

Teacher Performance Appraisal

Frequently Asked Questions

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General

1. What is the purpose of Ontario's Teacher Performance Appraisal system?

Ontario's teacher performance appraisal (TPA) system for new and experienced teachers is designed to:

- enhance student learning by promoting teacher development;
- provide meaningful appraisals of teachers' performance that encourage professional learning and growth;
- identify opportunities for additional support where required; and
- provide a measure of accountability to the public.

The TPA is an integral part of a continuum of professional learning that supports effective teaching, learning and assessment practices by building on and complementing previously-acquired learning from pre-service teacher education programs and the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), as well as learning acquired throughout each individual's teaching career.

2. When was it put in place?

The government first introduced a provincial TPA process in 2002. This was revised in September, 2007 after the introduction of the New Teacher Induction Program, which included a TPA process for new teachers.

3. What is the legislative and regulatory authority for the TPA system?

TPA requirements are set out in Part X.2 of the *Education Act*, and in Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 98/02 – Teacher Learning Plans, and O.Reg. 99/02 – Teacher Performance Appraisal.

4. What are the roles of the Ministry and school boards vis-à-vis the TPA?

In addition to its responsibility for the legislative framework set out above, the Ministry of Education supports the TPA by developing policies, guidelines, and other resources to assist boards and schools. Through its Regional Offices, the Ministry also monitors implementation and gathers information from the field on questions and issues that require clarification or further policy direction.

School boards are responsible for ensuring compliance with the TPA's legislative requirements in the schools within their jurisdiction. They may also establish additional policies and procedures so long as these do not conflict with provincial requirements. Compliance-related responsibilities include ensuring that all principals employed by the board carry out performance appraisals of the teachers within their schools in accordance with provincial and board requirements.

5. Why is it important for boards and schools to comply with the provincial TPA requirements?

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6. To whom does the TPA system apply?

Ontario's TPA system applies to all new and experienced teachers employed in Ontario's publicly-funded schools.

7. For the purposes of the TPA, how are "new" and "experienced" teachers defined?

"New" teachers are defined in the legislation as all teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers who are employed in a permanent position – full-time or part-time, by a school board, school authority or provincial school to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario. Teachers are "new" until they successfully complete the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) or until 24 months have elapsed since the date on which they first began to teach in a board.

All teachers who have completed the NTIP, or who held permanent positions in Ontario's publicly-funded schools prior to the NTIP's implementation in September, 2006, as well as temporary teachers (those teaching on a Letter of Permission) are appraised as "experienced" teachers.

8. Who is not covered by the TPA requirements?

Within Ontario's publicly-funded education system, TPA requirements do not apply to occasional teachers, continuing education teachers, vice-principals, principals, supervisory officers and directors of education. As of September 1, 2010 the appraisal of vice-principals and principals is governed by the provisions set out in O. Reg. 234/10 – Principal and Vice-Principal Performance Appraisal and in the Principal/Vice Principal Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual, 2010. Boards may develop a process for appraising the performance of any employees who are not covered by provincially-mandated performance appraisal requirements.

The TPA does not apply to certified teachers employed in private schools and instructors in faculties of education and other teacher education institutions.

9. If a school board decides to appraise its long-term occasional teachers using the TPA requirements for new teachers, will these appraisal results count towards completion of the NTIP?

No. Although occasional teachers are eligible to participate in the NTIP elements (orientation, mentoring, professional development), they are not included in the definition of "new" teachers for the purposes of the TPA. Therefore, any performance appraisals they receive prior to employment in a permanent full- or part-time position will not count for the purposes of completing the NTIP and earning a notation on their Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

10. Can a board appraise a new teacher in a long-term occasional position or a continuing education teacher using the TPA requirements?

In accordance with the legislation, these teachers are not covered by the TPA system. However, as employers, boards can develop processes for appraising those employees who are not included in any provincially-mandated appraisal system, and may choose to use elements of the TPA in these appraisals. If a board adopts this option, it should make it clear to these employees that appraisals conducted under these conditions do not count towards completion of the NTIP.

11. What are the essential components of a teacher performance appraisal?

The TPA system consists of the following key components:

- Competency statements
- Pre-observation meeting
- Classroom observation
- Post-observation meeting
- Summative report, which includes the Performance rating
- Additional supports for teachers who do not achieve a *Satisfactory* rating
- Annual Learning Plan (for experienced teachers only)

Application of these components differs in some cases depending on whether the person being appraised is a new or experienced teacher. For a summary of these differences, please see the table in section 3.2 of the *Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements Manual* (2010).

Responsibility for Conducting Appraisals

12. Who conducts teacher performance appraisals?

Principals are primarily responsible for appraising the performance of all teachers employed in their schools, and for ensuring that appraisals are conducted in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements.

