

Guidelines for Approval of Textbooks

2002

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education recognizes the important roles that school boards and textbook publishers have in the implementation of the Ontario curriculum. Boards provide learning resources that enable the students in their schools to meet the provincial curriculum expectations, and they need a range of resources from which to choose learning materials that meet the needs of their students. Textbook publishers develop such resources for Ontario schools, and in order to do so in a timely and cost-effective manner, they need to know what the requirements are for getting textbooks approved for use in the schools.

This document describes ministry policies on the approval of textbooks for use in the schools of Ontario. It outlines policies on determining the eligibility of textbooks for evaluation by the ministry, as well as the criteria for approval of textbooks.

Textbooks that have been approved by the Minister of Education in accordance with the eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria outlined in this document are listed in the *Trillium List*. School boards may select texts from the *Trillium List* and approve them for use in their schools.

The *Trillium List* replaces *Circular 14, 1995* and the 1997 electronic supplement to *Circular 14, 1995*. The *Trillium List* will be updated regularly and is available on the Ministry of Education website, at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>. It should be noted that textbooks approved by the ministry for courses in compulsory subjects offered under *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7–12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements, rev. ed., 1989* (OSIS) remain in the *Trillium List*; boards may continue to select and use these textbooks up to the end of the 2003–04 school year.

Since learning resources that are appropriate for use in classrooms may not consist of print materials only, the definition of *textbook* has been expanded for the purpose of these guidelines (see section 3 of this document).

Textbook developers and publishers should also refer to *Trillium List: Textbook Submission Procedures* (see also section 5 of this document).

Boards continue to have sole responsibility for the selection of supplementary resources to support elementary and secondary programs (see sections 3 and 6).

2. Legislation on the Provision of Textbooks

This document and the *Trillium List* are issued by the Minister of Education under the authority of the Education Act. The following excerpts from the Education Act, Chapter E.2, R.S.O. 1990, as amended, and from Regulation 298, relate to the selection and use of textbooks in Ontario schools.

Education Act

Under subsection 8(1), the Minister may,

- (4) establish procedures by which and the conditions under which books and other learning materials are selected and approved by the Minister;
- (5) purchase and distribute textbooks and other learning materials for use in schools;
- (6) select and approve for use in schools textbooks, library books, reference books and other learning materials;
- (7) cause to be published from time to time lists of textbooks, learning materials, reference books and library books, selected and approved by the Minister for use in elementary and secondary schools;
- (23) enter into an agreement with any board, person or organization in respect of the development and production of learning materials, and pay all or part of the costs in connection therewith.

Under subsection 170(1), every board shall,

- (13) subject to paragraph 31.1 of subsection 171(1), provide, without charge, for the use of the pupils attending the school or schools operated by the board, the textbooks that are required by the regulations to be purchased by the board.

Under subsection 171(1), a board may,

- (31.1) require a pupil enrolled in a continuing education course or class that is eligible for credit towards a secondary school diploma to pay a nominal deposit for a textbook provided by the board that will be forfeited to the board in whole or in part if the textbook is not returned or is returned in a damaged condition.

Under subsection 264(1), it is the duty of a teacher and a temporary teacher,

- (k) to use and permit to be used as a textbook in a class that he or she teaches in an elementary or a secondary school,
 - (i) in a subject area for which textbooks are approved by the Minister, only textbooks that are approved by the Minister, and
 - (ii) in all subject areas, only textbooks that are approved by the board.

Under subsection 265(1), it is the duty of a principal of a school, in addition to the principal's duties as a teacher,

- (h) to ensure that all textbooks used by pupils are those approved by the board and, in the case of subject areas for which the Minister approves textbooks, those approved by the Minister.

