College of Midwives of Ontario | Ordre des sages-femmes de l'Ontario

Peer and Practice Assessment Program

Assessor Information Guide

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1.0 Introduction

Assessors play an important role in supporting the College of Midwives of Ontario (the "College") in fulfilling its mandate to regulate the profession of midwifery in the public interest.

As part of its Quality Assurance Program (QAP), the College conducts peer and practice assessments to support midwives in maintaining and enhancing their professional competence. These assessments provide an opportunity for midwives to reflect on their practice, demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and judgment, and identify opportunities for continued learning and professional development.

The College relies on experienced midwives who bring sound professional judgment, strong communication skills, and a thorough understanding of midwifery practice to support the delivery of fair, consistent, and reliable assessments.

This guide provides prospective assessors with information about the Peer and Practice Assessment Program, eligibility requirements, qualifications, recruitment and appointment process, and expectations associated with the assessor role.

Detailed information about assessment procedures, tools, reporting requirements, and other operational responsibilities is provided to assessors following their appointment through orientation, training, and supporting program resources.

2.0 About the Peer and Practice Assessment Program

2.1 Program Overview

The Peer and Practice Assessment Program is a component of the College's QAP, established under section 80 of the Health Professions Procedural Code (the "Code"), being Schedule 2 to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA).

The QAP is designed to promote continuing competence and quality improvement through educational and non-punitive measures. Peer and practice assessments are grounded in the principle that midwives are practising competently while recognizing that opportunities for learning and practice improvement exist throughout their professional careers.

Through a structured and objective evaluation of a midwife's professional practice, assessments help identify areas of strength, opportunities for professional development, and, where necessary, areas requiring further improvement or remediation.

2.2 Legislative Authority of Assessors

Under section 81 of the Code and the applicable provisions of Ontario Regulation 669/20 (Quality Assurance Regulation), assessors are authorized to evaluate a midwife's knowledge, skills, and judgment as part of the Peer and Practice Assessment Program.

Depending on the nature and scope of an assessment, assessors may be required to:

a. inspect forms and other documents used in the midwife's practice;

b. inspect the midwife's records of the care of patients;

c. assess any information respecting the midwife's care of patients;

d. interview the midwife;

e. inspect the premises where the midwife practises;

f. examine the midwife's equipment and supplies;

g. evaluate the midwife's knowledge, skill and judgment, which may include a written evaluation or an objective structured clinical examination; and

h. inspect records of the midwife's participation in self-assessment, continuing education and professional development activities.

Following an assessment, assessors are required to prepare and submit a written report documenting their findings and assessment outcomes to the College.

Assessors are expected to conduct assessments objectively, consistently, and in accordance with the College's established assessment procedures and evaluation criteria.

3.0 About the Assessor Role

3.1 Role and Responsibilities

Assessors play an important role in supporting professional accountability and continuous quality improvement by evaluating midwifery practice against the standards and expectations of the profession.

The role involves:

- Completing all orientation, training, and calibration activities required by the College;
- Preparing for and coordinating assigned peer and practice assessments;
- Conducting assessments using the College's approved processes, tools, methodologies, and evaluation criteria;
- Reviewing and evaluating relevant information and evidence to assess a midwife's professional practice;

- Applying sound professional judgment to identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and any concerns relating to professional competence;
- Providing constructive and respectful feedback that supports professional reflection and development;
- Preparing and submitting clear, accurate, and objective written assessment reports to the College within established timelines; and
- Participating in assessment debriefs, feedback surveys, and other program evaluation activities, as requested by the College, to support continuous quality improvement.

Assessors are expected to conduct assessments in a fair, consistent, respectful, and impartial manner, recognizing that the assessment process is intended to support professional development and continuous quality improvement.

3.2 Time Commitment and Availability

The Peer and Practice Assessment Program takes place annually from **January to March**, with assessor assignments typically confirmed in early January. All assigned assessments must be completed by March 31 of the same calendar year.

Assessors can generally expect to be assigned between **5 and 11 assessments per year**, although the number may vary depending on the number of midwives selected for assessment, program needs, and assessor availability.

Each assessment requires time for preparation, conducting the assessment, reviewing findings, and preparing a written report. Assessments are conducted virtually; however, in exceptional circumstances, assessors may be required to travel to conduct an in-person assessment.

Assessors are expected to maintain sufficient availability during the assessment period to complete their assignments within established timelines. The College recognizes that assessors may have other professional and personal commitments and will consider their availability when coordinating assignments.

Specific expectations regarding assessment timelines, remuneration, and other contractual arrangements will be communicated to successful applicants before their engagement.

3.3 Remuneration

Assessors are compensated for their work in accordance with the College's established remuneration structure and the terms of their contract.

Information about applicable assessment fees, compensation for required training, and reimbursement of eligible expenses, where applicable, will be provided to successful applicants as part of the appointment and contracting process.

