

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM EXEMPTION POLICY

Purpose

This Policy establishes the criteria, process, and decision-making authority used by the College of Midwives of Ontario (“College”) to grant exemptions from Quality Assurance Program (QAP) requirements prior to the applicable program deadline.

The Policy supports consistency, transparency, and fairness in exemption decisions, clarifies the distinction between exemptions and barriers to compliance, and aligns with the College’s statutory mandate to administer its Quality Assurance Program.

Scope

For the purposes of this Policy, the College’s Quality Assurance Program includes:

- the Professional Development Portfolio Program, and
- the Peer and Practice Assessment Program.

This Policy applies only to exemption requests submitted before the applicable deadline for the relevant program. Requests received after the applicable deadline are not considered exemption requests and will be addressed as barriers to compliance in accordance with the College’s non-compliance policies and procedures, as amended from time to time.

Principle

Participation in the College’s Quality Assurance Program is mandatory under the Quality Assurance Regulation under the *Midwifery Act, 1991*. An exemption is an exceptional, prospective measure granted only where compliance within a specific program cycle is not reasonably possible due to significant personal, health, caregiving, or life circumstances.

Exemptions:

- Are not automatic
- Apply only to the specified QAP component and program cycle
- Do not waive participation beyond that cycle
- Do not set precedent for future cycles

All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis, balancing the registrant’s individual circumstances with the integrity of the Quality Assurance Program and the College’s public protection mandate.

Eligibility Criteria

A registrant may be eligible for an exemption where:

- The request is submitted prior to the applicable program deadline
- A completed Exemption Request Form is provided
- The circumstances reasonably prevent completion of QAP requirements within the program cycle

Examples of Eligible Circumstances

Circumstances that may warrant an exemption include, but are not limited to:

- Parental leave
- Extended or unforeseen medical leave
- Prolonged illness or incapacity
- A leave of absence from practice
- Significant caregiving responsibilities
- Other substantial life circumstances of comparable duration or impact

These examples are illustrative only. Each request is assessed on its individual merits.

Circumstances Not Typically Eligible

Exemptions will not generally be granted for:

- Workload pressures
- Travel, scheduling, or competing professional conflicts
- Administrative delay
- Oversight or forgetfulness

Discretion Clause

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee approval of an exemption. The College retains discretion to consider the full context of each request in determining whether an exemption is appropriate.

Application and Documentation Requirements

To request an exemption, a registrant must:

- Submit a completed Exemption Request Form
- Provide a clear explanation of the circumstances preventing compliance
- Submit reasonable supporting documentation where appropriate
- Submit the request in advance of the applicable program deadline, and wherever possible no later than fifteen (15) days prior to that deadline.

Where exceptional circumstances arise shortly before the program deadline and submission within fifteen (15) days was not reasonably possible, the College may assess the request at its discretion.

Documentation requirements will be applied proportionately, with consideration given to accessibility and availability. Where documentation is not reasonably available, the College may rely on the written explanation and contextual information provided by the registrant.

Exemption Authority

Delegated Staff Authority

The Quality Assurance Committee delegates authority to Quality Assurance staff to approve exemption requests that clearly meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this Policy.

Staff-approved exemptions must:

- Be documented with clear rationale
- Specify the scope and duration of the exemption
- Identify any conditions or follow-up requirements, if applicable.

Committee Authority

The Quality Assurance Committee retains decision-making authority where:

- There is evidence of repeated non-engagement with QAP requirements across program cycles
- There is prior history of regulatory concerns relevant to the assessment of the request
- The circumstances fall outside established eligibility criteria
- Staff determine that the request exceeds delegated authority

In such cases, the Committee may:

- Approve the exemption
- Approve the exemption with conditions
- Modify the scope or duration of the exemption
- Deny the request
- Direct alternative participation measures

Conditions of Exemption

Where an exemption is granted, the College may impose reasonable conditions to support future participation in the Quality Assurance Program.

Conditions may include, but are not limited to:

- Deferring participation to a future program cycle
- Proportionate modification of program requirements
- Confirmation of return-to-practice status
- Other reasonable conditions related to resumption of QAP participation

Exemptions apply only to the specific QAP and program cycle for which they are granted.

Equity and Fairness Considerations

In applying this Policy, the College will consider individual circumstances and apply the criteria in a manner that promotes fairness, consistency, and accessibility.

The College recognizes that registrants may face barriers related to health, disability, caregiving responsibilities, or other significant life events. Decisions will therefore assess whether the circumstances reasonably prevented participation while maintaining the integrity of the Quality Assurance Program and the College's public protection mandate.

Documentation and Oversight

All exemption decisions must be documented with rationale and retained for audit and monitoring purposes.

The Quality Assurance Committee may periodically review exemption trends to support consistency, accountability, and alignment with the College's statutory mandate.

Approved By: Quality Assurance Committee

Approval Date: April 30, 2026

Implementation Date: May 1, 2026

Last reviewed and revised: April 2026