

# QUALITY ASSURANCE QA EVERY DAY GUIDE



COLLEGE OF NURSES  
OF ONTARIO  
ORDRE DES INFIRMIÈRES  
ET INFIRMIERS DE L'ONTARIO

THE STANDARD OF CARE.



QUALITY  
ASSURANCE

*Quality Assurance: QA Every Day guide* is a resource developed by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) to support you in completing your annual Quality Assurance (QA) requirements.

This guide provides information on how to complete QA Every Day by using practice reflection to develop a learning plan.

You are encouraged to refer to this guide when reflecting on your practice and completing your learning plan. QA tools and resources are also available at [cno.org/qa](https://cno.org/qa).



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*Quality Assurance: QA Every Day guide*

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Ce fascicule existe en français sous le titre : *Assurance de la qualité : Votre guide d'autoévaluation*, n° 54005

## About CNO's Quality Assurance program

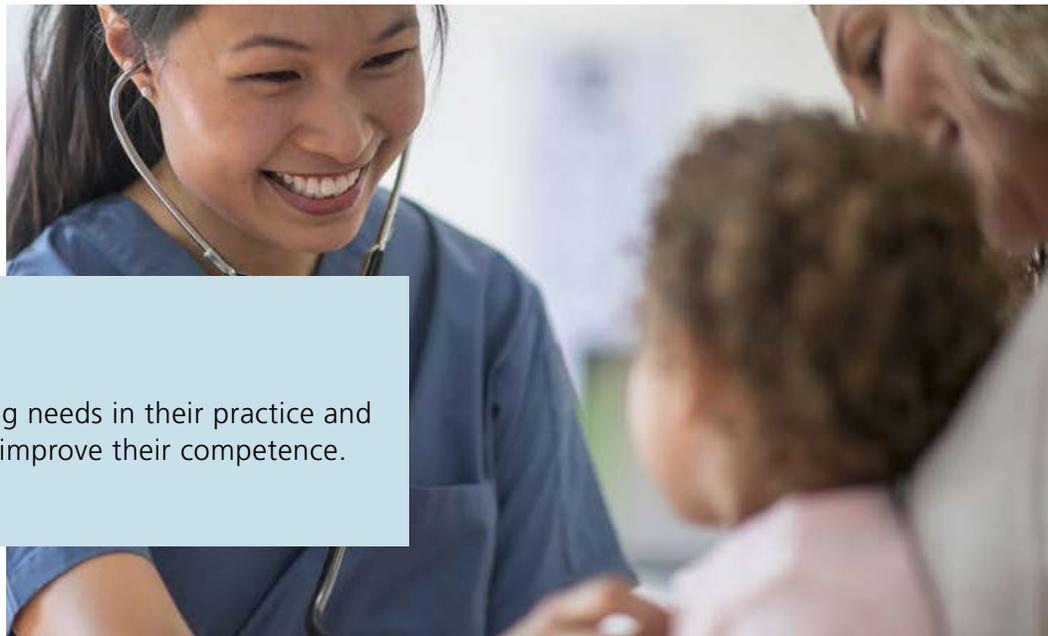
CNO's QA Program is based on the principle that lifelong learning is essential to continuing competence. Through QA, you are assuring the public of your commitment to continuously enhance the quality of client care you provide. As a nursing professional, the public counts on you to demonstrate this commitment by engaging in daily practice reflection and setting and achieving learning goals throughout your career.

The *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*, requires CNO to have a QA program that consists of:

- promoting continuing education and professional development
- self, peer and practice assessment
- a mechanism to monitor participation and compliance

The QA program is an important regulatory tool that supports CNO in achieving its strategic purpose: protecting the public by promoting safe nursing practice.

The obligation to maintain competence and to engage in ongoing professional development is also embedded in **Principle 6** of the ***Code of Conduct***.



### 6.9

Nurses self-reflect, identify learning needs in their practice and engage in continuous learning to improve their competence.

# Instructions for completing your self-assessment

## PART 1:



### Practice reflection

Practice reflection is the process of critically thinking about your practice and identifying your learning needs which will help you to engage in continuous learning.

