

# COLLEGE OF NURSES OF ONTARIO'S Academic Reference Group

June 20, 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 CNO's new Education Team Leader, Neshma Dhanani, to the group. The group shared updates about the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic, with most schools planning a hybrid or full in-person delivery for fall classes. Members shared they were able to celebrate in-person convocation with their graduates for the first time in three years! CNO thanks the academic community for their tremendous efforts to ensure excellence in nursing education during these incredible times.

### Program Approval

Academic institutions continue to move forward with the development of new standalone baccalaureate programs. CNO expects to review more new programs throughout 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 is modernizing its applicant assessment processes to streamline and reduce delays for applicants wanting to register as a practicing nurse in Ontario. The goal of these updates 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.

### Posting accepted 'gap-filler' courses/programs

CNO intends to publish on our [website](#) accepted gap-filler programs/courses that meet the education needs of internationally educated applicants. CNO will also list the entry-to-practice competencies that can be met for each program/course. Sharing this information will contribute to ensuring our registration practices are evidence-informed, fair, inclusive and effective.

CNO will continue to reach out to educational institutions currently offering accepted gap-filler programs/courses. We anticipate this information will be available on the website by mid-August.

## 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

**Neshma Dhanani**  
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

### Standards Modernization project

CNO shared its first priority is to update the *Code of Conduct*. As CNO's central practice standard, the Code will outline expectations of professional behaviour and conduct for all nurses regardless of their role, job description or practice setting. Our goal is to present the revised document for Council approval in December 2022.

The Code's update will enhance clarity around cultural humility and cultural safe care. CNO will be requesting feedback in a public survey planned for fall 2022, with further discussion planned for our next Academic Reference Group meeting.

### Nurse Practitioner ELC revisions

Canadian nursing regulators are reviewing and revising the current Nurse Practitioner (NP) entry-level competencies (ELCs) as part of a [national project](#) to implement a new model for NP regulation in Canada. Entry-level competencies are essential for public protection by reflecting the knowledge, skills, abilities and judgment required for safe and ethical NP practice.

Between June 15 and July 15, 2022, each regulatory body will engage NPs and other stakeholders within their jurisdiction to obtain feedback about the draft NP ELCs. NPs across the country will also have the opportunity to complete a validation survey to ensure competencies reflect current practice.

### 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, planning multiple selections each year so more members will be selected for QA Assessment. Following successful selection in April 2022, CNO will be completing a second selection in September. Each selection includes randomly selected nurses from across the province, as well as previously selected members who were granted a one-time deferral.

More changes to the QA Program will be implemented next year, including the launch of a new QA platform/learning management system, which will greatly improve our ability to build modern assessment tools, streamline our process and improve communication to our members to support a larger number of members engaging with the QA Program annually. Please continue to monitor the [website](#) for updates.

### 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 October 24, 2022, 0930-1130 hrs**

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