



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

THE STANDARD OF CARE.

Practical Nurse Program Approval Process

College of Nurses of Ontario

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I. INTRODUCTION

College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) Mission and Vision

CNO MISSION is to protect the public's right to quality nursing services by providing leadership to the nursing profession in self-regulation.

CNO VISION is excellence in nursing practice everywhere in Ontario.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide information to help in preparing the Practical Nurse (PN) Program Approval Committee members in their role as program reviewers. The process for review of PN programs has been developed on the assumption that the educational programs are preparing their graduates to meet the expectations of the entry-level practitioner eligible for registration and prepared to work within the health care system. These educational programs were developed to meet the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Program Standard and comply with CNO's Entry-to-Practice Competencies, program standards, and guidelines.

Legislation

It is in the public interest to ensure that PN programs graduate students who meet the entry-to-practice competencies and are able to meet the health-care needs of Ontario. For that reason, the proposed RPN entry-to-practice regulation includes the requirement that PN programs be approved.

The CNO objects under the *RHPA* include:

To develop, establish and maintain standards of qualification for persons to be issued certificates of registration.

The inclusion of an approval mechanism for PN programs relates directly to this object, and to the College's proposed revised entry-to-practice regulation.

In December 2001, Council recommended changes to the registration regulation that include the following requirements:

The applicant,

i) Must have received a diploma in practical nursing granted by a Community College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario whose program was, at the time the applicant graduated, approved by a body or bodies designated by the Council or by the Council itself.

Arising out of Council's decision, a Multi-Stakeholder Working Group was established to identify a program review process. In December, 2003, on recommendation of the Working Group, Council accepted the use of the MTCU's approval as the mechanism for preliminary practical nursing program approval, pending the approval based on the review by the Practical Nursing Program Approval Committee. Council also accepted a structure for the Program Approval Committee (see terms of reference) and approved the Approval Process Information and Criteria. Council put into place a two-phase approval process, to be implemented on a voluntary basis in 2004 for Humber, Durham, Centennial and St Lawrence Colleges and fully implemented as the mechanism for ongoing practical nurse program approval beginning in 2005 and thereafter.

Acknowledgement of the Working Group

Particular appreciation is given to the members of the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group formed in March 2002 at the request of CNO Council to craft the PN Program Approval process. The members include:

Barbara Foulds, RN PhD	Algonquin College (Chair)
JoAn Dale, RN MEd	St Clair College
Carl Gray, RN MA	Confederation College
Kelly Kay, RPN	RPNAO
Rene Kenny, RN MA	Centennial College
Beth McCracken, RPN	RPNAO
Nelsa Roberto, Analyst	MTCU
Kathie Conlin-Saindon, RN MA(Ed)	CNO

II. ASSUMPTIONS

In order to develop an on-going approval process for the PN Programs in Ontario, there were certain assumptions clearly outlined at the outset of development by the Multi-Stakeholder Working Group. Of these, the following relate to the work of the Approval Committee.

- Practical Nursing Programs prepare graduates to provide autonomous care to stable clients with predictable outcomes in multiple settings across the life span.
- Upon successful completion of the educational program, the graduate will be eligible to apply for registration with the College of Nurses of Ontario. Registration requirements also include successful completion of the National Examination.
- An ongoing review process provides confirmation that the programs meet their objectives as the curricula unfolds, as the students move through the program, and as the employers receive the products of the programs (the graduates), as outlined in the colleges' initial proposals,
- To decrease time and cost to participants, the review process is mindful of existing information within the college system already being collected.
- An internal review process occurs at colleges during curriculum review. The process is valuable and is recognized as such by the working group.
- There review is intended as a supportive process. Both the program's areas of strength and suggestions for improvement will be discussed by the review team and identified in the submission to the schools. The process will enable colleges to develop in both areas as a result of participating in the review process.

III. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Practical Nurse Program Approval Committee is a standing committee of Council established pursuant of *Article 28* to fulfil the requirement of program approval within the entry-to-practice regulation (**Refer to *By-Law Article 28 of General By-Laws***). The Committee is responsible for the implementation of relevant aspects of the Practical Nurse Program Approval Process.

The specific terms are:

1. Identify the review teams from the members of the PN Approval Committee.
2. Assign the programs to be reviewed to the specific teams.
3. Develop the timeframe for the review of the scheduled programs.
4. Through discussion with team members present recommendations of PN Approval Committee.
5. Provide reports of recommendations to Council annually.
6. Recommend changes and improvements to the process to CNO staff and/or Council as appropriate for consideration.

Membership

1. From stakeholder group recommendations, Council appoints four educators in the practical nurse programs, three RPNs in direct practice, three administrators/educators of RPNs in practice, and one member of the public with curriculum experience.
2. The Chair is elected by the Committee. The Chair is eligible to serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms as chair.
3. The term of office is from appointment in June of one year until June of the next year for a maximum term of three years. Committee members are eligible for re-appointment.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Duties of the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair is a member of the standing committee who is elected or appointed to serve as chair of the committee.

