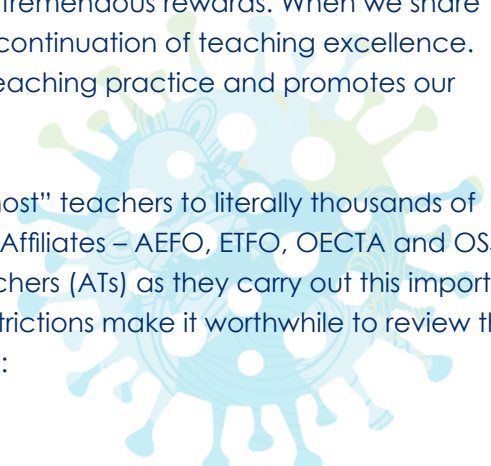




# Federation guidance for associate teachers during COVID-19

Teaching others to teach is a special responsibility that carries with it tremendous rewards. When we share our experience and expertise with beginning teachers, we help the continuation of teaching excellence. Mentoring teacher candidates also allows us to reflect on our own teaching practice and promotes our professional growth.

Ontario's teachers have a long history of serving as "associate" or "host" teachers to literally thousands of teacher candidates across the province each year. OTF and its four Affiliates – AEFO, ETFO, OECTA and OSSTF – have policies and detailed guides that help support associate teachers (ATs) as they carry out this important work. While these policies have not changed recently, COVID-19 restrictions make it worthwhile to review them. COVID-19 also requires us to consider a number of additional factors:



Am I obliged to serve as an associate teacher during COVID-19?

Serving as an AT has always been considered an entirely voluntary activity and it remains so.

These are unprecedented times, and we understand that the decision of whether or not to take on the role of associate teacher has become more difficult than ever before. The prevailing uncertainty in the system has meant that many teachers have not known what or where they were teaching, making it more challenging to volunteer to host a teacher candidate (TC).

Why are teacher candidates from programs in other parts of the province being hosted in my school?

Many TCs are residing outside of the cities where their programs are delivered, since their university learning is currently online. This may mean that they are looking for placements in different parts of the province than they usually do. Regardless of the program the TC comes from, it is reasonable to expect TCs to practice safe distancing measures in both their professional and personal lives.



## Can practicum placements be done online during Covid-19?

Currently, practicum placements may be carried out in classrooms or online. If the associate teacher is teaching in person, the teacher candidate will be able to do the same. If the teacher is teaching online, the practicum will be online.

There are more health and safety concerns for in-person practica, whereas the potential for boundary considerations are more prevalent in an online environment.

## What factors are important for in-person practicum placements?

- Teacher candidates should be included in the numbers calculated for any cohorts of staff and students due to COVID-19 protocols.
- The number of contacts should be limited: TCs should not travel from class to class, should not be shared by more than one AT, or visit other classes for experience.
- As per Federation policy, there should not be more than one TC assigned to one AT. This is especially important during the pandemic, so as to limit contacts and manage cohort numbers.
- TCs should have access to all Health and Safety training and equipment available to school board staff, including updated instruction on pandemic protocols and the use of PPE.

## What factors are important for online practicum placements?

- As with in-classroom practicum placements, ATs should carefully preview all lesson plans, assessments, videos or other materials the TC plans to use.

- TCs should be reminded to keep their online interactions with students professional at all times and should not be communicating with students individually or outside of formal practicum hours.
- TCs should be directed to the recent Video Conferencing Guidelines issued by the Ontario College of Teachers in light of COVID-19. While not yet certified to teach, TCs are expected to adhere to these guidelines.

## Useful Resources

*OECTA – Associate Teacher Manual*

[https://www.catholicteachers.ca/OECTA/media/pdfs/Manuals%20and%20Handbooks/Associate%20Teachers/2017/associate\\_teachers\\_manual.pdf](https://www.catholicteachers.ca/OECTA/media/pdfs/Manuals%20and%20Handbooks/Associate%20Teachers/2017/associate_teachers_manual.pdf)

*OSSTF/FEESO Advice for Associate Teachers*

<https://osstftoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Advice-for-Associate-Teachers.pdf>

*AEFO – Accueillir, accompagner, évaluer : Guide pour le personnel enseignant associé*

[https://www.aefo.on.ca/images/aefo/outils-et-ressources/personnel-enseignant-associe/Guide\\_personnel\\_enseignant\\_associe\\_Final\\_v7.pdf](https://www.aefo.on.ca/images/aefo/outils-et-ressources/personnel-enseignant-associe/Guide_personnel_enseignant_associe_Final_v7.pdf)

*ETFO – Advice on Being an Associate Teacher*

[https://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Professionals/AssociateTeachingDocuments/Advice\\_AT\\_Brochure.pdf](https://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Professionals/AssociateTeachingDocuments/Advice_AT_Brochure.pdf)

