PROGRAM STANDARDS

Introduction

Established in 1972, TESL Ontario is a non-profit organization serving the needs of teachers of English as a Second Language. It represents more than 4,600 language training professionals and is instrumental in influencing the success of many thousands of English language learners throughout Canada. TESL Ontario's expertise is in teaching, advocacy, accreditation, and professional development.

The TESL Ontario Language Instructor Certificate of Accreditation has been designed for individuals interested in teaching in adult ESL programs in Ontario, other Canadian provinces, and other countries. TESL Ontario accredited instructors are being hired by a wide range of employers in both publicly-funded and privately-funded sectors including settlement agencies, school boards, colleges, universities, and private language schools. A major requirement of TESL Ontario Language Instructor Accreditation is the completion of a TESL training program recognized by TESL Ontario.

The standards outlined in this document are for TESL training programs seeking TESL Ontario accreditation. These standards serve as the foundation for quality assurance and are applicable to TESL training programs provided by universities, colleges, school boards and private institutions.

To ensure the TESL training program accreditation standards remain relevant and transparent, and reflect best practice in the field of TESL training, they are periodically reviewed and updated by the TESL Ontario Standards Committee in consultation with the TESL Ontario accredited TESL Program Directors.

Purpose

The standards for TESL training program accreditation have been designed to

- promote excellence in TESL training and administration;
- provide an objective means to review the quality of TESL training programs and identify the strengths and areas for improvement;

- publicly recognize and promote TESL training programs and institutions that meet the standards; and
- assure the quality of programs and institutions for students and the public.

Standards

1. Mission Statement

A written mission statement or a brief text which describes the purpose and organizational commitments of the program (or host institution) is in place.

2. Training Structure and Curriculum

2.1. Program structure and curriculum are consistent with learning outcomes.

2.2. Training domains, program outcomes, and course objectives are aligned with each other and cover the TESL training domains and outcomes recognized by TESL Ontario. (http://teslontario.net/tesl-training-domains-and-standards)

2.3. Training content covers the TESL topics (theory, methodology, professionalism, and practicum) recognized by TESL Ontario. (Ctrl+ Click: http://teslontario.net/uploads/accreditation/Institutions/Topics.pdf)

2.4. Program length and number of hours assigned to each major training component (theory, methodology, professionalism, and practicum) meet the TESL Ontario standard.

(Ctrl+ Click: http://teslontario.net/uploads/accreditation/Institutions/Topics.pdf)

2.5. The theory and methodology components of accredited training are delivered in one of the following modes:

fully in-person
fully online-synchronous
hybrid (in-person & online-synchronous)

Accredited programs may include asynchronous activities and/or hours of instruction; however, those hours may not be counted towards the TESL Ontario required 250 hours of theory and methodology instruction.

2.6. Practicum meets the TESL Ontario practicum requirements.
(http://teslontario.net/accreditation/institutions/practicum-requirements)

2.7. Practicum mentors meet the TESL Ontario standards for mentors.
(http://teslontario.net/accreditation/institutions/practicum-requirements)

2.8. There are measures/guidelines in place to ensure that TESL Ontario practicum requirements are met.

2.9. Teaching materials, methodologies, and assessment tools and techniques are aligned with the course learning outcomes.

2.10. Program levels, number of terms per year, number of weeks per term, and number of hours of instruction per week/per course are specified.

2.11. A process for regular updates to the curriculum is in place.

3. Assessment

3.1. Transparent assessment policies and procedures are in place.

3.2. Information about assessment policies and procedures including the grading scheme and graduation requirements is provided to students.

3.3. Course-based written progress reports and formative feedback indicating the level of achievement and performance are provided to students on a regular basis.

3.4. Official transcripts and certificates are issued to students who have completed all required training and practicum components, and have met the program graduation requirements.

4. Student Appeals/Complaints

4.1. Policies and procedures for student appeals/complaints are in place.

4.2. A written description of appeal/complaint policies and procedures is provided to students (e. g. a web link and instructions to read it).

5. TESL Trainers

5.1. Trainers (Theory Instructors, Methodology Instructors, Practicum Supervisors, and Academic Coordinators) meet the TESL Ontario standards for TESL trainer approval and hold a valid (new or renewed) TESL Ontario TESL Trainer Certificate of Approval. (http://teslontario.net/accreditation/trainer)

5.2. Trainers' assignments are in accordance with the qualifications recorded on their TESL Ontario Certificate of Approval and are based on their educational background, training, and work experience.

5.3. A TESL trainer evaluation process is in place.

5.5. Trainers are aware of and observe the Code of Ethics for TESL Ontario Members and integrate them in their professional conduct and activities. (Ctrl+ Click: http://teslontario.net/uploads/aboutus/CodeofEthics.pdf)

5.6. Trainers are responsible for engaging in ongoing professional development (PD).

6. Admission

6.1. Transparent admission policies and requirements are in place.

6.2. Admission requirements and procedures ensure that applicants are qualified to enroll in the program and have a reasonable chance of completing the training successfully.

