

Future
QA
PROGRAM

Summary of Stakeholder Surveys

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Future QA Program, Summary of Stakeholder Surveys Report

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Introduction

Objectives of this report

This report provides an overview of the results from two surveys:

- 2017 Future Quality Assurance Public Survey
- 2017 Future Quality Assurance Stakeholder Survey

The 2017 Future QA Public Survey explored how the public perceives how nurses should maintain their competence and how employers and the College can support nurses to provide safe nursing care.

The 2017 Future QA Stakeholder Survey collected feedback from nurses, some of whom were educators or employers. It explored their views concerning:

- the methods that nurses, including those working as academics and employers use to identify annual learning needs
- the helpfulness of various methods that assist nurses to reflect on their practice
- how the College should work with educators, employers and nurses to support nurses in completing QA requirements.

The surveys did not provide specific information related to the proposed QA model. However, the emerging themes from the two surveys may support Council's approval of the new QA model. Once a new QA model is approved, we will conduct further consultation with stakeholders during the development phase of the new QA Program.

Detailed reports on both surveys, including survey methodologies, are available on Council's portal.

Executive summary

There are three key findings from the analysis of both surveys:

1) Regulator's role:

There was strong support from the public that nurses should have to demonstrate to the regulator that they are taking steps to improve their skills. This affirms the approach Council is proposing for redesigning the future QA Program.

2) Current approaches used by nurses to identify learning needs:

a) *Approaches for self-reflection:*

The majority of nurses who responded to the survey (including nurses in the educator role and supervisory/managerial roles) currently reflect on their overall practice as opposed to using a more structured method to reflect on specific competencies (for example, a questionnaire). Nurses in the educator role are less likely to use a structured method to reflect on specific competencies compared to other nurses who responded to the survey.

b) *Approaches for obtaining peer feedback:*

The majority of all nurses who responded to the survey currently obtain peer feedback informally, whereas far fewer participants use a structured method (for example, a questionnaire) to obtain peer feedback.

c) *Resources and support to assist nurses completing QA requirements:*

Less than 25% of nurses and educators and 35% of employers reported that their organizations currently provide nurses with support for completing QA requirements.

Educators, employers and nurses identified the following themes:

- the need for the College to provide education and resources
- increase communication and engagement strategies with nurses and employers
- engagement with educators
- alignment of performance reviews with QA requirements.

3) **Helpfulness of approaches to self-assessment and peer feedback:**

Public

- There was strong public support for both peers and employers to provide feedback to nurses as part of their self-assessment.

Educators, employers and nurses

- Employers and nurses favoured a more structured self-reflection based on specific competencies (for example, using a questionnaire), as well as a more structured method of obtaining peer feedback also based on specific competencies.
- Educators favoured reflecting on practice overall and obtaining feedback from peers about practice overall.

Considerations for the new QA Program:

- Mechanisms in the new QA Program that ensure nurses demonstrate their continuing competence to the College
- Integration of employer feedback into the self-assessment component of QA.
- Self-assessment is valued by stakeholders as an important process for nurses to maintain their competence. The new model should have a focus on the components of self-assessment which should include elements of self-reflection and peer feedback.
- Apply a structured approach based on competencies when completing both the self-assessment and obtaining peer feedback. Employers and nurses favoured a structured approach based on competencies.
- Develop communication and engagement strategies in collaboration with different stakeholders (nurses, employers and educators) in the development and implementation phase of the new QA Program.
- Develop education and resources in collaboration with stakeholders (nurses, employers and educators) to help nurses understand the new QA Program and support their QA activities.

Analysis of Public Survey Results

The College commissioned Research Now, an independent market research company, to conduct a survey using its proprietary panel of Ontarians between October 31 and November 1, 2017. The survey screened out anyone who was:

- under 18 years of age
- not a resident of Ontario
- not employed as a healthcare provider.

In total, 300 people completed the survey.

The survey only collected quantitative data. The results provide insight into the public’s perceptions of how nurses should maintain their competence and how employers and the College can support them.