Practice Reflection is an intentional and continuous process of critically thinking about your practice every day to help you identify the strengths in your practice and any gaps that require learning.

When reflecting, think about recent practice-related changes or experiences you encountered. Ask yourself:

- How do these changes or experiences impact your practice?
- What changed, if anything, in terms of how you do your work?
- What learning opportunities can you identify through your experiences that you can apply moving forward?
- What areas of your practice need professional development?

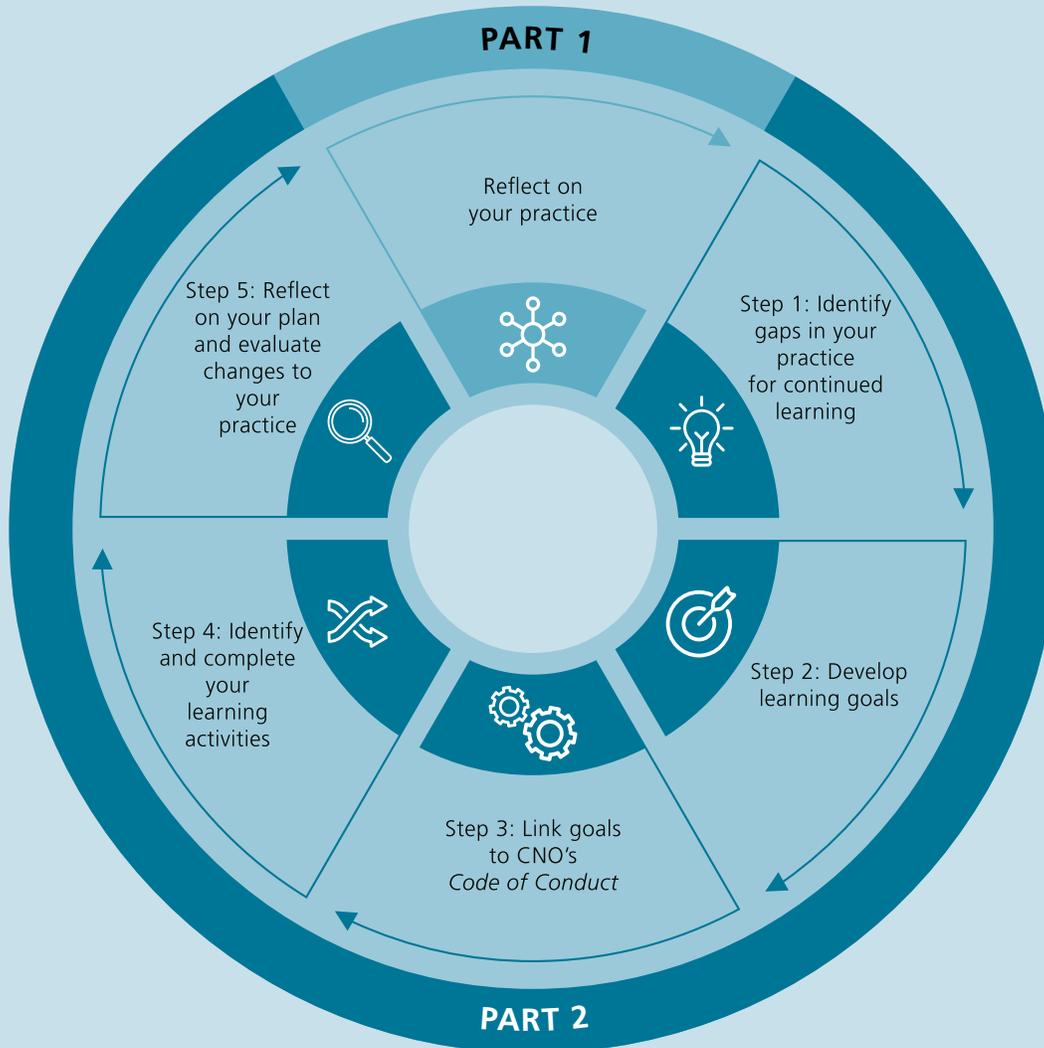
You may also choose to reflect with a peer, your team or in a group setting. Group reflection provides opportunities to learn from each other, identify common goals and inform your own learning goals.