4.0 Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for appointment, applicants must meet the College's established eligibility requirements.

These requirements are intended to ensure that assessors have the necessary professional experience, independence, and standing to conduct fair and credible assessments on behalf of the College.

4.1 Registration and Professional Experience

Applicants must:

- Be registered with the College in the General or Inactive Class;
- Have practised midwifery in Ontario for a minimum of three years;
- Not have served as an elected member of Council or a non-Council committee member within the preceding two years;
- Not have been employed by the College within the preceding two years; and
- Not have served as a director, board member, officer, or employee of a professional association within the preceding 12 months.

4.2 Professional Conduct and Good Standing

Applicants must demonstrate professional integrity and good standing.

To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Not be the subject of a disciplinary or incapacity proceeding in any jurisdiction;
- Not have been the subject of a finding of professional misconduct or incompetence in any jurisdiction;
- Not have had their certificate of registration suspended or revoked in any jurisdiction, except for non-payment of fees;
- Not have been the subject of a finding of professional negligence or malpractice;
- Not have been charged with or found guilty of a provincial or federal offence;
- Not be subject to a revocation, suspension, or restriction of privileges at a hospital, birth centre, or other health facility in Ontario that has been reported to the College under section 85.5 of the Code;
- Not be subject to a term, condition, or limitation imposed by the Discipline Committee or Fitness to Practise Committee;

- Not be subject to an undertaking with the College relating to their professional conduct or capacity;
- Not be in default of payment of any fees or submission of information or documentation required under the College's regulations or by-laws;
- Not be subject to an interim order made by a panel of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC);
- Not have been ordered to appear before a panel of the ICRC to receive a caution within the preceding three years; and
- Not have been ordered by a panel of the ICRC to complete a specified continuing education or remediation program within the preceding three years.

Applicants are expected to disclose any circumstances that may affect their eligibility or suitability for the role.

The College may review relevant information to confirm that applicants meet the established eligibility requirements before engaging them as assessors.

5.0 Qualifications and Desired Attributes

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements, applicants should demonstrate the professional knowledge, skills, and personal attributes necessary to conduct objective and meaningful assessments.

5.1 Professional Knowledge and Experience

Applicants should have a strong understanding of midwifery practice in Ontario, including the standards, competencies, and regulatory requirements that guide the profession.

Assessors must be familiar with, and able to apply, relevant professional resources, including:

- Professional Standards for Midwives
- Relevant Legislation and Regulations
- Midwifery Competency Framework
- Relevant clinical practice guidelines and evidence-informed practices.

Experience in practice leadership, mentorship, clinical teaching, supervision, professional assessment, or quality improvement is considered an asset.

5.2 Skills and Personal Attributes

The College seeks assessors who demonstrate:

- **Sound professional judgment:** The ability to objectively evaluate information, apply professional standards, and make well-reasoned assessments.
- **Strong analytical skills:** The ability to observe, interpret, and evaluate information while identifying relevant findings.
- **Effective communication:** Strong interpersonal, interviewing, and active listening skills, with the ability to engage respectfully with midwives from diverse backgrounds and practice settings.
- **Constructive feedback:** The ability to provide clear, respectful, and meaningful feedback that encourages professional reflection and improvement.
- **Strong written communication:** The ability to prepare clear, organized, accurate, and objective reports.
- **Professionalism and integrity:** A commitment to confidentiality, impartiality, accountability, and ethical professional conduct.
- **Organizational skills:** The ability to manage assignments, meet established timelines, and communicate effectively with College staff.
- **Adaptability and openness to learning:** A willingness to participate in training, receive feedback, and apply consistent assessment approaches.

Previous experience as a College assessor is not required. The College provides orientation and training to support newly engaged assessors in developing the knowledge and skills required for the role.

6.0 Assessor Recruitment and Selection

6.1 Recruitment and Representation

The College is committed to recruiting a roster of qualified assessors with diverse professional experiences, perspectives, and practice backgrounds.

Maintaining a broad and representative assessor roster helps ensure that assessments are conducted by individuals with relevant knowledge and experience and that the program reflects the diversity of midwifery practice across Ontario.

In recruiting and selecting assessors, the College may consider:

- **Geographic representation:** Experience practising in urban, rural, remote, and other regions of Ontario.
- **Practice settings and models:** Experience in group, solo, community-based, and interprofessional practice environments.

- **Clinical expertise:** Breadth of clinical experience and familiarity with different aspects of midwifery practice.
- **Professional experience:** Years of practice and experience in leadership, education, mentorship, or quality improvement.
- **Program needs:** The availability, capacity, and professional experience required to support the College's assessment activities.

These considerations help the College maintain a roster that supports appropriate assessor assignments and the effective delivery of the program.

6.2 Application and Selection Process

The College recruits assessors periodically based on program needs and the availability of positions on the assessor roster.

