



Regulation for School Counsellors by Province

Current as of November 23, 2012

Few provinces have strong regulations in place for school counsellors; only six provinces have explicit policies allowing localities to make hiring decisions if there is a shortage of qualified candidates. Even in provinces where training at an approved program is required, the institution has significant latitude in establishing the coursework and standards through negotiation with professional organizations or accrediting bodies. The end result is that even in regulated provinces, counsellor preparation may vary considerably by institution.

Please select a province below to view information on counsellor regulation specific to that province. You may also click [here](#) for a summary table containing the pan-canadian requirements for school counsellors.

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Alberta

In Alberta, one or more of the following groups may provide school counselling services:

- Teachers – certificated teachers who are members of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA).
- Social Workers – members of the Alberta College of Social Workers.
- Psychologists – regulated members of the College of Alberta Psychologists.

Sometimes these professionals may work alone; sometimes as a part of a multi-disciplinary team within the school. This team may consist of the following individuals or professionals: school principal; school counsellor who is a certificated member of the ATA with additional training in school counselling; teachers as student advocates; social workers or family/school liaison workers and school psychologists. Other professionals may also work with this team, including child development assistants, mental health workers, nurses and police officers.

Counsellors may be employees of the school board or they may be hired under contract to work for the school board and provide counselling services in one or more schools.

All of these practitioners work under a Code of Ethics published by their respected College.

Educational requirements

In Alberta, the issuance of a teaching certificate is based upon the Certification of Teachers Regulation, which requires that applicants have completed a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree or equivalent.

Policy 1.6.3 Guidance and Counselling states that school boards should employ professionally trained counsellors who have had successful teaching experience. For schools that do not have a counsellor, the school board should ensure that guidance and counselling services are available to the students. This policy is currently under review.

Sources

FOIP (2007). Guide to Providing Counselling Services In School Jurisdictions. Government of Alberta.
<http://www.servicealberta.gov.ab.ca/foip/documents/SchoolCounsel.pdf>

Alberta Teacher's Association Policy Resolutions May 2007.

<http://www.education.alberta.ca/media/815121/governmentresponseto2007ataararesolutions.pdf>



British Columbia

British Columbia (BC) school counsellors are allowed to practice counselling in schools through their certification as teachers by the Government of BC's Ministry of Education. The Teacher Regulation Branch (TRB), part of the Ministry of Education, works within a legislative mandate to ensure that educators in the K-12 school systems in BC meet and maintain the high standards of competence and conduct required to keep students safe and foster public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

The British Columbia College of Teachers (BCCT) was formerly the professional self-regulatory body for teachers in BC. It was responsible for setting and enforcing standards for teachers in the province. It assesses applicants to the profession and issues teaching certificates. In 2011, as a result of a report commissioned by the government of BC, the BCCT was abolished and replaced by the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education on January 9, 2012.

Currently, counselling in BC is an unregulated profession, despite a decade-long effort initiated by the British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors (BCACC) to have counselling included in the *Health Professions Act*. Similarly, other than licensure by the Ministry of Education, school counsellors are not regulated, although the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) supports a Provincial Specialist Association (PSA) of teacher-counsellors, the British Columbia School Counsellors' Association (BCSCA).

Because there are no legislated qualifications for counsellors in general or school counsellors specifically, enforcement of these standards is voluntary. As with other provinces, there are no accrediting bodies.

Educational requirements

The BC Ministry of Education's *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (2013)*, states that school counsellors should have a professional teaching certificate and a master's degree recognized by the Ministry in counselling psychology or a related discipline with a focus on counselling.

The minimal recommended standards of the BCACC and those recommended in the *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (2013)* are similar, and revolve around possession of a master's degree in counselling or a related discipline. More specifically, BCACC requires specific specialized counselling-based coursework (e.g., diversity, group, family counselling/counselling ethics) and a specified number of direct or videotaped supervised practicum hours.

Source

Keats, P.A. and Laitsch, D. (2010). Contemplating Regulation of Counsellors in Canadian Schools: Current Issues and Concerns. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, Issue #108, July 14, 2010.



Manitoba

Manitoba school counsellors are allowed to practice counselling in schools through their certification as teachers by the Department of Education and Literacy.

A valid Manitoba certificate must be held in order to be employed as professional school personnel in Manitoba. Professional school personnel include the classroom teacher, clinician, vocational teacher, school counsellor, special education teacher and special education coordinator, level 1 and level 2 administrator.

Educational requirements

To be eligible for a School Counsellor Certificate, a candidate must have thirty (30) credit hours of university course work at the post-baccalaureate level, or above, as specified in the guideline and will have accumulated a minimum of two (2) years successful teaching experience while holding a valid Manitoba Permanent Professional teaching certificate

Sources

Government of Manitoba – Education and Literacy – Professional Certification.

