



# **Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)**

## **Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program**

### **The Practicum Handbook**

## Practicum Handbook

### Purpose

The practicum is a culminating exercise designed to demonstrate the candidate's leadership attributes and ability to integrate and apply their learning from the four modules at a district school board level. It involves a significant practical project, within a district school board or other educational setting of a similar nature, which incorporates knowledge, management and leadership of program, personnel, finance and facilities. The duration of the practicum will be a minimum of 50 hours.

### Practicum Project

Supervisory officer candidates, in consultation with their SOQP mentor/instructor and a district practicum mentor, identify a specific leadership project related to the role of supervisory officer to which they apply appropriate legislation, school board policies and related research or theoretical concepts to a system setting. The practicum experience will place the candidate in the role of supervisory officer acting as a member of the district school board administrative team, assuming responsibility for a significant piece of work, and making contacts with the board, staff, parents and the community. **The practicum may be approved only after a candidate has completed two modules successfully. 80% to 100% of the project must be completed after approval of the practicum by the OPC mentor/instructor.** Candidates have **5 years** from the date of their first module to complete the practicum requirements.

### Expectations of Candidates

Candidates will select, in conjunction with the SOQP mentor/instructor and their district practicum mentor (local supervisory officer), a topic that reflects a growth opportunity. The intent of the experience will be realized if new learning is occurring, to this end, regular feedback from the mentor will be an integral component. The notion here is that the topic provides an opportunity for growth in a leadership position and that it be a meaningful learning experience. While it might well be a project that would be complementary to the normal course of the candidate's duties, it should be one that has significant aspects that are new or offer unique challenges from which the candidate can extract new meaning or practise newly acquired skills. The project should also reflect the duties and responsibilities of a practising supervisory officer. Will demonstrate a clear and conscious effort to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills addressed in the other four modules of the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program. In particular, the following areas are relevant for the completion of the practicum requirement:

**Legislation:**

This essential aspect of the role of the supervisory officer is to be integrated into a meaningful experience, wherever possible. It is suggested that all practica reference specifically the legislative base on which the project rests.

**Finances:**

Considered a subset of legislation, financial considerations are often a pivotal criterion in educational decisions.

Identify the financial considerations applicable to the success of their project.

**General:**

**Alignment of the practicum with Board Goals, Policy and Legislation:** Identify the manner in which the practicum topic supports the Board/Ministry of Education goals and contributes, in a meaningful way to significant objectives for the system. Knowledge of and experience with the relations between board administrations and trustees and between the Ministry of Education and the boards are important aspects of the supervisory officer role best learned or consolidated in real situations.

**Stakeholders:** Identify the members of the education community who are involved in their project.

**Research and Theory:** Identify the research and theoretical learning that is to be put to use in the performance of this duty.

**System Initiative:** Distinguish the practicum from school level learning experiences and district school board level projects (for example: making real life presentations at board level committees, board meetings or as the representative of the board.)

**System Relationships:** Ensure the opportunity to establish contact and interact with senior officials in boards.

**Leadership Demonstrations:** Demonstrate your knowledge and skills in oral and written communications, planning, organization, team-building, problem-solving, conflict management and leadership.

**Leadership Characteristics:** Model professional ethics, emotional and social intelligence and the Ontario Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers.

**Practicum Requirements****District Practicum Mentor:**

Candidates seek out a supervisory officer from their current board to act as their district mentor. The local supervisory officer (district practicum mentor) will agree to work with them throughout the duration of the leadership project. The district practicum mentor is a fully qualified, experienced, practising supervisory officer who provides regular, ongoing feedback to the candidate. Candidates not currently working in a district school board will need to establish this partnership with a qualified supervisory officer in a setting that is approved by the OPC SOQP Program Lead.

### **Regular Reporting:**

Candidates are required to communicate regularly with their district practicum mentor to discuss the progress of the project. In addition, they are required to interact with SOQP mentor/instructor at least three times: at the beginning of the practicum, in the middle of the practicum and at the end of the practicum.

### **Practicum Submission:**

The Practicum Submission will include the following information as outlined and described in this handbook. *Use the following information to identify the required content and topic headings.* Candidates will submit one electronic copy to their SOQP mentor. The electronic copy should only include **three** supporting pieces of information that provide evidence of leadership. The final version may include additional supporting information attached as appendices.

