Essential Teacher Skills and Abilities

Faculties of Education are responsible to society for providing programs of study that offer Teacher Candidates opportunity to acquire the knowledge, understandings, and skills needed to teach in Ontario schools, and to develop the attributes, attitudes, and behaviors of professional educators. Graduates must be able to take responsibility for the physical safety, psychological health, and educational well being of students, whether children, adolescents, or adults, in schools. Teacher Candidates must, therefore, possess the cognitive, communicative, sensory/motor, and emotional/social/interactional abilities necessary for these complex activities.

**Cognitive Abilities:** Teacher Candidates must be able to understand subject matter and related skills, thought processes, and attitudes at a level and in a manner which facilitates organization and integration of information, and interpretation and evaluation of ideas. Teacher Candidates must be able to learn, understand, select, and use teaching strategies appropriate to the level, ability, and interests of the students in the class.

**Communicative Abilities:** Teacher Candidates on practicum must be able to communicate effectively with students, teachers, aides, principals, parents, and others as needed. They must be able to speak with appropriate volume, vocabulary, and expression in the language of instruction so as to be readily understood by and set a good example for students. Teacher Candidates must be able to complete, in a timely manner, written plans for teaching, student worksheets, assignments, tests, student assessments and referrals, reports on student progress, communications to parents, and a variety of documents such as timetables, attendance records, and marks records. It is a policy of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario that “students may be asked to withdraw from the program if their inadequate command of English interferes with their ability to communicate effectively in the classrooms” to which they are assigned for practicum.

**Sensory/Motor Abilities:** Teacher Candidates must possess sufficient sensory function to develop and maintain awareness of all students in the classroom, and sufficient motor function to move about the classroom, manage materials and supplies, and demonstrate and supervise classroom activities.

**Emotional/Social/Interactional Abilities:** Teacher Candidates must demonstrate the emotional stability required for full utilization of intellectual abilities and judgment; must be able to “read” and understand different social situations, and communicate effectively in social interactions. Teacher Candidates must be able to develop rapport with students and appropriate relationships with others in schools, and must be able to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in the face of the uncertainties inherent in the functioning of schools and classrooms. Compassion, integrity, concern for others, interpersonal skills, and motivation are expected of teachers and of Teacher Candidates.
Teacher Candidates with Disabilities: The essential skills and abilities described above do not preclude persons with disabilities from entering the Faculty of Education or becoming certified as teachers. Indeed, the Faculty of Education will make every reasonable accommodation to facilitate a Teacher Candidate’s progress. Such accommodation may not, however, compromise the safety and well-being of students in classrooms or the academic and professional integrity of the B.Ed. program. A potential Teacher Candidate must be willing to acknowledge a disability, to recognize how that disability might affect his or her functioning as a teacher, and to seek disability-related accommodation by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities Office prior to the start of the school year. All requests for accommodation are considered on a case-by-case basis.