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/profcert/index.html>



New Brunswick

Application Requirements for a New Brunswick Guidance Counsellor Certificate or the New Brunswick Guidance Teacher Certificate:

- 3 years of teaching experience and Certificate V; OR
- Equivalent training and experience recognized by the Minister at the request of the School District Superintendent. (Letter of support addressed to the Minister of Education, CC Dir of Student Services)

Certification Options:

1. New Brunswick Guidance Counsellor

Candidates must complete a Master Degree with a minimum of 10 recognized graduate level courses. Applicants must meet the 3 following requirements:

- a. 2 Compulsory Courses:
 - Counselling Theory
 - Counselling Practicum
- b. 4 Other Approved Counselling Courses from the following list. Recommended courses have been identified to enhance the delivery of the NB Comprehensive and Developmental model. Please note that this is a recommendation only.
 - Assessment and Testing
 - At- Risk Students
 - Behaviour and Emotional Disorders
 - Career Development (recommended for middle/ high school counsellors)
 - Child Development Comprehensive and Developmental Guidance (recommended)
 - Counselling Ethics (recommended)
 - Counselling Skills (recommended)
 - Counselling in Specialized Settings
 - Consultation Methods
 - Gender Issues
 - Group Counselling (recommended)
 - Learning and Human Development
 - Multicultural Counselling
 - Psychological Education
 - Research and Evaluation
- c. 4 Other Graduate Level Courses (subject to approval)

2. New Brunswick Guidance Teacher

Candidates must complete 15 credits from the following list of approved university counselling courses at the graduate or 5000 Undergraduate Level (3 credits are awarded for each completed course from the list below):



- At- Risk Students
- Behavioural & Emotional Disorders
- Career Development (recommended for middle and high school)
- Comprehensive and Developmental Guidance (recommended)
- Consultation Methods
- Counselling Ethics (recommended)
- Counselling Theory (recommended)
- Counselling Practicum (recommended)
- Counselling Skills (recommended)
- Counselling in Specialized Settings
- Group Counselling (recommended)
- Gender Issues
- Learning and Human Development
- Multicultural Counselling
- Psychological Education

Or candidates may complete a combination of both university courses listed above and the following.

Department of Education Guidance Modules

1 credit is awarded for participation in a 6 hour Department of Education Module.

District Guidance Modules

1 credit is awarded for participation in a 6 hour District-Lead Guidance Module; 0.5 of a credit is awarded for participation in a 3 hour District-Lead Guidance Module.

Professional Development Activities as Pre-approved by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA). The Department of Education will award the equivalent number of credits as determined by the CCPA for Continuing Education Credits (CEC).

Counselling-related Educational Conference not listed on the CCPA website must be pre-approved by the Department of Education. Application Forms are to be submitted to the Department of Education for approval 2 weeks prior to the event. If approved, applicants can expect to receive approximately 1 credit for participation in a 6 hour professional development/conference.

Application Procedure

Upon completion of the training outlined above, the candidate must apply to the Educational Programs and Services Branch of the Department of Education for a New Brunswick Guidance certificate. Applications will be processed at two points during the year. Candidates must have all required documentation (transcripts, applications for counsellor education credits and a summary of participation in approved Department of Education or District Approved modules) submitted to the



Educational Programs and Services Branch of the Department of Education by June 30th or November 1st.

Sources

Government of New Brunswick – Department of Education. Requirements for New Brunswick Guidance Certification. <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/ss/CertificationGuidance.pdf>

Government of New Brunswick – Department of Education. Implementing a Comprehensive and Developmental School Program. Educational Programs and Services Branch, Student Services Unit (Anglophone). November 2002.

<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/publications/ss/NBSchoolCounsellingREV.pdf>



Newfoundland and Labrador

In the K-12 school system, counselling services are provided to students by guidance counsellors and educational psychologists. The requirements to work as a guidance counsellor in the K-12 system in NL are the same as for a regular certified teacher meaning that they must have a minimum of an approved B.Ed. The school district then determines who is most qualified for a particular position.

School districts prefer candidates who hold a Masters degree in Counselling or a program designed to prepare guidance counsellors for a K-12 setting.

Guidance counsellors may also qualify for an allowance, which does require that the teacher hold the Masters degree in Counselling.

As outlined in the teacher certification regulations: A level VI certificate, endorsed "Educational Psychologist" may be issued to an applicant who has completed a Master's degree and who is a psychologist registered under section 10 of the Psychologists Act, 2005 .

An Educational Psychologist may work as a counsellor in a school setting without having to be certified as a teacher, as long as they are registered as a psychologist with the appropriate province body.



Northwest Territories

School Counsellors are employed by the school boards in most schools in the Northwest Territories. They are certified as regular teachers or are given a Letter of Teaching Authority if they do not have the educational requirements for a teaching certificate.

