



Continuing Competency Program Framework

2022



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Continuing Competency Program Framework (2015)

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Introduction

The College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador (CRNNL) is the regulatory body for all Registered Nurses (RNs) and Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in the province. The College's mandate is to protect the public through self-regulation of the nursing profession in accordance with the *Registered Nurses Act*. The College strives to set the standard for nursing excellence in the province of NL.

The College, through the *Registered Nurses Regulations (2013)* Sections 17 (1), (2), & (3), is granted authority such that: "all members shall complete a continuing competency program as required by the council; the council shall conduct regular audits of the members' participation in the continuing competency program; and members shall provide all information requested in the conduct of the audit." The most current version of the College's *Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners* states that "the registered nurse and nurse practitioner engages in professional development opportunities, including compliance with continuing competence requirements".

Foundational Principles

The foundation for the Continuing Competency Program (CCP) is based upon the two principles of individual competence and self-reflection.

Competence

Competence is a multi-dimensional concept that includes acquiring knowledge, skills, and abilities and applying and maintaining the competencies acquired. Competence is an evolving process that moves across a spectrum of one's professional life. Competence has also been described as a dynamic concept, changing as the registered nurse or nurse practitioner (RN/NP) achieves a higher stage of development, responsibility, and accountability within their current practice setting/role. Furthermore, continuing competence is the ongoing ability of RNs/NPs to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgment, and personal attributes (e.g., attitudes, abilities, behaviors, beliefs, and values) required to practice safely, competently, and ethically in a practice setting. Maintaining continuing competence involves a continuous process of linking the standards of practice, code of ethics, and lifelong learning with reflective practice activities to one's context of practice.

Self-Reflection

Nursing is a reflective practice whereby RNs/NPs engage in a process of learning from one's experiences, reconsidering and rethinking their previous knowledge, and adding new knowledge to inform one's practice. The RN/NP reflects on their practice, on an ongoing basis, and takes action to continually improve that practice. Reflective practice also helps the RN/NP identify learning needs and progress from novice to expert practice.

Reflective practice is a hallmark of continuing competence; whereby registrants take time to thoroughly reflect on their knowledge, skills, actions, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and abilities, and continually identify learning needs. The College's CCP is just one part of this reflective process providing an opportunity for each RN/NP to formalize their reflective practice at a particular point in time during licensure renewal.

Assumptions

The CCP is further underpinned by a number of assumptions¹:

- CCP increases public confidence in the nursing profession.
- Requiring members to be engaged in ongoing learning and improvement contributes to the protection of the public.
- The public has the right to expect that RNs/NPs demonstrate continuing competence throughout their careers.
- Public interest and safety are best served when RNs/NPs continually enhance knowledge, skills, and judgement.
- Engagement is the motivating factor that makes participation in CCP translate into practice. Engaged practitioners are interested in their profession, their clients, and their practice.
- CCP is a crucial part of a RN/NP's professional responsibility to provide the highest standards of patient care and safety, and to provide that care based on best practices and current research.
- The individual RN/NP has a professional obligation and the primary responsibility for maintaining and continually acquiring competence.
- Continuing competence is essential to professional nursing practice. It promotes good nursing practice, assists in preventing poor practice, and contributes to the quality of nursing practice and best possible client outcomes.
- CCP facilitates the acquisition of the specific knowledge, skills, judgment, and personal attributes required to practice safely and ethically in a designated role and setting.
- CCP supports RNs/NPs in their professional commitment to lifelong learning and excellence.
- Competency is about an understanding of one's strengths, limitations, and relationship to the profession. Accurate self-assessment and reflection are the foundation for addressing competency gaps and to engage in lifelong learning that is the hallmark of professional life.
- An individual's ability to continually maintain, acquire, or demonstrate competence is influenced by the practice setting. Continuing competence can be facilitated or hindered by the environment in which they practice and the support they received from others (e.g., colleagues, employers, union, professional nursing organizations, government, etc.).
- Competence is continually maintained and acquired through reflective practice, lifelong learning, and integration of learning into nursing practice.
- The College's CCP is a component of the College's Quality Assurance Framework.
- CCP is a mandatory, legislative requirement and is not optional.

