

Practicum

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Orton-Gillingham Academy (OGA) OG Canada (OGC)

- **FAQ: What is the supervised practicum?**

The practicum is designed to guide and support trainees as they begin to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired during their training courses. Trainees work with (a) student(s) while being mentored by an OGA Accredited Training Fellow/ Trainer - OGC. Fundamental Learning offers a flexible practicum model to accommodate trainees in diverse locations and circumstances. Support is provided through in-person visits and/or video conferencing, ensuring consistent guidance throughout the learning journey.

** see requirements for distance supervision*

A practicum is REQUIRED to apply for certification .

Please indicate your interest in a practicum when submitting your registration form, as spaces are limited for each training session.

- A practicum must be started within 2-3 months of completing coursework.
- Candidates must submit a recent police record check that includes a vulnerable sector check.

- **FAQ: What does being “certified” mean?**

OGA certifies individuals at four different levels of “membership”: Classroom Educator, Associate, Clinical (f.k.a. Certified), and Fellow. OGC certifies individuals at two levels of membership: Classroom Educator and Associate Practitioner.

CLASSROOM EDUCATOR (OGCE) practitioners are certified by OGA to provide and adapt literacy instruction for whole class or small groups needing supplemental reading support.

The Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator is qualified to apply the principles of the Orton-Gillingham Approach to modify and to provide literacy instruction for the classroom or small groups (Tier 1,2 only*).

OGC Warranty for Classroom Educator states: “I will not engage in promotional/ advertising contexts designating myself as qualified to teach using the Orton-Gillingham Approach outside of my work in a school setting.”

**A teacher who intends to provide remedial support for a student needs to enroll in the Associate training course.*

Explicit
Systematic
Structured
Research-validated
Literacy instruction



Orton-Gillingham (O-G)
Dyslexia Specialists

funlearning.ca

Making sense of language

416.433.9580

Classroom educator coursework required: (minimum)

- 30 hours of coursework.
- Up to 6 hours may be asynchronous.
- These hours are included in Fundamental Learning's Fundamentals and Classroom Educator courses.

Supervised practicum: (minimum)

- 50 complete lessons over 8 months (at least five months need to be consecutive)
- Lessons are 40-60 minutes and occur at least twice/week on non-consecutive days
- *NOTE: Lessons can be divided into 2 sessions, but then there must be at least 4 sessions/week*
- 5 observations of the trainee teaching complete lessons in a small group (of at least 2 students) or general education classroom setting

At the completion of the 50-session practicum and 5 observations, trainees are eligible to submit their application to OGA or OGC for membership at the Classroom Educator level.

ASSOCIATE PRACTITIONERS are qualified to provide Tier 1, 2 and 3 instruction.

The Warranty for Associate membership states: “I will continue to tutor under the mentorship of a Fellow of the Academy.”

Associate Coursework required: (minimum)

- 70 hours of coursework.
- Up to 6 hours may be asynchronous.
- These hours are included in Fundamental Learning's Fundamentals and Associate courses.

Supervised Practicum: (minimum)

- 100 complete lessons over 8 consecutive months
- Lessons are 40-60 minutes and occur at least twice/week on non-consecutive days
- 10 observations of the trainee teaching complete lessons 1:1
- *NOTE: OGA's updated Dec. 2024 standards allow up to 30 lessons / 3 observations with a small group (2-3 students) with permission from the Fellow.*

At the completion of the 100-session practicum and 10 observations, trainees are eligible to submit a portfolio application required by the OGA.

CLINICAL MEMBERS are qualified as independent practitioners in the Orton-Gillingham Approach (Tier 3).

Clinical coursework may begin after a member has completed the Associate level coursework and practicum.

Clinical Coursework required: (minimum 100 hours in addition to 70 hours at Associate for a total of 170 hours)

- Fundamentals, Associate, Clinical

SUPERVISED PRACTICUM: (minimum)

- 200 lessons over 2 academic years
- 10 entire 40-60 minute lesson observations
- The Clinical practicum is with two different students: one at the lower level of language instruction and another at a higher level of language instruction. One of the practicum students needs to have a diagnosis of dyslexia (although the term dyslexia may not be used).

- **When can I begin a Practicum?**

A trainee can APPLY for a practicum placement after successful completion of all coursework and assignments at that level.

