



Accreditation Committee Decision

College of Education Niagara University

Pertaining to Renewal of Accreditation of:

Consecutive program of professional education with areas of study in the Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior divisions, leading to a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Education degree

**Accreditation Committee
Ontario College of Teachers
June 7, 2023**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Requirements and Findings	5
Requirement 1	5
Requirement 1.1	6
Requirement 2	7
Requirement 3	9
Requirement 3.1	12
Requirement 4	22
Requirement 5	23
Requirement 6	25
Requirement 7	28
Requirement 8	30
Requirement 9	33
Requirement 10	34
Requirement 11	37
Requirement 12	39
Requirement 13	41
Requirement 14	42
Requirement 15	44
Decision of the Accreditation Committee	45

Accreditation Committee Decision Regarding the Application for Accreditation Submitted by the College of Education, Niagara University

Introduction

The College of Education at the Niagara University finalized the submission of an application on December 20, 2022, for renewal of accreditation of the following program of professional education:

- Consecutive program of professional education with areas of study in the Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior divisions, leading to a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Education degree

In accordance with Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs and Regulation 563/21 General, an accreditation panel was established to:

1. conduct a review of the aforementioned programs of professional education; and
2. act in an advisory role to the Accreditation Committee by reporting its findings and making recommendations with respect to the accreditation of the programs reviewed.

The four-person accreditation panel was comprised as follows:

- a person who is a member of the roster established for the Accreditation Committee, who has experience in teacher education program evaluation and who is formerly an educator in an accredited program of professional education,
- a member of the College who is a member of the roster established for the Accreditation Committee,
- a person who is not a member of the College who is a member of the roster established for the Accreditation Committee,
- a person nominated by the College of Education, Niagara University.

In making its recommendations, the panel reviewed the application for accreditation and other supplementary documentation provided by the College of Education at Niagara University. The accreditation panel conducted a virtual site visit on March 30-31, 2023. The site visit began with a welcome, land acknowledgement and short presentation by the Dean, Associate Dean and Program Chair of the College of Education, Niagara University. During the site visit, the accreditation panel conducted interviews with teacher candidates, alumni, faculty members, field experience coordinator, associate teachers, faculty advisors, and members of the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

The College provided an opportunity for members of the public to comment on the quality of the program under review. The College notified the public of the opportunity to make a submission to the panel by notices on the Niagara's website and through social media. The panel considered the four public submissions received.

Following the review, the accreditation panel compiled a draft report of its findings and recommendations for review by the College of Education at the Niagara University. The final panel report submitted to the Accreditation Committee considers the comments provided by the Dean in response to the draft report.

In making its decision, the Accreditation Committee considered the Accreditation Panel Final Report dated May 19, 2023, a response from the faculty Dean to the panel's draft report dated May 11, 2023, the Panel Chair's presentation to the Accreditation Committee and the regulatory requirements of Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs.

Requirements and Findings

The reasons for the Committee's decision and the facts upon which it is based follow herein:

Requirement 1

The provider of the program is a permitted institution.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the College of Education at the Niagara University is a permitted institution in accordance with Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs. A permitted institution includes an entity authorized under *the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act*, 2000 to offer a program of professional education leading to a degree, or to operate or maintain a university.

On October 13, 2017, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities renewed consent to Niagara University to advertise and offer a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Education in Ontario for a period of seven years, from 2017- 2024. Niagara will reapply for ministerial consent in October 2023 and will provide the College with documentation of renewed consent when received.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 1 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 1.1

The program is four academic semesters, including the days of practical experience required under subparagraph 2 v of subsection 1 (2).

Findings

The evidence indicates that the program offered by the College of Education at the Niagara University is four academic semesters, including the 80 days practical experience required.

The consecutive program is delivered over four semesters in a Fall/Spring/Fall/Spring format. Each year of the program begins in late August and ends mid-May, with the summer off between year one and year two. Each semester has a duration of four months. Teacher candidates complete two practicum placement blocks totaling at least 80 days in the second year of the program. One 40-day placement occurs in semester three and a second is completed in the final semester of the program.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 1.1 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 2

The program has a clearly delineated conceptual framework.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the program of professional education reviewed has a clearly delineated conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework for the College of Education's consecutive program centers on six guiding values:

1. Vincentian Philosophy
2. Constructivist Practice
3. Evidence-based Best Practice
4. Reflective Practice
5. Professional Commitment and Responsibility
6. Professional Relationships

It is from these six values that the ten Program Goals are derived.

Goal 1: Learner Development

Goal 2: Learning Differences

Goal 3: Learning Environments

Goal 4: Content Knowledge

Goal 5: Application of Content

Goal 7: Planning for Instruction

Goal 8: Instructional Strategies

Goal 9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

Goal 10: Leadership and Collaboration

The ten Program Goals support the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions aligned with the Ontario College of Teachers' *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the Ontario College of Teachers' *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*.

The conceptual framework is delineated throughout the program's course syllabi, assessment tools, practicum, teaching practices and pedagogies and various course assignments. The first two guiding values, Vincentian Philosophy and Constructivist Practice are delineated through the Niagara faculty's student-focused approach to professional practice, providing particular attention to the needs of students who may be marginalized or otherwise in need. These values are connected to the second Program Goal which focuses on learner differences and is delineated in a key common assessment task completed by all teacher candidates. The task requires teacher candidates to apply their developing knowledge of students in an authentic classroom setting. Constructivist Practice, the second Guiding Value, is delineated in coursework and is integral to practicums. Assessment of the practicums incorporates all ten Program Goals, that are aligned with College's *Standards of Practice* and the College's *Ethical Standards*. Reflective Practice, the fourth Guiding Value is delineated through coursework, modeled by faculty and is an expected part of all lesson and unit planning.

The conceptual framework is communicated to teacher candidates as part of every course syllabus. The values and Program Goals are referenced by all faculty and course instructors as part of their course descriptions and course learning objectives. Given the Program Goals are encompassed in practicum assessment, teacher candidates and their associate teachers utilize these goals to support teachers' candidates' progress during practicums.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 2 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 3

The design of the program is consistent with and reflects the College's "Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession" and the "Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession", current research in teacher education, and the integration of theory and practice in teacher education.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the design of the program reviewed is consistent with and reflects the Ontario College of Teachers' *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, current research in teacher education, and the integration of theory and practice in teacher education.

Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession

The design of the program is informed by and aligns with the Ontario College of Teachers' *Standards of Practice* and the *Ethical Standards*.

Niagara aligns their purpose, values, and Program Goals as well as the Ontario College of Teachers' *Standards of Practice* and *Ethical Standards* with the courses, experiences, and assessments within the program. All foundation, method and practicum courses, for both Primary/Junior (P/J) and Intermediate/Senior (I/S) divisional cohorts have been mapped to the College's *Standards of Practice* and/or the College's *Ethical Standards* and have been aligned to the relevant Program Goals. Examples of the alignment include, but are not limited to:

- Commitment to Students & Student Learning – Learner Development
- Professional Knowledge – Application of Content & Planning for Instruction
- Professional Practice – Instructional Strategies & Assessment
- Leadership in Learning Communities – Responsibility & Collaboration
- Ongoing Professional Learning and the Ethical Standards– Professional Learning & Ethical Practice

Niagara's program incorporates Common Core Assessments (CCAs) which are mandatory assignments required of all candidates and assessed using a standardized evaluation rubric. Teacher candidates submit CCAs as portfolio submissions to the program's learning management system. The rubric used to assess CCAs includes the College's *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* as criteria. Candidates must identify how they demonstrate each of the five professional standards and the four ethical standards. As an example, candidates submit an

Understanding the Students-Context for Learning CCA assignment to demonstrate their Commitment to Students and Student Learning.