¹CRNNL's Advisory Committee for Continuing Competence, is made up of practicing registrants from diverse areas of practice and years of experience, identified assumptions and principles that underpin the CCP. This committee was dissolved and incorporated into the Regulation, Education, and Practice (REP) Advisory Committee.

Continuing Competency Requirements for Annual Licensure Renewal

Each year when RNs/NPs renew their licence they are expected to have completed the necessary steps of the CCP prior to completing the online application process. This means that the registrant has:

1. conducted their self-assessment², initially and throughout the licensure year, reflecting on their practice setting, professional practice, patient/client/resident population, interactions with and input from colleagues and the members of the health care team, and identified learning needs or topics they want learn more about in the current licensure year³.
2. completed and recorded 24 hours of learning in the CCP log located under “My learning” in the Alinity member portal.
3. evaluated and recorded the immediate impact of each learning activity under My learning in the Alinity member portal.
4. completed their summative evaluation after completing all 24 hours of learning and described the overall impact 24 hours of learning had on their individual nursing practice.

Steps 3 - 5 of the CCP must be completed in My learning in the Alinity member portal before the registrant will be issued a licence to practice.

If RNs/NPs return to work in the middle of a licensure year, the number of CCP hours required for licensure renewal⁴ will be prorated. This number of prorated CCP hours will be identified in My Learning. Registrants are also encouraged to review CCP resources on the College’s website.

Continuing Competency Program Requirements

Section 17(1) of the *Registered Nurses Regulations* (2013) require all members to complete the continuing competency program as required by the Council, and section 12(1)(c) requires successful completion of the CCP program for licensure renewal.

Renewing RNs and NPs

- All RNs/NPs who currently hold a licence and are applying to renew a licence with CRNNL **must meet the mandatory CCP requirements** for the current licensure year.
- RNs/NPs **who fail to complete the CCP are not eligible for licensure renewal and will not be issued a practicing licence until such time as CCP requirements are met.** Non-practicing membership may be issued to eligible individuals.

²Completing your self-assessment and identifying learning needs are informal, reflective exercises and are not recorded in My learning.

³Current licensure year refers to the year the registrant is currently practising (i.e., has a licence to practice for April 1, XXXX- March 31, XXXX).

⁴Licensure renewal occurs between January, XXXX-March 1, XXXX, up to March 31, XXXX.

- RNs/NPs who have been off work or are on a period of extended leave (e.g., maternity, sick, or disability leave, etc.) and are applying to renew a licence, must meet CCP requirements prior to the College issuing the Registrant a licence. Completion of the CCP is mandatory under section 12(1)(c) of the *Registered Nurse Regulations* (2013) for licensure renewal. There is no waiver of the CCP requirement, and no extensions provided to meet this requirement.

Non-practicing, Lapsed, or Resigned Members: Reinstatement

- Non-practicing members (including members on maternity, sick, or disability leave), members who let their membership lapse⁵, or members who resigned⁶ their College membership and are applying to renew a licence, must meet CCP requirements for the 12-month period immediately preceding the application for licensure renewal.
- Non-practicing members, members who let their membership lapse, or resigned members, and who have successfully completed CCP requirements in another province/territory or another country where the RN/NP was registered or licensed in the 12-month period immediately preceding the application for licensure renewal, will be considered to have successfully completed CCP requirements for the current licensure year.
- RNs/NPs issued a practicing licence after April 30th shall, for the CCP for the current licensure year, have the CCP learning activity hours prorated. The total number of required learning activity hours shall be calculated as two hours per month for each full month remaining in the licensure year.
- Registrants renewing an RN/NP practicing licence after April 30th shall, for the CCP for the current licensure year, have the CCP learning activities hours prorated. The total number of required learning activity hours shall be calculated as two hours per month for each full month remaining in the licensure year (this will also apply to newly licensed registrants, e.g., new graduates who obtain a licence to practice in the current licensure year after successful of their registration exam and renewing their licence between January-March for the upcoming year and registrants from another jurisdiction who have obtained initial registration and licence to practice for the current licensure year and who are renewing their licence for the upcoming year).