- i. Practicum Executive Summary
- ii. Practicum Summary Report (and supporting information)
- iii. Reflective Written Assignment
- iv. Log
- v. Forms 1, 2, 7 and 8

### **Practicum Executive Summary:**

Candidates will complete an executive summary of their leadership project. The executive summary will provide the following information:

- Name of candidate
- Candidate's current board or place of employment
- Practicum title
- Ontario Leadership Framework domain most reflected in the project
- Project description not to exceed 100 words

### **Practicum Summary Report**

Candidates are required to prepare a summary report of their practicum. The written summary of the practicum learning experience should be a minimum of 10 but not exceed 15 typed pages (double-paced, single-sided). Candidates may include, as attachments, materials developed as part of the practicum. The summary report will address the following areas as noted on form 6:

- **purpose of the practicum**, connections to district school board initiatives;
- reference to **relevant legislation**, district school board policies and literature;
- **financial considerations** and details;
- sources and **collection of data, results and recommendations**;
- relationship of the practicum to the **role of the supervisory officer**;
- **benefits to** students, parents, school staff, the district school board, and the system as a whole with reference to the improvement of teaching and learning;
- evidence of effective **leadership** in the context of the **Ontario Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers**;

- benefit to **personal professional learning**;
- reflections on the practicum experience in **relation to the other four modules**, and;
- Links to The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession

The final submission will synthesize the practicum experience, making links to the other four modules, and convey how the whole program has been transformational to the individual in a personal and professional way.

### **Reflective Written Assignment:**

The candidate will record, as a reflective written assignment, information about the practicum experience as it relates to **professional learning and growth** throughout the practicum experience. This assignment should reflect on difficulties experienced during the practicum, as well as the successes. Use the Ontario Leadership Framework for Supervisory Officers as the context for this assignment. The reflective written summary of the practicum learning experience should not exceed 10 typed pages (double-paced, single-sided).

Candidates should address the following areas as noted on form 5:

- Personal Leadership Style
- The Impact of One's Personal Leadership Style
- Strengths and Areas for Growth
- Difficulties Experienced
- The Role of the Supervisory Officer
- Personal Philosophy of Education
- The Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession

### **Log**

The candidate will keep a record describing and documenting the implementation of the practicum including the dates and duration of all practicum activities. Documentation may include meeting agendas, minutes, samples of work, etc.

The log will also include professional learning activities such as: conferences, workshops, job shadowing, research, professional reading related to the practicum, as well as meetings with the mentors. See Form 4 for the assessment criteria.

### **The OPC SOQP Program Lead**

- coordinates and directs the leadership practicum program;
- develops assessment criteria for evaluation of the leadership practicum;
- provides guidelines for the mentor roles;
- ensures mentors understand the requirements and responsibilities in the process;
- establishes criteria for practicum proposals and ensures SOQP mentor/instructors adhere to criteria;

- receives the final assessment for each candidate (see Practicum Form 8);
- maintains records;
- hears and decides appeals of unsatisfactory evaluation results;
- “signs-off” to indicate successful completion of the leadership practicum (see Practicum Form 8);
- maintains a record of the successful completion of the leadership practicum; and
- reports the successful completion of the program to the OPC registrar who in turn reports this information to the Ontario College of Teachers.

### **SOQP Mentor/Instructor – Practicum Advisor**

The candidate’s practicum advisor will be a course SOQP mentor/instructor. The SOQP mentor/instructor is responsible for:

- delivering the practicum orientation program;
- ensuring that all candidates know and understand the requirements for the practicum and their own responsibilities in the process;
- provide advice during the development of the proposal, including the outline, schedule of activities, learning outcomes, assessment process and evaluation criteria;
- approving the practicum proposal ( see Practicum Forms 1 and 2);
- interacting at least three times with the candidate: at the beginning of the practicum, in the middle of the practicum and at the end of the practicum;
- communicating with the district practicum mentor as necessary;
- coordinating and completing the evaluation of the candidate’s practicum project;
- preparing the required assessment forms and the practicum summative assessment;
- sending copies of all assessment forms to the candidate, and;
- sending all assessment forms and documentation to the SOQP registrar at the Ontario Principals’ Council.

### **District Practicum Mentor**

The mentor will be a fully qualified, practising supervisory officer who has a number of years of experience in the role. The district practicum mentor is responsible for:

- supporting the candidate in the development of the practicum proposal which is of benefit to the district school board and includes goals and objectives, an outline, schedule of activities (including the starting and expected completion dates), learning outcomes, assessment processes and specific evaluation criteria;
- reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the district mentor and the candidate;
- ensure that 80% of the practicum is completed after the approval of the project by the OPC SOQP mentor/instructor;
- mentoring, guiding and training the candidate throughout the practicum experience; and
- participating in the evaluation of the candidate’s practicum learning (see Form 7).

OPC will encourage the active involvement of supervisory officers in district school boards.