Watch [How to become a reflective practitioner](#) for more information on how to reflect. Additional questions to further guide your reflection can also be found on CNO's QA webpage at [cno.org/qa](http://cno.org/qa).



## PART 2: Developing your learning plan

Research shows that you are more likely to achieve a goal if you write it down. Having a learning plan allows you to write down your goals and track your learning activities and outcomes all in one place.



CNO has created a learning plan template for your use. You can access it at [cno.org/qa](http://cno.org/qa).

## Step 1: Identify your learning gaps

Based on your practice reflection, you should have an idea of the areas in your practice that need improvement.

In your learning plan, document these gaps and explain how addressing them will help you improve your nursing practice.

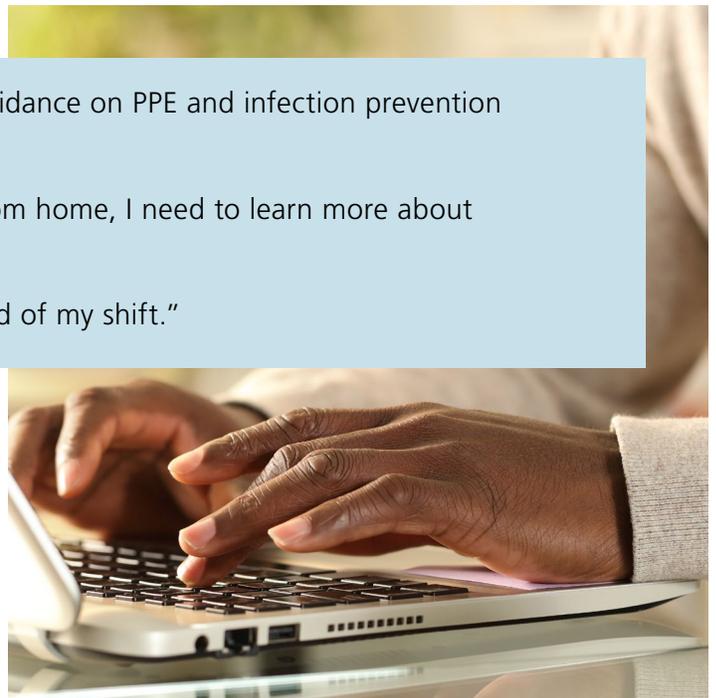
You may consider asking for input from your colleagues to provide you with a greater awareness of your strengths and areas that may need improvement, to ensure your learning gaps are relevant.

### Examples of learning gaps:

"I find it difficult to keep up to date with changing guidance on PPE and infection prevention and control."

"I often forget to review my client's medication list from home, I need to learn more about the medication reconciliation process."

"I find it difficult to provide a concise report at the end of my shift."



## Step 2: Develop learning goals

Based on the learning gaps you identified in Step 1 document your learning goals. Writing clear, achievable goals is important to accomplishing what you want to do.

When defining your learning goals, think about each of these:

- the areas of your nursing practice you are going to address
- how your goals will improve your nursing practice
- the principles in the [Code of Conduct](#) that align with your goals
- if your goals are realistic
- a reasonable timeframe to achieve your goals.

There are many ways you can set your goals. One way is through the SMART goal setting process. A SMART goal is specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-limited.

Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-limited
<p>Your goal should be specific. Try not to use vague phrases such as “I want to learn about...” If you are too vague, then how will you know when you reach your goal? Use an action word to describe what you want to achieve. Using an action word makes sure your goal is measurable.</p> <p>Here are examples of action words; identify, develop, plan, design, demonstrate, compare, describe, evaluate, explain, create.</p>	<p>A measurable goal is quantifiable, meaning you can see the results.</p>	<p>An attainable goal can be achieved based on your skill, resources and area of practice. Make sure your goal is realistic, given the resources that you have. A goal set too high may set you up for failure, whereas a goal set too low will fail to challenge and motivate you.</p>	<p>Make sure your goal is related to your practice. A relevant goal should apply to your current role and is clearly linked to your key responsibilities.</p>	<p>Identify a reasonable time frame to complete your learning activities and achieve your goal. A time-limited goal will help motivate you to move toward your goal and to evaluate your progress.</p>

### Examples of learning goals:

“I want to be able to demonstrate effective conflict management skills by September.”