While there is alignment to the *Standards of Practice* and *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* in coursework, it is the field experiences and practicum components that require teacher candidates to demonstrate their professionalism. Teacher candidates are assessed on a five-point scale aligned with the four *Ethical Standards* (care, respect, trust, and integrity) for their field experience and their preliminary practicum assessment. The mid-way practicum assessment focuses on the 10 Program Goals which are aligned with the *Standards of Practice*. At the end of their practicum blocks, teacher candidates' final practicum evaluation includes assessment on the College's *Ethical Standards*, and the 10 Program Goals that are aligned with the College's *Standards of Practice*.

The overarching program design includes course learning objectives, course assignments, common assessment tasks and practicum standards that align with the College's *Standards of Practice*. The program aligns with the College's *Ethical Standards* by supporting, developing and assessing teacher candidate dispositions throughout the program.

Current Research in Teacher Education

The design of the program is consistent with and reflects current research in teacher education.

The first semester has a heavier emphasis on understanding students and the context of the profession. This is consistent with the constructivist orientation of the program informed by research from Banihashem, Farrokhnia, Badali, Noroozi (2022); Dansforth & Smith (2005); Danielson (2007); Ladson-Billings (2009); O'Connor (2022); and Perkins (2009). The program emphasizes evidence-based practice and expects teacher candidates to strive to use research-informed strategies in their own practices. The evidence-based practice foci of the program are supported by research from Bauer; Prenzel, and Renkl (2015); Cook, Smith, and Tankersly (2012); Killian (2021); Parker, Brine, McGonnell, Baert, and Corkum (2020); Pellegrini, Neitzel, Lake, and Slavin (2021); Slavin (2002); and Wiseman (2010).

The College of Education infuses scholarly research from external researchers and theorists into the program. The Niagara faculty are also engaged in scholarly research which is embedded in individual courses or program development. Faculty members are engaged in current research on topics such as antiracism knowledge sharing, culturally responsive family engagement, building leadership capacity in areas of poverty, narratives of transgender youth, COVID action research, pandemic pedagogies, enhanced teacher education through the lens of risk, and self-reflective practice.

The program design and faculty research interests reflect the program's orientation of evidence-based research. Teacher candidates benefit from faculty research which is embedded in individual courses and broadly throughout the program. The program expects teacher candidates to strive to be current in their understanding of extant research as they

make professional decisions and employ appropriate research strategies to their practices. This is supported by mandatory courses on *Educational Research and Assessment of Learning* which include a focus on using current research to inform evidence-based practice. Teacher candidates must demonstrate capacity of evidence-based practice, supported by relevant research, on common assessments tasks.

The continuous development of the consecutive program is informed by research on current trends in initial teacher education. Three themes, equity, diversity and inclusion (Kelly, 2021; Liasidou, 2022); social-emotional aspects of teaching and learning (Cocoran and O’Flaherty; 2022; Yang 2021); and learning and evolving with current technology trends (Hill et al., 2022) inform the increased use of online and blended delivery of courses. Multi-modal delivery supports teacher candidates' virtual teaching skills and practices, provides inclusive learning options and can support wellness due to the increased flexibility in the program. Increased use of online and blended learning in addition to Niagara’s investment in online instructional resources will continue to build their faculty members’ skill to facilitate multi-modal delivery and respond to trends of the broader education system.

Integration of Theory and Practice in Teacher Education

The design of the program is consistent with and reflects the integration of theory and practice in education.

The guiding values of the College of Education’s conceptual framework include Constructivist Practice and Evidence-Based Practice. Program courses provide teacher candidates with multiple opportunities to progressively integrate and apply theoretical learning to their instructional practice in classroom settings. The program is structured with foundation courses at the onset in semester one. Semester two then supports the integration of this theory from foundation courses with the offering of method courses, focused on teaching practices.

Based on Niagara University’s constructivist approach the format and sequence of each semester includes theoretical learning as well as practical learning. Opportunities to apply theory to practice in foundation, method course and practicum placements are foundational to the program. The design of field placements in semester one and two supports teacher candidates’ learning from their coursework. In both final semesters, every teacher candidate completes a practicum block of at least 40-days. During the practicum blocks, teacher candidates take practicum courses that allow them to engage in critical reflexivity in their divisional seminar groups. This coursework occurring concurrently with practicum blocks allows teacher candidates to support the integration of theory into practice.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 3 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 3.1

The program enables students of a program of professional education to acquire knowledge and skills in all of the elements set out in Schedule 1.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the program enables students to acquire all the knowledge and skills in all of the elements set out in Schedule 1.

Curriculum Knowledge

Element 1 – Current Ontario Curriculum and Policy Documents

The program provides teacher candidates with knowledge and understanding of the current Ontario curriculum and provincial policy documents that are relevant to the candidate's areas of study and curriculum, including planning and design, special education, equity and diversity, and learning assessment and evaluation.

Primary/Junior Division

Teacher candidates in the Primary/Junior cohort acquire knowledge and understanding of the Ontario Curriculum in their integrated method courses in the following six core content areas for Grades 1-8: Language, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science & Technology, Health & Physical Education and the Arts. The Kindergarten Program is addressed and referenced in the *Methods in Early Learning* course and uses the Ministry of Education resources *The Kindergarten Program (2016)* and *The Kindergarten Addendum: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (2016)*. Teacher candidates use the curriculum and policy documents to inform planning, instruction and assessment practices.

Intermediate/Senior Division

Teacher candidates in the Intermediate/Senior division also acquire knowledge and understanding of the Ontario Curriculum in their respective teachable subject method courses. Method courses reference the grade 7 and 8 curriculum. Teacher candidates are led to understand the characteristics and needs of adolescent learners in grades 7 and 8 in Ontario through the method course, *Middle Childhood Philosophy and Practice*. Teacher candidates use current instructional design practices to create lesson or unit plans, and assessments informed by their understanding of the Ontario Curriculum, content knowledge and pedagogy.

Element 2 - Current Research in Teaching and Learning

The program offers several opportunities to prepare teacher candidates to use current research in teaching and learning with an emphasis on evidence-based practices. Teacher candidates examine current research to support professional decisions and employ appropriate research strategies to review and build their teaching practice.

In the *Introduction to Educational Research* course, teacher candidates review the principles of research in education, develop practical research skills and learn to analyze, synthesize, and critique educational research. Teacher candidates inform their developing teaching practice and their ability to connect research by completing a literature review based on a question from their teaching practice.

Some theories of learning are taught in specific courses, in the *Human Development, Learning and Motivation* course, teacher candidates learn theories related to Vygotsky. However, other theories are highlighted in various courses (e.g., Critical Race Theory). The program supports teacher candidates' understanding that the knowledge of education and learning is always evolving as reflected in research, curriculum revision and policy implementation.

Pedagogical and Instructional Strategies Knowledge

Element 1 - Educational Research and Data Analysis

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in using educational research and data analysis.

In the *Introduction to Educational Research* course, teacher candidates build capacities to collaborate with other colleagues around shared questions and areas of interest, looking at evidence, research, and theory to make precise, personalized pedagogical decisions and determine next steps. Teacher candidates complete a research summary project to introduce teacher candidates to the principles, processes and practices of research that are applicable to their specific teaching subject area and/or division. Teacher candidates demonstrate how they can mobilize the knowledge researched and implement it into their teaching practice to address key problems of practice.

In the *Foundations of Literacy* course all teacher candidates learn about the theories and concepts of teaching literacy, including pedagogies such as multiliteracies, multimodality, critical literacy and differentiated learning. Teacher candidates apply knowledge from educational research to analyze data from their classroom observations to demonstrate their command of theoretical and evidence-based literacy foundations and make connections to student data.

In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, all teacher candidates examine research to facilitate reflection on teacher and student roles within social constructivist teaching and learning. Teacher candidates examine their identities, positionality, implicit bias, collect data on students' lived experiences and reflect on how such elements can inform or influence teaching and student learning.

Element 2 - Technology as a Teaching Tool

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in using technology as a teaching tool. Niagara University's College of Education provides instruction using a variety of formats that support teacher candidates' ability to develop facility and familiarity with using technology as a teaching tool.