6.3. Appropriate procedures are in place and assistance and advice are provided to ensure that applicants understand the admission and registration policies as well as the requirements for TESL Ontario accreditation prior to enrolling in the program.

6.4. If the TESL program (or the host institution) admission requirements are lower than those of TESL Ontario accreditation, each student is provided with a waiver which they must sign prior to enrolling in the program indicating that they are aware of the TESL Ontario accreditation requirements.

7. Administration

7.1. The program and its host institution comply with all local, provincial, and federal laws; meet all applicable ministerial and institutional regulations; and adhere to any applicable registration process required by law.

7.2. Administrative policies and procedures pertaining to the services and operations of the program are fully operative and accessible to all students and other applicable stakeholders.

7.3. Administrative policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are transparent and appropriately implemented.

7.4. Administrative staff have relevant training and experience.

7.5. For the session covered by self-evaluation report, all student and trainer records are kept current, accurate, secure, and when appropriate, confidential. These records are retained until self-evaluation report is approved by TESL Ontario.

7.6. Procedures for financial supervision are in place.

8. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

Facilities, equipment, supplies, and means of communication that support a high quality educational environment and are accessible to TESL students, TESL trainers, and TESL program administrative staff are in place.

9. Review Plan

9.1. Regular reviews are conducted of the program structure and curriculum, and all policies and procedures regarding TESL trainers, administration, admission, student services, and appeals/complaints.

9.2. The TESL program has a written description of its review plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TESL Ontario recommends that TESL training programs applying for TESL Ontario accreditation review the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF) document (http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/oqf/) developed by the

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. The OQF includes all postsecondary certificate, diploma and degree programs offered under the auspices of the Province of Ontario, identifies the main purposes of each qualification, outlines the learning expectations for graduates who hold each type of qualification, and shows the relationship between the different qualifications. Furthermore, OQF sets out clear guidelines for the design of new programs and provides the continuum of learning expectations along which any new qualifications can be placed. In addition, the OQF, which is based on internationally recognized descriptors, assists programs and institutions in comparing Ontario's standards with those in other jurisdictions, whether for purposes of study in Canada by those from other countries, study abroad by Canadians or the export of Canadian programs to other jurisdictions.

2. Training Partner- Having a training partner is recommended to both private schools and other educational institutions. This is a plan for student protection in case of a school/program closure. If a school closes, the training partner will look after the students. The private sector has a TCAF (Training Completion Assurance Fund) to which they all contribute, and if a school closure happens, students can get refunds from there to cover the costs of completing the training elsewhere.

TESL ONTARIO COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

TESL Ontario respects that there is a difference between a legitimate complaint involving a breach of TESL Ontario standards and a complaint that should be dealt with at the program provider level. In case of a complaint lodged with TESL Ontario, however, more information from the TESL Program concerned may be required in order for TESL Ontario to respond clearly to the complainant. Therefore, fact finding will occur initially with a phone call or an email to the program provider as part of the complaint review process. This is not intended as an assumption on behalf of TESL Ontario that a breach of standards has occurred.

After the initial fact finding follow-up, the steps outlined below are taken only when a breach of the TESL Ontario TESL program accreditation standards seems to have occurred. Some examples of the breach of the standards are denying a student's right to appeal, not providing opportunities for 20 hours of supervised

individual practice teaching in an adult ESL environment, not covering all topics required by TESL Ontario.

Only when warranted and necessary will TESL Ontario intervene, make Suggestions, and follow up.

Resolution Procedures

Step 1. The TESL Ontario Accreditation Services Manager communicates the problem (complaint, grievance, etc.) to the TESL Program Director and requests information. The TESL Program Director will complete this step in 30 business days.

Step 2. The Accreditation Services Manager and the TESL Ontario Adjudicator review the clarification provided by the Program Director to determine whether a breach of standards has occurred.

Step 3. If a breach of standards has occurred, the Accreditation Services Manager will send the Program Director a notice in writing that a breach has taken place and request a response regarding what measures will be implemented to ensure compliance with the TESL Ontario standards. The Program Director will also be asked to submit a timeline for the implementation of the changes. The TESL Program Director's response will be due in 30 business days from the date of notification.

Step 4. The Accreditation Services Manager and the Adjudicator review the Program Director's response, and if needed, outline further changes that may be required along with an implementation timeline. These are sent in writing to the Program Director.

Steps 5. By the due date established in Step 3 or Step 4 above, the Program Director notifies the Accreditation Services Manager of the measures taken to ensure compliance with the TESL Ontario Standards.

Step 6. Within 30 business days of the established completion date, the Accreditation Services Manager and the Adjudicator review the changes

implemented by the TESL program to determine the TESL program's compliance to the standards. The Program Director is then notified of the results in writing.

Step 7. If the measures taken by the TESL program are not satisfactory and non-compliance persists, the TESL Ontario accreditation of the TESL program will be suspended. The suspension will be in effect until TESL Ontario completes a thorough review of the program and is convinced that the program has implemented the necessary changes to comply with the standards.

Please note:

- Accreditation of a program can be suspended more than once.
- Subsequent applications for program accreditation will still be considered.