13. Can principals delegate this responsibility?

A principal may delegate TPA responsibilities to the vice-principal(s) employed at the same school. This may help to ease the principal's workload and gives the vice-principal(s) an opportunity to gain experience in this area. However, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all appraisals are carried out in accordance with provincial requirements remains with the school's principal. Principals may not delegate TPA responsibilities to anyone other than the vice-principal(s).

At any time, a duty or power of a principal may be undertaken by a supervisory officer assigned by the board. In exceptional circumstances, these responsibilities can be delegated to a supervisory officer from another board.

To support principal workload, a board may contract temporary staff to manage the school in order to create uninterrupted time for the principal to conduct teacher performance appraisals.

14. Can an acting principal or acting vice-principal conduct teacher performance appraisals?

In exceptional circumstances, such as an extended leave of absence by the principal, appraisals may be conducted by the school's acting principal. However, the acting principal must be qualified as a principal or deemed to be qualified in accordance with the *Education Act* and regulations. Teachers who are designated to perform the duties of a principal or vice-principal and who do not meet this condition cannot conduct appraisals.

15. What happens if the principal cannot conduct the performance appraisals?

The legislation provides for substitutions in instances where a principal cannot undertake this responsibility. (see Questions 13 and 14), If a principal is absent or otherwise unable to conduct performance appraisals of teachers assigned to the school,, he or she can delegate this responsibility to a vice-principal in the same school or the appraisals can be conducted by a supervisory officer from the same board. In exceptional cases where none of these individuals is able to conduct these appraisals, a supervisory officer from another board can do so.

16. A new teacher's first appraisal was conducted by the principal, and the second by a vice-principal or supervisory officer because the principal went on leave. Does this affect the teacher's NTIP status?

No. Because the *Education Act* provides for the delegation of this responsibility, the second

21. Can a teacher ask for an additional appraisal?

Yes, a teacher can request an additional appraisal. However the principal may refuse such a request if he or she believes that it would not result in a change to the teacher's performance rating.

22. Can a teacher's appraisal be deferred to another year?

No. The principal must complete performance appraisals according to the legislated five-year appraisal cycle and the board must ensure that each teacher receives an appraisal during his or her evaluation year. The principal and/or board may not alter the five-year cycle to move an appraisal year forward or to extend it to the next year.

There are periods of time, however, that are excluded from the appraisal cycle for a given teacher. Namely:

- A period during which the teacher does not teach at any time in a school governed by the board;
- A period when the teacher is on secondment to a non-teaching assignment;
- A period when the teacher is on secondment to a teaching assignment outside Ontario's publicly funded education system;
- A period during which a teacher is on an extended leave of absence approved by the board.

See questions 69-71 for more information.

23. If a board hires a new teacher into a permanent position for only one semester, must the teacher be appraised twice during that period?

No. In accordance with NTIP requirements, a new teacher is appraised twice during the first 12 months of teaching. The teacher should receive one appraisal in the semester during which he or she is employed with the board. If the board continues the teacher's employment, the NTIP would continue and the second appraisal would occur sometime during the second semester. If the teacher is employed by another board, a record of his or her NTIP participation, together with the appraisal and its results would be forwarded,

experienced teachers principals must consider all 16 competencies, but do not need to provide

32. Are the ALP procedures different in the teacher's evaluation year?

In an evaluation year the teacher and principal meet to review and update the teacher's most current ALP as part of the appraisal process. Both the pre- and post-observation meetings provide opportunities for this activity. The ALP is finalized on the basis of this performance appraisal, and must take into account the principal's recommendations from the appraisal.

During non-evaluation years the teacher reviews and updates the previous year's ALP in consultation with the principal. Procedures for conducting this review are for the principal and teacher to determine, subject to board policies. Although a meeting is not required, it is

Principals should schedule performance appraisals in a timely manner, and commit to this schedule as much as possible. Scheduling appraisals requires careful planning and organization, and conveys to everyone that performance appraisal is an integral component of the school's learning environment. The principal's approach to scheduling performance appraisals and keeping to the schedule shows consideration for the teacher's personal and professional effort in preparing for the appraisal and helps set the tone for the school's professional culture.

41. What about teachers such as physical education teachers, librarians, and guidance counsellors, who do not teach in a regular classroom?

For the purposes of the performance appraisal, the principal or supervisory officer must observe the teacher in an instructional setting. For teachers who do not teach in a “regular” classroom, the observation would take place in the teacher’s regular instructional environment.

42. What about teacher-consultants who do not regularly interact with students?

Boards may establish protocols for appraising the performance of teachers such as curriculum consultants, who are not routinely in an instructional setting with students, by using the mandated competencies and any additional competencies that the board may develop.