### **Practicum Orientation**

Candidates will receive this Practicum Handbook and Practicum Guide when they register for the SOQP or during their first module. During Modules A and B, the program lead and/or SOQP mentor/instructors will explain the requirements and expectations of the practicum experience. The Practicum Handbook and Practicum Guide are designed to serve as a resource documents to candidates, SOQP mentor/instructors and district practicum mentors. The Practicum Handbook along with the Practicum Guide may be used as a practicum project checklist to ensure that all required elements of the practicum are completed.

Although the practicum orientation program will be integrated primarily into Modules A and B of the SOQP, candidates will be provided information about the practicum throughout all four modules.

The Practicum Handbook and Guide are included in the binder as information for candidates.

### **Practicum Proposal**

Candidates will prepare an outline of their proposed practicum experience (Forms 1 and 2). The proposal should clearly state:

- title and brief description of the leadership project proposal;
- objectives and relationship of proposed leadership project to the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program learning expectations;
- anticipated benefits of this project (personal and school system); and
- description of the criteria to be used in the assessment of the leadership project.

The proposal must be approved by the SOQP mentor/instructor and receive a positive endorsement from the district practicum mentor before the practicum begins.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

Assessment instruments and evaluation criteria will be provided:

- for the practicum proposal, log, reflective written assignment and practicum summary report; and
- for the summative assessment of the candidates' learning and performance during the practicum.

The summative evaluation of the candidate's practicum learning will be completed by the SOQP mentor/instructor in consultation, as required to inform the evaluation process, with the candidate and district practicum mentor. The process will include an examination of:

- the practicum proposal;
- the log;
- practicum executive summary;

- the reflective written assignment;
- the practicum summary report (and supporting information); and
- the district mentor's report.

The SOQP mentor/instructor will prepare all necessary assessment forms. All assessment forms and documents will be sent to the OPC SOQP registrar or designate. A copy of all assessment forms will also be returned to the candidate at the conclusion of the assessment.

Upon successful completion of the four modules of the SOQP and the Practicum, within the required timelines, a recommendation is made to the Ontario College of Teachers to add the Supervisory Officer's Qualification Program to the candidate's Certificate of Qualification.

### **Practicum Examples**

The practicum should provide opportunities for the candidates to work with staff, practising supervisory officers, trustees, parents and the community. The candidates should have occasions to demonstrate interpersonal skills as well as skills in various oral and written communications, planning, organization, team-building, problem-solving, conflict management and leadership. The practicum experience will place the candidate in the role of supervisory officer, acting as a member of the district school board administrative team.

The following suggestions for the practicum experience are intended to serve as examples only. Specific district school board needs may inspire other possibilities of similar scope.

1. Develop and implement a plan for a system initiative in collaboration with principals, supervisory officers and other appropriate staff.
2. Plan and lead, for the duration of the practicum, a curriculum review, development and implementation project as described in a Ministry of Education curriculum guideline.
3. Conduct a review of a district school board policy involving students, staff, school council representatives and supervisory officers for presentation to the trustees.
4. Develop and initiate the implementation of a system action plan for improvement as a result of provincial assessment results in collaboration with teachers, curriculum support staff, school council representatives and supervisory officers.
5. Assume responsibility for an administrative task such as developing a school-year calendar, emergency response procedure, or an action plan for community outreach. This task must involve collaboration with appropriate school board staff, school council or community representatives and employee organizations.

### **Practicum Evaluation Criteria and Assessment Instruments**

The SOQP provincial Lead and SOQP mentor/instructors have developed general evaluation criteria and assessment instruments, such as rubrics, for the practicum proposal and the summative evaluation of the practicum experience. The points underlined below were kept in mind when these general evaluation criteria and assessment instruments were developed.

The SOQP staff members are expected to provide candidates with assessment instruments and general evaluation criteria:

- for the practicum proposal; and
- for the summative evaluation of the candidates' learning and performance during the practicum.

During the practicum, candidates will have opportunities to:

- apply what they have learned through the study of theory and research;
- work with staff, practising supervisory officers, trustees, parents and the community; and
- demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of:
  - teaching/learning processes
  - student achievement
  - curriculum management
  - accountability issues
  - financial management
  - legislative requirements
  - leadership theory/practise
  - human/resource management
  - communication
  - reflective practice/action research
  - information/communications technology
  - organizational structures
  - educational partnerships
  - change management
  - collaborative strategic planning
  - publicly funded education
  - research and development
  - professional growth/development/training
  - political acumen
- translate knowledge and skill into action by:
  - creating a vision of educational excellence based on success for all students which is clear, concise, understood and endorsed by the partners in the educational jurisdiction;
  - behaving with integrity, honesty and fairness while respecting the rights and responsibilities of students, staff, trustees, school councils, parents and community partners; and
  - practising good judgement, effective decision making and creative problem solving when dealing with the professional responsibilities of the position.