

Continuing Competence Program: Frequently Asked Questions

BOB MACWHIRTER M.S.W., RSW, DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Over the past several months, the College has received a number of calls regarding the Continuing Competence Program (CCP). As members will know, the CCP was launched in April 2009. The implementation of a Continuing Competence Program is one of the legislated responsibilities of the College. In accordance with the Registration Regulation made under the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act* and in keeping with the public protection mandate of the College, a condition of a certificate of registration is that the member “must provide evidence satisfactory to the College of the member’s continuing competence to practise social work or social service work, as the case may be, in accordance with the guidelines approved by Council from time to time and published and distributed to the members of the College.”

Below are several Frequently Asked Questions in response to the feedback the College has received. Some of these questions have been addressed previously in the CCP Instruction Guide or in earlier editions of *Perspective*, while others are appearing for the first time.

1) WHY IS PARTICIPATION IN THE CCP MANDATORY FOR ALL MEMBERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE RETIRED FROM PRACTICE, ON MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE, OR CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED?

Members of the public need to be assured that all College members, regardless of work status, are engaged in the enhancement of their practice in an ongoing way and striving for excellence in the provision of social work and social service work. This is one way the College fulfils its mandate of protecting the public. The goals of a member who is not currently employed undoubtedly will differ from those of a member who is employed. If you are having difficulty determining your learning needs and goals, contact the Professional Practice Department for assistance.

2) ARE MEMBERS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ALL THEIR LEARNING ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WITHIN THE CALENDAR YEAR? QUESTION 3 OF SECTION 4 OF THE COLLEGE’S ANNUAL RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION



(“DECLARATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM”) SEEMS TO INDICATE THIS.

No. Depending on your learning plan, some activities may be completed quickly while others may require more time to accomplish. The College recognizes that some goals and learning activities may be carried over into the following year. Continuing competence is just that – continuing.

3) WHY SHOULD I COMPLETE THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL? I’M ALREADY COMPETENT.

Learning is an ongoing process. By completing the self-assessment you will be able to assess your strengths and identify the areas that you can enhance. This will enable you to develop a learning plan based on your personal learning needs. By developing your own plan, you have greater chances of attaining the goals you have set for yourself. A major goal of the College is to encourage members to strive for excellence in their practice. Participation in the CCP is one way to reach this goal.

Continuing Competence Program: Frequently Asked Questions

BOB MACWHIRTER M.S.W., RSW, DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

4) HOW DO I KNOW THAT THE COLLEGE WON'T EVALUATE ME BASED ON HOW I RATE MYSELF ON THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

The purpose of the Continuing Competence Program is to promote high standards and quality assurance with respect to social work and social service work. The purpose is not to “police” the practice of members. In keeping with an adult education model, the program is based on the assumption that all members have areas of strength, as well as areas in which they can further develop their knowledge and skills. The College is mandated to ensure that all members are actively involved in the process of self-evaluation, goal setting, and defining learning activities. The specifics of a member’s self-assessment, learning goals and plan, however, are the professional responsibility of the individual and not determined by the College.

5) CAN MEMBERS WORK TOGETHER TO COMPLETE THEIR SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS?

Members are welcome to do this, however, they are reminded that their individual learning goals and Professional Development Plan must be relevant to their own needs.

6) CAN VOLUNTEER WORK COUNT AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Professional development activities stem from the learning goals you’ve set for yourself through the self-assessment process. As long as a learning activity clearly relates to a learning goal and the Standards of Practice, it is acceptable.

7) WILL THE COLLEGE BE CONDUCTING RANDOM AUDITS OF MEMBERS’ COMPLIANCE WITH THE CCP?

Although some regulatory colleges do conduct random audits as part of their quality assurance programs, the College has decided not to do this. In keeping with an adult education model, the CCP requires that members themselves ensure that program requirements are met. Members are also required to make a declaration on their annual renewal of registration that they are participating in the CCP and that

the information provided and statements made are complete and correct. Any false or misleading information, statement, representation or declaration may be cause for revocation of a member’s certificate of registration.

8) CAN COLLEGE MEMBERS SUBMIT THEIR ANNUAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FOR THEIR SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL?

No. The CCP uses a self-assessment tool based on the College’s Standards of Practice to help College members evaluate their own strengths and learning needs. An employer’s evaluation is more limited, focusing on the performance of work place duties. However, a workplace performance appraisal may provide a member with feedback suggesting practice areas needing improvement from which she or he can develop aspects of a learning plan and goals.

9) I AM CURRENTLY NOT PRACTISING IN THE FIELDS OF SOCIAL WORK OR SOCIAL SERVICE WORK. CAN I IDENTIFY GOALS THAT ARE UNRELATED TO EITHER OF THESE PROFESSIONS?

All goals must relate to the College’s Standards of Practice and the practice of social work or social service work.

10) HOW MANY GOALS AM I REQUIRED TO SET FOR MYSELF?

As a regulated professional, you are accountable for your own actions. Therefore, you are responsible for determining what areas of your practice require improvement or new learning and consequently the learning goals and objectives to address these areas. Ultimately, you must be able to demonstrate that you have made reasonable efforts to develop an appropriate learning plan. You will need to use your professional judgment to decide what is reasonable and appropriate.

For more information on the Continuing Competence Program, please contact the Professional Practice Department at ccp@ocswssw.org.