

QUALITY PRACTICE PROGRAM



The Mission of the Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists is to assure that the interests of the public are upheld through the regulation and promotion of safe and effective physiotherapy services; and to communicate effectively with membership and thereby affect change on issues of concern to the public.

BACKGROUND

The Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists is the self-regulated body of physiotherapists licensed to practice in Nova Scotia. We have an obligation to meet the public's expectation that licensed and regulated practitioners have met the educational and professional qualifications for practice, and that they continue to practice competently. The College has established registration requirements and Standards of Practice that are based on basic skills and knowledge as described in the Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada October 2009¹. The national Physiotherapy Competency Exam is used to assess the basic entry-to-practice competencies to qualify for licensure in the province.

There is growing literature that suggests that regulatory bodies must go beyond their initial licensure for evidence of a practitioner's competence. A complaint/disciplinary process can be adequate in what it is set out to do but it is noted that the complaints received are more related to specific behaviors than being linked to performance or competence issues. Regulatory bodies realized that to use a disciplinary process to identify a practitioner lacking competence, or to correct the competency gaps of otherwise competent physiotherapists, is inadequate. In 2005 the Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists determined the need to develop a mechanism for assessing the **maintenance** of knowledge and skills among its members in order to fulfill the responsibility for ensuring the competence of the physiotherapists that they regulate. The work of that Task Force resulted in the blueprint for a Quality Practice Program.

¹ Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada, October 2009

DEFINITION:

For the purpose of a regulatory body, a practitioner must be able to integrate and apply knowledge, skills and abilities in a manner consistent with the Standards of the Profession. The Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists has adopted the following definition of continuing competence:

The ongoing or continued capacity of a physiotherapist to integrate and apply knowledge, skills and judgment required to practice safely, responsibly and ethically in his\her role\setting and which can be measured against acceptable standards.

There are four important assumptions with this proposed definition:²

1. *Continuing competence is not a static concept.* The profession's knowledge and skills change with the acquisition of new information from research, technology assessments and outcome measures. Therefore the standards and program for continuing competency requires ongoing development, monitoring and periodic evaluation.

2. *Continuing competence cannot be measured absolutely.* It is beyond the Colleges' ability and feasibility to monitor physiotherapists over the full range of possible encounters defined by his\her scope of practice. Thus, continuing competency is measured over a sample of performance demands and uses various tools of measurement.

3. *Continuing competence programs should focus on assuring that a physiotherapist's knowledge and skills in her\his current area of practice and typical encounters are sufficient such that safe and competent care is delivered.* It is neither likely nor practical for a regulatory body to use time and resources to focus on a physiotherapist's skills and knowledge in an unrelated area of practice.

4. *Continuing competence appraisal is complex and requires a collaborative approach.* It is recognized that accountability for competence development and assessment is shared by a variety of stakeholders i.e. the regulatory body, the individual physiotherapist, the employer, the educator, national regulatory, educational and professional associations and other related organizations.

The College has adopted the position that, for the purpose of continued competency,

"The individual physiotherapist has the primary responsibility for maintaining his\her competence."

² A National Framework for Assuring the Continued Competence of Physiotherapists in Canada- September 1999" (paper commissioned by The Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators and The College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia)

The Quality Practice Program of the Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists includes the following components:

- 1. Maintenance of a Professional Portfolio:** A portfolio is the collection of documents that identifies you, your experience(s) and your practice as a physiotherapist. It is the story of where you have been and how you have arrived at where you are at the present time. The portfolio is where you will store the tangible evidence of competency and continuing competency, the documentation of all your continuing education activities, your self- evaluations and your peer assessments/ audits.
- 2. Continuing Education:** Continuing Education is self directed and should utilize competency based self-reflection tools to determine educational and professional development needs. Continuing education includes the tracking and reporting of continuing education hours using appropriate recording forms. Courses, readings, inservices, presentations, student preceptors and peer mentoring are some of the ways to gather continuing education hours. We require 200 hours in the previous 5 year period. ***Volunteer hours are considered as “other hours” under practice hours and are not CE hours.***
- 3. Practice Assessment:** Practice Assessment includes **both** Self Assessment and Peer Assessment. Self-Assessment helps members focus on their own professional practice and their practice environment. Onsite dialogue with peers helps to identify areas of strength and opportunities for ongoing development in the physiotherapy practice. It may help to identify opportunities for continuing education. Peer Assessment has two components, the portfolio review and the onsite review. It is a competency assessment of practice and the most transparent way to promote accountability and provide a positive learning experience.

1.) Professional Portfolio

The professional portfolio contains all your documents and supporting information on your professional practice and continuing competence activities. The self assessment units, jurisprudence quizzes, current résumé /CV and job description, proof of malpractice insurance, evidence of self-reflection and documentation of CE activities and hours are mandatory components of the professional portfolio. ([See Checklist for Portfolios](#)). Although your portfolio will be individual to you, working with your peers while creating your portfolio can be beneficial to all and an opportunity to dialogue on strength and weaknesses.