Regulation 298

Section 7 of Regulation 298 states the following:

- (1) The principal of a school, in consultation with the teachers concerned, shall select from the list of the textbooks approved by the Minister the textbooks for the use of pupils of the school, and the selection shall be subject to the approval of the board.
- (2) Where no textbook for the course of study is included in the list of the textbooks approved by the Minister the principal of a school, in consultation with the teachers concerned, shall, where they consider a textbook to be required, select a suitable textbook and, subject to the approval of the board, such textbook may be introduced for use in the school.
- (3) In the selection of textbooks under subsection (2), preference shall be given to books that have been written by Canadian authors and edited, printed and bound in Canada.
- (4) Every board shall provide without charge for the use of each pupil enrolled in a day school operated by the board such textbooks selected under subsections (1) and (2) as relate to the courses in which the pupil is enrolled.

3. Definitions of Terms

Textbook is defined as a comprehensive learning resource that is in print or electronic form, or that consists of any combination of print, electronic, and non-print materials collectively designed to support a substantial portion of the Ontario curriculum for a specific grade and subject in elementary school or for a course in secondary school. Such a resource is intended for use by an entire class or group of students.

Supplementary resource is defined as a resource that supports only a limited number of curriculum expectations, or the curriculum expectations in a single strand, outlined in the curriculum policy document for a specific subject or course. Such a resource may be intended for use by an entire class or group of students. Examples are readers, novels, spelling programs, dictionaries, atlases, and computer software and instructional guides.

4. Requirements for Approval of Textbooks by the Ministry

Textbooks, as defined above in section 3, may be approved by the Ministry of Education for use in Ontario schools if they successfully meet all of the following requirements and criteria.

Eligibility Requirements

Congruence With Curriculum Policy

- a) The content must be consistent with that in one or more elementary subjects or secondary courses described in Ontario curriculum policy documents, and must support at least 85 per cent of the curriculum expectations for an elementary subject in a specific grade or a secondary course.
- b) In the case of a series, at least one title in the series must support at least 85 per cent of the curriculum expectations for an elementary subject in a specific grade or a secondary course. Individual titles in a series that do not support 85 per cent of the expectations for a subject or course are not eligible for evaluation.
- c) If non-print material (for example, a CD-ROM or manipulative material) makes up part of a textbook, and if the whole textbook package of which it is a part supports at least 85 per cent of the curriculum expectations for an elementary subject in a specific grade or a secondary course, this material will be eligible for consideration and will be included in the evaluation.
- d) A multimedia package that supports at least 85 per cent of the curriculum expectations for an elementary subject in a specific grade or a secondary course will also be considered to be a textbook and will be eligible for evaluation.

Provision of a Teacher's Resource Guide

Textbooks must be accompanied by a teacher's resource guide. This guide must be provided in both languages of instruction (English and French) if the textbook is translated.

Canadian Orientation

The content must have a Canadian orientation. It must acknowledge Canadian contributions and achievements and use Canadian examples and references wherever possible. It must use Canadian spelling conventions and SI units (units of measurement of the *Système international d'unités*, or International System of Units) for measurement references. The vocabulary and examples should be familiar to Canadians.

Canadian Product

Textbooks must be manufactured in Canada and, wherever possible, are to be written, adapted, or translated by a Canadian citizen or citizens or by a permanent resident or residents of Canada.

Evaluation Criteria

Content

Quality

The content must be accurate and of sound scholarship and must have contemporary relevance. The information must be presented in adequate depth and sophistication for the grade or course and build on students' previous knowledge and skills.

Reference to Use of Technology

The content must reflect uses of technology related to the subject/discipline, where appropriate, and allow students to use and develop these skills.

Health and Safety

Attention to safe practices must be evident through appropriate warnings and information; portrayal of people in learning, working, and playing situations; and the suitability of the learning activities.

Environmental Responsibility

The content must reflect concepts of environmental responsibility, where appropriate, within the context of the elementary subject or secondary course.

Language Level

The language used must be appropriate for the reading level of the grade for the elementary subject or secondary course. The material must be written in a style appropriate to the subject or discipline, and should include graphics and other aids to help students understand the information. Discipline-specific language and symbols must be used accurately, and technical terms must be used in contexts that students would understand. Diagrams and graphics must be accurate.