The Chair has two broad areas of responsibility: leadership and management of committee meetings.

1. Facilitate decision-making.
2. Ensure that the committee's objectives and policies are established and followed in accordance with the committee's terms of reference including conflict of interest guidelines.
3. Collaborate with CNO staff resource person(s) in preparation for the meetings.
4. Chair committee meetings. Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, she or he is responsible for arranging for a specific committee member to act as Chair in her or his absence.
5. Facilitate evaluations of the committee and review process to promote continuing improvement.

Duties of the Committee Members

1. Participate in review teams as assigned.
2. Participate in decision-making.
3. Encourage others in the expression of diverse perspectives to enrich debate.
4. Ensure to adhere to the Committee's objectives and policies, and follow the Committee's terms of reference including any relevant legislation.
5. Collaborate with CNO staff resource person(s).
6. Where the Chair is unable to attend a meeting assume the position if asked.
7. Acquire knowledge of legislation relevant to her/his Committee.
8. As a committee member, ensure awareness of responsibilities assumed as part of that committee.
9. Keep abreast of activities and issues affecting the functioning of the committee, including Council's strategic directions.
10. Facilitate evaluations of committee function and review process to promote continuing improvement.

Process for the Chair and Committee Members

1. Adhere to all Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Guidelines
2. Receive and review the PN program approval checklist and executive summaries from the schools under review.

3. Negotiate the assignment of program review team members based upon a review of the PN program approval checklist and identified needs of the program.
4. Receive reports from the review teams and approve recommendations of the review teams to go forward for Council approval.
5. Make decisions for random site visits, as appropriate.
6. Determine schedule for future program reviews.
7. Review approval process annually and make recommendations for changes to Council when appropriate.

Process for the Review Team

1. Receive and review the schools' documentation from the CNO.
2. Determine gaps in submitted materials and determine follow-up processes.
3. Conduct site visits as necessary.
4. Craft recommendations and present to the Approval Committee.

Process for Schools

1. Submit required documents to facilitate approval process, including completed PN program approval checklist and executive summary.
2. Attach an explanation if documents are unavailable.
3. Adhere to established deadlines for submitting materials for the review process.
4. Communicate with CNO Staff Support as needed.
5. Avoid submitting confidential information.
6. Facilitate Approval Committee site visits if needed.

Duties of CNO Staff Support

1. Provide administrative support to the Committee and Chair.
2. Receive the schools' documentation and distribute to Approval Committee.
3. Communicate decisions with the schools under review.
4. Provide advice and expertise where applicable.

PN Program Approval Checklist

A PN Program Approval Checklist has been developed to clearly and concisely address all of the criteria which enable the school to emphasize the program's strengths and identify areas for development. Submitted material may also include but is not limited to, information gathered by the community college for internal audits, curriculum reviews, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) results or other surveys. Schools are encouraged to use technological resources. The program review will include both nursing and relevant non-nursing courses.

Executive Summary

An executive summary highlighting key features of the PN program under review is also required by the Approval Committee. Please see attached “*Instructions for Schools*” document for specific information.

From the discussion of the information provided in the PN Program Approval Checklist and Executive Summary, the Approval Committee will determine the need for a site visit.

Site Visit

A site visit will be arranged if the Approval Committee decides that certain areas of the program need to be examined more closely; for example, in the case of a potential for Category 2 - Conditional Approval. The geographical location of the school in need of a site visit will be a consideration when assigning review team members.

Final Decision

Reporting will occur by phone or email communication to the school within two weeks of the CNO Council meeting at which the review is considered.

Reports to CNO

The Approval Committee will submit reports of recommendations to Council.

Approval Categories

Category 1- Approved

Approval is designated for 5 years.

Category 2-Conditional Approval

Conditional Approval is designated for a 1 year term requiring submitted progress report(s) on identified issue(s) at specified time intervals through that year. This allows the program to address the concerns of the Approval Committee and still maintain a conditional approval status. In this way the graduates would remain eligible to apply for registration with CNO.

If submitted progress reports demonstrate ongoing positive input by the program, a move to Approval Category 1 may be obtained. A program will only receive two consecutive

Category 2 Conditional Approval reviews before they will receive a Category 3 - Approval Denied status.

Category 3- Approval Denied

Approval will be denied if a program fails to meet the conditional requirements as set by the Approval Committee.

V. CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Definition

A conflict of interest exists when a member has an interest or information that can be reasonably expected to influence how the individual might conduct a review. A conflict exists whether the individual is actually influenced by this knowledge or interest or is perceived to be influenced by it.

The guidelines listed below are developed to assist the PN Program Approval Committee to make decisions concerning the undertaking of practical nursing program reviews in the province of Ontario.

