Fair Registration Practices Report 2020

The Fair Registration Practices Report was created as required in the:

- Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006 (FARPACTA) s.20 and 23(1), for the regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPACTA
- Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA) s. 22.7(1) and 22.9(1), for health colleges

Guidelines for this report are available to download as a .pdf on the OFC website.
https://www.fairnesscommissioner.com/en/Publications/Pages/Guidelines.aspx

Organization: College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)
Name of the regulated profession: Nursing (Registered Nurses (RNs); Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs); Nurse Practitioners (NPs))
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Sections of the Report

Qualitative Information

The following qualitative information is collected for the purpose of highlighting a regulator's enhancements to improve fair access year over year, including actions that result from recommendations made in the OFC's Assessment of Registration Practices.

For each of the categories below, where applicable, please describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year by your organization or a third-party for the purpose of changing fair access.

Please also describe the impact of these improvements/changes on applicants. If you have been working on improvements/changes over the last year that have not yet been implemented, describe your progress and the expected impact the improvements/changes will have on applicants and your organization.

Provide as much detail as possible. This can include the rationale for the improvements/changes, relevant findings from preliminary work leading up to the improvements/changes, methodology, relevant dates and anything else you think is important.

Include as much supporting material as possible to support your description (e.g., relevant reports, policies, protocols, websites, other documents and anything else you think is important). This material can be provided in the form of hyperlinks to electronic sources.

a. Requirements for registration, including acceptable alternatives

i)   Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year
No changes

ii)   Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants
No change

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization
No changes

b. Assessment of qualifications

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

Process changes to minimize delays resulting from impact of COVID-19 pandemic

Registration activities were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, largely because third-party organizations / service-providers were unable to provide services or were delayed in providing services. These include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Delays in receiving documents via mail from third party organizations such as schools, employers, nursing regulatory bodies, and other organizations both within and outside Canada
- Challenges in directly contacting several third-party organizations such as schools, employers, nursing regulatory bodies and other organizations inside and outside Canada to confirm or validate information
- Cancellation of the Touchstone Institute evaluation for Internationally Educated RNs as of March 2020
- Delays in students' ability to complete clinical practicums in Ontario's practical nursing diploma and baccalaureate degree nursing programs and refresher programs
- Delays in scheduling or holding registration examinations for NCLEX-RN and CPNRE
- Holding hearings as part of review or appeal processes.

Delays on CNO's part were minimized as processes were adapted to adjust to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These included:

- Enabling staff to work remotely;
- Amending procedures for handling paper documents by setting up the infrastructure to receive documents via alternate means such as email and fax to email. This included receiving education documents from schools; practice verification forms and job descriptions from employers; and, verification of registration documents from nursing regulatory boards all around the world. Processes were established to ensure that CNO maintained the ability to validate and authenticate that third-party documents were sent directly from the source;
- Identifying alternative means of validating certain information, including using online or e-verification to verify registration in other Canadian jurisdictions or the United States where an online or e-verification process was in place; and
- Rescheduling Registration Committee meetings and transitioning to a virtual meeting format.

CNO also worked collaboratively with third-party organizations to minimize the impact of pandemic related challenges on the application process. For example, CNO collaborated with third party registration exam providers to ensure that testing continued to be available while following COVID-19 safety practices and ensuring that results were issued in a timely manner.

With respect to cancellation of the Touchstone Institute evaluation, CNO has continued to remind applicants about the alternate options that are available, including returning to school to complete online or in-class courses to address an applicant's identified competency gaps and allow them to continue to move forward with their application.

Modification to the NCLEX-RN
In consideration of the pandemic, between March 25 and September 30, 2020, the NCLEX-RN, the registration exam for Registered Nurses (RN), was modified as follows:
- the number of test items was reduced; and
- the maximum time was reduced.

These modifications were made to the exam while maintaining its psychometric rigor and validity. These changes allowed the exams to continue with maximized capacity at testing centres and while complying with social distancing requirements.
https://www.ncsbn.org/Modified_NCLEX_Exams_Information.pdf

Accepting fewer clinical practicum hours to meet evidence of practice and nursing education requirements
COVID-19 impacted schools' ability to offer full clinical practicums for nursing students enrolled in some Ontario nursing programs, such as baccalaureate degree programs, college diploma programs, or refresher programs. Schools worked with CNO to explore alternatives to completing the usual full "clinical practicums" to ensure the following:

- graduates of Ontario programs met all required competencies and could be considered as having completed their nursing program for the purposes of graduating from an approved Ontario program and meeting the nursing education requirement; or
- applicants completing additional education to update their evidence of practice in a refresher program with a specified number of clinical practicum hours, such as 400 hours for those out of practise between 3 to 10 years, would be able to complete the program with fewer hours of clinical practicum and meet the evidence of practice requirement.

Specifically:

- For nursing education, while approved Ontario programs do not have a specified number of clinical practicum hours, students must complete clinical practicums that enable them to apply and demonstrate their nursing

knowledge, skill and judgement in real-life clinical situations. Schools consulted with CNO to ensure that applicants could be considered to have met the required competencies where alternatives to clinical practicums might be completed (for example, virtual, high fidelity simulation or clinical case studies), along with fewer than the usual number of clinical practicum hours.