The program requires all courses to include integrating technologies into teaching and learning as a learning objective. This learning objective prepares teacher candidates to teach remote learners, as well as engage and motivate learners in face-to-face classroom experiences. The course instructors model the use of technology to demonstrate how technology engages students both synchronously and asynchronously.

In the *Instructional Technology* course, all teacher candidates examine the theoretical benefits of technology as a learning tool. Learning objectives include learning to use technology to enhance mobilization of knowledge, differentiation, collaborative learning, and construction as well as to encourage innovation, intellectual curiosity and creativity in the lessons and units they develop for their method courses.

Element 3 - Inquiry-Based Research, Data and Assessment to Address Student Learning Styles

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in using inquiry-based research, data and assessment, and current instructional strategies to address student learning styles.

Throughout the method, foundation and practicum courses, teacher candidates engage in learning, discussion, activities, observation, and complete assignments to link between instructional strategy and its impact on the learner in the classroom. In the *Foundations of Literacy* course, all teacher candidates must demonstrate how they apply strategies for integrating literacy across the curricula. Teacher candidates engage in inquiry and research projects where they identify an essential question or problem of practice, apply knowledge that pertains to their practice and make connections through reflection, research, praxis and/or pedagogy.

Element 4 - Learning and Teaching Methods and Differentiated Instruction

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in using learning and teaching theories and methods and differentiated instruction in both coursework and practicum placements.

The use of learning and teaching theories and differentiated instruction is addressed in the *Human Development, Learning and Motivation* course. All teacher candidates address how to relate cognitive and behavioural theories to the learning environment and apply this learning in an assignment that analyzes a student's developmental level, interests, motivations, preferred learning modalities and assets to be able to recommend what teaching and learning opportunities would best support the student.

In the *Teaching Students with Exceptionalities* course, all candidates are introduced to inclusive education and how this affects the teacher's role from the Ontario perspective of teaching and learning. Teacher candidates investigate Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI) as well as differentiated instruction (DI) and differentiated assessment.

Expectations for teacher candidates to understand learner exceptionalities that enable each learner to meet high standards are included in the practicum midway evaluation. Teacher candidates must achieve Level 3 or the Expected level identifying that they regularly include differentiation in planning and instruction for learners. The Lesson Plan template requires teacher candidates to include planned accommodations or modifications.

Element 5 - Classroom Management and Organization Skills

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in the development of classroom management and organization skills in coursework and practicum experiences.

In the *Foundations and Legal Principles of Education in Ontario* course, teacher candidates examine ways teachers ensure safety in classrooms. Teacher candidates review the *Ontario School Code of Conduct* to review classroom safety and management strategies, along with a range of other documents that support teacher candidates' understanding of the role of the teacher with respect of classroom management.

In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, teacher candidates are expected to demonstrate their understanding of specific practices that meet diverse needs of students in the classroom. The Common Core Assessment (CCA) for this course, requires teacher candidates to report on various classroom management and organization strategies that they implement during their practicum.

In the final practicum evaluation, teacher candidates are assessed on their skill to model and nurture a safe, positive learning climate of openness, mutual respect, support and inquiry; create and maintain an environment in which all students are engaged in individual and collaborative learning; meet expectations regarding the coordination of resources, time, space and learners' attention; and communicate respect for learners' cultural backgrounds.

Element 6 - Student Transitions

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in child and adolescent development and student transitions to age 21 and from kindergarten through to Grade 12. Information pertaining to child and adolescent development is addressed in Requirement 11.

Student transitions are addressed in the Primary/Junior division in the *Methods in Early Learning* course. Teacher candidates examine best practices to support the needs of students during various educational transitions (e.g., preschool to kindergarten, kindergarten to elementary years). In the Intermediate/Senior division, transitions are addressed in the *Middle Childhood Philosophy and Practice* course. Teacher candidates investigate how to motivate and engage middle school students in their learning as they transition into secondary classrooms.

Supporting transitions related to students with exceptional learning needs is addressed for all teacher candidates in the *Teaching Students with Exceptionalities* course. Teacher candidates investigate how to work with all students, using student strengths and evidenced-based approaches that address individual learning needs to promote learning, development, positive mental health, and wellbeing. Teacher candidates examine the process to create realistic and comprehensive Individual Education Plan (IEP), that includes considerations for students in transition years.

Element 7 - Student Observation, Assessment and Evaluation

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in using current strategies relating to student observation, assessment and evaluation in both foundation and method courses, as well as through field and practicum experiences.

All teacher candidates take mandatory foundation and method courses which address curriculum planning and assessment. Through coursework and assignments, teacher candidates deepen their understanding of assessment strategies and tools aligned to Ministry and school board policies, including *Growing Success – Assessment and Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario* (2010).

In the *Assessment of Learning* course, all teacher candidates examine how assessment for (diagnostic), as (formative) and of (summative) learning is facilitated and the factors that influence its impact on students. Teacher candidates cover how assessment and evaluation differ and how to implement assessment to support student learning. Faculty model

assessment *for, as or of* learning by using rubrics, providing feedback on course assessments, and by placing emphasis on the use of formative assessment data to support student learning.

The Lesson Plan template requires teacher candidates to determine and describe the use of assessment *for, as or of* learning, plan using students' prior knowledge, employ gradual release strategies (e.g., modeled, shared, guided or independent) and utilize evidence of students' learning during consolidation to inform next steps for teaching as well as for student learning needs. Teacher candidates examine rationale and purpose of including observation, conversations and product to inform their next steps and support student learning. Teacher candidates demonstrate the application of the achievement chart categories of knowledge and understanding, thinking, communication and application to inform their planning and assessment. In addition, teacher candidates build the knowledge and skills to connect lesson planning and curriculum expectations to reporting.

During practicum placements, teacher candidates must select, adapt, or design various types of assessments that align with curricular expectations; use assessments *for, as or of* learning; and give feedback to students, including next steps for improvement and growth to progress satisfactorily in the program.

Element 8 - Supporting English Language Learners

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills to teach students whose first language is not the language of instruction in coursework and through practical experiences.

In coursework and in practicum, all teacher candidates explore language development, language diversity and develop awareness and inclusive strategies to support multiple language learners, new to Canada. Teacher candidates develop and apply appropriate instructional strategies for English or multiple language learners. Learning objectives support teacher candidates' knowledge and skills to apply and integrate diversity, equity and inclusion strategies across the curricula. Practicum courses support candidates' further understanding and application of supporting English or multiple language learners by developing plans to respond to the issues and needs of new Canadians from cultural and linguistic perspectives. As part of practicum evaluation, teacher candidates must demonstrate satisfactory progression on planning and instruction, as well as demonstrating regular inclusion of differentiation based on learner diversities and assets.

Element 9 - Pedagogy, Assessment and Evaluation for Specific Curriculum Areas

Information pertaining to this element is addressed in Requirement 10.

Element 10 - Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in the policies, assessments and practices involved in responding to the needs and strengths of all students, including students identified as requiring special education supports through coursework, assignments, and practicum experience.

Content pertaining to supporting students identified as requiring special education support is addressed in coursework and practicum. In the *Teaching Students with Exceptionalities* course, teacher candidates examine current trends in education in inclusive classrooms in Ontario to develop an understanding of various exceptionalities and learn how to use strength-based approaches to address individual learning needs that promote learning, development, positive mental health, and wellbeing. Teacher candidates are introduced to the theories and methods of educating students with physical, cognitive, and emotional/behavioural exceptionalities. Teacher candidates develop skills to read and implement Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and learn strategies to support running an effective inclusive classroom. In the final practicum, candidates must demonstrate regular inclusion of differentiation in planning and instruction for learners and consistent implementation of accommodations and modifications as required by IEP or other regulations to meet satisfactory progression in the program.

