

Amendments to Supervisory Officer Qualifications

Questions and Answers

June, 2008

Amendments to SO Qualifications and Appointments

1. How has the government changed the eligibility requirements and appointment process for Ontario academic supervisory officers (SOs)?

A. The eligibility and appointment requirements for academic SOs have been changed to:

- Allow school boards to appoint individuals who do not yet hold SO qualifications for a period of up to two years if they have:
 - A certificate of qualification or interim certificate from the Ontario College of Teachers;
 - A master's degree or doctorate;
 - Five years of classroom teaching experience; and
 - Two additional years of education-related leadership experience or principal's qualifications.
- Make such an appointment conditional on the individual entering into a written agreement with the employing board that he/she will do everything possible to complete within the specified time the requirements for the SO additional qualification set out in O. Reg. 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* within the two years. If the person continues to make progress towards completing the requirements the appointment can be renewed for another two years.

2. What changes have been made to the eligibility requirements and appointment process for business SOs?

A. The eligibility requirements for business SOs have been changed to allow consideration of other education-related experience relevant to the role of a business SO in lieu of the requirement to complete a program in school board management. All other eligibility requirements remain the same.

3. What regulations were amended to make these changes?

A. Ontario Regulation 309, made under the *Education Act* has been amended to provide for the two-year appointments for academic SOs and the change to the eligibility requirements for business SOs.

4. When would these changes take effect?

A. These changes came into effect on June 20, 2008, the date when the regulation was filed.

5. What benefits will these changes have for Ontario’s education system?

- A. These changes will:
- Provide more flexibility in the qualification and appointment process, thereby enabling boards to choose the best qualified and most effective leaders;
 - Broaden the range of candidates eligible for positions as academic supervisory officers and directors of education in Ontario’s publicly-funded schools; and
 - Improve labour mobility by providing a way for appropriately qualified and experienced candidates from outside Ontario to gain employment in positions as superintendents and directors of education.

6. Why is it important to have well-qualified and effective SOs?

- A. SOs have an important leadership role to play in creating the conditions where all students can succeed, by supporting principals in their leadership responsibilities, and by ensuring that everyone has high expectations of what students can achieve. They are also instrumental in promoting equity and fairness by encouraging mutual respect between parents, staff and students, and by ensuring that good schools learn from each other. In addition to these school-centered responsibilities, SOs are required to assume leadership roles in various board-level initiatives.

7. Why has the government made these changes now?

- A. Ontario needed to make changes to its SO qualification and appointment process in order to comply with labour mobility requirements set out in Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) by April 1, 2009, the deadline set by the Premiers. In addition, a number of school boards will be seeking new directors of education and superintendents in the near future, and some have expressed interest in considering qualified and experienced candidates from outside of Ontario. These changes make it possible for them to do so.

Eligibility Requirements

8. What are the requirements to become an academic SO? What regulation governs these requirements?

- A. Because academic SOs must be qualified teachers, their eligibility requirements are set out in O. Reg. 184/97 made under the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996*. Under this regulation, an academic SO must have the following qualifications:
- A certificate of qualification or interim certificate of qualification issued by the Ontario College of Teachers;
 - An acceptable post-secondary degree and a master’s degree;
 - Seven years of successful teaching experience;
 - Qualifications to teach in the Intermediate Division and two other divisions;
 - One or more of the following:
 - Principal’s qualifications;

- Specialist or Honour Specialist qualifications and two school years of successful experience as a board consultant or subject or program co-ordinator;
 - Two years of experience as a Ministry Education Officer;
 - For candidates from outside Ontario, two years of successful experience in a position that the College Registrar considers to be equivalent to that of an Ontario SO; or
 - A Program Consultant seconded to the Ministry for French-language, English-language or Native-language programs.
- Successful completion of a College-accredited SOQP within five years of entering the program.

9 What is the relationship between the College of Teachers requirements and the changes to O. Reg. 309?

- A.** O. Reg. 309 sets out the conditions under which the Minister issues a Supervisory Officer's certificate. The *Education Act* requires that the Minister confirm a person's eligibility for appointment to an SO position. The College's regulation, O. Reg. 184/97, sets out the requirements for individuals who are qualified teachers to obtain the SO additional qualification.

The amendments to O. Reg. 309 apply only to those individuals appointed for a two-year period as an academic SO. These individual will be expected to do everything possible to meet the College's requirements for the SO additional qualification within that time.

10. Will the College have to amend O. Reg. 184/97 – Teachers' Qualifications?

- A.** The Minister has written to the Chair of the College's Governing Council to ask that the College amend its regulation to reflect the amendments to O. Reg. 309. The Ministry is also aware that the College is developing a prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) framework which could be used to assess the qualifications of SO candidates. Once the College has approved this framework, it would have to be reflected in the regulation.

