



THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING



Teaching in vocational education involves a combination of knowledge of the trade and teaching skills. It also presents the challenge of beginning a new career at the same time as pursuing university studies. In the hope we can answer some of the questions that arise from this often difficult situation, this document will consider the principle issues associated with the bachelor's degree in vocational teaching, including:

- ▶ Where do you get the bachelor's degree?
- ▶ How do you register for a bachelor's degree?
- ▶ How do you get a teaching permit?
- ▶ Choosing a university?
- ▶ What conditions have to be met to be entitled to a provisional teaching authorisation?
- ▶ How do you obtain a provisional authorisation?
- ▶ How do you renew a provisional authorisation?
- ▶ Recognition of prior learning?
- ▶ Teaching permit and probation?
- ▶ The bachelor's degree—an impossible dream?

The Regulation respecting Teaching Licences (RTL) governs access to the teaching profession. Throughout this document, we will refer to the articles of the Regulation in this form: (RTL, art. X). The Regulation is available on the site of the "Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport" (MELS), in the section on teaching licences: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dftps/interieur/autoris.html.

Where do you get a bachelor's degree?

The new bachelor's degree in vocational education was created following the establishment of the 120-credit bachelor's degree in the youth sector. At that time, the MELS wanted to offer equivalent training for all school board teachers with a view to the professionalisation of teaching.

The degree is intended to develop the twelve competencies of the teaching profession, including:

- ▶ an initiation to teaching;
- ▶ pedagogical training;
- ▶ practical training through internships in schools;
- ▶ professional improvement activities related to the profession or the teaching sector.

Why sign up for a degree?

Following a 120-credit degree program is a requirement for those who wish to obtain a **teaching authorisation**. There are a few exceptions that will be mentioned at the end of this document in the section "*Teaching Permits and Probation*".

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A teaching authorisation can be provisional (provisional authorisation or permit) or permanent (diploma). These authorisations, whether provisional or permanent, constitute **"legal qualification"**.

From the point of view of **pedagogy**, the bachelor's degree is desirable because it fosters:

- ▶ understanding of diverse teaching and learning styles;
- ▶ better course preparation;
- ▶ the organisation of instruction, and;
- ▶ the evaluation of learning.

Obtaining a teaching authorisation, and, therefore, legal qualification, has an important impact on **working conditions**. It is a **prerequisite to receiving a contract** (Education Act, art. 23 and 25, Appendix XXXI of the provincial Collective Agreement). There is one exception, described below in the box "Tolérance d'engagement". Access to a contract substantially increases salary and improves other working conditions (insurance, pension, etc.). A teaching authorisation is a condition for access to tenure. And since the union won the battle for pay equity, vocational training teachers with a teaching authorisation are all paid on the single 17-step scale based on schooling.



- ▶ **Provisional authorisation:** a non-permanent authorisation issued when the conditions are satisfied (training, experience, contract) and the first three units of the bachelor's degree have been completed. It can be renewed three times, under certain conditions, until a licence is obtained.
- ▶ **Permit:** a non-permanent authorisation currently issued to those with teaching authorisations from outside Québec (see the section "Teaching Permits and Probation").
- ▶ **Licence:** a non-permanent authorisation issued on completion of 90 credits of a bachelor's degree.
- ▶ **Diploma:** a permanent authorisation issued on completion of 120 credits of a bachelor's degree.
- ▶ **"Tolérance d'engagement":** a dispensation from the requirements of the Regulation issued by the MELS for a period of one year at the request of a school board, which must demonstrate that no legally qualified teacher (with an authorisation) can be found for the position in question.

It is possible to teach without legal qualifications and without a contract on an hourly-paid basis. This situation implies chronic job insecurity as well as weakening of a centre's staff.

Choosing a university

The choice of a university, where possible, can have an important impact on the quality of training received and the amount of work required. Some things to consider before making a decision are:

- ▶ Is the training adapted to the reality of vocational training instruction?
- ▶ How easy or difficult is it to have scholastic and experiential learning in your trade recognised?
- ▶ What terms and conditions are offered to accommodate work-study duality (intensive weekend programs, distance education, courses offered locally)?