Continuing Competency Program Audit

All RNs/NPs complete the Continuing Competency Program annually. In addition, each year as part of a legislative requirement, CRNNL conducts a CCP Audit.

All CCP requirements are now recorded online under My learning within the Alinity member portal. Inclusion in the CCP Audit will occur automatically via a random selection of registrant entries in the online My learning and may occur at any time during the licensure year. Registrants may also be added to the CCP Audit upon the direction of the Director of Professional Conduct Review (PCR) as part of the PCR process. After the audit is completed, the RN/NP will receive notification via the Alinity member portal on the outcomes of the audit. There are no exemptions for the Audit.

⁵Lapsed status- A membership that has not been renewed to either practicing or non-practicing for a period of at least one year or more.

⁶Resigned status - A member who gave notice to the College that they were resigning their membership in accordance with the By-Laws.

In the event, the College’s review of the online CCP requirements identifies that the registrant was dishonest with respect to completion of their CCP requirements or made inappropriate comments, the registrant’s file will be referred to the Director of Professional Conduct Review (DPCR). Those who fail to submit CCP Audit requirements will also be referred to the DPCR.

Continuing Competency Program Components

The College’s Continuing Competency Program encompasses six steps:

1. Conduct your own self-assessment: Initially and throughout the year (informal process)
2. Identify your learning needs (informal process)
3. Complete and evaluate the immediate impact of each learning activity
4. Record 24 hours of learning activities under My learning in the Alinity member portal
5. Complete a summative evaluation
6. CCP Audit

Note: Please refer to the College’s CCP Guide for further details on how to complete the steps of the new CCP



STEP ONE: Conduct Your Self-Assessment: Initially and Throughout the Year.

This step is an informal process involving a reflective exercise and **is not required to be recorded or submitted.**

RNs/NPs are recommended to conduct their own self-assessment **at the beginning of the licensure year and throughout the year as needed**, recognizing that due to changes in nursing practice and possible evolving roles, new learning needs may have emerged that the RN/NP may wish to pursue in the licensure year. RNs/NPs could consider beginning with reviewing the most current version of the College's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics.

Conducting a self-assessment allows the RN/NP to strategically think about/reflect on their professional practice, within their practice setting, to help determine their personal and practice strengths, select the specific competencies to improve or acquire (knowledge, skills, judgment, or personal attributes), and to focus their selection of learning needs and/or interests for the licensure year.

Regardless of the domain of practice, specific roles that encompass the RN/NP's nursing practice, or the population the RN/NP serves, conducting a self-assessment will help focus the learning opportunities the RN/NP may seek and assist in acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, judgment, and personal attributes to competently meet the population's health needs in order to provide quality care and improve client safety and health outcomes. Furthermore, reflecting on an RN/NP's professional practice demonstrates accountability for professional development.

STEP TWO: Identify Your Learning Needs

This step is an informal process involving a reflective exercise and **is not required to be recorded or submitted.**

By engaging in the informal self-assessment process, RNs/NPs can identify learning needs for the licensure year (the year the registrant is practicing in, i.e., April 1-March 31). By identifying learning needs, the RN/NP can focus on specific areas of practice the RN/NP wants to improve, enhance, or learn more about. The RN/NP is asked to consider a number of reflective questions to focus their learning needs.

The RN/NP may wish to record the learning needs/topics they have chosen to work on this licensure year in the text box provided in Appendix A of the College's CCP guide. The College does not require the RN/NP to record or submit learning needs; however, recording them for future reference and for completing further steps, e.g., summative evaluation, is advised.

STEP THREE: Complete and Evaluate the Immediate Impact of Each Learning Activity.

The RN/NP must complete 24 hours (**an average of 2 hours per month**) of learning activities during the licensure year (April 1- March 31) and evaluate the immediate impact of the learning activity on their nursing practice.