The public was asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that:

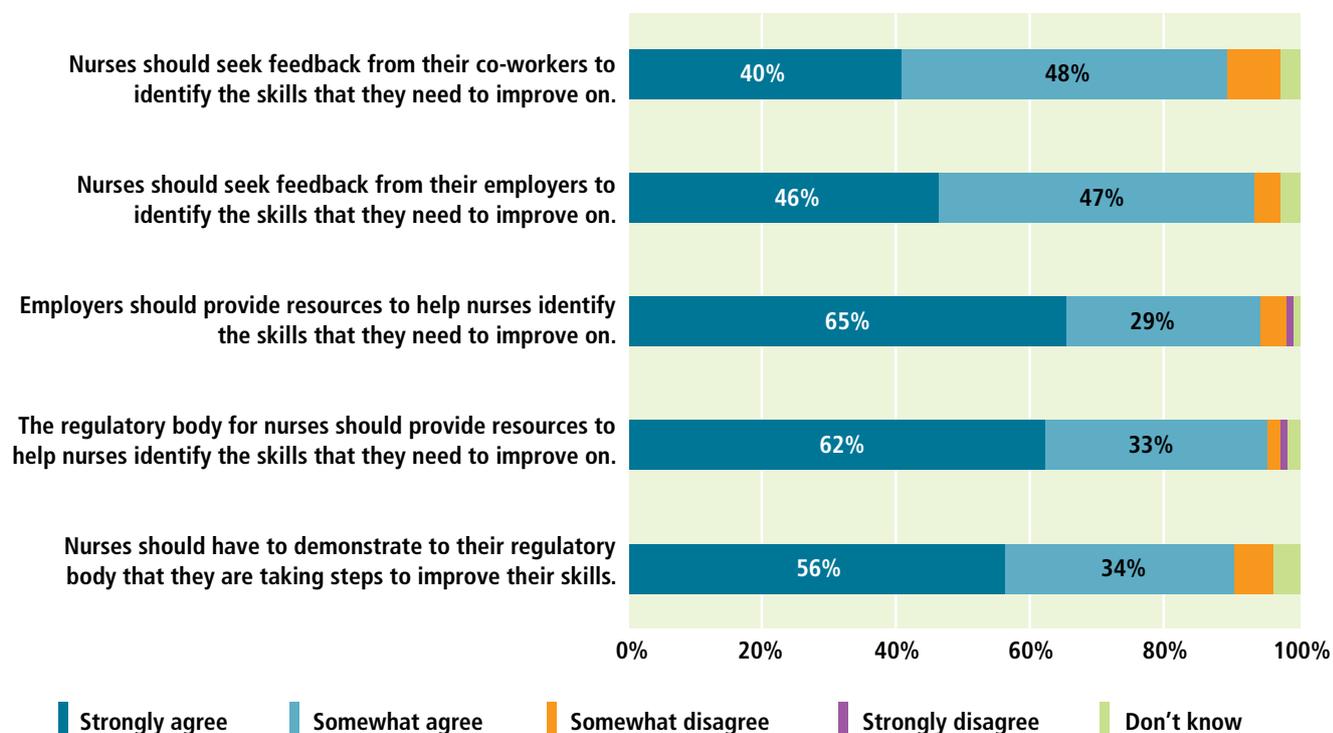
1. nurses should seek feedback from co-workers and employers to identify the skills that they need to improve on
2. employers and the College should provide resources to help nurses identify the skills that they need to improve on
3. nurses should have to demonstrate to their regulatory body that they are taking steps to improve their skills.

As shown in Figure 1, below, a large majority of the public agreed that nurses should seek feedback from their co-workers (88%) and from their employers (93%) to identify the skills that they need to improve on.

Similarly, respondents agreed that employers (94%) and the nursing regulator (95%) should provide resources to help nurses identify the skills that they need to improve on.

Ninety percent of respondents agreed that nurses should have to demonstrate to their regulatory body that they are taking steps to improve their skills.

Figure 1 Public Survey Results



Question: To provide safe nursing care, nurses need to continuously evaluate and improve their skills. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Analysis of Stakeholder Survey (Educators, Employers and Nurses)

The stakeholder survey collected feedback from 416 nurses, of whom 169 are educators (defined as members of nursing faculty at an Ontario college or university) and 129 are employers who are responsible for managing other nurses.