You can get in touch with the university education faculties to seek answers to these and other questions you might have.

What conditions have to be met to get to a provisional authorisation?

In most cases, the first teaching authorisation is the provisional teaching authorisation (RTL, art. 8). This authorisation is provincial and is, thus, recognised by all school boards in the province. It is issued with a number of conditions:

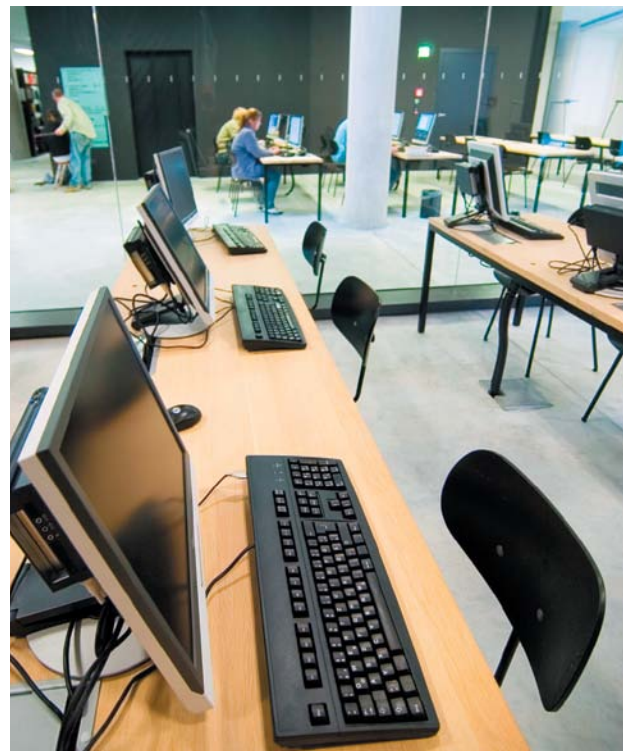
- ▶ successful completion of pre-service teacher training in vocational training, (minimum of three university credit);
- ▶ training directly related to the program taught (DVS, DEC or other);
- ▶ assignment by the employer within a period of twelve months of a teaching workload that requires a teaching authorisation (216 hours as of the 2011-2012 school-year, 480 hours previously) and that is directly related to the program to be taught;
- ▶ at least 3,000 hours of experience in the practice or teaching of the trade, directly related to the program to be taught.

Note that school boards wishing to meet their vocational staffing needs may request "**tolérances d'engagement**", which permit people just beginning their degree but who haven't obtained their first three university credits to obtain a contract.

How do you obtain a provisional authorisation?

Once all the conditions are satisfied, you should complete the form available on the MELS site: <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dftps/interieur/autorisa.html>. Along with any supporting documentation required (academic file, transcripts, police check, etc.), there is a section to be completed by the employer specifying the teaching assignment anticipated for the next 12 months. You should then submit the completed file to the regional office of the MELS (if the board has not already done so). Keep a copy of all documents you send in.

If the school board, the administration centre or the MELS regional administration reject an application for a provisional authorisation even when all the above conditions have been respected, contact QPAT for information on how to proceed.



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How do you renew a provisional authorisation?

Renewal of a provisional authorisation requires you to accumulate credits in a recognised professional training program at the undergraduate university level, respecting the steps provided in the Regulation (RTL, art. 37). It is the teacher's responsibility to take the necessary measures with the regional office of the MELS. The following table shows the different steps. **It is important to respect timelines in order to maintain your legal qualification:**

STEPS IN PROVISIONAL AUTHORISATION LEADING TO A TEACHING DIPLOMA	SUGGESTED CREDITS PER YEAR	COMPULSORY CREDITS PER STEP	CUMULATIVE CREDITS	MAXIMUM CREDITS FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
Prior to authorisation	3 credits	3 credits	3 credits	0 credits
Authorisation: Yr 1 Yr 2 Yr 3	0 credits 6 credits 6 credits	12 credits	15 credits	9 credits
1st renewal: Yr 4 Yr 5 Yr 6	6 credits 9 credits 9 credits	24 credits	39 credits	18 credits
2nd renewal: Yr 7 Yr 8	12 credits 12 credits	24 credits	63 credits	27 credits
3rd renewal: Yr 9 Yr 10	12 credits 15 credits	27 credits	90 credits	27 credits