See Appendix A for a list of possible CCP learning activities in this document or Appendix B of the College's CCP guide.

STEP FOUR: Record 24 hours of learning activities under My learning in the Alinity member portal.

The **RN/NP must record details of each learning activity** in the appropriate section of My learning. Learning activities are logged in five-minute increments. A total of 24 hours of learning must be logged in My learning, or the RN/NP will not be permitted to proceed to Step 5 of completing the summative evaluation. Those who do not currently have a licence to practice but apply or intend to apply to obtain a practicing licence must capture their learning in the Reinstatement module in the Alinity member portal.

The RN/NP must record details of each learning activity such as the title of the article read, the date attended a workshop, or the name of the education session (e.g., conference/webinar/workshop, etc.) attended, and the amount of time it took to complete each learning activity. One learning hour is equal to one clock hour. There is no longer any distinction between formal and self-directed (informal) learning activities.

STEP FIVE: Complete a Summative Evaluation

After completing the required 24 hours of learning activities and steps 1 – 4, the RN/NP is **required to complete a summative (summary) evaluation** that describes the overall impact that **all** learning activities had on the RN/NP's individual nursing practice. The RN/NP can begin by reflecting on the learning needs identified initially and the immediate impact the learning activities had on their practice. Then, the RN/NP is required to summarize the overall impact/outcome(s) from the entirety of their learning.

The RN/NP is not required to restate the immediate impact of each learning activity; instead, the RN/NP is required to describe how the entirety of the learning (24 hours) impacted or changed their nursing practice. The length of the summative evaluation is dependent upon the outcomes of the learning. **Registrants will not be issued a licence to practice for the upcoming year until all CCP requirements are met.**

STEP SIX: CCP Audit

All RNs/NPs complete the CCP annually. In addition, each year as part of a legislative requirement, the College conducts a CCP Audit.

All CCP requirements are now recorded online within My learning in the Alinity member portal. Inclusion in the CCP Audit will occur automatically via a random selection of registrant entries in the Alinity member portal and may occur at any time during the licensure year. After the audit is completed, the RN/NP will receive notification via the Alinity member portal on the outcomes of the audit. There are no exemptions for the Audit.

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Appendix A: Examples of Continuing Competency Program Learning Activities

Learning hours are calculated as one learning hour per one clock hour of a learning activity. For each learning activity, it is the responsibility of the individual RN/NP to reflect on how that learning activity is important to their practice and **record accurately the number of hours** in which learning has occurred.

Learning Activities Examples (not all inclusive):

- Learning at the bedside with the clinical educator, nurse practitioner, physician, or another health care professional
- Accessing resources such as e-Therapeutics, Mosby's, Up to Date, etc.
- Listening to recordings of the College Connection Podcasts and/or Archived Events
- Conferences, teleconferences, symposiums, seminars, webinars, workshops, rounds (e.g., client, grand nursing, medical, morbidity and mortality rounds, etc.), etc.
- University, College, Speciality Certification Courses (e.g., CNA certification courses)
- Education Modules, In-Services and Web-based Courses: e.g., controlled drugs and substances education course or program, CASN module(s), CAMH or BCCSU OAT courses, etc.
- Professional Committees and Special Interest/Provincial/National Groups
- Professional Journal Publishing and Research
- Independent learning including, but not limited to, reading journal articles, participating in journal clubs, researching online internet sites, reviewing textbooks, equipment or policy manuals, and electronic resources
- Employer Required Course (including, but not limited to): e.g., ACLS, TNCC, MoreOB, CTAS, NRP, Safe Patient/Client/Resident Handling, BLS, LEADS, LEAN, Conflict Resolution, etc.
- Preceptorship/Mentorship/Supervision/Teaching/Presenting (including, but not limited to, reviewing literature, reviewing policies & procedures, reviewing manuals, reviewing course materials, reviewing medications and their product monographs, etc. involved in preparing to be a preceptor, mentor, or provide supervision to new or novice nurses, teach a course, deliver an orientation, or present to a committee/conference, etc.) (**i.e., Preparatory work only**)



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