- For evidence of practice, CNO's Registration Committee approved a time limited policy that delegated to staff the authority to accept fewer clinical practicum hours for refresher programs. This policy was directed at applicants who were indefinitely delayed in completing the requirements for their program. This policy was revisited in March 2021 and the Registration Committee has approved continued delegation to staff to accept fewer clinical practicum hours for refresher programs. For example, an applicant who was directed to complete 400 hours as part of a refresher program could meet the requirement under the new policy if the school confirmed that 200 hours had been completed and was satisfied that the applicant met the course's objectives and learning outcomes.

Collectively, these changes have enabled CNO to:
- continue to balance public protection in ensuring that we register safe, competent nurses, along with ensuring fairness to the applicants; and
- support Ontario's health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants**

Process changes to minimize delays resulting from impact of COVID-19 pandemic
Collectively, these changes have enabled applicants to continue along in their application journey by creating alternative ways for applicants and other parties to submit documents and experience minimal pandemic-related delays.

Modification to the NCLEX-RN
RN applicants could continue to apply for and attempt the NCLEX-RN exam during the pandemic.

Accepting fewer clinical practicum hours to meet evidence of practice and nursing education requirements
This change allowed applicants to continue to move through the application process by meeting the nursing education and/or evidence of practice requirements. This occurred despite limitations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted education programs' ability to offer clinical practicums in a timely manner.

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

<u>Process changes to minimize delays resulting from impact of COVID-19 pandemic</u>
Collectively, these changes have enabled CNO to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and to continue to balance public protection by ensuring that we register safe, competent nurses, while ensuring fairness to the applicants.

These changes also helped CNO to support Ontario's health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<u>Modification to the NCLEX-RN</u>
CNO could continue to register RNs who were able to access and pass the NCLEX-RN once testing centres were reopened in compliance with pandemic requirements.

<u>Accepting fewer clinical practicum hours to meet evidence of practice and nursing education requirements</u>
These changes have enabled CNO to continue to register applicants who have met either the nursing education and/or the evidence of practice requirements via fewer than the usual clinical practicum hours in education and/or refresher nursing programs. This change acknowledges the challenges of accessing needed clinical hours during the pandemic and CNO's commitment to ensuring public protection by registering safe, competent nurses, and ensuring fairness to the applicants.

c. Provision of timely decisions, responses, and reasons

i)   Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
No changes

ii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
No changes

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
No changes

d. Fees

i)   Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

<u>Fee Waiver</u>
a. Emergency Reinstatement – Between March 31, 2020 and April 23, 2020, for members returning to practice and reinstating for purposes of assisting

during the pandemic, CNO waived the following three fees for more than 200 members who applied for reinstatement through the Emergency Reinstatement application process:

- Reinstatement application fee - $169.50
- Reinstatement fee - $56.50
- Annual Fee - $305.10

More than another 70 additional former members, who had begun the reinstatement application before the no fee policy was implemented, were also refunded the three fees. Thereafter, members wishing to return to practice were directed to register in the Emergency Assignment Class, a time limited registration class with no fee.

b. Exam Rescheduling Administration Fee for Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) Applicants – The RPN exam administrator, Yardstick, charges an administrative fee of $50.00 (+tax) to CNO for every applicant who does not complete the exam during the specified exam window (for example, cancelled, no show, or not scheduled). CNO requires that applicants who withdraw or reschedule the exam with CNO must pay a fee to reimburse CNO for the associated costs. In 2020, the exam administrator cancelled exams due to the pandemic; however, Yardstick continued to charge CNO the rescheduling fee where applicants were unable to reschedule during the window. CNO waived this fee and absorbed the cost of the cancelled exams for those applicants who contacted CNO and were unable to reschedule within an exam window due to the pandemic.

ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants

Fee Waiver
a. Emergency Reinstatement - Former members could apply to return to practice to assist during the pandemic without incurring a fee associated with reinstating their certificate of registration.

b. Exam Rescheduling Administration Fee for Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) Applicants – Applicants could reschedule the exam without incurring a fee associated with rescheduling the exam.

iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

Fee Waiver
a. Emergency Reinstatement – No impact identified.

b. Exam Rescheduling Administration Fee for Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) Applicants – CNO incurred costs associated with Yardstick's charges for applicants who rescheduled the NCLEX-RN.

e. Timelines

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

<u>Expedited the review of specific applications by the Registration Committee due to the COVID-19 pandemic</u>
The Registration Committee meets monthly. Applicants are referred to the Committee for review in the order of the date on which the application is identified as one requiring review by the Committee. Given the legislated 30-day notification period, this generally means that an applicant's matter may not be reviewed by the Committee for up to three months.

Between March and June 2020, in recognition of the need to register nurses on an expedited basis to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, CNO instituted a priority review system for identifying applications that should be reviewed by Registration Committee on an expedited basis. This included the following:

1. Identifying applications requiring review by the Committee where an applicant had one remaining requirement, and where, if met by the Committee's review, it was likely that the applicant would become eligible for registration. For example, Registration Committee must review certain types of evidence of language proficiency to determine if an applicant meets the requirement. Where it was their last remaining requirement, this applicant's application was prioritized for earlier review by the Committee over another applicant who had multiple other outstanding requirements, along with language proficiency. This change allowed applicants who were closer to registration to advance to Registration Committee in an expedited fashion.

