



*College of Occupational
Therapists of Nova Scotia*
2015-2016 Annual Report

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MISSION: The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia regulates the provincial practice of occupational therapy by ensuring safe and ethical service in order to protect the public interest.

VISION: The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia strives to effectively regulate the practice of occupational therapy and values continuous quality improvement.

VALUES: The College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia is committed to demonstrating:

- Fairness and equity in business interactions with the public and with the registrants
- Accountability for decisions and actions
- Respect for both public and professional perspectives
- An open honest communication process
- Accessibility to services provided
- Efficiency of business practice

Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Responsive and Accountable Leadership

- Board will demonstrate strong leadership through best practice governance
- Board will adopt a risk management framework with respect to its operational activities
- Assures sufficient financial and human resources to meet its mandate
- Exemplifies good management practices to meet the evolving needs of the College
- Supports its committees to optimize their contribution towards the role of the College
- Enhances the Public's awareness of its role in protecting the public's right to safe ethical occupational therapy

Supporting and advancing Quality Regulation

Ensures regulatory excellence by keeping its regulations current and demonstrating compliance with the Nova Scotia Fair Registration Practices Act

- Advances quality regulatory programs and services
- Collaborates with other regulatory bodies to ensure best practice in regulation
- Employs innovation to fulfill its regulatory commitment while being more responsive to the challenges facing occupational therapists
- Promotes public awareness, input and access to information by developing a public awareness strategy

Monitoring and Supporting Quality Practice

Will implement a Continuing Competence Program to ensure the ongoing quality of occupational therapy practice in Nova Scotia Provides support to occupational therapists in Nova Scotia to meet the essential competencies for practice



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2016

The Board of Directors of the College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia (COTNS) is pleased to announce that the **2016 Annual General Meeting (AGM)** will be held as follows:

DATE: Thursday, June 16th, 2016
12:00 noon to 1:00 pm

LOCATION: Dalhousie University
Room 213

Please note: that in accordance with our general regulations we are not permitted the use of proxy vote, so participation is required. 20% of members constitute quorum for the AGM. So, as of June 7th, 2016, with our 504 members we will require at least 101 members to participate.

If you are unable to travel to the meeting, and would like to participate by Adobe Connect, please contact the COTNS Office by **June 10th, 2016**, and arrangements will be made. **More information regarding Adobe Connect will be forwarded via email one week prior to AGM.**

We request that all members RSVP to Margo by calling (902) 455-0556 or 1-877-455-0556 (NS only) by June 10th, 2016, or by sending an email to admin@cotns.ca.

Message from the Chair

Pauline Cousins, Chair

This has been another year of change and growth for the College. The Board has been working diligently on the Strategic Plan over the past 4 years and we have made great strides in accomplishing this plan.

Key Result area #1: Responsive and Accountable Leadership

The College Board continues to demonstrate strong leadership through best practice governance. Margo Johnson, our Administrative Director, has been learning more about risk management frameworks and policy development this past year to ensure our operational activities are managed in a risk reduced manner. Each Board member sits as a Board Representative on the College committees to help support and optimize their contributions towards the role of the College.

This has been another year of change for the College. Over the past year, the Board has continued to work on succession planning to ensure a strong and sustainable organization. As we knew this would be our last year working with Gayle Salsman we ensured this year was dedicated to a smooth transition of the Registrar role at the College. Margo, has stream lined many of our processes and worked closely with Gayle to ensure the College works smoothly and efficiently during this time of transition. The Board would like to thank the hiring committee (Margo, Brian (Vice Chair), and Heather Cutcliffe (PEI Registrar)) for their time and effort in finding and securing a new Registrar for the College, Paulette Upshall.

At this time the Board would also like to thank Gayle Salsman for all of her work and dedication to the College. We wish her well on all her future endeavours.