Teacher candidates learn the legal responsibilities of teachers relative to curriculum, assessment and reporting expectations for students with special needs in the *Foundations of Legal Principles of Education in Ontario* course. All teacher candidates learn about Special Education law that supports and protects the needs of students with exceptionalities. This includes review of the *Education Act* with respect to special education, the identification, placement and review processes (IPRC) as well as mental health education.

The Teaching Context Knowledge

Teacher candidates in the program is provided with knowledge of the Ontario context in which schools operate in both coursework and practicum experiences.

Element 1 - Mental Health and Wellbeing

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and understanding in child, youth and parental mental health relevant to the elementary and secondary school environment in Ontario in course work and practical experiences.

An understanding of mental health in elementary and secondary learning environments, and their connection to current legislation and policies, such as *Ontario Safe Schools Act* (2000), and *Ontario Human Rights Code*, is developed for all teacher candidates in the *Foundations and Legal Principles of Education in Ontario* course. Teacher candidates also examine their legal accountability as outlined in Ontario policies and program memoranda pertaining to promoting student safety and wellbeing.

In the *Teaching Students with Exceptionalities* course, teacher candidates address how being able to identify individual learning needs can promote learning development, positive mental health, and wellbeing. Teacher candidates examine multi-exceptionalities, human rights, and Ontario Ministry of Education policy to develop an understanding of the benefits of strength-based teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Teacher candidates in the Intermediate/Senior cohort address social development, mental health, and wellbeing in the middle school classroom in the *Middle Childhood Philosophy and Practice* course. Teacher candidates learn to apply knowledge of the influence of family, culture, peer groups, and society (including media, legislation, expectations for success, discrimination and prejudice, socioeconomic level, violence, mental health, and wellbeing) to the learning, development, and motivation of pre-adolescent youth, and to their transition to secondary school. Teacher candidates in the Primary/Junior division examine best practices to promote wellbeing in children in the *Methods in Early Learning* course. In the practicum course, teacher candidates work collaboratively to develop a plan which addresses the promotion of mental health and wellbeing for teachers and students.

Element 2 - Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards

Information pertaining to this element is addressed in Requirement 3i.

Element 3 - Learning Transitions and Post-Secondary Pathways

Information pertaining to this element is addressed in Pedagogical and Instructional Strategies Knowledge Element 6.

Element 4 - Ontario Context

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills pertaining to the Ontario context in which elementary or secondary schools operate; Indigenous Perspectives, Cultures, Histories and Ways of Knowing; and Safe and Accepting Schools/Creation of a Positive School Climate.

Knowledge of the Ontario context is addressed in foundation courses where educational ideas, concepts and issues are reviewed in a historical, philosophical, sociological and cultural context. The program addresses several areas relative to understanding of education in the current Ontario context. Teacher candidates begin the program with foundation courses that focus teacher candidates' understanding of the context of education in Ontario. Teacher candidates develop an understanding of the value of planning and implementing student-centered instruction prior to developing instructional methodologies in the method courses.

In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, teacher candidates examine the theories, concepts and essential role of diversity, equity and inclusion in society and examine how the theories and concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion are applied to teaching and learning. Through critical reflection on the readings, their positionality, in-class discussion and activities, teacher candidates explore what diversity, equity and inclusion means to them and how they practically apply the theories to offer safe, inviting classrooms where all ideas are respected. In the *Foundations and Legal Principles of Education in Ontario* course, teacher candidates analyze the education system in Ontario, its laws and the ways in which diverse disciplines (e.g., history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, multiculturalism, economics, and ethics) are the basis upon which Western educational practices are built. Teacher candidates learn the legal framework for the governance of education and the role of teachers in Ontario.

Teacher candidates examine Indigenous perspectives, cultures, histories, and ways of knowing in two mandatory courses. In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, teacher candidates explore readings to investigate Indigenous epistemology and worldviews. In the *Foundations of Literacy* course, teacher candidates examine how to apply principles of effective instruction and develop appropriate instructional strategies for multiple language learners, Indigenous learners, and learners with limited schooling. Course resources are selected and reviewed to support use of current resources, include Canadian authors, and be connected to the Ontario context so equity, diversity, social justice and Indigenous perspectives are included.

Content pertaining to the development of safe, accepting and positive learning environments is addressed in coursework and practicum. In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, teacher candidates reflect on what they have learned and unlearned. The course promotes broadened perspectives, increased self-reflection, increased focus on student-centered instruction and awareness of students' lived experiences.

Teacher candidates are evaluated midway in their final practicum. This evaluation includes, but is not limited to, requiring teacher candidates to have satisfactory progression on knowledge of content areas, Ontario curriculum and expectations, cross-disciplinary skills, pedagogy as well as knowledge of learners and the community context, and modeling and nurturing a safe, positive learning climate of openness, mutual respect, support and inquiry.

Element 5 - Education Law and Legislation

Information pertaining this element is addressed in Requirement 11.

Element 6 - Professional Relationships

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in how to create and maintain the various types of professional relationships between and among members of the College of Teachers (OCT), students, parents, the community, school staff and members of other professions in coursework, field placements and practicum.

The program has Professional Learning and Ethical Practice identified as program goals. Teacher candidates are expected to engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to evaluate their practice, with an emphasis on the impact their choices have on learners and families.

Professionalism is a major theme of coursework, field experiences, and practicums. Teacher candidates must consistently demonstrate professionalism as outlined by being prompt, punctual, reliable, open to feedback and showing initiative. All teacher candidates have a dispositional evaluation completed in the *Foundations and Legal Principles in Education in Ontario* course, the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* course and the IMPACT field experience that encompasses professional relationships throughout this evaluation.

The importance of parent engagement and communication is addressed in foundation and practicum courses. In the *Teaching Students with Exceptionalities* course, the learning objectives include the ability to understand and demonstrate how to work collaboratively with families of their students. In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, a learning objective requires teacher candidates to identify strategies that build community and partnerships with families and community agencies. Teacher candidates explore strategies through collaborative work, required readings and journalling. In practicum courses, teacher candidates continue to build skills and strategies to support communication with families, explore privacy boundaries, and reflect on how to respond to topics of controversy.

The final practicum evaluation includes the Program Goal focused on Responsibility and Collaboration. Teacher candidates must demonstrate that they take responsibility for student learning and collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, and other school professionals to ensure learner growth and advance the profession.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 3.1 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 4

The program curriculum is current, references the Ontario curriculum, includes the application of current research in teacher education, and represents a wide knowledge base in the divisions and components of the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the program reviewed is current, references the Ontario curriculum, includes the application of current research in teacher education, and represents a wide knowledge base in the divisions and components of the program.

Findings related to this requirement are reported in Requirement 3.1.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 4 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 5

The course content of the program includes theory, method and foundation courses and makes appropriate provision for the application of theory in practice.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the course content of the program reviewed includes theory, method and foundation courses, and makes appropriate provision for the application of theory in practice.

Theory, Method and Foundation Courses

Theory is embedded in both the method and foundation courses that are required to be taken by all teacher candidates in the College of Education, Niagara University.

Six mandatory foundation courses are taken by all teacher candidates: *Foundations and Legal Principles of Education in Ontario; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Human Development, Learning and Motivation; Introduction to Educational Research and Statistics; Foundations of Literacy Instruction; and Teaching Students with Exceptionalities*. In addition to the six mandatory foundation courses, Intermediate/Senior teacher candidates are required to take the method course *Middle Childhood Philosophy and Practice*. Primary/Junior teacher candidates take the method course *Methods in Early Learning*.

The teaching method courses are described by division and area of study in Requirement 10.

Application of Theory in Practice

The program offers courses that have a balance of theoretical grounding and methodology. Coursework is strategically scheduled to prepare teacher candidates for application of theory to their field placements and practicums.

