



July 12, 2021

The Honourable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
438 University Avenue, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Lecce,

We are writing to share recommendations made by the Transition Supervisory Officer (TSO) to amend the Teachers' Qualifications Regulation (TQR) made under the Ontario College of Teachers Act related to demonstration of language proficiency.

The Registrars for Teacher Certification Canada (RTCC) will shortly introduce a pan-Canadian language competency assessment test which will serve as the only language proficiency test for internationally-educated applicants to teacher regulatory bodies in Canada. Once adopted, internationally-educated applicants who have not completed their teacher education program in French or English will be required to complete this assessment test.

The College is committed to adopting this pan-Canadian approach as part of its labour mobility obligations and support for simplifying and streamlining the language proficiency process for applicants.

Within the TQR, section 7. (2) currently provides for the possibility of an exemption based on Registrar discretion for applicants to establish language proficiency. This exemption will no longer be an option for applicants with the new language competency assessment test.

On July 8, 2021, the Transition Supervisory Officer, acting in his capacity as Council, approved the following recommendation:

That the Teachers' Qualification Regulation (O.Reg. 176/10) be amended to remove section 7. (2)

A supporting briefing note on this topic is enclosed with this letter.

The College looks forward to working with the Ministry of Education staff to develop regulatory language for the TSO's consideration.

Sincerely,



Paul Boniferno
Transition Supervisory Officer



Dr. Derek Haime, OCT
Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

Encl:

- Language Proficiency - Removal of Section 7(2) of O.Reg 176/10 (TQR)

PB/DH/TC/tk-ccs



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Briefing Note

Language Proficiency – Removal of Section 7(2) of O. Reg 176/10 (“TQR”)

Issue

The Registrars for Teacher Certification, Canada (“RTCC”) will introduce a language-competency assessment test, which will serve as the only language proficiency test for internationally-educated applicants to teacher regulatory bodies in Canada. This test will obviate the need for a discretionary approach to language proficiency. Section 7(2) of O. Reg 176/10 (“TQR”) currently provides an exemption for applicants in establishing language proficiency, whereas this exemption will be superfluous with a pan-Canadian test; the clause may be struck as a pro-active step.

The College has made a commitment *per* its labour mobility obligations to honour the pan-Canadian approach. Once adopted, the College will require all internationally-educated teachers (IETs) who have not completed their teacher education program in French or English to take the language-competency assessment test.

The test is expected to be implemented by August 2022. Thereafter, the College will no longer accept current language proficiency tests (IELTS, TOEFL, etc.), nor the exemption under section 7(2), when the assessment is made available.

Background

The RTCC Language Competencies Working Group (LCWG) has concluded that applicants to teacher regulatory bodies across Canada will be required to establish language proficiency in the following ways:

- 1) By confirming they completed studies in French or English as required to demonstrate acceptable language competency;
- 2) By confirming they will sit for the RTCC language-competency assessment in French or in English;
- 3) By confirming they will not provide evidence of language competency and would like their assessment to be forwarded to their chosen province/territory without evidence of language competency, with the understanding that this will impact their eligibility for certification by the province/territory.

Legislative Context

The *TQR* outlines the core requirements for applicants to become certified in Ontario. Section 6(e) stipulates that applicants must submit evidence that the applicant meets the language requirement as prescribed in the *TQR* under section 7. This section stipulates that:

- 7.(1) A person meets the English or French language proficiency requirements referred to in clauses 5 (1)(h) and 6 (e) if the person,
- (a) successfully completed an acceptable program of professional education that was taught in English or French; or
 - (b) successfully completed an English or French language proficiency test that,
 - (i) tests the applicant’s ability to comprehend and communicate in English or French,
 - (ii) has both an oral and a written component,
 - (iii) is acceptable to the College, and

(iv) is administered by a person or organization acceptable to the College.

The *TQR* currently provides discretion with regard to language proficiency:

7. (2) The Registrar may exempt an applicant from the requirement under clause 5 (1)(h) or 6 (e) to meet the English or French language proficiency requirement if the applicant provides evidence satisfactory to the Registrar of the language of instruction of the applicant's elementary, secondary and post-secondary education, other than the program of professional education, and after taking into account the language of such education, the Registrar is satisfied that the applicant is able to comprehend and communicate effectively in English or French, as the case may be.

In its Registration Guide, the College has specified that applicants can provide proof of proficiency in English or French in one of 3 ways, which informs the exercise of discretion under section 7(2) of the *TQR*:

1. "If you completed your teacher education program entirely in English or entirely in French, ask the head of the institution you attended to send a letter to the College.

The letter needs to confirm the language of instruction for the entire program when you attended.

If the College's evaluation of your teacher education program finds it unacceptable, you will have to use option 2 or 3 to prove your proficiency in English or French.

2. If you completed both your elementary and postsecondary education or both your secondary and postsecondary education entirely in English or French, ask each institution to send a letter to the College confirming English or French as the language of instruction for the entire program when you attended.

3. Complete one of the acceptable language proficiency tests and ask the testing agency to send your results to the College. The College cannot accept test results older than two years. If you have special needs because of a

disability, please contact the testing agency directly to confirm appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate you."

Analysis

The RTCC language test will obviate the need for discretion in assessing language proficiency. The advent of a language-competency assessment test will simplify, streamline, and unify language proficiency in Canada.

Under the current statutory framework, the Registration Appeals Committee may only exercise discretion under section 7(2) of the *TQR* if the applicant provides satisfactory evidence of the language of instruction of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education—other than the program of professional education—and, after taking into account the language of such education, it is satisfied that the applicant is able to both comprehend and communicate effectively in English/French.

According to the Registration Guide, two possible pathways are (1) elementary and postsecondary education or (2) secondary and postsecondary education completed entirely in English/French.

The RTCC language test will facilitate the pan-Canadian approach by harmonizing language proficiency and removing the potential for inconsistent use of discretion.

Recommendation

Section 7(2) should be struck from the *TQR*.

Next Steps

1. Senior leadership signoff and approval;
2. Legislative amendment(s) to the *TQR*;
3. Dissemination to applicants and stakeholders;
4. Update registration materials.

Prepared by: The Policy and Research Unit

Date: April 28, 2021