Given the growing needs of the College as our membership grows and the expectations from outside sources increases to ensure accountable and transparent regulation to the public it is time for the College to increase our fees. This decision was a difficult one for the Board but it is in the best

interests of the profession and important to the sustainability of the College to ensure we have sufficient financial and human resources to meet our mandate.

Key Result Area #2: Supporting and advancing Quality Regulation

The changes we have made to our human and financial resources will also help to: ensure regulatory excellence is met as we need to keep our regulations current and demonstrate compliance with the Act and the Nova Scotia Fair Regulation Practices Act; continue to make advances in quality regulatory programs and services; collaboration with other regulatory bodies to ensure best practice in regulation; employ innovation to fulfill our regulatory commitment while being more responsive to the challenges facing occupational therapists.

Margo and Victoria (Board Governor in Council) have spent time over the past year working on public awareness. After many discussions about the meaning of public awareness it was decided that the first focus would be on awareness among occupational therapists. As such, we have revived the newsletter. The hope is to provide newsletters more frequently to keep occupational therapists engaged in the progress being made by the College in regulatory practice. We continue to generate and explore ideas on public awareness to engage the public in occupational therapy self-regulation.

Key Result Area #3: Monitoring and Supporting Quality Practice

The Continuing Competence Program Committee continues to work on ensuring the ongoing quality of occupational therapy practice in Nova Scotia. The Practice Committee completed a 5 year project to review and develop a Code of Ethics. This was sent to all practicing members to help support occupational therapists in Nova Scotia in meeting the essential competencies for practice.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Margo, Gayle, and Paulette for all their work every day to keep the vision and mission of the College. I would also like to thank all of the members of the various College committees. Without their time and commitment to the College we would not be able to make the progress we have to further our profession.

Thank you!
Pauline

Message from the Registrar

Gayle Salsman, Registrar

This August would have marked 15 years for me as Registrar of the College. The College has grown steadily since that time. Along with a steady growth in the number of registrants, in 2002 we had 243 registrants and now in 2016 we have 523, expectations of the College have also grown steadily. As occupational therapy practice changes and evolves to match the increasingly complex and challenging health and social environments; the College has been receiving more frequent and more difficult practice questions from its members and an increase in questions from employers seeking clarification related to practice expectations of occupational therapists. At the same time, government continues to request consultation related to competency expectations for occupational therapists working in various parts of the health care system. This year, they related to palliative care and mental health and addictions competencies. Perhaps not coincidentally, we are receiving more frequent and complex complaints related to the practice of occupational therapists. The College continues to grow and change to meet these challenges and expectations. The board identifies that we must not only develop practice standards for registrants, we must support registrants to allow them to meet these standards in practice -we must give registrants tools and guides to assist them to make good decisions related to practice.

Just as we expect our registrants to continuously evaluate their practice, the College must also continue to evaluate our standards and our practice supports to ensure that they are reflective of practice and meet the needs of occupational therapists practicing in today's environment.

In addition to changes in the practice environment that registrants face, the environment in which the College operates has changed dramatically over the past 15 years. Increased scrutiny by government and the public around registration concerns have resulted in the Fair Registration Practices Act and the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (Forum of Labour Market Ministers). These have necessitated that the College continue to monitor and improve our registration practices. To this end, the College has made organizational efforts such as ongoing policy changes; improving communication with applicants; and increasing transparency around decision making.

The College understands well, however, that it cannot meet these challenges alone. To this end, the College took a lead role in the development of ACOTRO's Substantial Equivalence Assessment System (SEAS) which was launched on May 1, 2015. SEAS provides a national approach to the qualification recognition and competency verification for IEOTs wanting to work in Canada. Through this national assessment service, IEOTs now applying to work in any province

receive a more comprehensive competency assessment, have access to support to learn about jurisprudence before testing, and are provided with gap-filling options should they be required to meet the standards.

