# CTESOL Program Accreditation

# 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.

Individuals interested in teaching English in the private sector in Ontario, in the private and publicly-funded sectors in the other Canadian provinces, and in foreign countries usually go through a short-term English teacher training program. Considering the proliferation of these programs in Canada (and around the world) and the growing demand for higher quality and accountability in these programs, TESL Ontario has developed the standards for Canadian TESOL (CTESOL) training program accreditation. These standards reflect best practice in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages and set the foundation for quality assurance in short-term certificate programs. Furthermore, to ensure these standards remain relevant and transparent, they are periodically reviewed and updated by the TESL Ontario Standards Committee in consultation with the TESL Ontario accredited training providers.

The short-term English teacher training programs applying for the TESL Ontario CTESOL Program Accreditation are required to meet the standards outlined in this document.

## Scope and Purpose

The standards for CTESOL program accreditation are designed for teacher training programs that are of a minimum of 120 hours in length and prepare trainees to teach English to adult learners in the private sector in Ontario, in the private and publicly-funded sectors in the other Canadian provinces, and in various contexts in foreign countries.

These standards are relevant and applicable to all short-term programs regardless of their mode of delivery (on-site, online, or blended). Online and blended programs should arrange for the practicum component of the training to be completed on-site. They will also need to account for their instructional hours differently than on-site programs.

The CTESOL program accreditation standards are intended to promote excellence in short-term English teacher training and administration, provide a framework for institutions interested in developing and delivering a short-term English teacher training program, provide an objective means to review the training quality and identify the strengths and areas for improvement, and assure the high quality of the training for the trainees and the public.

## Standards

### 1. Mission Statement

A written mission statement describing the purpose and organizational commitments of the program (or its host institution) is in place.

The mission statement
- Reflects the aims and values of the program
- Is written so as to be understood by staff, trainees, and the public
- Is accessible to staff and prospective and current trainees
- Guides the development of the curriculum and is the basis for all program activities
- Is evaluated periodically and revised as necessary

### 2. Training Structure and Curriculum

2.1. The program structure and curriculum are consistent with the learning outcomes.

2.2. The training domains, program outcomes, and course objectives are aligned with each other and cover the CTESOL training domains and outcomes recognized by TESL Ontario.

2.3. The training content covers the CTESOL topics (theory, methodology, professionalism, and practicum) recognized by TESL Ontario.

2.4. The program length and number of hours assigned to each major training component (theory, methodology, professionalism, and practicum) meet the TESL Ontario standard. The program consists of at least 100 instructional hours and a minimum 20-hour practicum.

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. The practicum component of the program meets the TESL Ontario CTESOL practicum requirements.

2.7. Practicum mentors meet the TESL Ontario standards for CTESOL practicum mentors.

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

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

2.10. Program length, number of weeks per session, and number of hours of instruction per week/per course are specified.

2.11. Promotional materials inform potential trainees of the length and structure of the program.

2.12. 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 trainees.

3.3. The program has effective formative and summative assessment procedures in place to determine trainees' achievement of the learning outcomes.

3.4. The program has written procedures for documenting trainee progress and for regularly informing trainees of their individual performance.

3.5. Trainees are informed of criteria and procedures for how they will be assessed, including assessment of the practicum.

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

3.7. The program has a formal, written plan for development and on-going review and revision of its assessment practices.

4. Trainee Services

4.1. Trainee services are transparent and consistent with the program mission.

4.2. The program clearly communicates all trainee services that are available to trainees and consistently provides these services.

4.3. The program provides academic advising in a timely and accurate manner.

4.4. The program provides general advising about topics of interest to trainees (e.g., placement and employment opportunities).

4.5. The program provides trainees with written documentation of the procedures by which they may lodge formal complaints, has a documented procedure for responding to complaints, and responds to complaints in an ethical and culturally sensitive manner.

4.6. The program keeps a record of all formal complaints and how each was resolved

5. Trainers

5.1. Trainers (Theory Instructors, Methodology Instructors, Practicum Supervisors, and Academic Coordinators) hold valid membership with a provincial TESL organization.

5.2. Trainers meet the TESL Ontario trainer approval standards and hold a valid (new or renewed) TESL Ontario Trainer Certificate of Approval.

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

5.3. A 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.

5.6. Trainers are responsible for engaging in ongoing professional development (PD to remain current in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

6. Admission

6.1. Admission and enrollment policies are transparent and consistent with the program mission.

6.2. Properly trained individuals oversee admissions.

6.3. Admission requirements and procedures ensure that applicants are qualified to enroll in the program, have the appropriate background to benefit from the program, and have a reasonable chance of completing the training successfully.

6.4. 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.

6.5. If the CTESOL program (or its host institution) admission requirements are lower than those of TESL Ontario accreditation, each trainee 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.

6.6. Both the admission policies and the personnel who implement the policies and processes adhere to ethical standards and good practice.

7. Administration

7.1. The program administrative structure and policies are transparent and support the program mission.

7.2 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.

7.3. The program is staffed with a sufficient number of administrative personnel to achieve the program mission.

7.4. Administrative personnel have appropriate education, training, and experience for their positions.

7.5. Administrative policies and procedures relating to program operations are fully operative and accessible to all who are affected by them; reviewed regularly; and implemented in a timely, fair, systematic, and ethical manner.

7.6. The program has transparent policies about internal and external communication and facilitates communication that is accurate, timely, and ethical.

7.7. Relationships with other entities are transparent and support the mission of the program.

7.8. Procedures for financial supervision are in place.

7.9. All records, including but not limited to financial, candidate, personnel, program, governmental, and contractual, are maintained and kept current, accessible, complete, accurate, and secure.


8. Facilities, Equipment, and Supplies

Facilities, equipment, supplies, and means of communication that support a high quality educational environment and are accessible to trainees, trainers, and 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 trainers, administration, admission, trainee services, and appeals/complaints.

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

# Recommendations

1.  TESL Ontario recommends that CTESOL 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 trainee protection in case of a school/program closure. If a school closes, the training partner will look after the trainees. The private sector has a TCAF (Training Completion Assurance Fund) to which they all contribute, and if a school closure happens, trainees 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 the TESL Ontario standards and a complaint that should be dealt with at the training provider level.  In case of a complaint lodged with TESL Ontario, however, more information from the CTESOL 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 training 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 CTESOL program accreditation standards seems to have occurred. Some examples of the breach of the standards are denying a trainee's right to appeal, not providing opportunities for the required hours of supervised individual practice teaching in an adult ESL environment, not covering all training 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 CTESOL Program Director and requests information. The CTESOL Program Director responds in writing 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 sends the Program Director a notice in writing that a breach has taken place and requests 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 Program Director's response is 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. The Accreditation Services Manager notifies the Program Director of the required additional changes in writing.

**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 training provider to determine the CTESOL program's compliance to the standards. The Accreditation Services Manager notifies the Program Director of the results in writing.

**Step 7.** If the measures taken by the training provider are not satisfactory and non-compliance persists, the TESL Ontario accreditation of the CTESOL 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.