School counsellors must:

- have successfully completed an approved counsellor training program in the Territories;
- hold a bachelor of education degree with a specialty in guidance; or
- has equivalent educational qualifications approved by the Registrar.

Where there is no person with the qualifications as described above, a prospective employer may apply, in writing, to the Registrar for permission to employ a person with other qualifications as a school counsellor. The Registrar may then, in writing, permit an education body to employ a person who does not have the qualifications outlined above for a period expiring no later than the end of the school year in which the permission is given.

In many cases, School Counselling Staff act as coordinators or case managers for the children, youth and families that they work with. They may be the person who is most aware of all of the people and circumstances involved. The School Counselling Staff will not necessarily deliver the current or potential activity/program/resources, but may provide information to children, youth, families, school staff and administration, liaise with interested persons, or coordinate access.

The Honouring the Spirit of Our Children: A Framework for School Counselling Programs in the Northwest Territories presents the School Counselling Programs (SCP) Model that can act as a template for use throughout a School Counselling Program. It can be used for assessments and interventions of children, youth and families, program planning and program assessment.

Source

GNWT Education Act. In Handbook for School Counselling Programs in the Northwest Territories (2004). Honoring the Spirit of our Children. Northwest Territories, Education, Culture and Employment. http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/divisions/kindergarten_g12/Counselling%20documents%20ENG_FR/Handbook%20for%20School%20Counselling%20Programs.pdf



Nova Scotia

Counsellor Qualifications

- has a valid Nova Scotia Teacher's Certificate
- has two years of appropriate teaching experience
- has a Master of Education Degree in Counselling from an accredited university

Degree must include graduate level courses in:

- individual counselling theory and techniques
- group counselling theory and techniques
- assessment or testing
- career theory and techniques
- professional practice issues and ethics
- university faculty and on-site supervised school-based practicum

Counsellor Competencies

The guidance counsellor is a licensed teacher with graduate-level degree qualifications who assists students, parents, teachers, and school administrators by providing counselling, consulting, co-ordinating, and managing roles. To be most effective in these challenging roles, the guidance counsellor needs to be an individual who demonstrates specific skills, knowledge, and professional attitude competencies developed through the acquisition of graduate-level training and related teaching experience. These competencies are listed in Appendix A of Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling (Nova Scotia Education, 2010).

Counsellor Ethics

Ethical behaviour in guidance and counselling practice is characterized by

- respect for the dignity and integrity of persons
- responsible caring in counselling relationships
- responsibility to society

A guidance counsellor must be a licensed teacher and, therefore, adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. The additional training required to become a qualified guidance counsellor includes an additional ethical requirement. A guidance counsellor should adhere to the principles of ethical decision making to resolve ethical dilemmas in counselling.

Source

Nova Scotia Department of Education. Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program : student services series. Department of Education. Student Services (2010).

<http://studentservices.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/Comp%20Guidance%20and%20Couns%20Prog.pdf>



Ontario

To be hired as a school counsellor in Ontario, applicants must meet and obtain certification as a teacher with the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). To be certified, teachers must:

- have completed a minimum three-year postsecondary degree from an acceptable postsecondary institution;
- have successfully completed a one-year acceptable teacher education program.

Applicants can then take one of two routes. They can complete Additional Qualifications Courses (Guidance and Career Education, Part One, Part two and Specialist) or they can complete a Master's degree with a focus on counselling/psychotherapy.

The Ontario College of Teachers Act 1996 and the Ontario Education Act guide the curriculum and certification of teachers who wish to become school counsellors.

Source

Ontario College of Teachers - <http://www.oct.ca/becoming-a-teacher/requirements>

Ontario School Counsellors Association - <http://www.osca.ca/en/counsellors-a-teachers/career-development/how-to-become-a-guidance-counsellor>



Prince Edward Island

Personnel delivering school counselling services must have the necessary qualifications and must adhere to the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Associations' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Counsellors, while keeping in mind relevant legislation and policies.

It is essential that School Counsellors meet the following qualifications:

- A professional teaching certificate*
- A Master's degree in counselling, counselling psychology or a related discipline with a focus on counselling
- Be eligible for Canadian Counsellor Certification (CCC) through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association.
- Have completed graduate course in five of the following areas:
 - Communication and relationship skills
 - Group counselling
 - Career development
 - Research and evaluation consultation methods
 - Learning and human development
 - Psychological education
 - Counselling interventions and strategies
 - Multi-cultural counselling
 - Counselling in specialized settings
 - Counselling ethics
 - Psychoeducational assessment

* Non-instructional licenses may apply in special circumstances.

