

Policy Review Template

Policy Title: Professional Advisory Framework

Policy #: EX-26	Location: CouncilNet
Reviewed by: Executive Committee	Approved by Council: December 2013
Initial Approval Date: November 2013	Next Review Date: February 2023
Review Cycle: 3 years	
Version History: 2013/ February 2020/July 8, 2020	

1. Statement

It falls within the College's mandate, as the regulator of the teaching profession, for the Registrar to provide advice and guidance to members with respect to their professional practice. One of the ways this has been achieved by the College is through the issuance of professional advisories.

Professional advisories respond to:

- a professional's need to understand an aspect of professional practice
- a professional's need to know how the regulator views certain conduct
- the public's need to understand what professionals are (or are not) expected and/or obligated to do.

In a broader sense, professional advisories enable regulatory bodies such as the College to engage their membership and the public in their regulatory activities and in doing so, make the organization more relevant.

2. Purpose

This document formally outlines a framework to assist the Executive Committee in fulfilling its mandate to review and select professional advisory topics and report back to Council. Authority to review topics for future advisories and proposed updates to previously released advisories was granted to the Executive Committee by Council in December 2013.

3. Other Regulatory Bodies

Regulatory bodies such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the College of Nurses of Ontario, the Law Society of Ontario, the Professional Engineers Ontario and the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers routinely issue professional advisories, practice directions, guidelines, standards or policy statements each year as part of their responsibilities to their respective memberships, and as part of their mandate to protect the public interest.

4. Proposed Advisory Framework

A two stage guideline in which a new professional advisory would be developed and released is proposed. The guideline will provide flexibility to respond to emerging issues that warrant

the College providing advice to its members. The first stage of the cycle would be considered the development stage with research, drafting and appropriate consultation undertaken by the College. The second stage would serve as the rollout year with a variety of activities undertaken within the context of a detailed communication plan.

Advisory topics may be identified by the Registrar, a Council member or a particular Council committee. Topics may be suggested by employers, stakeholders, College members or the general public. [In some cases, a revision to an existing advisory may become necessary if there is](#) ~~There could also be~~ a critical change in legislation that is relevant to College members. In most cases, however, relevant topics will become self-evident based on a perceived need and in the absence of readily available guidance in the subject area.

Should the number of suitable advisory topics increase or decrease over time, the development and rollout cycle recommended in this framework would be adjusted accordingly.

In order to ensure consistency, the College would develop a standard template document for professional advisories to ensure overall product consistency and to better facilitate our members' and the public's understanding of the content.

Stage 1: Research, development consultation and approval of the Professional Advisory

During Stage 1, the following activities would take place:

1. Advisory Topic Confirmation

A list of suitable advisory topics will be developed with sufficient background to explain the purpose and relevancy of each topic for members of the profession. Background will also include a proposed outline and possible content for each topic.

The list will be presented to the Executive Committee for the selection of a topic. Based on the topic selected, the Executive Committee may invite other committees to provide input and/or feedback during the advisory development.

2. Research

A cross-departmental College [work](#) group will be established and background research will be undertaken in support of the approved topic. The research phase will include the identification of external experts in the relevant area who will provide feedback on early drafts of the advisory. The College work group will be formed to co-ordinate background research, identify relevant information and existing resources, and find critical and expert readers.

3. Consultation processes and drafting

In addition to experts and critical readers, College members, Council members and the public may be invited to provide input during the research and drafting phase, through electronic means. Excerpts of the professional advisory or relevant policy questions may

be placed on the College's website and social media platforms inviting comment using the College's survey software tool or our social media site. College members will be notified of the opportunity to comment through the College's electronic newsletter *Your College and You/Des nouvelles de l'Ordre* ~~Facebook and Twitter as well as through social media~~. This feedback mechanism will ensure that members and the public have equitable access to the consultation process. Regulatory or education stakeholder organizations will also be able to utilize the same online tool to submit their comments.

Each advisory issued by the College would include extensive consultation with both expert and critical readers knowledgeable in the topic area.

4. Approvals Process

The Executive Committee will be provided with regular updates on the advisory development process and an opportunity for input and interim reviews of the advisory document. The final draft of the advisory will be produced, incorporating feedback received during the consultation phase and provided to the Executive Committee for final review, approval and referral to Council.

Council will receive the final draft of the advisory for final approval.

5. Regular review of professional advisories

In addition to the development of new advisories, a review process of existing professional advisories is in place to ensure that they remain current and relevant to College members and the public.

[Within six months of the release of a new professional advisory, an electronic survey will be sent to randomly selected College members to assess their awareness of the advisory, relevancy of the content and how it has been reflected in their professional practice.](#)

[A review process is also undertaken if legislative or regulatory changes are introduced that impact the content of the advisory.](#)

As part of this review, a College work group will be formed and additional consultations with members and other stakeholders will be held where necessary.

Stage 2: Rollout of Professional Advisory

Once the professional advisory has received final approval from Council, it will be publicly disseminated in the following manner:

1. Public release / media event / Canada Newswire

To mark the initial public release of the professional advisory, a media release will be issued and disseminated to media contacts, Canada Newswire and by staff in Communications. A media event will also be organized, at which time members of the

College's Senior Leadership Team and Council Chair, as appropriate, will have the opportunity to provide details to provincial stakeholders and the media on the professional advisory and answer any questions they may have. Other social media tools ~~such as Facebook and Twitter~~ will also be used.

2. Distribution

Copies of the professional advisory will be distributed to College members as an insert to *Professionally Speaking/ Pour parler profession*, as a link in the College's e-newsletter and as an attachment in an email addressed to individual Council members. Additional supporting content may be developed for the magazine by Communications. Features such as FAQs about the professional advisory and what it means for members and case studies will be developed to further assist members in thinking about what the advice in the professional advisory means for their practice.

3. Regional media tour

In order to ensure that both members and the general public are aware of the professional advisory, a regional media tour will be organized. Members of the External Relations (ER) team will work to identify stakeholders and key constituencies. ER will organize a series of regional events at which the professional advisory can be presented by members of SLT and ER, [and if applicable, a panel of experts for example, College members, child welfare organizations, student trustees](#). Key regional stakeholders and members of the public will be invited. Communications staff will identify the most appropriate regional media opportunities in order to promote the release and highlight the College's mandate and activities.

4. Speakers' Bureau

The College has established a Speakers' Bureau that would provide members of the public and stakeholder groups with easy access to a list of College spokespersons who are available to present the professional advisory to their group. The College will ensure that the advisory topic becomes the main focus for presentations at cyclical conferences at which the College traditionally presents. ~~including our own bi-annual conference, CLEAR (Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation) and CNAR (Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation) as well as other teacher and parent conferences.~~

5. Other activities to facilitate rollout

The development of audio-visual materials and alternative means of reaching the public and College members, such as the posting of videos to the College website, online webinars, live online Q&A sessions and telephone town halls to members and stakeholder groups will also be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the content of the professional advisory and budgetary concerns.

6. Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated every three (3) years or earlier as required by Council.