

Request for Proposal: Tools to Assess Physiotherapists' Competence

The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario (College) is inviting submissions for proposals to develop new tools and update existing tools to assess whether physiotherapists are meeting standards for competence and professional obligations.

Submissions must be received by **February 28, 2018**.

Background and Description of the Project

The College's mandate is to protect the public interest by ensuring that physiotherapists remain qualified, ethical and competent practitioners throughout their career. The College is required by law to administer a Quality Assurance (QA) program that includes the following:

- Conducting assessments of members' competency
- Providing a means for members to self-assess
- Promoting continuing competency and ongoing quality improvement

The College is making changes to the Quality Assurance Program. The new program will include the following components:

- Continuing education and professional development activities
- Annual completion of a mandatory online learning activity created by the College
- A 1-hour remote assessment completed with a peer assessor using video conferencing (20% of members each year)
- A more in-depth on-site practice assessment conducted by a peer assessor at the physiotherapist's practice site (a subset of the 20% who did the remote assessment)
- Participation in an individualized practice improvement program for those with gaps identified through the on-site practice assessment

A more detailed description of the College's new Quality Assurance Program is attached in the appendix. There is also a short video available: <https://www.collegept.org/video-overview-of-new-quality-assurance-program>.

The remote assessment is a new process that has not been done before at the College, and a new assessment tool needs to be created. The new assessment tool needs to be tested for validity, reliability, and user acceptability.

The College has an existing assessment tool for the on-site practice assessment that has demonstrated to be valid and reliable, however the tool needs to be updated, and the College needs to ensure that the updated tool continues to be valid and reliable.

The College currently uses a questionnaire to collect information about a member's practice prior to the on-site practice assessment, which needs to be updated. If it is determined that it would be useful to also have a questionnaire prior to the remote assessment, then a new questionnaire needs to be created.

The project is expected to take place from April 2018 to March 2019.

Expected Deliverables

- 1) Develop a new assessment tool for the 1-hour remote assessment that is demonstrated to be valid, reliable and is acceptable to users.
- 2) Assist with updating the existing on-site practice assessment tool in order to maintain the validity and reliability of the tool.
- 3) Consider and provide advice on the desired content of the pre-assessment questionnaires for the remote and on-site assessments.
- 4) Develop an appropriate research design for pilot testing the remote and on-site assessment tools to evaluate validity, reliability and user acceptability.
- 5) Revise the remote and on-site assessment tools based on results from the pilot test as required.
- 6) Deliver training to peer assessors to ensure understanding and proper use of the assessment tools, and develop training materials for the College to use in future training.
- 7) Make recommendations about the approach to test the validity of the assessment tools and evaluate the impact of the Quality Assurance Program after implementation.

Submission Requirements

1. All proposals will be treated in confidence.
2. Proposals should be succinct yet comprehensive and include:
 - An outline of how the work will be undertaken.
 - Estimates of the time required for each part of the project.
 - The costs associated with each part of the project.
 - The qualifications of the project lead.
 - Identification of individuals involved.
 - Previous projects of a similar nature.
 - References.

Available Resources

The College has the following resources available:

- The budget for this project is \$50,000.

- Subject matter experts (including members, peer assessors and staff) to assist with development of a blueprint and content for the assessment tools.
- Item writers to develop questions for the assessment tools, if necessary.
- A separate budget has been allocated for conducting pilot tests of the assessment tools.

Consultant Selection Criteria

- a) Demonstrated expertise in assessment and testing
- b) Demonstrated experience in program evaluation
- c) Understanding of competency assessment, quality improvement and the professional regulatory environment
- d) Thoroughness/quality of the submission
- e) Reasonableness of cost
- f) Availability
- g) Ability to meet timelines as determined
- h) Feedback from references

Deadlines

Anticipated timeline for project completion: **March 31, 2019**

Proposals must be submitted on or before **February 28, 2018** to Joyce Huang, Strategic Projects Manager, College of Physiotherapists of Ontario at jhuang@collegept.org.

The successful candidate will be contacted in late March 2018.

We look forward to receiving your response.

Appendix:

- Description of the New Quality Assurance Program

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Description of the New Quality Assurance Program

The Council of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario approved a new Quality Assurance Program in principle in December 2017. The new program is based on the recommendations from the Quality Assurance Working Group.

About the Quality Assurance Working Group:

The Quality Assurance Working Group (“WG”) is comprised of Gary Rehan, President; Darryn Mandel, Council Member; James Lee, Council and Quality Assurance Committee Member; Theresa Stevens, Council Member and Chair of Quality Assurance Committee; Jatinder Bain, Quality Assurance Committee Member; Shelley Martin, Manager, Quality Assurance; and Jill Adolphe, Citizens Advisory Group Member.

The WG was asked to consider what changes to the Quality Assurance Program, if any, might increase its positive impact on practice without increasing cost.

Overview of the new Quality Assurance Program:

The program will have the following components:

1. **Mandatory education:** Each year, all members will be required to complete an on-line mandatory education activity (similar to the current PISA [the Professional Issues Self Assessment]).
2. **Practice assessment:** All members will go through a modified assessment process over a 5-year cycle. They will be selected based on how long it has been since they were last assessed. No member who is successful in his or her peer assessment will be subject to reassessment within a 5-year cycle.