The College also supported the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (the Network) by acting as a member of the Working Group of the Network on Collaborative Regulation and as a member of the first executive of the Network. The work of the Network over the past several years has included the development of a framework for joint investigations, a framework for reviewing scopes of practice, providing a structure for sharing best practices and developing web based governance modules for boards.

The College also recognizes the need to collaborate in areas outside of registration. To this end, the College will host the College of Occupational Therapists of BC and the OT regulators from PEI, NB and NL for a two-day session in June dedicated to exploring how we can collaborate with respect to continuing competence programs and practice education modules. While collaboration is truly in everyone's best interests, it requires dedicated time and resources to make it happen.

To meet these increasing challenges and expectations requires that the College have sufficient human and financial resources. During my time as Registrar, it has been my honour to help build the strong foundation on which the College now sits. To do that, however, the College needs new leadership with a new commitment to take on these future challenges. To that end, I am pleased to welcome Paulette Upshall into the role of Registrar. Together with Margo Johnson, the College's Administrative Director, I am confident that the College will continue to build on the strong foundation that has been built over the past 15 years.

Successful self-regulation requires the leadership and commitment of all occupational therapists. All occupational therapists in Nova Scotia must acknowledge the trust that government and the public places in the College to regulate the practice of occupational therapy. Each and every individual occupational therapist must take on the responsibility of self-regulation and do what they can to advance the College's mission. There are many ways that registrants can do their part: they can take on the roles for governing the profession through serving on the board; they can dedicate their time and knowledge to College committees; they can respond to requests for consultation and feedback or may do their part simply by staying up to date with College standards and participating in Continuing Competence programs. Each of these roles is important.

The College has made it a strategic priority to actively engage registrants. I challenge each individual occupational therapist to do their part to ensure that the College is a trusted and respected leader in occupational therapy regulation.

Board and Committee Members and College Staff

2015-2016 Board of Directors

Pauline Cousins, Chair
Brian Bailkowski, Vice Chair
Allanna Jost, Treasurer
Victoria Apold, Member at Large
Crystal Perry, Secretary

Credential's Committee

Myrna King
Annette Fraser
Scott Thieu
Christine Marchessault

Practice Committee (Halifax)

Jennifer Finlayson
Kristy Spear
Natalie O'Mara
Brian Bailkowski
Jocelyn Brown
Phyllis Williams, Chair

Practice Committee (Cape Breton)

Karen Kendall, Chair
Sheila Poulton
Angela Stairs
Sandy Cantwell-Kerr
Leslie Greencorn
Nancy Wadden
Amanda Forward

Continuing Competency Committee

Joanne Comeau, Chair
Karen Landry
Karen Roberts-Small
Jennifer Saunders
Pauline Cousins
Diane MacKenzie

College Staff

Gayle Salsman, Registrar (Outgoing)
Margo Johnson, Administrative
Director
Paulette Upshall, Registrar (Incoming)

Continuing Competency Committee Update

The mandate of the Continuing Competence Committee is to develop, implement and evaluate the Continuing Competency Program for Occupational Therapists in Nova Scotia.

Over the past year the Committee's activities included:

- Development of Information Session material
- Continuing Competence information sessions in Halifax, Yarmouth, Shelburne, Liverpool and Sydney
- Planning for upcoming sessions in other regions in Nova Scotia as well as online sessions to allow access to a broader group of occupational therapists
- Exploration of partnership with COTBC including planning an opportunity for the Committee to meet with representatives from COTBC upcoming in June
- Exploration of partnerships with other Atlantic OT Regulators related to education modules and exam possibilities

Overview of Information Sessions:

An overview of each component of the Continuing Competence framework was provided:

Competence Maintenance

- Currency hour requirements
- Prescribed Education Modules - sample topics include ethics, documentation, consent, professional boundaries, conflict of interest
- Additional Practice Standards Supports - webinars, education sessions, practice guidelines, practice support
- Self-Assessment with Peer and Colleague feedback - College documents or workplace review based on competencies
- Professional development plan - based on assessment of practice

Competency Review:

- Regulatory Competence exam
 - All Registrants - once every 5-6 years
- Onsite Peer Assessment
 - Registrants who fall below the threshold
 - Registrants identified through the complaints process
 - Random selection of Registrants

Competence Improvement:

- Individualized program targeted to specific areas of concern identified through the Assessment component.
- Separate from the complaints process
- Emphasis on supporting registrants to meet practice standards

Frequently asked questions:

The following were the most frequently asked questions related to continuing competence during the sessions.