Limited space is available and requires a strong commitment to learning, self-evaluation and reflection, as well a strong level of competency with the material in the course.

A practicum must be started shortly after completing coursework (*within 2-3 months*). If trainees are not yet ready for a practicum at the completion of the course, they may audit future courses to develop their skills and knowledge and apply again later. *Please refer to Practicum Overview for further information.*

- **FAQ: Are there requirements for Practicum Students?**

Classroom Educator practicums are intended for students in a general education setting and are not intended to serve as intensive remedial interventions.

Lessons may be delivered as:

- whole class instruction - a teacher delivers an O-G literacy lesson
- small group - intended for students in a general education setting who require additional practice and support in reading to keep pace with classroom instruction.

- **FAQ: Who would be an appropriate practicum student for the Associate level?**

To meet Associate-level requirements, your practicum student **must have a dyslexic learning profile**, though a **formal diagnosis is not required**. If a formal diagnosis is unavailable, you must gather and review existing data and conduct an informal assessment to build a solid student profile that supports OG as an appropriate intervention.

What qualifies as a dyslexic learning profile?

- Strong listening comprehension
- Weak reading and spelling skills
- Average or above-average cognitive ability

Guidelines for selecting a student:

- The student may not be formally diagnosed but is a struggling reader who would benefit from OG instruction.
- There should be **supporting documentation**, such as:
 - School-based testing
 - Teacher or parent concerns
 - Referrals
 - Standardized test scores indicating difficulties with P.A. or decoding
- Teacher observations are valuable, especially if a formal evaluation has not been done.
- If available, review any **psychoeducational evaluations**—particularly cognitive scores and phonological processing assessments (e.g., CTOPP-2).

- **FAQ: Can my student have other challenges?**

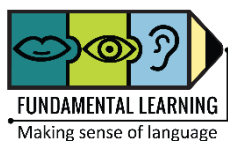
While many students can benefit from the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach, not all are suitable for the Associate-level practicum.

Practicum Student Requirements:

- Should have average or above-average cognitive ability
- Should have minimal behavior or attention issues that can be effectively managed
- Should not have significant competing needs that could interfere with OG instruction

Students not appropriate for the Associate practicum include those with:

- Significant behavior or attention challenges
- Autism
- Intellectual disability
- Developmental Language Disorder (receptive and/or expressive language disorders)
- Other conditions that make direct, systematic instruction difficult to implement



These students may still benefit greatly from OG instruction; however, for training purposes, it is essential that you work with a student who allows you to focus on mastering the OG Approach, without additional complexities that may limit instructional progress. We encourage you to apply what you've learned in your OG coursework to support all of your students, even those who may not be your approved practicum student.

- **FAQ: At what level should the student be?**

While instructional level is more important than age, practicum students are generally not appropriate before second grade.

At the Associate level, the practicum student should be in the early stages of literacy instruction, working on:

- Grapheme-phoneme correspondences
- Beginning spelling patterns
- Introductory syllable work

Although younger students (e.g., kindergarten or first grade) may benefit from Orton-Gillingham instruction, they are not appropriate for the Associate practicum. This is because the practicum must provide opportunities to teach multiple syllable types and patterns and concepts that extend beyond single closed syllable words.

Therefore, your **primary 1:1 practicum student must be in second grade or higher** to ensure the developmental readiness and instructional scope required at the Associate level.

- **FAQ: How long do I have to complete an Associate practicum once I begin?**

- The practicum must span a minimum of 8 consecutive months
- A minimum of two lessons per week is required, scheduled on non-consecutive days. This means that at least 100 lessons must be completed within 50 weeks.
- However, aiming for the minimum is not recommended, as cancellations due to holidays, illness, school events, or unforeseen circumstances are common.

Planning for Success:

- Build in make-up time or, preferably, plan for more than two lessons per week to stay on track.
- Practicum students should not take extended breaks during the practicum
- Ideally, the 100 required lessons should be completed within a school year (8 months).

If Extended Time Is Needed:

- You may continue working with your student through the summer if needed.
- Alternatively, you may work with two different students. In that case:
 - One must be designated as your primary practicum student, for whom you will submit a detailed student profile.
 - Your Fellow will determine how observations are split between students.