Interested applicants may be invited to submit an application outlining their professional experience, qualifications, and interest in the role.

The recruitment and selection process may include:

1. **Application review:** College staff review applications to assess eligibility, relevant experience, qualifications, and suitability for the role.
2. **Interview:** Shortlisted applicants may be invited to participate in an interview to further explore their professional knowledge, communication skills, judgment, and approach to peer assessment.
3. **Eligibility verification:** The College confirms that selected applicants meet the applicable eligibility and professional standing requirements.
4. **Contracting and orientation:** Successful applicants enter into a contractual agreement with the College and complete the required orientation and training before conducting assessments.

Meeting the eligibility requirements does not guarantee selection. Candidates are selected based on their qualifications, suitability, and the operational needs of the program.

The College will communicate application requirements, timelines, and next steps during each recruitment cycle.

7.0 Professional Expectations

Assessors represent the College when conducting peer and practice assessments and are expected to demonstrate professionalism, independence, and integrity throughout their engagement.

The following expectations apply to all appointed assessors.

7.1 Confidentiality

Assessors may have access to sensitive and confidential information about a midwife's professional practice, including client records and other practice-related information.

The Code establishes specific confidentiality protections for information obtained through the QAP. These protections are intended to support open and meaningful participation in the assessment process.

Assessors must maintain the confidentiality and security of all information obtained through their role and comply with applicable legislative requirements and College policies relating to privacy and information security.

All assessors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and comply with the College's Information Security Policy.

Detailed information about confidentiality obligations and secure information-handling practices is provided during orientation and training.

7.2 Conflicts of Interest

Assessors must be able to conduct assessments independently, objectively, and without bias.

A conflict of interest may arise where an assessor has a personal, professional, financial, or other interest or relationship that could affect, or reasonably be perceived to affect, their impartiality.

Examples may include a previous or existing professional relationship, supervisory or mentorship arrangement, shared practice affiliation, or other connection with the midwife being assessed.

Assessors are required to disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest to the College upon receiving an assessment assignment and as soon as they become aware of any circumstances that may give rise to a conflict throughout the assessment process.

The College will review disclosed conflicts and determine whether an assessor may proceed with an assignment.

7.3 Professional Conduct and Ongoing Eligibility

Assessors are expected to uphold the professional standards and regulatory requirements of the College and maintain their eligibility throughout their engagement.

In addition to demonstrating professionalism, impartiality, and respect, assessors are expected to:

- Adhere to the College's established assessment procedures, policies, and timelines;

- Maintain regular, timely, and professional communication with College staff regarding assignments, scheduling, and any issues that may arise;
- Exercise sound professional judgment and maintain appropriate professional boundaries; and
- Demonstrate accountability in fulfilling their assessment responsibilities and contractual obligations.

Assessors must notify the College within 14 days if they become the subject of a College complaint or investigation, or if they are arrested or charged with an offence.

Assessors must also disclose any other changes in circumstances that may affect their eligibility or suitability to continue in the role.

The College will review relevant circumstances and determine whether any action relating to the assessor's engagement or future assignments is necessary.

7.4 Orientation, Training, and Quality Improvement

All newly engaged assessors are required to complete orientation and training provided by the College before conducting assessments.

Training supports a shared understanding of the program's objectives, assessment methodology, evaluation criteria, reporting expectations, and professional responsibilities.

Assessors are expected to:

- Attend required orientation, training, and calibration activities;
- Maintain current knowledge of relevant professional standards, legislation, and clinical practice expectations;
- Apply the College's established assessment methodology and evaluation criteria consistently;
- Remain receptive to feedback and opportunities for professional development; and
- Participate in program evaluation, quality improvement, and follow-up activities as requested by the College.

Training may be delivered virtually or in person and may include opportunities to observe experienced assessors, where appropriate.

The College provides assessors with the tools, guidance, and resources necessary to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

8.0 Contractual Engagement

Assessors enter into a contractual agreement with the College outlining the terms and conditions of their engagement, including responsibilities, remuneration, and termination provisions.

Assessment assignments are made based on program requirements, assessor availability, and relevant professional experience. Engagement as an assessor does not guarantee a minimum number of assignments.

Assessors are expected to maintain their eligibility, fulfill their contractual obligations, and comply with the College's applicable policies and procedures throughout their engagement.

An assessor's contractual engagement may be terminated by either the assessor or the College in accordance with the terms outlined in the contract.

9.0 Questions and Contact Information

The College welcomes interest from qualified midwives who wish to contribute to professional development and quality improvement through the Peer and Practice Assessment Program.

For questions about assessor eligibility, recruitment, or the application and selection process, please contact:

Quality Assurance Department
College of Midwives of Ontario

Email: qap@cmo.on.ca
Telephone: 416-640-2252
Toll-free: 1-844-640-2252
Extension: 4

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