

PRACTICUM ATTENDANCE POLICY

General Attendance Information:

The Ontario College of Teachers and the Ontario Ministry of Education regulates the number of days Teacher Candidates are required to be in a practicum setting. MT policy requires that Teacher Candidates be in attendance for the total number of days as designated in the MT Program Schedule. Absences of any nature during Field Experience Days or Practicum could result in some make-up days or in an unsuccessful practicum.

Make-up days cannot be scheduled during academic classes, and are usually completed in April/May. There are no exceptions allowed. Make-up practicum blocks are scheduled after the completion of classes in April/May. (Year 2 TCs completing the practicum components of the program in April/May must delay convocation until the following November.)

Important note: Make-up practicum blocks require TCs to pay an additional administrative fee of \$450.

Because attendance is of critical importance, Teacher Candidates are expected to:

- make medical and other personal appointments after school hours
- limit absences to illness, religious observances, or bereavement.

In very exceptional circumstances, a TC may request a deferral of a practicum due to health or medical reasons. A formal request of this nature should be made to the relevant Practicum Coordinator and include documentation to support the request, (e.g. medical note from a certified medical practitioner). This request will be discussed with the MT Practicum Committee.

If a Teacher Candidate steps out of a practicum **for any reason**, then the practicum is deemed to be unsuccessful. A make-up practicum will be scheduled in April/May and the TC will be required to pay the additional administrative fee of \$450.

Communication of Absences:

Teacher Candidates are expected to maintain the same high standards of professionalism that are followed by experienced teachers in the field. Therefore, if for any reason a candidate is absent during a practicum or Field Experience Day, he/she should immediately communicate the absence to all parties concerned with the placement. It should also be ensured that the instruction received by the students is not compromised by the Teacher Candidate's absence. Specifically:

1. Teacher Candidates **must** notify the AT via the school office before school begins for the day. The AT **MUST** know before the school day begins. Failure to do so will compromise your professionalism evaluation.
2. If the TC is scheduled to teach on the day of the absence, all lesson plans **must** be submitted to the AT before school begins.
3. Teacher Candidates must also send an email to both the Faculty Advisor and Practicum Coordinator, notifying them of the absence. TC's must make it a practice of keeping Faculty Advisors apprised of all developments during the Practicum, so he/she can better support the TC's development as a teaching professional.

If a Teacher Candidate is absent for three or more days due to illness, a medical certificate **MUST** be submitted to the Practicum Coordinator. There are no exceptions allowed. The Practicum Coordinator, in consultation with the Associate Teacher, will determine the status of a practicum with 3 or more days of absence (e.g., the scheduling of make-up days, or to schedule a make-up practicum due to a failed practicum.) In cases where the absence is less than three days, Teacher Candidates should meet with the AT to discuss current growth as a teacher, and to jointly decide whether to schedule additional teaching days, or not.

Punctuality:

Teacher Candidates assume the same responsibilities of punctuality as regular members of the staff. During a Field Experience Day, each TC should ask their Associate Teacher about expected daily arrival and departure times and demonstrate their professional commitment by abiding by these times.

Professional Activity Days:

If a professional activity day occurs during a practicum session, Teacher Candidates are expected to attend, participate, and follow the recommendations of the Associate Teacher and school Principal.

Snow Days:

TCs need to follow board/school policy regarding attendance on inclement weather days. Please consult your AT to find out the specific policy. If the school is closed due to weather conditions, TCs are not expected nor required to attend, nor do they have to make up the day. They do, however, need to connect with their AT and with their Faculty Advisor as per any absence. The situation can become unclear because schools are usually not *immediately* closed in the morning. In these cases, schools usually direct their teachers to *attempt* to come to school or go to the closest school. In some cases, it is announced via news reports that buses for a specific board have been cancelled due to inclement weather. In cases where many students arrive by bus, schools may direct their teachers to stay at home since they know that few students will attend. Therefore, to ensure clarity of expectations, during early orientation meetings with TCs before each Practicum block, it is the responsibility of each school to clearly outline their expectations for TCs in case of inclement weather.