2. Notifying specific applicants that they would be brought to an earlier Registration Committee meeting, and other applicants that they would be rescheduled to a later date.

By actively managing the volume of matters reviewed by the Committee, CNO moved eligible applicants toward registration in an expedited fashion.

<u>CNO's Cyber Security Incident</u>
CNO experienced a cyber security incident on September 8, 2020, which resulted in a complete shutdown of operations until October 2, 2020. During that time, several services were temporarily unavailable, including the public register Find A Nurse and the online portal for applicants. Specifically, CNO was unable to access applicants' information in our database, provide any updated information on applicants' applications; receive and scan incoming correspondence; send outgoing correspondence; or register applicants who were eligible for registration. As a result, applicants experienced delays in moving through the applicant process, including becoming registered. During this time, CNO:

- ensured that Customer Service was available via telephone as of September 17, 2020 and email as of September 28, 2020 to provide general information and direct applicants to the website;
- made alternative arrangements to send RN applicants the results of their NCLEX-RN exam via email instead of through the applicant portal; and
- provided regular updates on the Cyber Security Incident on its website, which provided general information and answers to applicants' concerns about their application.

Once CNO resumed regular operations, we worked expeditiously to prioritize applicants at different stages in the process and move them forward to registration where applicable or to respond to their inquiries and provide updates regarding required next steps.

Cancellation of September Registration Committee due to Cyber Security Incident on September 8, 2020
CNO experienced a cyber security incident on September 8, 2020, which resulted in a complete shutdown of operations until October 2, 2020. As a result, the Registration Committee meeting scheduled for September 24, 2020, was cancelled. All applicants were notified of the cancellation and were rescheduled to either the October or November 2020 Committee meeting dates. This rescheduling occurred as soon as CNO reopened.

ii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants

Expedited the review of specific applications by the Registration Committee due to the COVID-19 pandemic
By analyzing application data, CNO was able to target applicants who had met most of the registration requirements and expedite review by the Registration Committee. This approach reduced applicants' time to registration.   Other applicants, with multiple outstanding requirements, were re-scheduled for review by the Registration Committee three to four months later.

CNO's Cyber Security Incident
Applicants could not access the online applicant portal and were unable to:

- create an application;
- view the status of their application;
- retrieve messages and receive/view correspondence;
- apply for the RPN registration exam;
- pay fees; and
- become registered as members of or reinstate membership with CNO.

As a result, applicants experienced delays in moving through the applicant process during the timeframe of September 8 to October 2, 2021.

<u>Cancellation of September Registration Committee due to Cyber Security Incident on September 8, 2020</u>
Applicants were delayed by one or two months as a result of the delay in having their application reviewed by the Registration Committee.

iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

<u>Expedited the review of specific applications by the Registration Committee due to the COVID-19 pandemic</u>
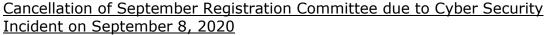By focusing the Registration Committee's time and effort on the review of applications that were in the final stages of the application process, CNO was able to continue to supply needed nursing resources to the people of Ontario in a timely manner. As well, CNO was able to balance the workload of both professional and public Committee members who were also impacted by competing demands during the pandemic.

<u>CNO's Cyber Security Incident</u>
CNO experienced a cyber security incident on September 8, 2020, which resulted in a complete shutdown of operations until October 2, 2020. During that time, several services were temporarily unavailable, including the public register Find A Nurse and the online portal for applicants.

Specifically, CNO was unable to access applicants' information in our database; provide any updated information on applicants' applications; receive and scan incoming correspondence; send outgoing correspondence; or register applicants who were eligible for registration. As well, CNO was unable to complete electronic transactions with external third party stakeholders related to the application process, including: receiving information from the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) for new applicants; receiving language proficiency test results from CELBAN; referring RN applicant names to the Touchstone Institute for assessment; and referring exam eligible applicant names to exam administrators.

CNO engaged a leading cyber-security firm to assist with remediation and conducting a comprehensive forensic investigation as we worked toward restoring our systems and resuming operations by October 2, 2021. We ensured ongoing communication via the website with all stakeholders, including applicants, NNAS, educators, third party assessment providers, and others.

<u>Cancellation of September Registration Committee due to Cyber Security Incident on September 8, 2020</u>
The Registration Committee's application volume increased at the October and November meetings.

f. Policies, procedures and/or processes, including by-laws

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

Accepting language proficiency test results electronically from IELTS
Effective November 2020, CNO began downloading applicants' language proficiency test results directly from the IELTS portal. Previously, CNO received a paper copy of the applicant's results via mail from IELTS and scanned the results to the applicant's file. Now, CNO is notified by e-mail each time test results are available for downloading from the IELTS portal.

This new portal significantly reduces the wait times associated with processing results. The IELTS Results Service is a complimentary service available to IELTS recognizing organizations, that includes two different services - Verification and E-Delivery. This service helps Administrators process IELTS results that are submitted to their institution. This service is of great benefit to applicants, as it means that language test results are received and processed by CNO as soon as they are available.