The course *Foundations of Literacy* has explicit provision for the application of theory in practice. Teacher candidates learn about concepts and pedagogies of teaching literacy and apply theoretical knowledge to analyze data and support informed pedagogical decisions. Teacher candidates examine how literacy is embedded in learning across the curriculum and all aspects of our lives. Teacher candidates learn the importance of the six skills of literacy (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and other ways of representing). Teacher candidates apply their theoretical learning in a field-based project which is a required Common Core Assessment (CCA). Teacher candidates demonstrate their understanding of the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of literacy, pedagogy, assessment, and evaluation practices, in the planning and response to the student observed for their project.

All teacher candidates learn theory related to diversity, equity and inclusion in their initial semester of the program. In the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* course, teacher candidates apply theoretical learning from topics such as, but not limited to dignity, respect, difference, identities (visible and hidden), implicit bias, and microaggression. Application supports teacher candidates in making sound instructional choices that effectively promote learning and development.

In their divisional groupings, teacher candidates learn the basic principles of observation and evaluation in the *Assessment of Learning* course with a focus on implementation of authentic assessment. Teacher candidates apply the principles by developing a formative assessment task/tool for a specific grade, selected subject and identified expectations from the appropriate curriculum.

In semester two, teacher candidates in the Intermediate/Senior division take a general method course, *Methods of Teaching in Intermediate/Senior Grades*. Teacher candidates build on the theoretical learning from their foundation courses, learning how to unpack curriculum documents to support planning and assessment. This course has teacher candidates consider their learners while developing strategies and skills to create inclusive classrooms that engage, connect and motivate adolescent learners.

In semester two, teacher candidates in the Primary/Junior division take *Methods of Teaching Math and Science*. Teacher candidates investigate the specific content strands of the Mathematics and Science and Technology curriculum. The overall strands of social emotional learning and STEM skills and connections are also reviewed. Teacher candidates apply their understanding of the curriculum, related research, instructional and assessment strategies by developing an integrated Mathematics/Science and Technology unit plan.

Opportunities to apply theory to practice occur in the program's practicum courses. Teacher candidates engage in reflective practice while applying their learning in their practicum blocks. Teacher candidates in their divisional groups examine topics such as teacher identity, teaching philosophy, linking history of education to current practice and learning to engage in critical reflexivity.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 5 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 6

The program's format and structure are appropriate for the course content.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the format and structure of the program are appropriate for the course content.

Niagara University's College of Education offers a two-year consecutive program. The consecutive program has two divisional cohorts, Primary/Junior or Intermediate/Senior. The program is delivered over four academic semesters, with a summer break between semester two and semester three.

Format

The structure of the program combines three types of experiences to prepare teacher candidates for certification as Ontario teachers: (i) coursework both in content areas and in foundational educational theories; (ii) field experience placements in schools or other educational settings that progress from observation, to assistance, to teaching; (iii) a minimum of 80 days of classroom practicum that draw upon course knowledge and allow teacher candidates to apply research and theory to practical learning and teaching practices in the classroom.

Semester one begins the sequence of course work with theoretical learning through foundation courses focused on equity, diversity and inclusion, legal principles, human development, students with exceptionalities, and literacy instruction coupled with a 13-day field placement. The second semester is comprised of method courses to support teacher candidates' shift to application in practice and has another 13-day field experience.

Year two combines coursework and practicum to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to reflect critically on their practice and build competence during two 40-day practicum blocks. Teacher candidates complete coursework while on practicum where they assume classroom teaching responsibilities under the supervision of a qualified associate teacher.

Course Work

In semester one, both Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior candidates take the same foundation courses, however in separate cohorts. Starting semester one with foundation courses focuses teacher candidates' initial learning on understanding students' learning needs and the Ontario context prior to exploring teaching methods and practices for specific divisions and/or subjects.

In semester two, teacher candidates are required to complete specific method courses for the divisions in which they are qualifying to teach: Primary/Junior or Intermediate/Senior. In both semester three and four, teacher candidates take one practicum course, one mandatory course, one elective along while completing a practicum of at least 40-days. The structure of the second year facilitates and supports candidates' opportunity to apply theory to practice and use reflective practice.

Program Delivery

The program is offered primarily face-to-face. However, the program offers courses in multiple modalities, including face-to-face, hybrid, synchronous online, hy-flex¹ and asynchronous online. Offering multiple modality delivery supports collaborative learning, program adaptability, flexibility (i.e., geographic, faculty), and development of virtual teaching skills for teacher candidates.

For each course offering, the Department Chair in collaboration with the Dean decides on the delivery format based on a number of factors including the approved delivery format for a specific course, balanced formats across a cohort, faculty expertise, preference for real time interaction and classroom space availability. Teacher candidates are made aware of the delivery format for each course prior to registration, to allow for informed selection regarding their course schedules. The program requires teacher candidates to attend as full-time students, be part of a cohort and commit to some face-to-face/in-person attendance through coursework. Field experiences and practicums are intended to be completed in person.

Course Credits

In year one of the program, teacher candidates complete 30 full credits which include foundation, curriculum (method), and practicum courses. The two field placements, completed in year one, are mandatory, however have no credit allocation. In year two of the program, all teacher candidates complete 30 full credits including foundation, method, and practicum courses as well as a practicum block in both semesters three and four.

In total, all candidates receive 60 full credits. Each semester teacher candidates take 15 credits where every three credits accounts for 37.5 hours of instruction. The program provides a total of 750 hours of instruction.

Program Features

Field Experience Placements (IMPACT & Teacher Apprenticeship)

¹ Hy-flex: some candidates attend face-to-face while others join synchronously online

All teacher candidates complete two field placements in year one. The field placements provide teacher candidates with the opportunities to start as observers in the IMPACT placement and take on more direct teaching responsibilities by the end of the second Teaching Assistantship field placement.

During the IMPACT placement, teacher candidates can assume a variety of roles, including but not limited to, co-leading a classroom, serving as an educational assistant, fulfilling the role of an early childhood educator (ECE) in JK/SK, tutoring students with exceptionalities and/or helping the school administration with special projects for the school.

During the Teaching Assistantship placement, teacher candidates are involved in a variety of activities, including but not limited to observation, assisting in the classroom, teaching, and assisting with co-curricular activities.

Building Professionalism – Seminars

Teacher candidates in both divisional cohorts take practicum courses during their third and fourth semester, while completing their two 40-day practicum blocks. The practicum courses, known as *Professional Seminars*, encourage teacher candidates to engage in reflective practice while applying their learning in their practicum blocks. The *Professional Seminar* courses include instruction on topics such as: classroom organization; classroom management; attitudes towards teaching and teaching ethics; personal reflection (e.g., identity, teaching philosophy); professional evaluation; basic understanding of school systems; career counselling and preparation. The spring *Professional Seminar* courses include a four-day conference that offers teacher candidates a selection of workshops hosted by specialists (e.g., literacy across the curriculum; mindfulness; creating inclusive classrooms).

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 6 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 7

Students are assessed and informed of their progress on an ongoing basis throughout the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that teacher candidates are assessed and informed of their progress on an ongoing basis throughout the program reviewed.

Niagara's College of Education program eligibility policy is included in the Field Placement Handbook that outlines the criteria to advance in the program. The program has articulated a series of gateways of evaluation, including gateways for Intake, Midway and Program completion. In order to progress to the first practicum in semester three, a teacher candidate must successfully pass the Midway gateway. This gateway includes a review of Grade Point Average (GPA) in method courses, field experience hours completion, disposition evaluation, field placement evaluation ratings, and the Common Course Assignment (CCA) average ratings.

Grading policies and regulations are posted on the Niagara University website and are communicated to all teacher candidates as part of the orientation process. Teacher candidates can review their individual assignment grades in the learning management system, at any point, and can review their final course grades on the Niagara's student portal system.

Coursework

Each course syllabus includes a Grading Policies and Procedures section that provides specific details on learning outcomes, assignment details and assessment for the course. This section defines the grading scale ranging from 97-100%, A+, to below 60%, which is deemed as a "fail".

