or bell?).</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inclement weather</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>What are the inclement weather duties? Is there a different supervision schedule for inclement weather days? Make note of any different location or supervision time.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fire drill procedures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>What are the fire drill procedures? Which exit is used? What are the attendance procedures? What is the “all clear” signal to return to class? Where is the class list for Fire Drill attendance? What does the occasional teacher do if the fire alarm rings during planning time or during recess/lunch time?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emergency procedures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>If there is an emergency what is expected of the occasional teacher? Who is the occasional teacher to contact? Note special instructions for lockdown, tornado procedures, etc.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First aid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If first aid is needed, what is the procedure to follow? Who are the people on staff who are qualified in first aid? Where is the first aid kit located?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accident reports</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Where are accident reports located? Who can assist in the completion of the form? To whom is the form submitted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Audio-visual equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Photocopy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Money collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Computer use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Physical education/gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Distribution/collection of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dress code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Use of electronic devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Entry procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Attendance procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Washroom/dinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Recess (for elementary occasional teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>End of day/dismissal routines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource: OECTA, Essential Information for Occasional Teachers

[http://www.oecta.on.ca/forteachers/essentialsots/essentialsindex.htm](http://www.oecta.on.ca/forteachers/essentialsots/essentialsindex.htm)
Resources Used

www.applytoeducation.ca
Online Applications

www.cra-arc.gc.ca
Canada Revenue Agency

www.edu.gov.on.ca
Ontario Ministry of Education

www.etfo.ca
Elementary Teachers’ Federation

http://www.etfo-torots.org/index.html
ETFO Toronto OTs

www.eqao.com
Ontario Standardized Testing

www.geocities.com/otbud12/
OSSTF Toronto OTs

www.hrsdc.gc.ca
Human Resources Canada

www.labour.gov.on.ca
Ontario Ministry of Labour

www.mayoclinic.org
Useful Interview Prep Tips

www.oct.ca
Ontario College of Teachers

www.oecta.on.ca
Ontario English Catholic Teachers

www.osstf.ca
Ont. Secondary School Teachers

www.otffeo.on.ca
Ontario Teachers’ Federation

www.otline.ca
Hamilton-Wentworth Elem. OTs

www.otpp.com
Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan

www.qeco.on.ca
Qualifications Evaluation

www.uwgb.edu
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

www.volunteer.ca
Volunteer Canada
For information about:

**Volunteering** in schools, go to: www.volunteer.ca/vol_contacts/voe_map/eng/flash_map.php

**Writing a resume**, go to: www.uwgb.edu/careers/Creating_Resume.htm

**Preparing for interviews**, go to: www.mayoclinic.org/jobs/interviewtipsinclude.html

**Curriculum exemplars**, go to: http://wblrd.sk.ca/~bestpractice/rubrics/index.html


**Differentiated instruction**, go to: http://members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiating.html

**Creating an IEP**, go to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.html


**Character Education** in Ontario schools, go to: www.curriculum.org/edu/character/index.shtml

**Kids Help Phone**, go to: www.kidshelpphone.ca/en/

**Bully Prevention Training**, go to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/bullyprevention/registry.html

**Ontario Student Record** (OSR), go to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/osr/osr.html

**Balanced Literacy**, go to: www.eworkshop.on.ca/cfmx/edu/core.cfm

**Developmental Reading Assessment**, go to: http://cf.pearsoned.ca/school/index.cfm?type=series&series_letter=D&series_ID=109095

**Smart Board**, go to: http://smarttech.com

**Performance appraisal**, go to: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraisefs.html, and www.etfo.ca/AdviceForMembers/ProfessionalPortfolio/Documents/ProfPortfolio_05.pdf