11. What are the current requirements to become a business SO?

- A.** The qualifications of business SOs are set out in O. Reg. 309 made under the *Education Act*.
- An acceptable post-secondary degree;
 - A master's degree or qualifications to practise as an architect, certified general accountant, certified management accountant, chartered accountant, professional engineer, lawyer or professional planner or any other profession that, in the Minister's opinion, provides appropriate experience for the position of business SO;
 - Successful completion of a program in school board management;
 - Successful completion of a business SOQP within five years of entering the program.

12. What is the Program in School Board Management, and who will determine whether an individual's qualifications and experience can be considered in lieu of its completion?

- A. The Program in School Board Management consists of six graduate-level courses offered by certain Ontario faculties of education. Two of these courses, one in school board finance and one in school board administration have been compulsory, while the other four are optional.

The Ministry will work with SO organizations and SOQP providers to establish criteria for exempting appropriately qualified and experienced individuals from all or part of the program.

13 Is there a two-year appointment opportunity for Business SOs?

- A. Under the provisions set out in O. Reg. 309 this option is already available to school boards. Suitably qualified and experienced individuals who have an acceptable university degree and either a master's degree or qualifications to practise as an accountant, architect lawyer, professional engineer, or professional planner may be appointed as a business SO for up to two years, provided that the individual enters into a written agreement with the employing board to do everything possible to complete the SO requirements set out in the regulation. Such an appointment can be renewed for another two years if the individual continues to make progress towards completing the SO requirements.

Labour Mobility and Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)

14. How do Ontario's requirements for SOs compare to those of other parts of Canada and other countries?

- A. Ontario is the only Canadian jurisdiction with a formal academic and business SOQP set out in regulation. Ontario's requirements are, on the whole, more highly regulated and less flexible than those of other Canadian provinces and territories. Most provinces require teacher certification, and some require a master's degree. On average, the teaching experience requirement is five years. In some cases (e.g. British Columbia and Manitoba) these requirements are the responsibility of school boards as part of their hiring practices. In jurisdictions outside Canada, certification and qualification requirements for individuals in positions equivalent to those held by Ontario SOs are generally less regulated than they are in Ontario.

15. How difficult has it been for qualified and experienced SOs from other parts of Canada and other countries to be hired as superintendents or directors of education in Ontario?

A. Because the Ontario requirements do not exist in other jurisdictions, it has not been possible under the existing regulatory framework for well qualified and experienced candidates from outside Ontario to be considered for senior leadership positions in Ontario's publicly-funded school boards.

16. What is the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and what does it have to do with labour mobility?

A. The AIT is an agreement signed by the Government of Canada and the provinces in 1994. Its purpose is to "make it easier for persons, investments and services to move across Canada". Parties to the agreement have made a commitment to work towards achieving the labour mobility goals outlined in Chapter 7 of the AIT by April 1, 2009.

17. How does Chapter 7 of the AIT apply to Ontario's education system?

A. The AIT's labour mobility requirements apply to all regulated professions. This includes the teaching profession, i.e. teachers, principals and academic SOs.

18. Isn't Ontario lowering its standards by letting supervisory officials from other provinces into SO positions when they don't have the qualifications required of Ontario candidates?

A. No, Ontario is providing a way to recognize comparable qualifications and experience of individuals from outside Ontario, so that they can be candidates for positions as Ontario superintendents and directors of education.

These changes will help to bring Ontario into compliance with the AIT, which provides that provinces should only impose professional requirements, such as the SOQP, if there are legitimate objectives that can only be met through these requirements, and if there are accommodation mechanisms in place to enable candidates from other provinces to meet them. The SOQP provides SO candidates with knowledge and skills they will need to become effective system leaders. Even those individuals who have experience in other jurisdictions may need to undertake certain modules of the SOQP in order to become familiar with the Ontario context.

19. Aren't these amendments unfair to Ontario's current and aspiring SOs? After all, they allow people from outside Ontario to be hired with fewer qualifications, while expecting Ontario candidates to meet all the requirements.

A. No, Ontario's SO requirements are designed primarily for Ontario teachers and principals who aspire to be SOs, and thus would not yet have the knowledge and experience required to be an effective system leader. These amendments allow recognition of comparable qualifications and experience of applicants from outside Ontario and enable them to be employed as SOs while they acquire any additional Ontario-focussed knowledge they might need.

20 Can a candidate from Ontario without the requisite SO qualifications qualify under these provisions?

A. Yes, it would be possible, but there would be relatively few such candidates. Most Ontario candidates would not have gained the required knowledge and experience unless they had gone through the regular qualification process and have already completed the SOQP.