

# COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

News to Use: November 2023

## What is the Academic Reference Group?

The Academic Reference Group is made up of academic stakeholders and representatives of the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) who share information and collaborate on nursing regulatory issues of mutual interest and concern.

The group includes 12 Ontario nursing educators who have volunteered to represent all nursing programs in the province.

The goal of the group is to provide an opportunity for discussion and collaboration on regulatory issues of importance to both educators and the College of Nurses of Ontario.

## Welcome

We appreciate your time and thank you for your continued engagement as a member of the Academic Reference Group.

## Program Approval

At the September meeting, Council approved four new baccalaureate programs, one direct entry full and three pre-health specified programs. The list of [approved nursing programs](#) has been updated based on Council's decisions.

CNO expects to review more new programs throughout 2024. To start the [preliminary approval](#) process, please notify [Katie Dilworth](#), CNO's Manager of Education, regarding your intent to offer a new program(s) at least one year before commencing the program.

## Registration exams

CNO has recently shared Q3 2023 reports for REx-PN and NCLEX-RN exams. We have met with many individual programs to review their results. If you have any difficulty accessing your report, please contact [Sean Knight](#).

Please email [Katie Dilworth](#), CNO's Manager of Education, if you would like to schedule a meeting to discuss your PN or BN program exam results.

## RPN initiation scope expansion

The Ontario government approved regulations granting RPNs the authority to initiate, independently, certain controlled acts in certain practice settings without needing an order from an authorized health care professional. The regulations were effective July 1, 2023.

The authority to perform these controlled acts is not new. RPNs could always do this action with an order. The difference is that RPNs who have the relevant competence can now initiate these procedures without an order. While nurses may have access to perform or initiate controlled acts, it may not be possible in certain practice contexts without an order because of legislation or facility policies (for example, hospital settings). Please see our [webpage](#) for further information, including our new [Scope of Practice](#) standard that supports this change.

## RN Prescribing

The Ontario government is making changes to Ontario law (the *Nursing Act, 1991*) that will permit registered nurses to prescribe certain medications and communicate diagnoses for the purposes of prescribing. RNs do not have the authority to perform either of these activities until government approves CNO's proposed regulations. The regulation also includes changes in accountabilities for all

## GROUP MEMBERS

We encourage you to share your feedback with any member of the Academic

Reference Group:

**Renee Berquist**  
St. Lawrence College

**Annie Berthiaume**  
Collège Boréal

**Mariève Chartrand**  
Collège La Cité

**Wendy Ellis**  
George Brown College

**Lisa-Anne Hagerman**  
Conestoga College

**Kathryn Halverson**  
Brock University

**Erin Kennedy**  
Western University

**Kumaran Mahathevan**  
Centennial College

**June Raymond**  
Cambrian College

**Alison Thompson**  
Lakehead University

**Katherine Trip**  
University of Toronto

**Anne Marie Shin**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Katie Dilworth**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Neshma Dhanani**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Giovanna Graci**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Nathalie Peladeau**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Donna Rawlin**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

**Irene Wu-Lau**  
College of Nurses of Ontario

nurses (RPNs, RNs, NPs) to dispense medication or administer a substance by injection or inhalation.

The regulations require that RNs successfully complete CNO Council-approved education to become authorized to prescribe. The competencies for prescribing build on the entry-level competencies for RNs. RN prescribing education programs must integrate and teach these competencies. The regulations will permit RNs to prescribe the following medications: immunization, contraception, smoking cessation medications, travel health (prevention) medications, wound care (topical) medications, and over-the-counter medications.

CNO is developing a new practice standard and other resources to support safe practice and align with the regulatory changes. We encourage you to continue to monitor our website for [updates](#).

### Nurse Practitioner update

CNO continues to engage with NP programs to discuss the integration of the new NP entry-level competencies into their NP program curricula. At the national level, work continues with the NP practice analysis, which will inform development of the new single entry-to-practice exam. Project updates are posted on the [CCRNR website](#).

### Standards Modernization Project

#### New Code of Conduct

To support nurses and stakeholders with the application of the revised *Code of Conduct*, CNO has developed the following resources:

- Three [learning modules](#) focused on the new principle in the Code on inclusive and culturally-safe care
- A [Code of Conduct Webinar](#) available in English and French. This includes an overview of the Code, key features of the modernized Code and a review of how the Code applies to practice.
- Mapping tools to support the integration of former *Professional Standards* and *Ethics* practice standards into the revised Code (also available in French).

Additional resources include:

- [Code of Conduct FAQs](#)
- [Culturally Safe Care Resources](#)

#### Scope of Practice Standard

On July 1, 2023, the [Scope of Practice](#) standard took effect. This standard outlines the nurse's legislative accountabilities, including key requirements nurses must consider when deciding whether to perform an activity for safe client care.