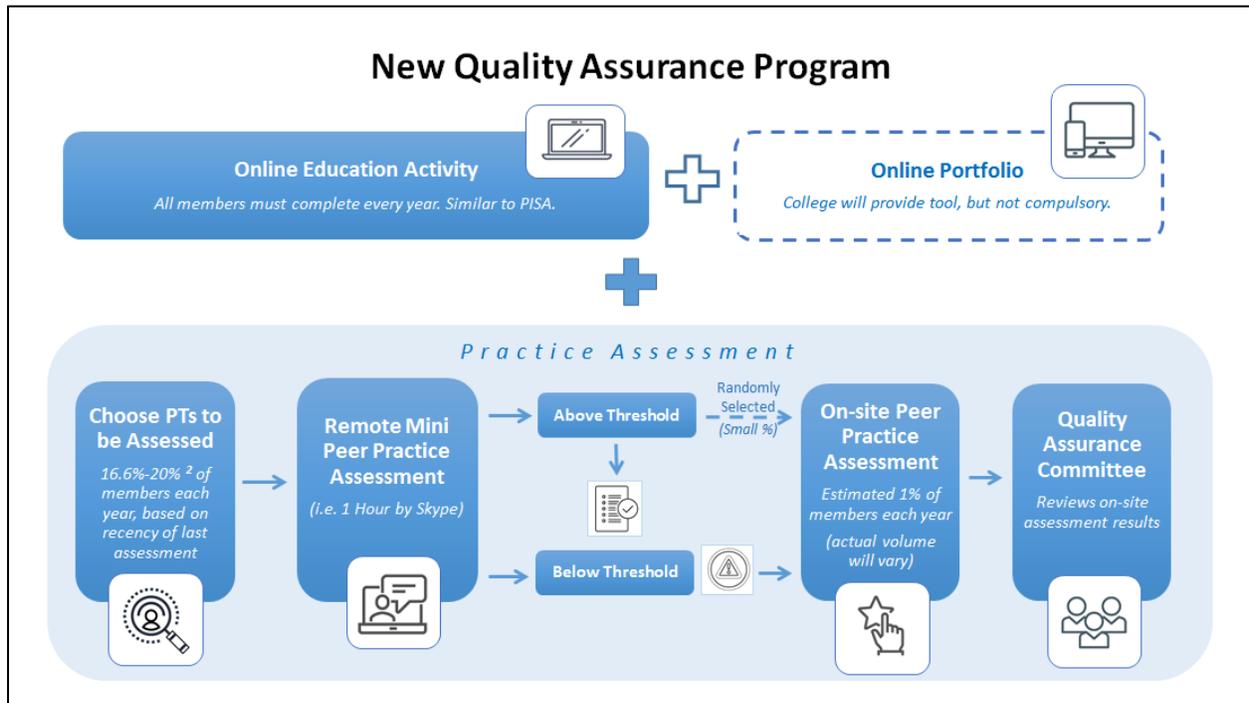
Each year, a cohort of members will be selected for assessment. Everyone in the cohort will participate in a short remote peer assessment, conducted using video teleconferencing. The purpose of the remote assessment is to identify PTs who need a more in-depth on-site assessment.

- Those who fall below a pre-determined threshold will be directed to participate in an in-depth on-site peer practice assessment.
- A small (yet to be determined) percentage of those who are above the pre-determined threshold will be randomly selected for an in-depth on-site peer practice assessment. The purpose is to blind the selection process to prevent stigma and bias.

On-site peer assessment results will be reported to the Quality Assurance Committee, as today.

- Members will still be required to participate in ongoing learning and improvement, however the keeping of a portfolio will not be mandatory. An electronic “portfolio” tool will be made available to members through our website if they choose to use it.

Figure 1: The New Quality Assurance Program



Background:

The compulsory educational activity presently known as PISA has value and should be retained, but can be improved. The activity should be renamed to reflect that it is not about self-assessment. It will continue to be open-book and compulsory. The College will continue to identify annual topics based on analysis of practice data and trends that would indicate where there seems to be an educational need.

In future, it may be possible to create different educational modules for different segments of the PT population.

The WG took into account research that demonstrated the beneficial impact of assessments as well as the consultation feedback that indicated strong support for practice assessments. The WG also recognized that the College’s own research has demonstrated that assessments have a beneficial impact for at least 7 years. On this basis, the WG determined that it would not be unreasonable to space assessments at time frames within this window. Assessing all members within a relatively short time frame was considered to be the best approach for public protection.

The WG felt, based on anecdotal evidence and experience, that in most cases, it is possible to identify problematic practices relatively quickly. The WG believed that much of the utility of the on-site

assessment could be attained through a briefer, remote assessment. This would reduce costs significantly, which would permit increased volume without increased expense.

Practitioners whose remote assessments suggest concerns about their practice would be required to undergo a more in-depth on-site assessment.

To avoid the stigma associated with being selected for an on-site assessment (i.e. colleagues being aware that selection for on-site assessment must be a result of practice problems having been identified), a certain number of PTs will be randomly selected to do the on-site assessments during each program cycle. All PTs in the assessment cohort will participate in the remote assessment, and then a small number of PTs are randomly selected from those who are above the threshold.

Practitioners would be selected for assessment based on the time since they had their last assessment. Accordingly, in the first year of the program those who have never before been assessed would be selected.

Other required activities:

In addition to the Quality Assurance Program described above, the Jurisprudence Module will continue to be a required activity for all members. The module tests members' understanding and application of practice standards, legislation and rules related to practice in Ontario.