

Staying Connected: Completing the CCP When You Are Not Currently Practising

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As a member of the College who is not currently practising due to parental or medical leave, unemployment, working in a different field or retirement, you may find yourself struggling with how to complete the Continuing Competence Program (CCP). The CCP is **mandatory for all members**, and is one way that the College fulfills its mandate of public protection. The program was designed to be flexible, meaningful, relevant and accessible for all members. This article aims to help you understand the areas of flexibility in the program, so that you can complete the CCP and demonstrate that you are **Professional, Ethical, Qualified** and **Accountable**.

The CCP requires you to review the 8 Principles in the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook, 2nd Edition*, and then to complete the *Self Assessment Tool and Professional Development Plan Documents*. This is best done early in the year, so that you can then carry out and track your learning activities throughout the year. If you are not currently practising, you can tick off a box at the end of each section of the *Self Assessment Tool*, indicating you are not currently practising. You can also decide, using your professional judgment, how many goals to set for yourself each year, as well as the focus of your goals.

Once you have identified your goals in the *Self Assessment Tool*, you are ready to transfer them to the *Professional Development Plan*. Because you are not currently practising, your goals will likely be different from those of someone who is and may reflect the fact that you are not currently practising. They may relate to keeping current in a particular area or preparing yourself for returning to work. Remember that learning activities are defined broadly, and could include reading or online research, for example. You should be able to meet your goals in a variety of ways that are feasible, even if your access to resources (including energy, money, concentration, time and mobility) is limited.

Still wondering what your CCP might look like? The list of suggestions below might give you some ideas as to how you can continue to expand your knowledge while you are not practising. While this list is not meant to be exhaustive, it takes into account some of the challenges you might face.

- Continue to network by maintaining contact with colleagues (past and present) or getting involved in a professional association
- Keep current by visiting the wide variety of websites that provide professional news and information
- Explore practice issues, theories and research by subscribing to an online journal - some of which are free. Set alerts for areas of particular interest
- Learn about new technologies; explore and increase your internet/computer skills
- Consider researching and writing an article
- Read or start a professional blog
- Listen to podcasts on topics of interest. These can often be downloaded free-of-charge from the websites of educational and professional bodies
- Create an e-mail alert through Google using relevant key words, and review the articles
- Stay current with changes in your professional environment by continuing to read relevant material, including the *Perspective* newsletter and the Practice Notes available in the Resource Room on the College website www.ocswww.org
- Volunteer while you are seeking employment
- Find a mentor, or consider becoming a mentor
- Reach out to a peer or former colleague to discuss professional issues and trends affecting practice
- Reflect on your current experience, and record your insights about your own practice in a journal
- Revise your resume in anticipation of returning to work



Remember to give yourself credit for the things that you do! This will be easier if you document your accomplishments in your *Professional Development Plan* as they occur, and create an electronic or paper folder to record and keep evidence of your learning activities.

For further information on the CCP, visit the CCP Resources page on the College website www.ocswww.org, or contact the Professional Practice Department at ccp@ocswww.org