



Applying to Teaching

Mapping the route to a Faculty of Education

If you are considering applying to teaching, you might find yourself grappling with a lot of questions. Do I really want to be a teacher? Is there anything I am missing in the process? How can I increase my chances of getting in? Career Services is here to help. We've got key advice condensed in this tipsheet that touches on the most common questions. For more help check out our [Applying to Teaching workshop](#).

Thinking about applying?

Make the most of your time at Queen's before getting ready to apply in your final year. By getting involved and learning about teaching before applying you can decide if it is a good fit, and be working towards meeting the requirements for admission at the same time.

Do what you love – you'll tend to thrive! Choose a university program that interests you since you will usually attain better marks learning something that fascinates you. A broad-based education can be a real asset in teaching. In addition, be aware that most schools require specific pre-requisite courses (see below); however, with advance planning, they can generally be incorporated into your university program.

Check out the profession by conducting *information interviews* with teachers, principals, program coordinators and support staff. Set up appointments to discuss your career goals and their experiences in the field. Learn the realities of the day-to-day work and how it fits with what you know about yourself. Also, be realistic and get informed by exploring other career options in addition to teaching.

Meet the pre-requisites before you apply. To test out your fit with teacher education programs and to enable you to apply to many schools, find out how you will be assessed. Selection is generally based on a combination of academic standing, pre-requisite courses and relevant experience. Programs have different pre-requisites depending on the divisions and teaching subjects in which they specialize, so always check specific schools that include your teaching interests to determine their requirements. Generally, most require a credit in areas such as English, Fine Arts, Math, Health, Science, and Humanities. Keep good notes.

ONTARIO Application Guidelines are outlined by the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC) which operates the Teacher Education Application Service (TEAS).
www.ouac.on.ca/teas

Aim high academically to keep the doors open. The reality of applications for Bachelor of Education programs is that marks are an extremely important part of the process. Solid "B" academic standing on 10-15 most recent or final full credits may be the minimum requirement you need to meet to gain entrance into the application process. Aim even higher to keep your application competitive. Both 3-year (general) and 4-year (honours) degrees are acceptable in teaching, but they are weighted differently in the application process and in determining teacher certification salary ranges.

Stay involved with your community and participate in activities that mean something to you. Teachers are active, dedicated and visible members of their communities who assume a range of roles outside the classroom. The ability to balance academics with employment, volunteer work, sports, community service and extra-curricular interests is a trait that application committees are looking for in prospective candidates. Avoid doing what you think you "should" do—instead try some new activities that show your diverse interests. Also, commit long-term to other activities that demonstrate your progress to leadership positions as well as teaching experience.



The Application Basics

Although teacher education programs differ in their specific requirements, the following items often form part or all of the application process. It is estimated that depending on the number of schools to which you apply, the process can take from 10 to 30 hours to complete, so planning ahead is essential for success. In Ontario, the TEAS deadline is typically early December.

Transcripts: You will need to arrange for transcripts (from high school and post-secondary programs you have attended) to be sent directly to the programs to which you are applying. There is a fee associated with this, so factor that into your application budget. Also, foreign official transcripts must be accompanied by an officially certified English translation. Find out particular procedures early to avoid last-minute problems at deadline time.

Profile of Experience: Many schools will ask for an itemized list of all your activities for the last several years. This can include employment, volunteer work, education, awards and accomplishments, extra-curricular, research and other activities. Teaching experience is an asset and for a few schools (Brock), a requirement. You may also be asked to include the name and contact information of a person who can verify the activity. Be sure to use current contact information for the verifier so that schools can easily connect with them, if needed.

Personal Statements: Most programs will ask applicants to submit answers to general or specific questions about their goals, experiences and fit with the program. This personal statement information is submitted in the form of a written essay or short answers (depending on the school) and can be extremely time-consuming. It is wise to start early and have others read your writing along the way. Flawless grammar and spelling are essential; respecting the word or character count is critical.

A Good Application Shows...

- Conscious, informed choice
- Awareness of teaching demands
- Range of academic competence
- Unique strengths
- Relevant experiences
- Honesty, clarity and preparation

Pondering the personal statements portion of the application sometimes highlights for students that they may be having difficulty articulating their specific reasons for choosing teaching and defining what makes them different from other well-qualified candidates. Try writing a paragraph a day so that the task is less overwhelming. Write authentically using your own voice and cite specific examples from your life. Avoid generalities: (“I am a team player with a variety of experiences”) and naïve statements: (“Being a teacher requires patience, dedication and a thirst for learning...”). Instead, tell succinct, vivid stories to let the reader to see your potential contributions to teaching, to the divisions in which you want to teach and, particularly, to their program.

References: A few (but not all) programs require written letters of reference sent directly to them. Choose references carefully. They should be people who know you well and are in a position to comment favorably. It is important to distinguish between “I am willing to write you a reference”, and “I am willing to write you a *positive* reference”. Try to solicit references from those who know you in different contexts (for example a former teacher, coach, mentor, employer, or community board member) and who will write about specific and positive qualities you possess. Give them an “information package” about you and set up an appointment to discuss your goals, your recent activities and to help them remember specific incidences in which your best qualities stood out. Thank them in writing afterwards and let them know your progress.



