

WINTER 2024

# Newsletter



## CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM UPDATE

The COTNS is launching its updated Continuing Competence Program (CCP) in early 2025. The new program reshapes the *Competence Review* portion of the program to move to an individualized competence assessment for registrants selected by Risk-Based Selection.

The Competence Review portion of the program assesses a registrant's practice to ensure that they are meeting the expectations for competent practice. The previous Competence Review program prescribed a written evaluation (exam) for all registrants on a five-year cyclical basis. This revised process allows the College to focus resources on those registrants identified with more high-risk indicators in their practice.

This component involves the following process:

- Selection - Registrants will be selected for assessment utilizing risk-based selection.
- Competence Assessment – Registrants identified using risk-based selection will be assessed by an assessor using a behavioural-based interview and a professional reflection.

This CCP framework revision was initiated in partnership with other OT regulators to work towards a consistent competence assessment process nationally. These changes were recommended by the COTNS Continuing Competence Committee and approved by the College Board of Directors.

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## What risk indicators will be used?

The risk indicators are based on evidence in the health profession literature and data from other OT regulators across the country that identify factors that are associated with risk to the public. The data to support indicators is evolving, and the College will be supported by data specialists including psychometricians to ensure appropriate validation of the selected indicators.

The initial indicators are based on employment factors, practice factors, compliance history in continuing competence and registration, and professional conduct history with the College. Similar indicators are used by other OT regulators in Canada. COTNS will partner with other OT regulators to share resources, tools and training for our rollout of the program, including sharing assessment resources.

## Additional Changes to the CCP

- The College has migrated to online/digital versions for most Competence Maintenance requirements.
- The updated self-assessment form, mapped to the *Competencies for Occupational Therapists in Canada*, is now also available for your use in developing your goals.
- Clarification on the annual requirement for self-assessment, professional development goal setting and recording learning activities.

The revised forms are web-based and replace the former paper-based system. All registrants are required to enter their existing 2024/2025 Professional Development Learning Goals into the online portal by **December 31, 2024**. Please note that it is not a requirement to enter completed learning activities by this deadline, only to enter your goals into the new web-based forms. Registrants may choose to enter their completed learning activities at any time before the end of the registration year.

## CCP Survey

The Continuing Competence Committee acknowledges and appreciates all registrants who participated in our Continuing Competence survey in November and December 2024. The results of this survey will be shared with registrants in 2025.

## What happens if my assessment identifies areas in need of improvement?

The *Competence Improvement* portion of the framework is designed to improve the competencies of registrants identified through Competence Review as having indicated learning needs. Based on the number and type of learning needs identified, College staff and/or the Continuing Competence Committee will determine the required steps to address identified learning needs from the Competence Review.

If you have any questions about the changes to the CCP, please reach out to [info@cotns.ca](mailto:info@cotns.ca).

## PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

To be licensed to practice as an occupational therapist in Nova Scotia, all registrants must carry professional liability coverage with a \$5,000,000 liability and a legal endorsement for investigations by the regulatory body. The College only accepts insurance coverage with the registrant as the named insured.

The insurance policy **must meet our requirements** as indicated in section 48 of the Occupational Therapists Registration Regulations. **Employer-provided PLI does not meet our requirements and is not accepted.**



Registrants must ensure that they have continuous insurance coverage for the duration of their license **without any lapses.**

Registrants are responsible to update their liability insurance information and upload a new liability insurance certificate to their profile within **30 days** of their previous insurance expiring.

# CONSULTATION REMINDER: PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PRACTICE STANDARD

**FEEDBACK DEADLINE 9:00 AM - DECEMBER 24, 2024**

We are inviting registrant input regarding a new practice standard on the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct.

The need for a consistent framework and uniform definitions concerning sexual misconduct is required under the Regulated Health Professions Act (the “RPHA”) which was passed by the Nova Scotia Government in November 2023. The RPHA provides a common legislative foundation for all regulated health professions in Nova Scotia.

On November 8, 2024, Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network approved the [Minimum Requirements](#) for sexual misconduct and sexual abuse standards, which includes:

- Uniform definitions of “sexual misconduct” (including sexual abuse) and “client”;
- The prohibition of sexual misconduct;
- A mandatory duty to report sexual misconduct to regulators and employers, and to co-operate in regulatory proceedings related to sexual misconduct.

The proposed Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Practice Standard represents a significant step in aligning with provincial requirements and ensuring the highest quality of care for Nova Scotians. We recognize the consultation timeline is limited. However, we value your feedback in shaping the final version of this standard.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- Review the [proposed standard](#).
- Submit your feedback via e-mail to: [info@cotns.ca](mailto:info@cotns.ca) with the subject line: COTNS Practice Standard - Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Feedback

## NEW DATA COLLECTION

Beginning in December 2024, registrants and new applicants will begin to see new questions populate application and renewal forms and their COTNS online profile. These new questions will collect additional information about:

- Employment - Starting in 2024
- Practice/roles - Starting in 2024
- Voluntary Race-based and Indigenous Identity - Starting in 2025

## Race-Based and Indigenous Identity Data

Beginning in early 2025, registrants will also notice that COTNS has started collecting data about registrants’ “Racial Background” and “Indigenous Identity”. Collection of this data is completely voluntary, and registrants can select “prefer not to answer” if they do not want to provide their data.

## Rationale for Collecting this Data

The Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) added race-based and Indigenous identity data to the 2022 health human resource data set for the purpose of using the data to inform actions and interventions to improve health equity among racialized groups.

The collection of these data elements increases the College’s awareness of registrants’ race-based and Indigenous identities, enabling the College to make decisions that are more representative of the public and the communities served by COTNS registrants.

## Data Protection

Only staff who are responsible for processing the data will have access to registrants’ race-based and Indigenous identity data. Also, when sharing race-based and Indigenous identity data with CIHI, data will only be used in aggregate with other registrants’ data and not on an individual level.

Detailed information about COTNS’ collection of race-based and Indigenous identity data will be shared with registrants in January 2025. If you have questions or wish to discuss, please contact [info@cotns.ca](mailto:info@cotns.ca).

# THE ROLE OF A HEALTH PROFESSION REGULATOR

The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia is a health profession regulator. The College's mandate is to protect the public's interest by setting standards for practice, establishing programs to ensure that occupational therapists practice safely and competently, and investigating concerns raised about registrants' practice. The College is not an advocacy or lobbying organization for occupational therapists.

As a result, the College does not advocate for or on behalf of the profession with respect to access to individual assessment tools or intervention protocols. We encourage organizations and registrants to verify whether their request falls within our mandate before taking action.

## NEW COTNS ONLINE PORTAL

The COTNS has completed the transition to a new database online portal. This portal is available at [cotns.alinityapp.com](https://cotns.alinityapp.com). We request all registrants to log in and familiarize themselves with the new portal. Registrants will also notice that new information is required to be provided when completing a Profile Update.

In preparation for the upcoming licence renewal period, all registrants are required to check their profile information to ensure that it is accurate and if necessary update their personal, employment, or insurance information.



## Holiday Office Closures

Please note that the COTNS office will be closed on December 25, 26, 27 and 31, and offer only limited urgent services on December 30.

Regular office hours and services will resume on January 2, 2025.

## Staff Changes

The College is pleased to announce that **Josef Méthot** is our new Registration and Administration Associate. Josef brings many years of experience working in professional regulation, and most recently worked at the Law Society of British Columbia.

An avid gardener and hiker, Josef is also a lifelong musician and is excited to continue to explore the vibrant East Coast musical scene. Welcome Josef!

### College Board of Directors

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