Extending the Period of Validity of Temporary Class Certificates of Registration
Applicants, who have met all requirements of registration, except for the exam requirement, can apply for registration in the Temporary Class if they have a job offer with an Ontario facility. The period of registration ends on the earliest of one of the following:

- meeting all requirements and becoming registered in the General Class;
- six months from the date on which the Temporary Class certificate of registration is issued by the CNO; or
- the date on which an applicant fails their first attempt of the relevant registration exam.

Beginning September 8, 2020, the CNO ceased operations due to a cyber security incident and was unable to update application information. We were unable to:

- send the names of exam eligible applicants to the exam providers for the NCLEX-RN (RN registration exam);
- allow exam eligible RPN applicants to apply for the September CPNRE (RPN registration exam) window even though the deadline was September 15, 2020; and
- send the names of applicants who had applied to write the CPNRE on September 8, 2020, to the exam provider.

Collectively, the exam delays impacted some applicants, who were members of the Temporary Class, and who, due to the CNO's technical issues, were unable to register for the exam on or after September 8, 2020, but prior to the expiration of their Temporary Class certificate of registration as an RN or RPN. The registration of these Temporary Class members would have expired while

CNO was unable to process registrations, and these members would not have been able to continue providing nursing services in Ontario during the pandemic.

CNO's Executive Director approved an administrative policy authorizing an extension of the validity period of a Temporary Class certificate of registration issued to specifically identified members who were unable to register for the applicable exam (for example, NCLEX-RN or CPNRE) from September 8 to October 2, 2020. The certificate of registration remained valid beyond the six-month period until the earlier of the following:

1. Issuance of a certificate of registration in the General Class; or
2. Receiving notification of failing the registration exam; or
3. The expiry date of January 8, 2021.

This policy posed a minimal risk to the public. These nurses could continue to work in a supervised capacity in their place of employment. These nurses were also subject to restrictions with respect to certain aspects of their practice.

Creating new forms to collect information related to Language proficiency
In January 2020, CNO introduced new forms to collect information about an applicant's language proficiency. The forms are as follows:

- Evidence of Language Proficiency – Applicant Form: This form is used by the applicant to provide a personal statement explaining how they meet the requirement in listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Applicants can refer to their experience and/or education.

- Evidence of Language Proficiency – Education Form: The form is used by schools to provide identifying information and details about an applicant's nursing or non-nursing education and how it applies to language proficiency. Schools are asked to provide specific supporting documentation including course descriptions and letters of reference.

- Evidence of Language Proficiency – Experience Form: The form is used by any organization to provide identifying information and details about an applicant's nursing or non-nursing experience in relation to language proficiency. Employers, volunteer organizations or other organizations/individuals are asked to provide supporting documentation including job descriptions and letters of reference.

- Evidence of Language Proficiency – Summary of Evidence: This form is used by the applicant to list specific evidence and documents that will be provided in support of language proficiency.

Using these new forms to collect evidence from applicants and third parties has enhanced consistency and streamlined the collection, assessment, and review of documentation as it relates to language proficiency. The forms, along with detailed information about the types of evidence that will be considered by CNO

toward meeting the language proficiency requirement, are available on the website at: https://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/registration-requirements/language-proficiency/language-proficiency-other-types-of-evidence/.

Targeted outreach to applicants who were eligible for registration in the General Class, Temporary Class or the Emergency Assignment Class (EAC)
CNO identified applicants who met specific registration requirements or had one or two outstanding registration requirements and would be eligible for registration as a Registered Nurse (RN) or Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) in either the General Class, Temporary Class or EAC.

CNO then contacted the specified applicants via targeted emails or messages via the message centre (in the applicant portal) to notify them of their status and required next steps to become eligible for registration in the General Class, Temporary Class or EAC.

A sample e-mail is provided below.

You're almost there! You have one outstanding requirement to meet before you can register as a nurse in the Temporary Class.

Our records show that your last requirement is to provide a recent Canadian police criminal record check. To meet this requirement, you will need to submit an online police check through Sterling Talent Solutions' online portal myBackCheck.

Next Steps:
Please log into Sterling Talent Solutions' online portal myBackCheck and submit your police check. You can find the link on the CNO website at www.cno.org by searching for "Police Criminal Reference Check". You will need your CNO application number to log into Sterling Talent Solutions' website. You can find your application number on your Maintain Your Membership (MYM) account under My Applications.

For more information about submitting a police check, you may visit our website at www.cno.org and search for Police Criminal Record Check.

Don't forget some of your other requirements may be expiring soon. Be sure to update your application as soon as possible.

Activated new Emergency Assignment Class (EAC) of registration
Ontario Regulation 275/94 made under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, authorizes CNO to register nurses in the Emergency Assignment Class (EAC) at the request of the Ministry of Health and when the province declares an emergency. CNO activated the EAC for the first time in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, processes were simultaneously developed and

implemented to support the registration of nurses to this class to address health human resource needs related to the COVID pandemic.

Registration in this class is available for 60 days and can be renewed at the Executive Director's discretion. Applicants are not required to pay application or registration fees. There are fewer requirements for registration as compared to other certificates of registration. They are as follows:

- completion of an approved or recognized nursing RN or RPN program;
- practising as an RN or RPN within the previous three years;
- demonstrating language proficiency in either English or French; and
- meeting character, conduct and health requirements, including providing a Police Criminal Record Check (PCRC).