43. What happens in the post-observation meeting, and when does it take place?

The post-observation meeting should take place as soon as possible after the classroom observation. The teacher and principal review the results of the classroom observation and discuss other information relevant to the principal’s appraisal of the teacher’s performance. During the post-observation meeting, the teacher and principal should:

- Discuss the competencies they consider to be most relevant to the teacher’s performance appraisal

- For new teachers, discuss the teacher’s participation in the NTIP;

- Discuss and finalize the teacher’s professional growth goals and strategies and/ or the areas for improvement to be considered in the teacher’s learning plan (ALP, INS, or Enrichment/Improvement Plan);

- If the teacher wishes to do so, discuss how the eunsu(ols LP)TJ8(mf0.45/ach)-7.4t7(ster lacher(9b .8(heu.4()-2.0

45. Can a principal include comments on competencies that were not previously identified during the pre-observation meeting?

For appraisals of experienced teachers a principal can provide comments on any of the competencies set out in Schedule 1 of O. Reg. 99/02, even if they weren't discussed at the pre-observation meeting, if the principal thinks it is appropriate to do so in light of the classroom observation. However, principals should discuss these additions with the teacher during the post-observation meeting, so that the additions will not come as a surprise when the teacher receives the summative report.

46. When does the principal give the summative report to the teacher?

The principal must give the teacher a signed copy of the summative report within 20 school days of the classroom observation.

47. Why does the teacher have to sign the summative report? What if the teacher doesn't agree with it?

The signature helps protect all parties by signifying that the teacher has received and read the document. The teacher signs the summative report to acknowledge receipt, and does not imply agreement. The teacher can add comments if desired, and retains a copy of the signed report for his or her records.

48. Can a principal add comments to the summative report after the teacher has signed it?

Principals should not alter a summative report once the teacher has signed it without notifying the teacher and giving him or her the revised report to sign and add comments if desired. This would then become the version sent to the school board through the appropriate supervisory officer.

Performance Ratings

49. What are the categories for rating the performance of teachers?

The rating categories differ for new and experienced teachers. The performance of new teachers may be rated as *Satisfactory*, *Development Needed*, or *Unsatisfactory*. The *Development Needed*

52. How often can a new teacher receive a rating of *Development Needed*?

A new teacher can receive this rating only once, namely, the first time during his or her new teaching period that he or she receives a rating that is not *Satisfactory*. Any subsequent ratings will be either *Satisfactory* or *Unsatisfactory*.

53. What does a *Development Needed* rating mean?

This rating is intended to ensure that a new teacher whose performance is not at a satisfactory level and who may be struggling receives additional supports and an opportunity to improve. It signals that the teacher would benefit from an additional period of NTIP participation, and indicates the need to focus on the teacher's growth by providing enriched NTIP supports such as more orientation or additional mentoring opportunities or professional development.

54. What happens if a teacher receives a *Development Needed* rating?

With input from the teacher, the principal develops an Enrichment Plan tailored to the teacher's individual professional development needs. The Enrichment Plan identifies those NTIP elements that could help improve the teacher's performance. The principal must give the new teacher this Plan within 15 school days of determining the rating. (See Question 56.)

If, during the first 12 months of teaching, a new teacher receives a *Development Needed* rating, the new teaching period can be extended for up to 12 months. The third appraisal must take place within 120 school days after the beginning of the extended NTIP period to allow time for the teacher to benefit from the additional supports.

55. What does an *Unsatisfactory* rating mean?

An *Unsatisfactory* rating signals the need for an Improvement Plan that identifies specific areas where the teacher must improve in order to proceed successfully in his or her career with the board. It also signals that, if the improvement does not occur, the teacher's employment could be terminated.

56. What happens if a teacher receives an *Unsatisfactory* rating?

The process is different for new and experienced teachers.

New Teachers: Because an *Unsatisfactory* rating can only be assigned after a new teacher has received a *Development Needed* rating, the teacher has now received two ratings that are not *Satisfactory*, and will be placed on review status (See Question 58). The principal must develop an Improvement Plan with input from the teacher, and must implement it within 15 school days of determining that the performance rating is *Unsatisfactory* (see Question 56). The next appraisal must take place within 120 school days of the time when the teacher is notified that he or she is placed on review status, but no later than 24 months after the teacher began teaching (i.e., the end of the second 12-month new teaching period).

Experienced Teachers

62. When making a recommendation to terminate a teacher's employment, what should the principal send to the board?

Together with the recommendation, the board must also receive written reasons for the recommendation, a copy of all appraisal documents and any other documentation relied on in conducting the appraisal.

63. Can a teacher's employment be terminated before this appraisal takes place?

If, at any time during the 120 days the teacher is on review status, the principal and supervisory officer determines that the delay required for conducting another appraisal is not in the best interests of students, they may send a joint recommendation to the board to terminate the teacher's employment. If the principal's duties are being performed by a supervisory officer, then

whether this is an evaluation year for that teacher. While not required to do so, the receiving board should consider requesting any recent appraisals of the teacher from the “home” board.

70. What happens if the seconded teacher’s performance rating is *Development Needed* or *Unsatisfactory*?

If a teacher on secondment receives a rating that is anything other than *Satisfactory*, the secondment ends, and the teacher resumes his or her position at the “home” board. The appraisal