

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Quality Assurance Committee

DATE: December 6, 2022

SUBJECT: 24.0 Competency Review and Evaluation Process

☒ For Decision

☐ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To review and approve proposed changes to the Competency Review and Evaluation (CRE) process.

Background:

Under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA), all health professionals in Ontario must comply with a Quality Assurance (QA) program prescribed by their College's Board which promotes continuing competence and ensures all registrants maintain a high standard of practice and professionalism in the public interest.

The Competency Review and Evaluation (CRE) process is a mechanism for the QA Committee to monitor registrant participation in, and compliance with, the QA Program. The CRE process includes 3 main components:

1. Audit of the registrant's Professional Portfolio
2. Participation in the Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) process
3. Participation in a Peer and Practice Assessment (PPA)

Annually, 20% of registrants are randomly selected to participate in the CRE process. Of those selected, half are required to have a fulsome review of their previous year's Professional Portfolio and half are required to participate in the Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) process and have a fulsome review of their previous years Professional Portfolio.

Registrants identified as requiring an in-depth assessment of their practice during this process are also required to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment.

Professional Portfolio

An online reporting system was developed in 2019 and, registrants are now required to complete all components of their Professional Portfolio online. Through the database, staff can determine whether a registrant has completed some, none or all components of the requirements. Without a fulsome review, staff cannot determine whether it was completed correctly.

Multi-Source Feedback (MSF)

The purpose of MSF is to provide formative feedback to prompt practice awareness and improvement if needed. MSF also provides a screening tool to identify those opticians who require a more in-depth practice assessment.

After a pilot of MSF in 2014, the QA Committee set a threshold score to determine which opticians require further assessment of their practice. When an optician successfully places above the established threshold, the registrant is not required to complete any further steps. Opticians who place below the threshold are required to engage in a Peer and Practice Assessment.

The surveys are designed to collect information about the opticians' professional interactions and evaluate their knowledge, skill, and judgement related to professional behaviours and communication skills.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MSF portion of the CRE process has been suspended since March 2020.

Peer and Practice Assessment (PPA)

The QA Program allows for a peer assessor to be appointed to assess a registrant's practice including their knowledge, skill, and judgement. These in-depth assessments are comprised of a behaviour-based interview, a chart review and premise inspection.

A registrant is referred for a PPA if:

- They were selected to participate in the MSF process and fell below the threshold established by the QA Committee or failed to fully complete the process
- They failed to submit or fully complete their professional portfolio
- They are selected based on other criteria specified by the QA Committee

For Consideration:

With the introduction of the QA portal, it is now easier for the College to monitor basic participation in the QA Program by all registrants. A detailed audit is still required to confirm whether an individual portfolio was completed fully and correctly. In addition, as noted above, the MSF process has been paused since 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With this in mind, the Committee felt it was time to re-evaluate the CRE process. The committee considered whether:

- the data in the registrant portal could be leveraged to make the process more effective and efficient.
- the MSF process should be revived and, if not, what alternative should be implemented to assess registrants' continuing competence.

At their meeting October 20, 2022, the QA Committee reviewed stakeholder feedback and an environmental scan of how other regulatory bodies monitor compliance with their QA program.

Environmental Scan Highlights

- Most colleges use a random audit to individually evaluate their members' continuing education/portfolio requirements
- The majority colleges require that their members self-declare compliance with the QA program on renewal
- 1 other college is currently participating in the MSF process, however, their QA program is currently under review
- Peer Assessments are completed by a random selection process and in circumstances where concerns were identified when monitoring compliance with the QA program

Stakeholder Feedback Highlights

- Most registrants did not identify any barriers to completing the Professional Portfolio or indicate they had challenges completing it online
- Registrants required to participate in the MSF process indicated they had trouble obtaining the required number of both colleague and patient survey's

Effectiveness of the Multi-Source Feedback Process

Since 2017, 831 registrants completed the MSF process. Historical data shows that:

- The vast majority (97%) had results above the established threshold.
- A small minority (3%) were required to undergo a PPA as a result of their below-threshold score. Of those, practice issues were only identified in approximately 21% of cases. These issues were typically in lower-risk areas such as record keeping, although issues relating to dispensing contact lenses or eyeglasses were identified for 3 registrants.

Effectiveness of Peer and Practice Assessments

Since 2017, 25 PPAs were completed due to non-compliance with the CRE process. The results are as follows:

- 5 registrants (20%) were required to complete at least 1 NACOR (National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators) bridging module related to eyeglass or contact lens dispensing
- 4 registrants (16%) were required to complete the College's Record Keeping Module
- 16 registrants (64%) successfully completed the process

Future of the CRE Process

In review and consideration of the information above, the Committee noted:

- the MSF process may not be a reliable or efficient way to identify registrants who may be falling below standards in key areas of competency.
- The majority of opticians who participated in the MSF process did not make any types of improvements to their practice

- A higher proportion of practice issues were identified among registrants who demonstrated non-compliance with the CRE process as compared to those registrants who scored below the threshold on MSF
- The majority of opticians who participated in a PPA made some type of improvement and/or changes to their practice

As such the Committee recommends that the MSF process be discontinued and, in its place, there be a random selection of 2-5% of registrants who are seemingly compliant with their professional portfolio requirements required to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment.

To monitor compliance with Professional Portfolio requirements, the QA Committee recommends randomly selecting 10% of seemingly compliant and 25% of seemingly non-compliant registrants to have a fulsome review of their previous year's professional portfolio.

Public Interest Considerations:

Requiring and monitoring participation in the College's QA Program is a mechanism to ensure that registrants are competent, provide up to date knowledge and patient-focused care.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations:

A random selection of registrants to participate in the CRE process ensure all registrants have an equal chance of being selected.

Recommendations/Action Required:

The Committee recommends that the Board approve the following changes to the CRE process:

- Discontinue the Multi-Source Feedback process effective immediately
- Randomly select 10% of seemingly compliant registrants to have a fulsome review of their previous year's Professional Portfolio; 2-5% of these registrants will be randomly selected to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment
- Randomly select 25% of seemingly non-compliant registrants to have a fulsome review of their previous year's Professional Portfolio

To allow time to notify registrants of the changes to the process, the Committee recommends that this become effective in 2024 and, the CRE process for 2023 remains at 20% of registrants being randomly selected to have a fulsome review of their previous years Professional Portfolio.