Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

Information on Application Processing Approaches

The information in this document will assist applicants in understanding the parallel and sequential processing approaches. It will help them to compare the potential benefits, drawbacks and risks to each application processing approach.

Information on Parallel Registration Processing and Sequential Registration Processing

What is parallel registration processing?

Parallel registration processing means that eligible, independent registration requirements can be completed at the same time instead of waiting for one requirement to be completed before starting another. For example, while the College waits to receive an official transcript from your academic institution, you may be able to complete your vulnerable sector check.

What is sequential registration processing?

Sequential registration processing means completing certain requirements in a specific order because you must know the outcome of one step before you can move forward to the next step. For example, equivalency applicants must receive the College's confirmation that their application meets the Threshold Assessment Review Requirements before proceeding with other registration requirements.

How to decide: Begin independent registration requirements at the same time only when completing one does not depend on the outcome of another. If a requirement depends on a decision by the College or another third-party organization, complete it sequentially and wait for that decision before proceeding.

Why is the College offering parallel registration processing?

Ontario Regulation 479/24, made under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006* (FARPACTA), requires the College and other regulators governed by FARPACTA to develop a parallel registration processing plan and obtain approval from the Ontario Fairness Commissioner. Parallel processing is intended to reduce wait times and make the registration process more efficient.

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Can parallel processing reduce the time needed to complete my application?
As noted above, parallel processing may reduce the overall time needed to complete an application for registration. However, overall processing time will depend on your circumstances and how quickly the College receives all required documents from you and third parties.

How do I request parallel processing?
You don't need to submit a formal request. After you submit your application for registration through the College's Online Portal, you may begin any independent registration requirements that are eligible for parallel processing. Regardless of your approach, the College will notify you in writing if your application is incomplete and identify what is needed to complete it.

What should I know about the registration requirements?
The College's Registration Requirements webpage explains the requirements your application must meet before the College can issue you a certificate of registration. Review the page carefully to identify which requirements apply to your application.

The table below summarizes the registration requirements, known third-party costs, and whether each requirement may be completed in parallel. In this table, "Yes" means that the requirement is generally independent and eligible for parallel processing. "No" means that you must wait until the College or third-party decision is complete.

Registration Requirement	Cost	Eligible for Parallel Processing
Academic Qualifications		Yes
Official transcript from a Canadian academic institution	Fees vary by institution and typically range from $10 to $30. Contact your academic institution directly for current fee information.	
Official transcript from an academic institution located in the USA	Contact your academic institution directly for current fee information.	
Third-party credential assessment report (for academic qualifications obtained outside of Canada and USA)	Fees vary depending on the third-party assessment agency and type of evaluation report. Review the Third Party Credential Assessment resource for additional information.	

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Currency of Practice	Not applicable *Note:* Generally, applicants are required to indicate on the online application whether they practised the profession of social work or social service work within the five years before the date of application. There is no cost associated with providing this information. However, in some circumstances, applicants may incur costs if they are required to provide additional supporting documents to demonstrate currency of practice such as an official transcript for academic qualifications completed in the last five years (other than the basis of registration) or verification of out-of-province registration if they practised in another Canadian jurisdiction within five years before the date of application.	Yes
Eligibility to Work in Canada	Consult the Fee List published on the IRCC website.	No
Professional Conduct and Ability to Practise in a Safe Manner • **Includes the requirement to provide a copy of a valid Vulnerable Sector Check**	Generally between $35 and $75. Contact your local police service for details.	Yes — accredited degree/approved diploma stream. No — equivalency stream. Equivalency applicants need to provide a vulnerable sector check only after the College confirms that their

		application is approved in principle for registration.
Language Proficiency Test	Fees vary depending on the specific language test and testing location. For details, visit the applicable website: TOEFL, IELTS , CELPIP, PTE, TEF , TCF.	No — equivalency stream. Equivalency applicants need to provide a language proficiency test only after the College confirms that their application can proceed to the Secondary Review Phase.
College Fees		
Application fee (non-refundable)	$100	Not applicable — payment is required to submit the application.
Registration fee	$400 (regular fee) or $300 (new graduates). Review the Fee Schedule for details on how the registration fees are calculated.	No — must be paid only after the College confirms the application is eligible for registration.

What should I consider before choosing between parallel and sequential processing?

The comparison table below summarizes the potential benefits, drawbacks and risks of each approach. You may choose to complete eligible independent requirements at the same time or one at a time, based on your circumstances, available time, costs and ability to manage several steps. You cannot choose to begin a requirement that depends on an earlier outcome; in those cases, you must wait until the applicable decision is complete.