Instructional and Assessment Strategies

The content must support a broad range of instructional strategies and learning styles. The activities must be appropriate for the skills and knowledge described in the curriculum expectations. The activities must also provide opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking and problem solving, to apply concepts and procedures, and to communicate their understanding. There should be a range of tasks – that is, open-ended tasks, teacher-directed tasks, and tasks for students to do independently. The content and activities should be appropriate for students from diverse backgrounds and at different levels of physical ability. It should include, as appropriate, ways of helping students make connections within and between the strands of the subject or course and between the subject/course content and the community and workplace.

The connections between instructional strategies and assessment should be meaningful and should be consistent with the assessment strategies for the subject or course.

Bias

The content must be free from racial, ethnocultural, religious, regional, gender-related, or age-related bias; bias based on disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, occupation, political affiliation, or membership in a specific group; and bias by omission. The material should present more than one point of view, and be free from discriminatory, exclusionary, or inappropriately value-laden language, photographs, and illustrations.

Format

Suitability for Student Use

Textbooks must be intended primarily for use by students, rather than for use by teachers. The organization should be logical and easy to follow to promote ease of comprehensibility.

Durability

Textbooks must be constructed of high-quality materials sufficiently durable to support frequent use by many students. For print materials, the size, weight, and shape of the textbook should be such that the textbook is easily transported with little risk of damage.

5. Procedures for Seeking Ministry Approval of Textbooks

Textbooks submitted for inclusion in the *Trillium List* will be evaluated by an independent evaluation agency commissioned by the ministry for this purpose. The agency will evaluate the textbooks in accordance with the provincial requirements and criteria described above. It will submit reports and recommendations, which will be reviewed by the ministry. Decisions to list textbooks in the *Trillium List* will be made under the authority of the Minister of Education.

Textbook developers and publishers should also refer to *Trillium List: Textbook Submission Procedures* for detailed information on the procedures for submission of textbooks for provincial evaluation and for information on submission of the fee for evaluation. The document is available in electronic form and can be found on the Ministry of Education website, at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

6. Selection of Textbooks and Resources by School Boards

Boards are responsible for selecting textbooks from the *Trillium List* and approving them for use in their schools. They are also responsible for the selection and approval of other textbooks and instructional materials, as outlined below.

Textbooks in the *Trillium List*

In all subject areas for which approved textbooks appear in the *Trillium List*, boards may select textbooks and approve them for use in their schools, with the assurance that these textbooks have been subjected to a rigorous evaluation in accordance with the criteria specified above in section 4.

Textbooks for French As a Second Language (FSL)

Boards may select textbooks from the *Trillium List* for programs or courses described in the following curriculum policy documents:

- *The Ontario Curriculum: French As a Second Language – Core French, Grades 4–8, 1998*
- *The Ontario Curriculum: French As a Second Language – Extended French, Grades 4–8; French Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2001*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: French As a Second Language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, 1999*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: French As a Second Language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, 2000*

Boards may also select textbooks for extended and immersion programs in French as a second language from those approved for schools in which French is the language of instruction.

Textbooks for Support Programs and Second-Language Programs in French-Language Schools

Boards may select textbooks from the *Trillium List* for the support programs *Actualisation linguistique en français*, *Perfectionnement du français*, and *Anglais pour débutants*. They may also select textbooks from the *Trillium List* for programs in *Anglais* and courses in English for secondary schools whose language of instruction is French.

Boards may also select textbooks for these support and second-language programs from the textbooks that are approved for programs or courses in English-language schools offered under the following curriculum policy documents:

- *The Ontario Curriculum: French As a Second Language – Extended French, Grades 4–8; French Immersion, Grades 1–8, 2001*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: French As a Second Language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, 1999*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: French As a Second Language – Core, Extended, and Immersion French, 2000*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 1997*
- *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development, 1999*

Other Textbooks

Classical Studies and International Languages

It is the responsibility of school boards to evaluate, select, and approve textbooks for courses in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10: Classical and International Languages, 1999* and *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 11 and 12: Classical Studies and International Languages, 2000*.

Supplementary Resources

Boards have sole responsibility for the selection and evaluation of supplementary resources (see section 3 for definition) to support elementary and secondary programs. Boards are expected to ensure that an effective process is in place for the selection and approval of such materials for use in their schools.



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