Teacher candidates receive their grades from faculty throughout their courses as both diagnostic and formative measures. Grades and feedback are readily available to teacher candidates on the Grades Table within the Niagara learning management system. Teacher candidates are provided opportunities for resubmission of assignments after receiving feedback.

Practicum

Teacher candidates are assessed and informed of their progress in practicum settings through feedback from their associate teacher and faculty advisor.

Niagara has developed an assessment tool in which candidates are assessed against the Ontario College of Teachers professional and ethical standards. For example, the Program

Goal, Vincentian Tradition and Constructivist Practice align with the College's *Standards of Practice*, Commitment to Students and Student Learning in that teacher candidates must demonstrate they are members dedicated in their care and commitment to students. Associate teachers complete three practicum reports during a teacher candidate's practicum in each of semesters three and four. Practicum progress is assessed using a 5-point rating scale. The five scale points are: (1) Unacceptable, (2) Emerging, (3) Expected, (4) Advanced, and (5) Exceptional. The preliminary report assesses the teacher candidate on the College's *Ethical Standards: Care, Respect, Integrity and Trust*. Teacher candidates must have a rating of 3.0 or higher or the faculty advisor will arrange a check-in meeting. At the Midway assessment, the associate teachers assess the teacher candidates with respect to the ten Program Goals (refer to Requirement 2), which are aligned to College's *Standards of Practice*. The ten Program Goals categories are learner development; learner differences; learning environment; content knowledge; application of content; assessment; planning for instruction; instructional strategies; professional learning and ethical practice; and leadership and collaboration. Teacher candidates are expected to receive an average overall rating of 3.0 or higher. The Final practicum assessment combines the two assessment measures. As such, by the final evaluation in each practicum block, candidates are assessed on criteria pertaining to demonstration of the four ethical standards and the ten Program Goals (14 components in total).

Teacher candidates must achieve a rating of Expected (3.0) or higher for at least eight components on the final practicum evaluation. If a teacher candidate is rated as Unacceptable on any component, they will meet with their faculty advisor to review the area(s) of need. An Improvement Action Plan (IAP) is initiated by the faculty advisor in conjunction with the associate teacher if a teacher candidates experiences difficulty addressing any standards or is at risk of failing a practicum.

The faculty advisor observes the teacher candidate a minimum of two times each practicum, completes an observation form and usually conducts an on-site conference with the teacher candidate. Teacher candidates can utilize the feedback provided from the faculty advisor observations, the preliminary and/or the midway assessments to support their growth prior to the final practicum assessment.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 7 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 8

The program includes a practicum that satisfies the requirements set out in subparagraph 2v of subsection 1(2) and subsection (2).

Subparagraph 2v of subsection 1(2) sets out that the program includes a minimum of 80 days of practical experience, appropriate to the format and structure of the program, in schools or in other situations approved by the College for observation and practice teaching.

Subsection 9. (2) sets out that the requirements for the practicum portion of the program are as follows:

- 1. The practicum must include observation and practice teaching in an instructional setting in schools or other situations that use the Ontario curriculum or in situations approved by the College.*
- 2. Revoked.*
- 3. The practicum enables every student to participate in settings related to each division and at least one of the subject areas of the program that are relevant to the student.*
- 4. An experienced teacher supervises the students and assesses their practicum.*
- 5. A faculty member is appointed as an advisor for each student.*

Findings

The evidence indicates that all required components for the practicum are addressed in the program reviewed.

A Minimum of Eighty Days Appropriate to the Format and Structure of the Program

Niagara's consecutive program includes a minimum of 80 days of practical classroom experience. All teacher candidates are required to successfully complete two classroom practicums in the second year of the program.

The 80-day practicum is organized in two blocks in year two. During semester three, teacher candidates complete at least a 40-day practicum, completed in a 10-week block. In semester four, in the latter half of year two, teacher candidates complete another practicum of at least 40-days, completed in a 10-week block.

The format and structure of the practicum is such that it occurs concurrently with course work and practicum courses in semesters three and four of the program. The *Professional Seminar* practicum courses examine topics including but not limited to the role of the teacher, teaching ethics, classroom management. These seminar courses also promote reflective practice while teacher candidates are experiencing their practicum.

Observation and Practice Teaching in Settings that Use the Ontario Curriculum

The program includes observation and practice teaching in an instructional setting in schools or other situations that use the Ontario Curriculum.

Niagara's College of Education partners with a number of school boards. Practicum placements are generally made in 14 publicly funded Ontario school boards. However, other district school boards or private schools that use the Ontario curriculum are also used, if required.

The Field Placement Handbook includes a pacing guide that outlines typical uptake of classroom responsibilities to be discussed by associate teachers and year two teacher candidates. Teacher candidates are expected to assist with as well as observe classroom routines in week one. By week two, teacher candidates should be teaching lessons that have been shared and approved by their associate teachers. During weeks five through seven, teacher candidates should be progressing to assume two thirds of their associate teacher's schedule. As teacher candidates enter the end of their placements, they can be teaching up to 100% of their associate's assigned teaching allotment.

Each Division and One Subject Area

Teacher candidates complete practicums in both divisions for which they will be certified.

Primary/Junior teacher candidates complete their practicum in one of their qualifying divisions during their first practicum in semester three. By the end of semester four, these candidates complete practicums in both primary and junior divisions. Some Primary/Junior candidates complete a kindergarten placement as their primary division placement.

Intermediate/Senior teacher candidates complete practicums in both intermediate and senior divisions by the end of semester four. Intermediate placements consist of placements in a grade 7 or 8 class or grade 9 or 10 placements. Teacher candidates complete a practicum in at least one of their teachable subject areas and where possible have placements in both of their teachable subjects.

Experienced Teacher Supervises and Assesses

The College of Education, through the Field Experience Coordinator arranges and tracks all classroom practicums. Placements are selected in consultation with a representative of the school district to ensure the associate teachers are certified and teaching in the division and subject area of the placement, have a minimum of 5 years teaching experience, and have the approval of the school principal.

Associate teachers work with Niagara faculty advisors to help teacher candidates develop confidence and proficiency in teaching competencies. The roles and responsibilities of the associate teacher are described in the Field Placement Handbook. As mentors, associate

teachers provide modeling and feedback to support teacher candidate growth regarding teaching practice, reflection, curriculum knowledge, attitude, professionalism, and educational theory. In addition to ongoing daily feedback, associate teachers are responsible for completing and submitting three formal assessments. These include a preliminary, midway and final assessment in both practicum one, in the third semester and practicum two, in the fourth semester.

Faculty advisor

The College of Education assigns a university supervisor to all teacher candidates as their faculty advisor. A faculty advisor must have OCT certification in the division or subject area of the candidates or have supervisory expertise and experience. The faculty advisor must also have a minimum of five years' teaching experience. The faculty advisor serves as the liaison between the university and the associate teacher.

Throughout both practicums, teacher candidates communicate with their assigned faculty advisor via phone contact and/or e-mail. At least once during each practicum, teacher candidates will meet as a group with a faculty advisor who will facilitate peer sharing and reflections on issues pertaining to the candidates' specific experiences. The faculty advisor observes the teacher candidate a minimum of two times each practicum, completes an observation form and usually conducts an on-site conference with the teacher candidate.

Should a teacher candidate experience difficulty in their practicum and are at risk of failing the practicum, the faculty advisor will work with the teacher candidate and the associate teacher to develop a growth plan to address the concerns outlined in the Teacher Candidate Improvement Action Plan (IAP).

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 8 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 9

Successful completion of the practicum is a requirement for successful completion of the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that successful completion of the practicum is required for successful completion of the program reviewed.

In order to be recommended for graduation and degree conferral, teacher candidates in the program must successfully complete all program components including a minimum of 80 days of practicum.

The Field Placement Handbook stipulates teacher candidates must successfully complete a teaching practicum in semester three and semester four, achieving a grade of 3.0 or higher for at least eight components in order to complete program requirements, receive the Bachelor of Professional Studies degree, and be recommended to the Ontario College of Teachers for certification.