These different steps form the first block of the bachelor's degree, of 90 credits, leading to a **licence, once a language test has been successfully completed**. The licence can be renewed every five years if a minimum number of hours of teaching, work in the trade or university credits are completed. It is then possible to complete a second block of 30 credits leading to the teaching **diploma**. This final legal qualification is permanent and does not have to be renewed.

Recognition of prior learning

It is possible to have certain prior learning recognised as credits for the bachelor's degree. This may include experience in your trade, teaching experience, and professional improvement activities in the context of your specialty. Policies on the recognition of prior learning vary from one university to another, but can significantly reduce the time necessary to obtain the degree.

The teaching permit and probation

The teaching permit is a provisional authorisation good for a period of five years (RTL, art. 30). In vocational training, three categories of persons can currently **be issued a teaching permit** without first holding provisional authorisations. These are those who:

- ▶ prior to September 1, 2008, successfully completed the old bachelor's degree or certificate program in vocational training (RTL, art. 61 to 64);
- ▶ prior to September 1, 2007, successfully complete a university college-level teacher training program of at least 30 credits (RTL, art. 65 and 66);
- ▶ received outside Québec training recognised by the MELS as equivalent to the bachelor's degree in vocational training (RTL, art. 11 and 39).

These persons have to satisfy certain other conditions specified in the articles of the Regulation mentioned in parentheses.

In order to qualify for the teaching diploma, teachers must undergo and successfully complete a **probationary period**. Further details on the duration, the supervision, the evaluation, and the repetition of probationary periods can be found in the MELS document on probation available on the MELS site at the address: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lancement/RegAutorisationEnseigner/StageProbatoire.pdf.

Mastery of the language of instruction

A person who:

- ▶ as of the school-year 2008-2009, began a professional teacher training program;
- ▶ obtained a teaching permit as of September 1, 2008;
- ▶ holds a teaching permit issued on the basis of a teaching authorisation obtained outside Quebec;
- ▶ must pass the examination in French or English recognised by the Minister for the purpose of issuing the teaching **licence or diploma** (RTL, art. 27 and 28) as part of the university training.

In the case of those who received most of their training on which an application is based in a language other than French or English, the examination must also test oral expression and comprehension of either French or English.

A person who does not pass the examination may not renew an authorisation and loses legal qualification. It is, therefore, essential to be sure to pass the examination before the final expiration of the provisional authorisation or the permit.

The bachelor's degree—an impossible dream?

The institution of the new 120-credit degree represents a huge effort for many vocational training teachers. However, the scope of this task should be put in context:

- ▶ vocational training teachers can perform a portion of their student teaching and their assignments as a part of their paid workload;
- ▶ it is possible to have up to 27 credits of trade experience recognised, along with further credits for any relevant post-secondary studies;
- ▶ the first 90 credits can be spread out over a period of 10 years;
- ▶ it is possible to never complete the 120 credits and still keep your job with the licence issued after successful completion of 90 credits of the degree, including 45 credits in education (RTL, art. 9 and 10). Renewal requires (RTL, art. 38) having, during the preceding five years.
 - ▶ accumulated 750 hours of teaching in your field in a vocational training centre, **or**;
 - ▶ worked for 1,500 hours in your field, **or**;
 - ▶ accumulated 9 new credits for a professional teaching degree, **or**;
 - ▶ a combination of the three, provided that the percentages of the requirements satisfied total at least 100%.

At this time, the "Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement" (FSE) and QPAT are working with the MELS and the universities on improvements that will minimise the hardships of having to work and study at the same time.

This document was prepared in the winter of 2011. Modification by the government of the applicable laws and regulations is always a possibility.

This document was adapted and translated according to a form produced by the FSE-CSQ.

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