While there are no restrictions on a member's certificate of registration in the EAC, members' scope of practice was limited to providing nursing services for the public of Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To introduce efficiencies into the application process for the EAC, CNO:

- created a new fillable PDF application form, which could be downloaded from CNO's website;
- designated an email box (emergencyclass@cnomail.org) where forms and queries could be sent for timely replies;
- minimized the documentation required for other types of registration (i.e. paper Verification of Registration forms were no longer required where registration could be verified on another regulatory body's online register or through an online registration verification system); and
- prioritized review of EAC applications to ensure that they were processed expeditiously if applicants met all registration requirements.

Targeted communication was used to inform potential applicants about the class and invite them to apply. Eligible applicant groups included:
- nurses registered in other Canadian jurisdictions or the United States;
- former CNO members or members of the Non-Practising Class;
- new graduates from Ontario's nursing schools who had not failed the registration exam; and
- internationally educated nurses who met the registration requirements for this class.

Between April to June 2020, the following were contacted via email:
- 2489 Ontario educated applicants; and
- 409 internationally educated applicants.

With newly designed processes, applicants were assessed for registration in this class within 24-48 hours. The following guiding principles were used to develop the necessary processes and rules to operationalize the EAC and process applications:

- Safety: Applicants were assessed in a manner that balanced the province's need for nurses in an emergency with patient safety and public protection. The application process included measures to allow staff to verify that applicants did not have previous character, conduct or health issues that could affect their ability to practice during the pandemic. Once registered, EAC members' scope of practice was limited to providing nursing services for the public of Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Accountability: As self-regulated professionals, members are responsible for the information they provide to CNO. In a pandemic situation, not all information that is self-reported by applicants is validated or verified (for example, with employers or educators).

- Fairness: Rules were developed to assess applicants with similar profiles. All applicants were required to meet the same requirements for this class. Rules were applied consistently across groups of applicants.

The Emergency Assignment class was active for 134 days from March 23 to August 4, 2020. CNO registered 816 nurses during this time (591 RNs and 225 RPNs).

ii)   **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants**

Accepting language proficiency test results electronically from IELTS
For applicants, CNO's ability to receive IELTs results via the portal has significantly reduced the wait times associated with sending results through the mail. Now, it means that language proficiency test results are received by CNO as soon as they are available in the IELTS portal, which enables CNO staff to update this requirement in a timely manner.

Extending the Period of Validity of Temporary Class Certificates of Registration
Out of fairness, members were permitted to remain registered in the Temporary Class beyond the usual six-month period if they were unable to write the registration exam for reasons beyond their control. This provided temporary class members with the opportunity to continue working as a nurse during the pandemic, until they were able to attempt the exam and receive the results of their exam attempt.

Creating new forms to collect information related to Language proficiency
These new forms are available to applicants and can be accessed from the CNO website. This approach has consolidated information for applicants.

Targeted outreach to applicants who were eligible for registration in the General Class, Temporary Class or the Emergency Assignment Class (EAC)
Direct messaging to applicants ensured timely communication and raised their awareness of either:

- potential options for registering in a specific class where they had met specific requirements and were eligible to do so; or
- their eligibility for registration by highlighting the one or two requirements they had yet to meet.

Activated new Emergency Assignment Class (EAC) of registration
As compared to processing times for other certificates of registration, EAC applications were processed in an expedited manner. If CNO received all required information, the streamlined application process enabled applicants to become registered within one to two days.

iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

Accepting language proficiency test results electronically from IELTS
The IELTS Results Service is a complimentary service available to CNO. It includes two different services: Verification and E-Delivery. This service enables CNO staff to download the results of tests while validating that the results are from the source organization and have not been altered. This process has eliminated the paper associated with receiving results.

Extending the Period of Validity of Temporary Class Certificates of Registration
This policy enabled CNO to continue to supply much needed nursing resources during the pandemic. It also provided CNO with time to receive and process the exam results from exams occurring in November and December 2020 and move those applicants who were successful on the exam toward registration in the General Class. There was minimal public risk to the public. These members remained registered in the Temporary Class beyond the usual six-month period (until January 8, 2021) while remaining subject to the specific restrictions of this certificate of registration, including practising under supervision of another nurse.

Creating new forms to collect information related to Language proficiency
The use of forms to collect language proficiency evidence from applicants and third parties has enhanced the consistency of information provided to CNO in relation to language proficiency. As well, it has streamlined the collection, assessment, and review of documentation by staff. It has also reduced the need to include any forms in our correspondence to applicants, as these forms are now readily available on our website.

Targeted outreach to applicants who were eligible for registration in the General Class, Temporary Class or the Emergency Assignment Class (EAC)
CNO identified and communicated directly with applicants to inform them of their options and any next steps in the registration process. By reaching out to eligible applicants, CNO was able to register safe, competent nurses and provide much needed nursing resources during the pandemic.

Activated new Emergency Assignment Class (EAC) of registration
CNO processed applications for the EAC and registered these applicants on an expedited basis. This was one of CNO's many responses to the pandemic and provided Ontarians with much needed nursing resources.

g. Resource for applicants

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

Updated information about the Language Proficiency Requirement
Updated Forms, along with detailed information about the types of evidence that will be considered by CNO toward meeting the language proficiency requirement became available in January 2020 on the CNO website at:
https://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/registration-requirements/language-proficiency/language-proficiency-other-types-of-evidence/

Applicant resources regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic
CNO created a COVID-19 specific section on its website at https://www.cno.org/en/trending-topics/novel-coronavirus/ and revised the website's architecture to make it easy for applicants to find information about how to apply for the Emergency Assignment Class, how to reinstate registrations, and how to volunteer during the pandemic. The section of the website is no longer active.