Here are some suggestions for starting to create your portfolio:

Steps to creating a portfolio:

- Select a method of containing documents (e.g. binder, file folder, file box or electronic format accepted by the College).
- Identify , Collect and Document any relevant materials you may have that provide evidence of your competency as a physiotherapist
- Insert completed jurisprudence quizzes.
- Insert current résumé/curricula vitae, including professional memberships, citations, letters related to professional organizations or participation in committee work within the profession, malpractice insurance (MPI) certificate, performance reviews, letters of reference, etc.
- Insert evidence of ongoing learning (e.g. course certificates, inservices, workshops, telehealth, research, teaching, presentations etc.) As part of this section, you will need to fill in the hours spent in each activity. (See List of Links under CE for a recording form).
- Insert proof of being a student preceptor or doing peer mentoring (*You can claim a maximum of 60 hours/year*)
- Insert documentation of publications and journal reviews by recording the name and date of the journal/publication as well as the title of the article.
- Insert completed set of Self-assessment units.
- Insert education/credentialing documents (e.g. copies of diplomas, degrees, and awards, certificates of completion, CPR, WHMIS, etc.
- Include a job description, an overview of your position and responsibility with key accountabilities

These are links which may be helpful in developing your own portfolio:

[Checklist for Portfolio](#)

[Writing Your Résumé](#)

Annually and concurrently with Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists license registration renewals, each physiotherapist is required to declare that they are collecting

relevant information and maintaining their individual professional portfolio. All practicing physiotherapists are required to submit their portfolio for review every five years.

2.) Continuing Education

Continuing Education is self-directed and achieved by self assessment using competency based self-reflection tools to determine educational and professional development needs. It includes the tracking and reporting of continuing education hours. Learning experience forms and goal setting help physiotherapists identify learning needs and areas for further professional development. Continuing education should be relevant to your current area of practice to enhance practice, or relate to an identified area of developing interest. Courses, readings, inservices, presentations, student preceptors and peer mentoring are some of the ways to gather continuing education hours. We require 200 hours in the previous 5 year period. ***Volunteer hours are considered as “other hours” under practice hours and are not CE hours.***

The Continuing Education Recording Form is a work sheet in which to track your CE activities and hours for easy tabulation and for declaration on the NSCP annual online registration renewal form each year. These sheets should become part of your portfolio.

Continuing education hours are accumulated for continuing education related to your area of practice or current interest. Continuing education hours must be accumulated to a minimum of 200 hours over the previous consecutive five year period. Continuing education may include both formal and informal activities.

Here are some examples:

- Taking post-graduate courses
- Attending in-services, courses, seminars and conferences
- Undertaking research and presenting research results
- Providing one to one mentorship of a peer or internationally educated (Max 60 hr/yr)
- Preceptor of a student (count only direct time spent and a max 60 hr/yr)
- Engaging in independent study
- Teaching or presenting physiotherapy related topics to colleagues, or to the public etc.
- Reading journals and research papers (Record names, dates and titles of articles)

These are links you may find helpful:

[Use this form to report your annual CE hours to NSCP](#)

[Identification of Learning Needs](#)

[Learning Experience Form](#)

[Learning Plan](#)

[Smart Goal Form](#)

3.) Practice Assessment

Practice Assessment is the assessment of your physiotherapy practice and practice setting. There is a self assessment component to practice assessment as well as a peer assessment.

The self assessment is to be done by you and should help you identify the strengths and weaknesses of your own practice and measure your own practice against the required Standards of Practice.

The Self- Assessment units are tools based on the Standards of Practice, the Essential Competency Profile and the NSCP Code of Ethics document. It helps to identify the attributes and ethics of a competent physiotherapist as well as their appropriate professional conduct.

The purpose of this process is to review your current methods of practice and compare them to the Standards of Practice, the Essential Competency Profile for Physiotherapists in Canada and the College's Code of Ethics & Rules of Conduct. You are encouraged to reflect upon specific situations and ask yourself.... How do I deal with this in my current practice? The Unit Questionnaires will require you to reflect upon your various roles and responsibilities within the profession of physiotherapy.

The Rules of Conduct are divided into the following categories:

- responsibilities to the client
- responsibilities to society
- responsibilities to the profession

The practice statements outlined in each of the units apply to the various roles and environments in which physiotherapists practice as they relate to the three categories.

The jurisprudence quiz is a self assessment tool to help you assess your knowledge of College documents, legislation, and other resources relevant to professional practice.

Through this process, you may identify learning needs that you can add to your learning goals or, you may find that you are missing documents that you will need to obtain. This should expand your knowledge of regulatory requirements related to your practice.

These are links you may find helpful:

[Jurisprudence Quizzes](#)

[Self Assessment Units 1-3](#)

[Chart Audit Checklist](#)

[Workplace Evaluation Form](#)

Peer Assessment is carried out by the College and has two components: the portfolio review and the onsite review.

The Portfolio Reviews are done annually during February to May. Each physiotherapist will have their portfolio selected and reviewed by the Peer Assessment Committee every five years. The information and process for this is clearly described in the email received by members selected to have their Portfolios reviewed.

The Onsite Review is done annually during the fall. During the Onsite review assessors will be measuring the practice setting against the required Standards of Practice...pulling charts for audits, looking at attendances vs. billings, practice setup and safety measures, procedure manuals, conducting interviews and completing a report on their findings. More information on the Onsite Review Process will be available before the end of 2011.