Teacher candidates who are not successful in the first teaching practicum are placed on academic warning and are not permitted to participate in the second practicum until such time as the requirement has been successfully met and documentation has been provided to the Field Experience Coordinator. Teacher candidates who do not successfully complete the second practicum are not permitted to graduate until documentation of successful practicum completion has been provided to the Field Experience Coordinator. Teacher candidates on academic warning who are not successful in achieving satisfactory on final practicum evaluations, may be dismissed from the program.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 9 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 10

The teaching method courses in the program are appropriate in relation to the divisions to which they relate.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the teaching method courses in the program are appropriate in relation to the divisions to which they relate.

Primary/Junior Divisions

Teacher candidates in the Primary/Junior cohort undertake division-specific method courses reflecting the six core content areas of the Ontario Curriculum: Language, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Health and Physical Education, Social Studies and The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts). Primary/Junior method courses reference the corresponding current elementary Ontario curriculum documents, relevant resources as well as Ministry of Education documents. The Kindergarten Program is explored in the *Methods of Early Learning* course, mandatory for all Primary/Junior teacher candidates.

The method course assignments are practical and support the link between instruction and assessment in the primary, junior and kindergarten classrooms. All method courses use the program's Lesson Planning template to support development of lessons or units that require teacher candidates to consider student needs, rationale for learning, technology that enhances learning, integrating subjects and assessment *for, as* and *of* learning. In the *Methods of Teaching Math and Science* course, candidates apply their understanding of the Ontario curriculum documents by creating a math mini-unit for a specific topic that includes objectives, teaching content, teaching methods and assessments. In the *Methods of Teaching Language and Social Studies* course, teacher candidates apply their understanding of the related curriculum expectations by creating a Critical Reading Project for a junior grade, focused on text that links language and social studies curriculum expectations. In the *Methods of Early Learning* course, all Primary/Junior teacher candidates prepare kindergarten report card comments. Teacher candidates examine pictures of kindergarten learning scenarios and use the Four Frames of the Kindergarten Program document in combination with *Growing Success (2010)* to create objective comments.

Intermediate/Senior Divisions

Teacher candidates in the Intermediate/Senior divisional cohort complete two method courses in their two teachable subject areas. Both method courses are taken in the second semester of year one of the program. In these method teaching courses, teacher candidates explore how to apply theory to the learning concepts in their teachable subjects. In addition, all Intermediate/Senior teacher candidates take the *Methods of Teaching in the Intermediate/Senior Grades* course. Teacher candidates learn how to design instruction and

assessment based on knowledge of the learner, the subject matter, the community and intended student outcomes. The *Methods of Teaching in the Intermediate/Senior* course supports Intermediate/Senior teacher candidates with teaching methods specific to their subject area, however, the candidates also benefit from learning from each other in this mixed subject cohort.

The following methodology courses are offered for the Intermediate/Senior cohort: *Dramatic Arts; Visual Arts; English; French as a Second Language; International Languages – Spanish; International Languages – Italian; Mathematics; Computer Studies; Science – General; Science – Biology; Science – Chemistry; Science – Physics; History; Geography; Politics; Religious Education; Law; Social Sciences – General; Business – General; Business - Entrepreneurship; Economics; Business – Accounting; and Business – Information & Communication Technology.*

Course outlines for Intermediate/Senior method courses reference the Ontario Curriculum documents, Grades 1-8 and Grades 9-12 and some of the related Ministry of Education resources for the Intermediate and Senior divisions as well as general Ministry of Education resource documents. All method courses have specific assignments pertaining to lesson planning, assessment and evaluation.

Teacher candidates are expected to link their assignments to subject specific Ontario Curriculum documents. In the *Methods of Teaching Social Science* course teacher candidates review the social science curriculum expectations to plan a unit that is expected to include 8-10 lessons that address a cluster of expectations from the Ontario Curriculum: *Social Sciences and Humanities, Grade 9-10 or Grade 11-12.*

All Intermediate/Senior candidates take the *Middle Childhood Philosophy & Practice* course. Teacher candidates learn about topics such as but not limited to inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, critical thinking, as well as language and logic development. Teacher candidates create an activity for middle school learners to demonstrate their pedagogical knowledge in two Intermediate subject areas, using the appropriate grade 7 and 8 curriculum. The learning objective requires teacher candidates to apply their knowledge of pre-adolescent youth in this assignment while exploring the grade 7 and 8 curricula.

Schedule 1 - Pedagogy, Assessment and Evaluation for Specific Curriculum Areas

The program enables teacher candidates to acquire knowledge and skills in pedagogy, assessment and evaluation for specific curriculum areas within the curriculum-specific method courses.

Method courses in both the Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior divisional cohorts examine teaching methodologies and assessment practices. Content and assignments relating to teaching strategies, lesson and unit planning, curriculum delivery, pedagogical decision making and assessment and evaluation are evident in many method course

outlines. All method courses use the program's Lesson Plan template which requires teacher candidates to outline curriculum expectations, learning goals, success, criteria, and selected assessment strategies that outline if assessment is *for*, *as*, or *of* learning. Teacher candidates acquire knowledge and skills in specific curriculum areas informed by the Ontario Curriculum and Ministry Policy documents that support their learning about the appropriate subjects for their divisions. Course work supports teacher candidates' proficiency in skills pertaining to triangulating assessment data; teaching and assessing for diversity of students; providing accommodations appropriate for their grade and/or subject area; applying the assessment knowledge and skills from *Growing Success* and completing report cards for their specific grades or subject areas.

Method courses for the Primary/Junior cohort devote specific time to the Kindergarten program that have teacher candidates consider developmental and wholistic perspectives on experiential play-based learning. Method courses for the Intermediate/Senior cohort prepare them to teach and assess various grade 7 and 8 subject areas and to support the diversity of learners in their classes. Overall, teacher candidates are prepared to chunk expectations from the curriculum, connect assessment and evaluation to support student learning.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 10 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 11

The teaching theory and foundation courses in the program include courses on human development and learning and on legislation and government policies relating to education.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the teaching theory and foundation courses in the program reviewed include human development and learning and legislation and government policies relating to education.

Human Development and Learning

Human development and learning, as it relates to education, is integrated into several mandatory foundation courses for the Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior cohorts.

All teacher candidates are required to successfully complete the *Human Development, Learning and Motivation* course. All candidates examine the developmental stages of early childhood, childhood, preadolescence, and adolescence to gain awareness of human learning, maturation and motivation. Teacher candidates explore the topics of cognitive development; self, social and moral development; behavioural view of learning; cognitive views of learning; complex cognitive process; the learning sciences and constructivism; and social cognitive view of learning and motivation.

In the Primary/Junior *Methods of Early Learning* course, teacher candidates focus specifically on creating programming to facilitate children's development and early learning through exploration and analysis of fundamental principles of childhood development.

In the Intermediate/Senior *Middle Childhood Philosophy and Practice* course, teacher candidates focus specifically on the learning development and motivation of preadolescent youth.

To fulfil set program standards focused on learner development, each teacher candidate must demonstrate all the following for satisfactory progression on the final practicum evaluation: consistently creates and provides learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate for most of the learners with attention to the needs of individual learners; regularly scaffolds the next level of development; and frequently designs learning experiences that integrate different areas of development including cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical.

Legislation and Government Policies

All teacher candidates in the program are required to successfully complete the course *Foundations and Legal Principles of Education in Ontario*. In this course, all teacher candidates learn about the legislation and government policies relating to education. This

course allows teacher candidates to develop the knowledge to carry out their ethical and legal responsibilities in the classroom. They explore topics such as but not limited to constitutional law as applied to education; duties of a teacher; standard of care; negligence; 'reasonable' behaviour; rights and responsibilities of students and parents; freedom of expressions and religion, records and confidentiality; teacher autonomy and lines of authority; school safety, negligence in the classroom, sexual conduct, teacher as role models, teaching and technology and teachers in the workplace.