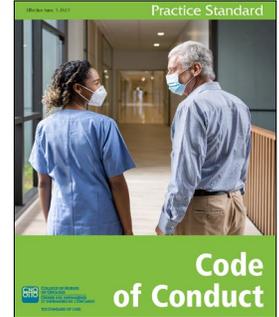
“I want to be able to identify ethical conflicts in my work environment, and apply an ethical framework to assist my team with effectively resolving ethical conflicts by November.”

“I want to be able to explain how PHIPA (*Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*) applies to patient confidentiality on my unit. I will provide an in-service to my colleagues by October.”

Watch [Are your learning goals SMART?](#) for more information on developing SMART goals.

## Step 3: Link learning goals to the Code of Conduct

After creating your learning goals, choose the principles from the [Code of Conduct](#) that relate to your goals. This is an opportunity to reflect and incorporate the Code into your practice. Once you have determined your learning goals and aligned them to the *Code of Conduct*, you can identify several learning activities for achieving your goals.



## Step 4: Set out learning activities

Your learning activities should bridge the gaps in your knowledge which will improve your nursing practice and the safe nursing care you provide.

While determining your learning activities, think about what type of learner you are. Do you learn best by observing? Reading? Discussing? Choose learning activities that work best to keep you up to date and facilitate your growth and development. Your learning activities should have a timeline to keep you on track.

Once you have chosen an activity, document it in your learning plan. Your learning activity should be specific and based on what is realistic within your time frame.

### Examples of learning activities and activity statements:

Learning activities	Learning activity statements
Taking a course	I will participate in the NUR 101 Course on Therapeutic Communication at the St. George College starting March 10 until December 15.
Attending a specific in-service	I will attend the Infection Prevention in-service offered at the Public Nursing Hospital starting March 12.
Reviewing a specific organization policy	I will review my organization policies related to confidentiality; <i>Keeping Patient Health Information Safe and Privacy</i> starting June 10 until the end of June.
Being mentored by an expert	I will be mentored by the Medical Director at my clinic on prescribing medical cannabis starting January until the end of February.
Reviewing specific literature	Starting May 10, I will conduct a literature review on the complications related to peritoneal dialysis and read at least three articles by the end of May.
Reviewing specific best practice guidelines	Starting April 1 until April 30, I will review the 2018 Clinical Practice Guideline – on Diabetes from the Diabetes Canada ( <a href="http://diabetes.ca">diabetes.ca</a> ) website.
Being supervised	My nurse educator will observe me giving two administrations of iron infusion, from June 1 to June 10.

Once you have written your learning activities, you can start completing the activities and achieving your goals to support your continued learning.

Developing your learning plan is a continuous process. Make sure you review it on a regular basis and update it when you complete an activity and reach a goal. As you review your learning plan, you may need to make adjustments to your goals and activities.

## Step 5: Evaluate

At the end of completing your learning activities, take the time to evaluate your learning. Reflect on what you have accomplished and how this new knowledge and/or skill improves the safe nursing care you provide. Determine how you will apply what you have learned to your practice. Remember learning is a continuous process that will happen throughout your career.

### Next steps

Update your learning plan and note any changes or improvements to your practice.

For answers to frequently asked questions about CNO's QA Program, visit [cno.org/qa-faqs](https://cno.org/qa-faqs).

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### QA Self-Assessment checklist

- Reflect on your practice
- Document your learning gaps in your learning plan
- Determine and document your learning goals
- Link learning goals to CNO's *Code of Conduct*
- Develop your learning activities
- Engage in your planned activities
- Track your progress
- Apply your learning in practice
- Evaluate your learning plan

#### QA Every Day

As professionals, nurses demonstrate their commitment to lifelong learning. QA is every day.