Applying Outside Ontario

Because of the increasing number of applicants to teacher education programs in Ontario, some students consider attending a program in other Canadian provinces or in the U.S.A., Australia, Britain, New Zealand or elsewhere internationally. When applying for a program outside Ontario, it is very important to do lots of preliminary research. There are many factors to consider when making this decision including increased tuition and living expenses, the challenges of living in a new and possibly quite different location, and licensing implications should you wish to return to Ontario to teach.

License to teach in Ontario

To work as a teacher in Ontario upon completion of an education degree, you must be accredited by the Ontario College of Teachers, the provincial licensing body. Investigate the certification process well. The OCT regularly provides information sessions for those who hold a foreign degree.

Applying to other provinces in Canada

For information on teacher education across Canada, start by researching the Association of Colleges and Universities at <http://www.universitystudy.ca/search-programs/>. When contacting programs, ask about the number of spots available to out-of-province students, then build that knowledge into your application strategy.

Applying internationally

- USA: Consult the Petersen's Directory or the Education files at Career Services for information on direct application to individual schools like SUNY at Potsdam or D'Youville in Buffalo
- Australia, Britain, New Zealand: Contact organizations that coordinate applications, like KOM Consultants www.komconsultants.com

Where do education graduates work?

Traditional Systems & Divisions

- Primary+Junior: Junior Kindergarten through Grade 6.
- Junior+Intermediate: Grade 4 through Grade 10.
- Intermediate+Senior: Grade 7 through Grade 12.
- Technological Education: This program is only available at a few faculties of education. details.
- College and/or university (B Ed not required)

Alternative Settings

- Adventure and the Arts (high seas, wilderness, museums, media)
- Business (online instruction, human resources training)
- Cross-cultural (TESL, TFSL, immigration services)
- Diversity-based (community outreach, counselling)
- Experiential (Montessori, Waldorf, applied technology)

Sampling of some teachable subjects:

Business, Dramatic Arts, History, PHE, Science, Outdoor Education, Individual and Society, French, Music, Physics, Mathematics, Art, Religious Education, Accounting, English, Information Management, Visual Arts, Francais, Computer Science, Family Studies, International Languages, French as a Second Language, Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Marketing, Law/Political Science

Funding

Teacher applications through the TEAS costs \$155 for 3 choices. Each individual school also requires additional fees, typically \$50-\$100. Transcripts also cost \$12. For sources of funding, contact Student Awards at the university to which you are applying. The Career Information Area at Queen's Career Services



also has some books that list scholarships and bursaries. Also, inquire about the possibility (and practicality) of on-campus or part-time employment.

Tips from selection teams for improving your chances of admission

The Research

- Find out what teaching is about—information interviews, teaching websites, and brochures.
- Talk to teachers, current teacher candidates and recent grads to discover more about the relevance of your background to individual programs that interest you.
- Go directly to the source for information. Talk to the admissions people who do the work, take your money, approve applications or grant degrees. Understand current priorities, timelines and assessment criteria for each program. If possible, visit the campus before applying, and before accepting an offer.

The Application

- Apply to more than one program to improve your chances of acceptance
- Appearances count on the application—neat handwriting and typed, well-spaced text
- Use space constructively to give clear information. Do not write “see resume” or “see question 2”
- Read the fine print and follow directions precisely
- Apply earlier than the final deadline to avoid an overcrowded website in December
- Include evidence, examples, brief anecdotes and reflections to distinguish your application
- Highlight unique, relevant attributes like international experience, other languages, exceptional skills
- Deadline for the OUAC application is **December 1** usually, check to verify

Useful Books (available in the Information Area at Career Services)

- *So You Want to Be a Teacher: The Guide to Teaching as a Career Choice in Canada*
W. Rod Dolmage, Harcourt Brace & Company 1996 Call # C.SPC.71.2
- *Opportunities in Adult Education Careers*
Blythe Camenson, VGM Career Horizons, 2000 Call # C.SPC.71.1
- *101 Career Alternatives for Teachers: Exciting Job Opportunities for Teachers Outside the Teaching Profession*, Margaret M. Gisler, Prima Publishing, 2002, Call # C.SPC.71.4
- *Perfect Personal Statements*
Mark A. Stewart, MacMillan Co. 1996. Call #E.GEN.23
- *What’s Next? A Job Search Guide for Teachers*
Alan Travers, J. Daniel Lalonde, Lakeside Publishing. Updated annually. Call # J.SRC.GEN.2

Online Resources (starting points for researching teaching)

Ontario Universities’ Application Centre (Teacher Education Application Service - teas)	https://www.ouac.on.ca/teas/
Canadian Teachers’ Federation	http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx
Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario	http://www.etfo.on.ca/
Montessori Schools and Teacher Education	http://www.montessori-institute.ca/
Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)	http://www.oct.ca
Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation	http://www.osstf.on.ca/