Updated Information about the Registration Exams during the pandemic
CNO provided up-to-date information on the following pages about examination dates and availability of test centres throughout the pandemic:
- https://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/entry-to-practice-examinations/
- https://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/entry-to-practice-examinations/rpn-exam/
- https://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/entry-to-practice-examinations/rpn-exam/
- http://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/entry-to-practice-examinations/nclex-rn/
- http://www.cno.org/en/become-a-nurse/entry-to-practice-examinations/rpn-exam/faq-canadian-practical-nurse-registration-examination/

Applicant information during CNO's Cyber Security Incident
CNO experienced a cyber security incident on September 8, 2020, which resulted in a complete shutdown of operations until October 2, 2020. CNO created a dedicated section that was easy to access from the front page and provided regular updates. The section also gave answers to applicants' concerns about their application, including what they could to do while waiting for CNO to re-open, and how to reach Customer Service.

ii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants**

To improve applicants' understanding of CNO's processes and any changes, information was updated in a way that was clear and consistent. Providing this information helped applicants stay informed and up to date with respect to the changes in the application process and any impacts and updated during the COVID-19 pandemic or CNO's Cyber Security Incident.

iii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization**

Providing additional information on changes and updates on the CNO website helped CNO support applicants and reduce some of the calls to the CNO's Contact Centre. By being transparent and forthcoming about the information provided to applicants, they remained informed about how to proceed through the application process or about delays or impacts related to the pandemic and/or the CNO's cyber security incident.

From surveys completed between January to December 2020, 1,035 newly registered members rated their level of satisfaction with application information on CNO's website as follows:
* 87% indicated that the information was comprehensive
* 85% indicated the information was easy to understand
* 89% indicated that the information was helpful
* 81% indicated that the information was easy to find

h. Review or appeal processes

i) **Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year**
No changes

ii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants**
No changes

iii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization**
No changes

i. Access to applicants' records

i) **Describe any improvement/changes implemented in the last year**
No changes

ii) **Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants**
No changes

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
No changes

j.   Training and resources for registration staff, Council, and committee members

i)   Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

Change in Meeting Format from in-person to virtual
With the COVID-19 pandemic, all Registration Committee meetings were transitioned from in-person meetings to virtual zoom meetings as of March 2020. The Committee met for the purposes of: annual orientation, review of policy decisions, and review of evidence related to applications.

ii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants

Change in Meeting Format from in-person to virtual
Applications continued to be reviewed by the Registration Committee in a timely manner, allowing applicants to move forward with the application process.

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

Change in Meeting Format from in-person to virtual
Changing the meeting format from in-person to virtual enabled CNO to continue holding its monthly Registration Committee meetings so that applications could be reviewed in a timely manner. As a result, CNO minimized the health and safety risks associated with the pandemic, while continuing to move applicants through the application process. All Committee members received training on the use of Zoom.

k. Mutual recognition agreements

i)   Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
No changes

ii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
No changes

iii)   Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
No changes

l. Describing any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year
No changes

ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants
No changes

iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization
No changes

m. Describe any registration-related improvements/changes to your enabling legislation and/or regulations in the last year

i) Describe any improvements/changes implemented in the last year

Ontario Colleges become Degree granting Institutions
Ontario Regulation 275/94, under the *Nursing Act, 1991*, was amended on December 11, 2020, to enable Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to deliver baccalaureate nursing degree programs independently. These colleges will be able to award baccalaureate nursing degrees to graduates of Council approved nursing programs that are offered by a publicly funded college.

ii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on applicants

Ontario Colleges become Degree granting Institutions
Students who wish to complete a baccalaureate degree nursing program in Ontario will have more options with respect to pursuing a baccalaureate nursing degree offered through Ontario universities and Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, which must be approved through CNO's Nursing Education Program Approval process.

iii) Describe the impact of the improvements/changes on your organization

Ontario Colleges become Degree granting Institutions
To ensure ongoing excellence in nursing education, CNO will have to review and approve a greater number of baccalaureate degree nursing programs that now will be offered by both universities and Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Provide any additional information:

Quantitative Information

The following quantitative information is collected for the purpose of observing statistical changes and trends related to application, licensure, appeals and staffing year over year.

a. Languages
Indicate the languages in which application materials and information about the application process are available.

Language	Yes/No
English	Yes
French	Yes

Other (please specify):

b. Gender applications
Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable

Gender	Number of applicants
Male	2208
Female	15359
None of the above	35

Additional comments:

c. Gender of members
Indicate the number of members in each category as applicable. Select the option that best corresponds to the terminology used by your organization.

Gender	Number of members
Male	16535
Female	172387
None of the above	17

Additional Comments:

For the following sections d,e & f, the OFC recognizes that the term <u>initial education</u> infers that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions.