Important Considerations:

- Choose a student who can consistently attend lessons and is able to commit to the required time.
- Note: The 100 lessons and 10 observations are minimum requirements. A Fellow may determine that additional lessons or observations are necessary to ensure adequate preparation.

- **FAQ: Do I need to use the same student for the entire practicum?**

While it is preferable to complete the practicum with a single student, the Academy recognizes that this may not always be possible. The full 100 hours of Associate practicum do not need to be completed with the student you submit for certification. However, you should work with that student long enough to demonstrate meaningful progress through the scope and sequence. You must complete a minimum of 50 lessons with the student you choose to include in your application.

NOTE: For a lesson to count toward your practicum, your Supervising Fellow must have observed you teaching that student.

- **How is the practicum support organized?**

Fundamental Learning believes strongly that coaching and support are crucial to a trainee's success.

"During the practicum, Liisa provided patient and thoughtful guidance, ensuring we felt confident and well-prepared. Her unwavering support and expertise set us up for success."

Upon acceptance into the practicum (signed agreement and registration fee submitted), you will be enrolled in the Practicum course site. This platform provides access to essential materials, including permission forms, resources, announcements about upcoming professional development, communications from the OGA, and additional support materials.

You will also be set up with shared communication tools through Dropbox, where you can upload required documents and access shared documents.

A paid Dropbox account is not necessary.

Throughout your practicum, we will use these shared tools to:

- Support the intake process for your practicum student
- Review and provide feedback on lesson plans and instructional materials
- Track student progress and document questions and reflections

Observations and Feedback

- Observations will occur approximately every 3–4 weeks
- Each observation will be followed by an oral feedback session
- You will submit a written reflection and the follow up lesson, which your Fellow will review and respond to with written feedback and clarifications

Community and Ongoing Support

- Weekly Learning Community meetings provide a space for Q&A, additional training, resource sharing, and peer support
- These meetings foster collaboration, allowing participants to learn from and support one another
- In addition to group sessions, you will also have private feedback meetings during each observation, where you can ask specific questions and receive individualized guidance

- **FAQ: What is the cost for a practicum?**

The cost is spread out over the course of the practicum. Upon acceptance into a practicum, a non-refundable registration fee is paid. An observation fee is paid at the time of each observation.

(contact Fundamental Learning for current fees)

- **FAQ: Will I be certified after I finish the practicum? or are there additional requirements?**

Upon completion of the practicum and all coursework requirements, trainees are invited to submit their portfolio application package to OGA for review, along with an application fee that includes one year of membership. *(See OGA site for current fees).*

Each level has different requirements. If OGA is satisfied that all requirements have been met an acceptance letter is sent out to the applicant inviting them to sign the Warranty.

Trainees should create an account on the Academy website to view the current requirements for applying for certification before beginning a practicum, so they are aware of the requirements and the process.

If the Fellow is an Accredited Training Fellow (ATF) the application is reviewed first by the ATF. If the ATF is confident that all criteria have been met, the application is submitted to the Academy on a rolling basis. If the ATF determines that the application package is not yet ready for submission to OGA, the ATF will provide feedback and support to the applicant to strengthen their application, and they can apply again once the requirements have been met.

- **FAQ: What are the requirements for distance supervised practicum?**

The trainee is required to have access to high-speed internet, a camera, monitor, speakers, and a microphone. Most people find a laptop is sufficient. *(No Chromebooks)* Using the ZOOM platform, the Fellow joins the session and interacts with the trainee and student. *Under certain circumstances, trainees may video and upload the unedited lesson for review. The Fellow and trainee will then connect and review the lesson together.*

All trainees must have access to and decent facility with technology, including the ability to work with Word documents, combine files into PDFs, use Dropbox Paper, as well as scan and upload documents on a timely basis.

FAQ: I took O-G training with another Fellow. Can I take my practicum with Fundamental Learning?

Unfortunately, due to high demand, we can only accommodate teachers who enroll in the courses through Fundamental Learning.

"Taking courses and doing a practicum with Liisa was the best training I have ever received.

For the first time, I have foundational knowledge to understand the English language and teach it to the students in my classroom.

I also have the tools to investigate the questions that my students bring to me daily as well as the varied resources that I am regularly asked to use."

Please go to funlearning.ca for more information or to register for training.

