

COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

April 25, 2022

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

Katie welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced seven new members to our group. The ongoing stress of the COVID pandemic and clinical placement availability were discussed. Members shared that employer partners continue to be supportive despite the staff fatigue with latest COVID outbreaks across the province. CNO thanks the academic community for their tremendous efforts to ensure excellence in nursing education during these incredible times.

Program Approval

At the March 2022 meeting, Council approved five new nursing programs as preliminary approved, three of which are francophone degree programs. Academic institutions continue to submit their intention to offer standalone baccalaureate programs to CNO for preliminary approval, with more new programs expected to be approved in 2022 and 2023.

Any school interested in starting the [preliminary approval](#) process, please notify [Katie Dilworth](#), CNO's Manager of Education, of your intent to offer a new program(s) at least one year before commencing the program.

Registration exams

REx-PN launched on January 4, 2022, as the new regulatory exam for RPN registration in Ontario. Exam eligible RPN applicants can schedule an appointment to write the exam any day of the week. This new exam is a valid, reliable method to evaluate whether applicants are prepared to work safely as practical nurses in Ontario. Please review the [REx-PN webpage](#) for more information.

Early exam results for the first quarter of 2022 reveal very small numbers of applicants have written the new exam across the province. CNO's Education Team will be reaching out to book 1:1 meetings with each PN program over the next few months to discuss their first cohort results.

Modernization of Applicant Assessment project

CNO provided updates about modernizing its applicant assessment process to streamline and reduce delays for applicants wanting to register as a practicing nurse in Ontario. The goals of updating the registration requirements are to implement efficiencies in how CNO assesses applicant information, update relevant policies associated with the process, and reduce the length of time it takes for an applicant to be registered. Continue to check the [website](#) for regular updates to the modernization process.

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

Sandra DeLuca
Fanshawe College, Western University

Wendy Ellis
George Brown College

Erin Kennedy
Western University

Sylvie Larocque
Laurentian University/Université Laurentian

Kumaran Mahathevan
Centennial College

Linda Patrick
University of Windsor

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

Donna Rawlin
College of Nurses of Ontario

Nathalie Peladeau
College of Nurses of Ontario

Irene Wu-Lau
College of Nurses of Ontario

Supervised Practice Experience Partnership

In partnership with Ontario Health, the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership (SPEP) was launched in January 2022. SPEP provides a new option for applicants, who meet specific criteria, to meet their evidence of practice requirement by completing a supervised practice experience within a CNO-approved practice setting in Ontario. Any setting is welcome to participate. Check out the [website](#) for more information.

Language Proficiency

As part of the modernization of applicant assessment process, CNO launched a new [Language Proficiency policy](#) in March 2022. The new policy provides seven options for applicants to demonstrate language proficiency in English or French at the level required for nursing practice. Check out the [website](#) for more information.

Nurse Practitioners to order CTs and MRIs

Starting July 1, 2022, NPs will have the authority to order magnetic resonance imaging tests and computerized tomography scans. [Learn more](#) about the changes associated with CTs and MRIs. We will post more information on cno.org before the changes take effect in July.

Point of Care Testing

Starting July 1, 2022, all nurses (RPNs, RNs and NPs) will be able to perform point-of-care tests (POCTs). While many nurses currently perform POCTs, regulation changes under the *Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act*, will make nurses' authority to perform them clear. An explicit exemption under this legislation will allow nurses to perform POCTs without an order or directive. But even with this new exemption in place, some nurses will still need an order or directive due to workplace policies or regulations under setting specific legislation (for example, *Public Hospitals Act*). [Read more](#) about changes to point-of-care tests.

Quality Assurance

CNO continues to make enhancements to the [Quality Assurance \(QA\) program](#) to better support nurses in meeting their QA obligations related to continuous learning and practice reflection. As part of these changes, a small number of nurses will be randomly selected to participate in [QA Assessment](#) this year. Nurses selected for QA Assessment will have access to QA Peer Coaches and CNO staff to guide them through the process. More enhancements will be coming in 2023, including the launch of a new QA platform to support member regulatory learning and participation in the QA program. We look forward to sharing further updates on this work in the coming months.

Refresh of CNO Student and Educator web pages

In late 2021 and early 2022, we refreshed our [Student](#) and [Educator](#) pages. We reorganized the content, resources and helpful links so it is more user-friendly, including offering the pages in French.

Next meeting is scheduled for June 20, 2022, 0930-1130 hrs

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