For the purpose of these questions, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

d. Jurisdiction where applicants obtained their initial education
Indicate the number of applicants by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International (list countries and # of applicants)		Unknown	Total
10319	717	244	INDIA	4032	7	17602
			PHILIPPINES	1588		
			NEPAL	166		
			NIGERIA	91		
			IRAN	52		
			PAKISTAN	51		
			KOREA	30		
			UNITED KINGDOM	28		
			GHANA	26		
			KENYA	22		
			JAMAICA	21		
			AUSTRALIA	17		
			BRAZIL	14		
			ISRAEL	13		
			LEBANON	10		
			JORDAN	8		
			CAMEROON	7		
			FRANCE	7		
			IRELAND	7		
			ITALY	6		
			MAURITIUS	6		
			TRINIDAD	6		
			ETHIOPIA	5		
			ROMANIA	5		
			RUSSIA	5		
			CHINA	4		

			COLOMBIA	4	
			HONG KONG	4	
			JAPAN	4	
			UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	4	
			CÔTE D'IVOIRE	3	
			IRAQ	3	
			POLAND	3	
			SAUDI ARABIA	3	
			SIERRA LEONE	3	
			SOUTH AFRICA	3	
			SRI LANKA	3	
			SWAZILAND	3	
			SWITZERLAND	3	
			TURKEY	3	
			ZIMBABWE	3	
			BELGIUM	2	
			BELIZE	2	
			COSTA RICA	2	
			EGYPT	2	
			FINLAND	2	
			GERMANY	2	
			GUYANA	2	
			NETHERLANDS	2	
			NEW ZEALAND	2	
			PORTUGAL	2	
			PUERTO RICO	2	
			RWANDA	2	
			SINGAPORE	2	
			ALBANIA	1	
			BAHAMAS	1	
			BARBADOS	1	
			FRENCH POLYNESIA	1	
			GAMBIA	1	
			GREECE	1	

			HAITI 1		
			LATVIA 1		
			MALAYSIA 1		
			SERBIA 1		
			TAIWAN, 1 PROVINCE OF CHINA		
			UGANDA 1		
			UKRAINE 1		

Additional comments:

e. Jurisdiction where applicants who became registered members obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants who became registered members in the reporting year by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International (list countries and # of applicants)	Unknown	Total
7728	502	104	INDIA 1090 PHILIPPINES 785 IRAN 41 NEPAL 40 KOREA 16 NIGERIA 16 PAKISTAN 14 UNITED KINGDOM 14 ISRAEL 13 JAMAICA 11 CHINA 8 AUSTRALIA 6 GHANA 6 KENYA 6 LEBANON 5 CAMEROON 4 IRELAND 4	0	10457

			UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	3	
			FRANCE	2	
			HAITI	2	
			IRAQ	2	
			JORDAN	2	
			ROMANIA	2	
			SPAIN	2	
			SRI LANKA	2	
			SWAZILAND	2	
			ZIMBABWE	2	
			ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	1	
			BRAZIL	1	
			BULGARIA	1	
			BURKINA FASO	1	
			COLOMBIA	1	
			EGYPT	1	
			ETHIOPIA	1	
			FINLAND	1	
			ITALY	1	
			MALAYSIA	1	
			NORWAY	1	
			PORTUGAL	1	
			PUERTO RICO	1	
			RUSSIA	1	
			SERBIA	1	
			SLOVAKIA	1	
			SOUTH AFRICA	1	
			TAIWAN, PROVINCE OF CHINA	1	
			THAILAND	1	
			TRINIDAD	1	
			UGANDA	1	

| | | | UKRAINE | 1 | | |
| | | | UZBEKISTAN | 1 | | |

Additional comments:

f. Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

Indicate the total number of registered members by jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International (list countries and # of applicants)		Unknown	Total
156925	8888	1644	PHILIPPINES	7356	120	188939
			INDIA	6347		
			UNITED KINGDOM	1112		
			IRAN	536		
			POLAND	507		
			CHINA	451		
			HONG KONG	418		
			JAMAICA	402		
			RUSSIA	390		
			ISRAEL	314		
			MACEDONIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC	303		
			PAKISTAN	276		
			ROMANIA	270		
			NIGERIA	241		
			KOREA	207		
			AUSTRALIA	127		
			LEBANON	127		
			NEPAL	118		
			GHANA	89		
			JORDAN	78		
			SOUTH AFRICA	77		

			GERMANY	71	
			GUYANA	71	
			SRI LANKA	71	
			UKRAINE	67	
			KENYA	60	
			CZECH REPUBLIC	58	
			COLOMBIA	55	
			IRELAND	55	
			TRINIDAD	54	
			HAITI	48	
			ETHIOPIA	42	
			FRANCE	42	
			HUNGARY	41	
			JAPAN	38	
			TAIWAN, PROVINCE OF CHINA	37	
			BRAZIL	35	
			NETHERLANDS	34	
			BULGARIA	29	
			ZIMBABWE	29	
			PERU	28	
			NEW ZEALAND	26	
			SINGAPORE	26	
			UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	25	
			ITALY	24	
			BELGIUM	20	
			SERBIA	19	
			SWEDEN	19	
			ALBANIA	18	
			CUBA	17	
			PORTUGAL	17	
			FINLAND	16	
			SWITZERLAND	15	
			UGANDA	15	
			MALAYSIA	14	