Sources

School Counselling Services, Standards and guidelines, Handbook for School Counsellors (2005) PEI, Department of Education, Student Services.

http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/ed_couns_svcs.pdf



Québec

L'Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec (OCCOQ) has certified guidance counsellors provincially since 1963. It is compulsory to become certified through OCCOQ in order to use the professional title of Conseiller d'orientation (Guidance Counsellor).

Terms of licensure

To obtain the license of guidance counsellor from the OCCOQ, applicants must meet the requirements prescribed by the adopted regulations pursuant to the Code des professions du Québec. Under this regulation, applicants must:

- have completed university graduate guidance and counseling;
- have an adequate knowledge of the French language.

The following diplomas give access to the permit of guidance counsellor issued by the College:

- Master of Science with orientation training and testing or training and memory (MA), Laval University;
- M.Ed., careerology option with training and testing (MEd), University of Quebec at Montreal;
- Master with orientation training and testing or training and memory (M.Sc.), University of Sherbrooke;
- Master of Arts (MA), non-thesis, Counselling Psychology Program, McGill University.

Source

Site web de l'Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec.

<http://www.orientation.qc.ca/LeConseillerOrientation/Admission.aspx>



Saskatchewan

Completion of an approved integrated program is required and recognized through an Additional Qualification Certificate. Alternatively, a bachelors degree plus 48 hours of professional education training and a practicum is required for a Professional B certificate, which allows employment only in the specific field of preparation (e.g., counselling).



Yukon

In Yukon schools, counselling services are provided primarily by school counsellors. School counselling services should be coordinated with services provided in the community by other ministries (such as mental health services) and community agencies.

School counselors should meet the following qualifications:

- A professional teaching certificate;
- A Bachelor of Education or equivalent;
- A Master's degree recognized by the Teachers' Qualification Board in counselling psychology or a related discipline with a focus in counselling.

Source

Special Program services - A Handbook of Procedures and guidelines. Prepared by Special Programs Branch, Department of Education, Yukon.

http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/specialprograms/pdf/Special_Program_Services_A_Handbook_of_Procedures_and_Guidelines_-_OCR1.pdf



Summary Table

Prov/Terr	Occupational emphasis ¹			Educational Licensing Authority	Mandatory Teacher License	Available School Counselling specialization/ certificate	Mandatory Master's degree	Exemptions ²
	Counselling	Guidance	None					
AB	Yes ³	Yes		Ministry of Education	Yes	No	No	
BC			Yes ³	Ministry of Education Teacher Regulation Branch	Yes	Yes	No	
MB	Yes	Yes		Department of Education and Literacy	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁴	No	Yes
NB	Yes	Yes		Department of Education	Yes	Yes	Varies	
NL		Yes		Department of Education	Yes	No	Yes ⁵	Yes
NT			Yes ³	Teacher Qualification Service		No	No	
NS		Yes		Department of Education	Yes	No	No	Yes ⁶
NU	Yes			Department of Education		Yes ⁷	No	Yes
ON	Yes ³	Yes		College of Teachers	Yes	Yes	No	
PEI			Yes ³	Department of Education and Early	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

¹ In this table and throughout the paper, counselling is conceptualized as engaging in mental health services, while guidance is seen as providing college, career, and vocational advising. Most jurisdictions have separate regulations for school psychologists, not specified here as these positions tend to be district-wide and not school-based.

² Localities are allowed to make hiring decisions in the case of a shortage of qualified personnel.

³ While the province may recognize key differences in the role of counsellor and guidance, specific hiring decisions and qualifications for these roles are made at the local levels.

⁴ Counsellors are required to have a valid teaching certificate, two years of teaching experience, 18 credits in defined courses and 12 hours elective coursework

⁵ Guidance counsellors are recognized through an additional allowance for guidance work. See <http://www.edu.gov.nf.ca/cert/Pdf/GuidanceCounsellorConditions.pdf>

⁶ In the case of a shortage of qualified personnel, localities can train internal staff for the position.

⁷ To be employed as a school counsellor, individuals must complete an approved counsellor-training program and have a bachelor of education degree with a specialty in guidance. All schools must have a school community counsellor.



		Childhood Development					
QC	Yes	Yes	Ordres		Yes ⁸	Yes	
SK			Ministry of Education	Yes	Yes ⁹	No	Yes
YT		Yes ³	Department of Education	Yes	No	No	

Source: Updated and adapted from Keats, P.A. and Laitsch, D. (2010). Contemplating Regulation of Counsellors in Canadian Schools: Current Issues and Concerns. Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, Issue #108, July 14, 2010.

⁸ A master's degree in Orientation is required, as well as membership in l'Ordre des conseillers et des conseillères d'orientation du Québec.

⁹ Completion of an approved integrated program is required and recognized through an Additional Qualification Certificate. Alternatively, a bachelor's degree plus 48 hours of professional education training and a practicum is required for a Professional B certificate, which allows employment only in the specific field of preparation (e.g., educational psychology).