1. The Approval Committee members who are college faculty on the review teams should not review a program in the geographical area from which they come. For the purpose of definition, the geographical areas used are the four regions described by the Provincial Heads of Nursing membership.
2. Approval Committee members in direct practice or administration/education roles may review programs in their geographic area. It is beneficial to have an understanding of the unique community needs when evaluating the clinical and graduate issues from the program.
3. If an Approval Committee member presents a valid reason to the committee at large he/she may request to be removed from an assigned program review.
4. If the Approval Committee at large feels that the assignment of a member to a specific review creates a conflict or the potential for a conflict, the assignment may be redistributed.
5. If an Approval Committee member has confidential knowledge, or if the member's school is being reviewed, the member must declare a conflict and remove him/herself from the Approval Committee discussions of that review.

VI APPEAL PROCESS

Introduction

The decision of the Council is final. The decision may be appealed only when the program alleges that the Review Team has not followed the process completely or correctly.

Criteria For Appeal

The decision of the Council is only subject to appeal when the reviewed program has sufficiently demonstrated that:

1. The process has not been employed properly,
2. Insufficient or inappropriate data were used to formulate a decision, or
3. A perceived conflict of interest existed

Documentation not included, as part of the original assessment, will not be accepted for the appeal.

Appeal Procedure

Within 30 days of receiving written notification from the CNO Council, an appeal must be presented in writing to the Program Approval Committee.

1. Appealing program must present their argument in writing including supporting data to the Approval Committee through CNO.
2. Materials are circulated to the Approval Committee for consideration.
3. Original Review Team acts in a consulting role to the Approval Committee.
4. Should the Approval Committee (minus the original Review Team) decide the process was flawed a new team is struck to review the process.
5. The recommendation is brought to the Approval Committee.
6. The Approval Committee excluding the original review team makes a decision.
7. The Approval Committee decision is taken to Council.
8. All decisions of Council are final.

VII RESOURCE LIST

Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (July 2000), Board of Accreditation Manual.

Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (1995), Accreditation Program Workbook.

Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing Board of Accreditation (2003), Terms of Reference.

Canadian Nurses Association (1996), Conflict of Interest Code.

College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (March 2000), Education Standards Advisory Committee.

Council Of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (1997), Approval Process Documentation.

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (March 2001). Practical Nursing Program Standard. Toronto

Moffett, S. (1997), Oklahoma Nursing Education Program Approval Process Explained Issues, 18 (2).

Ontario College of Teachers (2001), Accreditation Handbook Programs of Professional Teacher Education Toronto.

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, Future Goals for Ontario Colleges and Universities: Discussion Paper, July 1996.

Registered Nurses Association of British Columbia (July 1999). An Overview and Guidelines for Programs Preparing for Review. Vancouver.

Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. Administrative Document: Approval of Basic Nursing Programs and Re-entry Programs in Saskatchewan. Regina. October 1999.

VIII APPENDICES

Appendix A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Approved: the term used to designate the standing of a program that has successfully completed the process set out in the Practical Nurse Program Approval document for the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).

Attrition: the loss of students from an educational program prior to their graduation.

Competencies: the expected performance behaviours that reflect the knowledge, skill, judgement, values, and beliefs of a beginning nurse in practice.

Conceptual Framework: the thoughtful notion or ideas of the basic structure of a program.

Council: the governing body of the College of Nurses of Ontario consisting of elected Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses and appointed members of the public.

Criteria: an essential attribute or quality of an educational program against which a practical nursing program can be measured, judged, or evaluated.

Curriculum: the process by which a program is planning to achieve the terminal learning outcomes. It includes the philosophical foundations, content, delivery methods and sequencing of courses, evaluation process, and theory to practice expectations of a beginning practitioner.

Entry-to-Practice Competencies: for the purpose of this document reference to Entry-to-Practice Competencies are specifically made to the CNO document "[Entry-to-Practice Competencies for Ontario Registered Practical Nurses](http://www.cno.org/docs/reg/41042_EntryPracRPN.pdf)", 1999. (http://www.cno.org/docs/reg/41042_EntryPracRPN.pdf)

Evaluation: is a process to draw conclusions as to the value of a program or the achievement of its participants.

Geographical Regions: The province is divided into four geographical regions by ACAATO. For the purposes of the review, these geographical divisions will be used.

They are; northern, eastern, central and western. Individual Community Colleges are designated within a region.

Graduate: one who has successfully completed the requirements of the program in practical nursing at that specific educational institution.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI): statements that when applied to gather data measure program quality and relevance against stated program outcomes. Specifically measured are graduate satisfaction, student satisfaction, student retention, and employer satisfaction.

Philosophical Statement: description of basic theory/theories used to identify the foundational ideas and convictions contained in the specific program of practical nursing.

Program: includes the curriculum and the systems in place to support the delivery of that curriculum including the faculty, physical facilities, clinical placements, library/computer supports, administration, governance, policies and procedures.

Review Team: Members of the PN Program Approval Committee will be designated to Review Teams for the purposes of reviewing individual programs.

Substantial Change: the modification or revision of an existing program that has been approved by either the initial MTCU Program Approval Process or both the MTCU and the CNO Program Approval Process. These changes would be addressed in curriculum, program description, and resources.

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