			THAILAND	14	
			CAMEROON	13	
			NORWAY	13	
			RWANDA	12	
			SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	12	
			BARBADOS	11	
			MAURITIUS	11	
			SOMALIA	11	
			ZAMBIA	11	
			EGYPT	10	
			GRENADA	10	
			TURKEY	10	
			URUGUAY	9	
			BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	8	
			MOLDOVA, REPUBLIC OF	8	
			AUSTRIA	7	
			CROATIA	7	
			GREECE	7	
			IRAQ	7	
			SLOVAKIA	7	
			UZBEKISTAN	7	
			AFGHANISTAN	6	
			BELARUS	6	
			BURUNDI	6	
			CHILE	6	
			MEXICO	6	
			TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF	6	
			ALGERIA	5	
			CONGO	5	
			DENMARK	5	
			ECUADOR	5	
			KAZAKHSTAN	5	

			SAINT LUCIA	5	
			SPAIN	5	
			ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	4	
			BOTSWANA	4	
			EL SALVADOR	4	
			MALTA	4	
			NICARAGUA	4	
			SIERRA LEONE	4	
			VENEZUELA	4	
			ZAIRE	4	
			ARGENTINA	3	
			AZERBAIJAN	3	
			BANGLADESH	3	
			CÔTE D'IVOIRE	3	
			DOMINICA	3	
			ERITREA	3	
			FIJI	3	
			ICELAND	3	
			LATVIA	3	
			LITHUANIA	3	
			MOROCCO	3	
			SWAZILAND	3	
			BURKINA FASO	2	
			CONGO, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF T	2	
			COSTA RICA	2	
			DJIBOUTI	2	
			GEORGIA	2	
			KUWAIT	2	
			PANAMA	2	
			PUERTO RICO	2	
			QATAR	2	

			SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	2	
			SAUDI ARABIA	2	
			SUDAN	2	
			TAJIKISTAN	2	
			TUNISIA	2	
			ARMENIA	1	
			BAHAMAS	1	
			GUATEMALA	1	
			KYRGYZSTAN	1	
			LESOTHO	1	
			MYANMAR	1	
			PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, OCCUPIED	1	
			SCOTLAND	1	

g. Application processed

Indicate the number of applications your organization processed in the reporting year. Enter the data by jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession, i.e. before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario.

January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
New applications received	10319	717	244	6315	7	17602
Applicant actively pursuing licensing. Those who had some	3987	570	247	14633	8	19445

contact with your organization in the reporting year						
Inactive applicants. Those who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year.	952	354	154	5080	6	6546
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	502	86	14	239	0	841
Applicants who became fully registered members	7728	502	104	2123	0	10457
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative licence but were not issued a licence	72	1	0	1	0	74
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence*	2274	47	54	55	0	2430

- An alternative class of license enables its holder to practice with limitations, but additional requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licensed.

Additional comments:

*In 2020, we issued Emergency Assignment Class licenses in addition to Temporary Class licenses as an alternative class of license.

h. Classes of certificate/license

Provide a description of the classes of certificate/license offered by your organization. You should have at least one class listed.

#	Certification	Description
1	General Class	Most nurses registered with the CNO belong to the **General Class**. Both Registered Nurses and

		Registered Practical Nurses belong in this class.
2	Extended (Nurse Practitioner)	The **Extended Class** is for RNs who have additional education and clinical experience that allows them to practise as Nurse Practitioners. Members in this class have an expanded scope of practice, with the authority to diagnose, prescribe medication, perform procedures, and order and interpret diagnostic tests.
3	Non-Practising Class	The **Non-Practising Class** is for members who want to remain CNO members at times when they are not practising nursing in Ontario.
4	Temporary Class	The **Temporary Class** is an option for applicants who have met all the registration requirements for the General Class *except* completing the registration exam. Members in this class are allowed to practise under defined terms and conditions. They can join the General Class after they pass the exam.

| 5 | Special Assignment Class | The **Special Assignment Class** is a time-limited registration for nurses who have an appointment as an RN or RPN with an approved facility in Ontario. Members in this class can only practise within the scope of their appointment and only under defined terms and conditions. |
| 6 | Emergency Assignment Class | The **Emergency Assignment Class** comes into force when the provincial government declares an emergency and asks the CNO to issue Emergency Assignment certificates of registration to qualified nurses. |

Additional comments:

i. Reviews and appeals processed

State the number of reviews and appeals your organization processed in the reporting year. Enter the data by jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession, i.e. <u>before</u> they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario.

January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
Applicants that were subject to an internal review or that were	56	3	16	1150	0	1225

referred to a statutory committee of your governing council, such as Registration Committee						
Applicants who initiated an appeal of a registration decision	3	0	0	1	0	4
Appeals heard	5	0	0	3	0	8
Registration decisions changed following an appeal	1	0	0	0	0	1

Additional comments:

j. Paid Staff

Provide the number of paid staff employed by your organization in the categories shown, as of December 31, 2020.

You may use decimals if you need to count half units. For example, on full-time employee plus one part-time employee will be equivalent to 1.5 employees.

Category	Number of staff
Total number of staff employed by the regulatory body	320
Number of staff involved in the appeals process	3
Number of staff involved in the registration process	46

Additional comments:

Submission

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization:
Title: Anne Coghlan, RN, MScN
**   Executive Director and CEO**
Date: April 15, 2021