To support the integration of the standard into practice, a [Scope of Practice Webcast](#) is available on our website, in addition to our [Ask Practice Understanding Scope of Practice and Your Nursing Accountabilities](#).

### New Jurisprudence Exam

As of July 17, all applicants seeking registration for the General, Special Assignment, Temporary, Reinstatement or Extended class are required to pass a [new Jurisprudence Exam](#). The Jurisprudence Exam assesses applicants' knowledge of their professional,

legal and ethical accountabilities to ensure they are able to provide safe and competent nursing care in Ontario.

The new exam format features an interactive “open book” e-learning module and a 50-question multiple-choice exam. The exam format means applicants may use other online or offline resources (e.g., laws, regulations, CNO’s practice standards) to support their answers during testing. The new exam is available online and can be completed virtually in English or French through a secure website.

### **Modernization of Applicant Assessment**

On September 28, CNO Council approved draft changes to regulations under the *Nursing Act, 1991* that amend the education registration requirements. These amendments build on recent work to modernize applicant assessment and align with CNO’s strategic plan outcome to improve the applicant experience and ensure our registration processes are evidence-informed, fair, inclusive and effective. If approved, they will also help further increase health human resources in Ontario. The proposed amendments to regulations include:

- Removing Ontario education equivalency for registration in the General Class for both Registered Nurse and Registered Practical Nurse applicants. This is replaced with a new regulation that accepts relevant nursing education recognized or approved in any jurisdiction
- Adding a new regulation that requires applicants to successfully complete a course approved by CNO’s Council that supports successful integration into the health care system in Canada

The education requirement is one of eight registration requirements that must be met to support ensuring those entering the profession can provide safe and competent patient care. Other requirements include passing a registration exam, having proficiency in English or French and recent nursing practice as a few examples.

You can read details of the proposed regulation changes on our [public consultation page](#). All stakeholders are welcome to provide feedback about these proposed changes. The deadline for comments is Monday, November 27, 2023.

### **Quality Assurance**

CNO has updated the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) Program](#) to support greater relevancy to everyday nursing practice and increase the reach of the program. We have implemented a new, more user-friendly technology platform and process improvements to better support nurses going through QA Assessment. The program had a successful soft launch of the new approach this summer and have commenced another QA Assessment cycle in October with a larger number of nurses randomly selected to participate.

You can find our QA resources and access the updated Learning Plan template on CNO’s [QA webpage](#). More changes to the program will be coming in 2024. Please continue to monitor [CNO.org](#) for updates. If you have any questions, please email CNO at [QAassessment@CNOmail.org](mailto:QAassessment@CNOmail.org) for additional support.

## Regulatory changes

### 'As of Right' and Labour Mobility

The Ontario government has approved legislative amendments to enable interjurisdictional mobility for select registered health professionals related to Bill 60, *Your Health Act, 2023*. Under Bill 60, nurses registered in an equivalent category in other Canadian jurisdictions can temporarily practice in Ontario, while completing their registration with CNO.

To enhance labour mobility and streamline the registration for nurses registered in other provinces or territories, CNO has [implemented new options](#) to reduce registration barriers for applicants. These changes enable eligible labour mobility applicants to demonstrate their registration requirements, including evidence of recent practice and verification of registration, within a matter of days.

### Program Approval Roundtable

On Oct 26 and 27 CNO held an inaugural Program Approval Roundtable meeting with nursing regulators from across Canada (19 in total). The meeting objectives included enabling regulators to share their experiences with program approval, identifying new and emerging issues related to the regulation of nursing education and creating an ongoing mechanism for collaboration on approving entry level nursing education.

Guest speakers included Dr Leigh Chapman, Chief Nursing Officer for Canada, and Allison Henry, Director, Health Workforce Regulatory Oversight, Ontario Ministry of Health. The keynote speaker was Dr Nancy Spector, Director of Nursing Education from NCSBN. Dr Spector highlighted recent research outcomes in program approval and the new NCSBN Nursing Education Approval Guidelines. Roundtable discussions were led by members of the CNO Education team along with CRNS and CLPNA.

After the meeting, participants expressed positive feedback citing tremendous learning and collaborative relationships developed.

### ARG membership recruitment

CNO continues to recruit new members for a three-year term starting in 2024. The ARG includes representation from all nursing programs. At this time we need university-based program representatives, from diverse areas across the province to maintain equitable representation between colleges and universities. [Learn more](#) about CNO's recruitment for new members.

CNO extends a big thank you to all new and current ARG members for their ongoing participation and support. Your involvement helps inform our regulatory role and ensures Ontario nursing education program graduates are ready to practice safely and competently.

### Council updates

Read the [September 2023 Council meeting materials](#).

*Please share this update with other nursing educators at your school.*