Teacher candidates collaboratively analyze a number of case studies to apply their understanding of the relevant legal and professional issues. For each case, teacher candidates identify the main issue, identify relevant areas of education law and determine the likely outcome of the incident.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 11 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 12

The faculty members teaching the program are an appropriate combination of, persons with appropriate academic qualifications, practitioners with appropriate experience in the field of education, and persons with appropriate expertise in the divisions and components of the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the faculty members teaching in the program are an appropriate combination of persons with appropriate academic qualifications, practitioners with appropriate experience in the field of education, and persons with appropriate expertise in the divisions and components of the program.

Academic Qualifications

Instruction in the program is delivered by faculty composed of full-time faculty members, associate professors, assistant professors, adjunct professors, faculty fellows, senior lecturers, and part-time instructors. The College of Education's full-time faculty all hold doctoral degrees. All other instructors hold, at a minimum, a master's degree, OCT certification and no less than three years of K- Grade12 teaching experience or demonstrate exceptional qualifications to be exempt from these minimum standards.

Experience in the Field of Education

The majority of faculty members bring experience in elementary and/or secondary schools from varied roles. The faculty and course instructors bring a balance of field and academic backgrounds and experience. Many faculty members have held positions at other faculties of education within Ontario, across Canada and internationally, bringing diverse perspectives, experiences, and comparative research. The faculty bring together diverse perspectives on education and foster multidisciplinary expertise in areas such as, but not limited to, assessment and evaluation, Indigenous education, curriculum development, early childhood education, history of education, language and literacy for first and additional language acquisition, learning and teaching, learning exceptionalities, environmental education, and inclusion and special education.

Expertise in the Divisions and Components of the Program

Faculty members have expertise in the divisions and subject areas of the program in which they teach. The majority of faculty members are Ontario Certified Teachers, in good standing, having qualifications in primary, junior, intermediate, and/or senior divisions as well as numerous additional qualifications.

The development of the College of Education's program, courses and common assessments is informed by the research and expertise of its full-time faculty members. New part-time faculty members are selected to supplement the knowledge base of the full-time faculty and reflect the diversity of the program's cohorts. Where possible, each course has an assigned course lead to support coherency of content, currency of resources and support instructors as needed.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 12 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 13

The permitted institution maintains adequate internal controls to preserve the integrity of student records relating to the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that Niagara maintains adequate internal controls to preserve the integrity of teacher candidate records relating to the program reviewed.

The protection and privacy of teacher candidate information is protected under the University's Information Security and Digital information Protection Policy. This policy outlines the Purple Pass system that provides teacher candidates with login credentials to university systems. This system ensures that communication to and from the University and University business, occurs in a secure system. Teacher candidates are required to log into a secure learning management system for any information related to submitting assignments, reviewing course grades, collaborating with peers, and accessing course information.

At Niagara University, the Information Security and Digital Information Protective Policy applies across the University to include all academic and administrative sectors, third-party agents of the University, and any other University affiliate that is authorized to access institutional data, services and systems. All information is protected in accordance with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is US privacy legislation, and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), which is Canadian privacy legislation.

All program application information is stored in a data system that requires two-factor authentication access for any duly authorized representative. Once a candidate is admitted to the program, a paper file is created, and these files are maintained in a locked office at the Vaughan location while candidates are matriculated within the program. Upon completion of the program, candidate transcripts and graduate files are scanned and stored securely on university servers.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 13 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 14

The permitted institution is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance of the program and, if the program is an existing program, has implemented measures demonstrating that commitment.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the College of Education, Niagara University is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance for the program reviewed and has implemented measures demonstrating that commitment.

As part of their commitment to continuous improvement, Niagara implemented additional strategies to enhance their quality assurance system. A Quality Assurance System (QAS) delineates the program's quality assurance process. The QAS focuses on the program's core purpose to develop skilled, ethical teachers who advocate for positive change by learning, leading, and serving students, families, and communities, especially those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. Secondarily, the QAS focuses on the program operations to maintain and enhance its ability to meet that core purpose.

As outlined in the QAS, program data, including that from courses and field experiences, is synthesized and reviewed by the Assistant Dean, faculty and stakeholders to inform decisions and revisions related to program improvement, candidate admission, retention and graduation. The aggregated data drives the program's quality assurance process. For example, results from common rubric scoring guides for Common Core Assessments (CCA) are gathered and reviewed to determine if teacher candidates are demonstrating knowledge and skills appropriate for graduation. Scores from CCAs are aggregated on an annual basis and trends are determined based on three years of data. Program strengths are suggested in areas where the means are highest and ninety-five percent or more of the ratings are outstanding, while areas for program improvement are identified where the means are lowest, and more of the ratings are satisfactory. Program faculty and course instructors discuss potential program improvements based on the results.

The QAS includes annual progress reports that identify continual improvement through goal setting and assessment. The program annual reports are distilled from the program area of focus and aligned to the program QAS. Actions such as the maintenance, change and elimination of course syllabi or course assessments are taken or planned as a result of the outcomes achieved.

For faculty to support and guide one another, the Leadership and Planning Team revised the Niagara wide continuous improvement process for all program areas to include two focus areas each year. Past areas of focus for improvement included implementing a Common Course Assessment (CCA) to determine the impact of teacher candidate learning for *Assessment of Learning*. Other improvements included program alignment to the College's professional and ethical standards; development of professional dispositions; and

articulation of program evaluation measures for intake, practicum, and graduation. This focus resulted in the revised IMPACT evaluation form and course-based disposition evaluation form.

Current areas of focus relate to program standards for technology and the improvement of alumni and stakeholder feedback processes. Faculty are reviewing program assessments to identify technology integrations. They are also reviewing survey data from alumni to inform program improvements and recommend strategies for collecting future information from alumni and other stakeholders.

The Program Coordinator meets monthly with the Dean of Education and the Assessment Coordinator to examine program data and discuss next steps for program improvement. These meetings address the review of feedback and program data, with a focus on program improvement, identify the stakeholders who should be involved in next steps and identify information to be shared with the Teacher Education Advisory Committee.

The university distributes Student Perception Surveys to all teacher candidates at the end of semesters to gather feedback to support faculty reviews. Alumni are provided with an opportunity to complete a graduation survey to provide feedback to the program.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 14 is fully satisfied.

Requirement 15

The program has a Teacher Education Advisory Committee or similar body that functions in an advisory or liaison capacity in relation to the program.

Findings

The evidence indicates that the program has a Teacher Education Advisory Committee that functions in an advisory and liaison capacity in relation to the program.

The Teacher Education Advisory Committee provides a collaborative forum for education stakeholders to provide input and feedback on Niagara's program. Committee meetings also allow for the opportunity to share updates or current issues.

Niagara's Teacher Education Advisory Committee meets twice per year. Committee members includes representatives from the faculty, principals and teachers from various school boards, and professional developers from educational companies.

Input from the TEAC has informed decisions pertaining to components of the program as well as program improvement. The committee has consulted on such topics as dispositions, program gateways, Common Core Assessments (CCAs), program locations, enrollment, recruitment, program electives, faculty ratios, and school and community partnerships.

Conclusion

Based on the information provided, the Accreditation Committee finds that Requirement 15 is fully satisfied.

Decision of the Accreditation Committee

For the reasons set out above, the Accreditation Committee finds that the following program of professional education offered by the College of Education, Niagara University fully satisfies the requirements of Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs:

- Consecutive program of professional education with areas of study in the Primary/Junior and Intermediate/Senior divisions, leading to a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Education degree

The Accreditation Committee grants general accreditation to this program for a period of seven years until June 7, 2030 or for an amended period of time that is in accordance with Section 15 of Regulation 347/02, Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs.

Accreditation Committee
Ontario College of Teachers
June 7, 2023