Methods/tools used to identify learning needs

The survey asked respondents what methods and tools they use to identify their annual learning needs. The responses are shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1 Tools/Methods currently used to identify annual learning needs

Which, if any, of the following tools/methods do you currently use to identify your annual learning needs? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)	Educators (n=169)	Employers (n=129)	Nurses (n=118)
Reflecting on your own overall practice	98%	92%	92%
Asking peers to provide informal feedback	64%	60%	58%
Using a structured questionnaire to assess your own practice on specific competencies	21%	32%	34%
Using a structured questionnaire to get feedback from peers about your practice on specific competencies	14%	19%	13%
Other (describe)	17%	26%	14%

Nearly all respondents reflect on their own overall practice to identify their learning needs (98% of educators, and 92% of employers and nurses). Somewhat fewer ask their peers to provide informal feedback (64% of educators, and 60% of employers and 58% of nurses).

Approximately 33% of nurses and employers and 21% of educators use structured questionnaires to assess their practice on specific competencies, while fewer than one in five respondents use structured questionnaires to get feedback from their peers.

Respondents were asked to describe other tools they use to identify their annual learning needs. The methods most frequently identified were:

- performance reviews
- self-assessment tools
- multiple sources of feedback from clients, students and peers
- continuing education activities
- independent study or research (for example, review of new legislation, current literature reviews)
- Other (for example, conversation with chair of program or employers).

Approximately 30 nurses (27 employers and 3 educators) identified performance reviews as a common method for identifying annual learning needs. For example, respondents stated that the formal process at work, annual skills assessment and performance evaluations are some of the ways they use to identify their learning needs.

A few respondents also noted that they use self-assessment tools to identify learning needs such as reviewing competencies, reflecting on daily practice, and developing learning plans with goals and objectives. The majority of the respondents that highlighted this approach were nurses. Another method that emerged from stakeholders' responses was seeking feedback from multiple sources such as clients, students and peers. Most of the respondents that highlighted this method were educators. Other methods included continuing education activities and independent research or study such as reviews of new legislation or current literature reviews.

Current level of support from organizations for completing QA Learning Plan

Respondents were asked if their organizations currently provide support for nurses to complete the College's QA Learning Plan. As shown in Table 2, less than a quarter of nurses and educators and 35% of employers reported that their organizations provide them with support.

Table 2 Does your organization currently provide support for nurses to complete the College's QA Learning Plan (for example, time and resources)?

	Educators (n=169)	Employers (n=129)	Nurses (n=118)
Yes	22%	35%	24%
No	60%	57%	42%
Don't know	17%	9%	27%
Not applicable – I'm not employed	0%	0%	7%

Perceptions of helpfulness of different approaches for assisting nurses to identify their learning needs

Respondents were asked about the helpfulness of various tools and methods for assisting nurses to identify their learning needs. Specifically, they were asked about:

Critical reflection and self-assessment by:

- reflecting on their own overall practice
- using a structured questionnaire to assess their own practice on specific competencies

Seeking peer feedback by:

- asking peers to provide informal feedback about the nurse's overall practice
- using a structured questionnaire to get feedback from peers about the nurse's practice on specific competencies.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of respondents believe that both reflecting on their own overall practice, and using a structured questionnaire to assess their own practice on specific competencies would be helpful in assisting nurses to identify their learning needs.

Employers and nurses were more likely to rate using a structured questionnaire as helpful, while educators were more likely to rate reflecting on their own overall practice as helpful.

Table 3 Comparison of perceptions of how helpful stakeholders believed reflecting on one’s overall practice is as opposed to more structured self-reflection based on specific competencies.

Respondent type	Reflecting on overall practice			Using a structured questionnaire to assess own practice on specific competencies		
	Not at all helpful	Moderately helpful	Very or extremely helpful	Not at all helpful	Moderately helpful	Very or extremely helpful
Educators	5%	15%	78%	4%	26%	67%
Employers	3%	34%	62%	2%	22%	72%
Nurses	8%	31%	59%	2%	30%	65%

The results in Table 4, show that, when considering methods to obtain peer feedback, more employers and more nurses believe using a structured method to gather peer feedback regarding specific competencies is very or extremely helpful as compared to asking peers to provide informal feedback on their overall practice. Educators perceived both methods were very or extremely helpful.

Table 4 Comparison of perceptions of how helpful stakeholders believed obtaining informal peer feedback about one’s overall practice is as opposed to obtaining more structured peer feedback on one’s practice regarding specific competencies.