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	Parallel Processing	Sequential Processing
Potential benefits	• May reduce overall processing time by allowing you to complete other independent requirements while waiting for a transcript, verification of registration or other third-party response.	• May help you avoid paying for a requirement before you know whether it is needed. For example, equivalency applicants need a vulnerable sector check only if their application is eligible to proceed to registration. • May be easier to manage because you complete one requirement at a time.
Potential drawbacks	• Requires you to coordinate with several organizations and track multiple requirements and timelines at the same time.	• Waiting for a requirement to be approved may increase overall processing time.
Risks	• You may pay third-party fees before knowing the outcome of another step. These fees are generally non-refundable if your application does not proceed to registration. • Completing an individual requirement does not guarantee registration; your application must meet all registration requirements to be eligible for registration.	• Waiting for one requirement to be approved before working on the next may extend the overall processing timeline, particularly when documents or verifications must be obtained from third parties. • Completing requirements sequentially does not guarantee registration; your application must meet all registration requirements to be eligible for registration.

What are the common causes of delay in the registration process, and how can I avoid them?

For common sources of delay, review the webpage Factors that can potentially delay application processing times. Additionally, the following can also potentially delay the processing of your application:

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) processing times for work or study permits, which are outside the College's control.
- Delays from third-party organizations such as third-party credential assessment agencies or local police services, including high volumes of requests during their own peak periods.
- Seasonal high volumes of applications — the College sees peak periods in spring/summer and again in fall.

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To avoid delays, submit the required supporting documents for your application stream, monitor the status of your application and supporting documents in Online Portal and respond promptly if the College asks for additional information.

Common Registration Scenarios

The below information illustrates how parallel and sequential processing may apply in common registration scenarios. Each application for registration is different; therefore, the information below should be viewed as general guidance only.

Can I switch from sequential to parallel processing (or vice versa) after I've already started my application?
Yes. You may change your approach at any time during the application process. For example, if you initially wait for one requirement to be completed before starting another, you may later begin any *independent* requirements in parallel. Before changing your approach, review the considerations and risks outlined above.

I'm waiting on my immigration documents from IRCC. When should I apply for registration?
Eligibility to work in Canada is a registration requirement and applicants must submit a copy of their valid work or study permit with their application.

If IRCC is still reviewing your application for a work or study permit, wait to apply for registration until you receive the permit or confirmation that it has been approved and the document is being issued. The outcome is unknown until that point, and IRCC processing times are outside the College's control and may exceed published timelines.

Once you receive your work permit or study permit—or confirmation that it has been approved and is being issued—you can apply to the College and begin independent requirements. These may include official transcript or third-party credential evaluation report, vulnerable sector check, where applicable, or an out-of-province verification of registration. Completing these requirements in parallel once you receive confirmation that you have been approved for a work or study permit can help prepare the rest of your file while you wait for the permit to be issued.

I have a work or study permit that may restrict me from working in health services. Should I complete other requirements in parallel while I sort this out?
Applicants whose permit has a health restriction do not meet the College's eligibility to work in Canada registration requirement. Resolve the restriction with IRCC before applying or spending time and money on other requirements. If you begin other requirements while your permit document is unresolved, they cannot be used if you are not eligible to legally work in Canada.

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I recently graduated. When should I start the registration process?
New graduates can gather supporting documents before applying for registration. For example, if you complete your program in the spring but your convocation is not until June, you can request supporting documents that may take time to obtain—such as a vulnerable sector check—several weeks before your convocation. Submit your application closer to your convocation date. After submitting it, request your final transcript from your educational institution and upload your vulnerable sector check. To be eligible for registration, your official transcript must indicate that your degree/diploma has been granted and the date it was granted.

The College considers a vulnerable sector check valid for six months. If you request one too early, it may expire before the College reviews your file and you may need to apply for another check. For more information about this registration requirement, please visit the College's website.

I'm an equivalency applicant waiting for my Threshold Assessment Review outcome. Is there anything I can do in the meantime?
You must wait for the College to confirm that your application meets the Threshold Assessment Review Requirements before completing other registration requirements. In the meantime, review the Registration Requirements webpage and the list of documents the College may request if your application proceeds to the Secondary Review Phase. This preparation will help you act promptly after you receive confirmation that your application is eligible to proceed to the next phase.

I'm currently registered in another province. What can I do in parallel while waiting for out-of-province verification?
Verification of out-of-province registration is generally eligible for parallel processing. If you are a social worker registered in good standing in another Canadian jurisdiction, you may begin other independent requirements while waiting. These may include obtaining a vulnerable sector check or, if you are a social worker registered in Alberta or Saskatchewan, requesting an official transcript from your academic institution.

I'm submitting several application documents at the same time. How do I keep track of the status of each one?
You can monitor the status of your supporting documents in the Online Portal. Under your profile name, click on "My Documents" and then navigate to the section "Documents – Submitted Documents". The column "Status Reason" shows the status of each submitted document:

- *New* means it has not yet been received or is awaiting review;
- *Approved* means it has been reviewed by staff and accepted; and
- *Non-compliant* means it does not meet the applicable requirement.

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After submitting a document, check the portal regularly. Allow five to ten business days for the College to process it before contacting the College for an update.

Who do I contact if I have questions, need clarification or want to discuss my circumstances?

Contact the College's Registration and Renewals Department:

- registration@ocswssw.org
- 416-972-9882 or 1-877-828-9380 (toll free)