Respondent type	Asking peers to provide informal feedback about the nurse’s overall practice			Using a structured questionnaire to get feedback from peers about the nurse’s practice on specific competencies		
	Not at all helpful	Moderately helpful	Very or extremely helpful	Not at all helpful	Moderately helpful	Very or extremely helpful
Educators	14%	40%	46%	20%	31%	45%
Employers	11%	38%	50%	10%	26%	62%
Nurses	14%	38%	45%	14%	29%	51%

Overall, these results show that stakeholders are supportive of the different methods that would assist nurses to reflect on their practice.

Stakeholders’ perceptions of different approaches to identifying learning needs

The survey also included a qualitative question where respondents were asked to provide open feedback about how the College should work with educators, employers and nurses to support nurses in completing the College’s QA requirements.

The main themes that were identified by educators, employers and nurses are:

- the need for the College to provide education and resources
- increase communication and engagement strategies with nurses and employers
- engagement with educators
- alignment of performance reviews with QA requirements.

Other themes that emerged from stakeholders' feedback that were less pronounced include:

- support for structured questionnaire
- nurses' accountability to comply with QA requirements
- support for multisource feedback process
- comments related to current QA program.

Below is an exploration of the main themes and suggestions from stakeholders that Council can take into consideration when redesigning the QA Program.

Education and resources

One of the main themes that emerged from stakeholders' feedback was the need for the College to provide education and resources on the QA Program. There were a total of 76 responses (27 employers, 27 educators and 22 nurses) who stated that education and resources from the College would help them understand the new QA requirements and how to properly complete them. They suggested ideas like:

- the College should educate nurses in completing QA by offering seminars/webinars
- develop resources (for example, checklists, brochures, pamphlets)
- the QA Program should be accessible and user friendly (for example, online support).

Communication and engagement with nurses, employers and educators

Communication and engagement with nurses and employers was also a recurrent theme from stakeholders' feedback. There were a total of 70 responses that highlighted this theme (27 were educators, 21 employers and 22 nurses). They suggested ideas like:

- the College should encourage employers to provide time, support and resources to nurses to complete QA
- increase engagement with employers and remind them about QA requirements
- designate a QA month/PD days to complete QA
- the College should provide different methods of completing QA
- the College should work collaboratively and interactively with nurses and employers.

Further to communicating and engaging with nurses and employers, educators also pointed out the need for better engagement with the College. For example, they identified that the College should:

- help educators with students' knowledge and understanding about QA
- help educators integrate QA into nursing education
- listen to educators' concerns and act on them.

Performance reviews

Another dominant theme from stakeholders' feedback was the idea of aligning employers' performance review with QA requirements. There were approximately 41 comments that suggested integrating QA into the annual performance reviews (18 employers, 18 educators and 3 nurses). In their comments they identified that:

- aligning QA with employment performance reviews or vice-versa would be beneficial
- employers should verify nurses' completion of QA before the nurse satisfies employer's performance review
- the timing of QA and performance review should coincide.

This was a theme that was also identified by stakeholders as a method that they currently use to identify their learning needs from the previous question. Given the stakeholders' emphasis on aligning the performance reviews with QA, there is an opportunity for Council to explore ways to increase engagement with employers.

Other themes

Stakeholders also identified other themes that would be helpful to them. For example:

- some showed support for the idea of a structured questionnaire based on competencies
- others disagreed with the previous comments related to the role of employers in providing support to nurses to comply with QA requirements. They stated that nurses should be accountable to complete the QA requirement independently and this is not the employers' role
- others suggested that by making it mandatory for all nurses to complete a Learning Plan during Annual Membership Renewal, nurses would more likely comply with QA requirements.

Another theme was the process of multisource feedback being beneficial to nurses. Some respondents indicated that some nurses are not aware of their weaknesses and that having a peer review section to reflective practice may be beneficial to help them identify learning gaps. Similarly, a structured and anonymous QA portal where nurses can provide feedback anonymously might be helpful as well as a structured questionnaire that provides peers with specific competencies to evaluate them.

Lastly, some comments related to the current QA Program. For example:

- the need for the QA Program to include continuing education requirements
- QA is punitive for Nurse Practitioners
- the current QA program works well
- the QA process is vague
- need to simplify QA requirement by making them more inclusive and flexible as well as the need to improve Learning Plans
- support for random audits and Learning Plans.



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