Why is the College moving to a competence exam?

There is an increased demand from government and the public for the College that occupational therapists are supported, monitored, and that there is enforcement to ensure the safe, ethical, and effective practice of occupational therapists.

In addition, research demonstrating that self-assessment does not promote competence raised concerns for Committee members. Scholars at UBC argued that high performers underestimate their abilities and the lowest performers overestimate their abilities. While peer and colleague feedback (such as required by the College's self-assessment) can help low performers identify their weaknesses; even when weaknesses are identified, we don't necessarily seek out opportunities for improvement. Instead, we focus on improving what we already do well.

Will this be like the National Occupational Therapy Exam?

No, this exam will look at everyday practice related to core regulatory topics.

- Sample Regulatory topics include -
Confidentiality/Privacy, Conflict of Interest, Consent, Professional Boundaries, Client Records, Assignment and Supervision, Scope of Practice

What happens if I am unsuccessful?

You will be given two attempts to successfully complete the exam. If you are unsuccessful, you may be required to complete education or learning modules. You will also be required to complete the on-site peer assessment. If the on-site peer assessment does not identify any issues, no further action will be required. If the on-site peer assessment identifies issues, you will be required to complete a personalized education plan and/or a period of supervised practice. This process is separate from the complaints process.

Continuing Competence Program

Competence Maintenance

Reflective Component: Provides structure to support reflective practice, professional development and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Key Elements

1. Currency Hours

Participants (Who):

- All registrants - Mandatory

Tools (What):

- Annual Continuing Competence Declaration - Mandatory

Frequency (When):

- Annually at the time of registration/renewal

2. Assessment of Essential Competence and Professional Development Plan

Participants (Who):

- All Registrants

Tools (What):

- Self-assessment - Optional
- Colleague/Peer Feedback - Mandatory
- Professional Development Plan - Mandatory

Frequency (When):

- Every two Years

3. Practice Education Modules (PEM)

Participants (Who):

- All Registrants - Mandatory

Tools (What):

- Online Self-learning Practice Education Modules
- Self-Learning Module Quiz
- Certificate of completion

Frequency (When):

- Each registrant MUST complete at least one PEM every year

Competence Review

Evaluative Component: Provides structure for assessing/evaluating the Continuing Competency requirements and competence of all registrants.

Key Elements

1. Written Competence Exam

Participants (Who):

- All Registrants - Mandatory

Tools (What):

- Online written exam (Standard of Practice and Code of Ethics)

Frequency (When):

- Every 5 years - All registrants will write the exam every 5 years

2. On-site Assessment

Participants (Who):

- Registrants who fall below established Competence Exam threshold
- Randomly selected registrants
- Registrants recommended by College

Tools (What):

- Onsite Peer Assessment by Peer Assessor
 - Behaviour-based Interview
 - Review of Occupational Therapy Record
 - Review of Professional Development Plan
 - Review of PEM Completed
- Mobile Assessment Tool (MAT)
- Peer Assessment Report template

Frequency (When):

- Yearly
- Number assessed is based on # of registrants requiring onsite Peer Assessment

Competence Improvement

Improvement Component: Provides structure to support improvement of competencies that are below acceptable standard

Key Elements

1. Recommendations for Improvement

Participants (Who):

- Individuals identified through the Competence Review

Tools (What):

- Peer Assessment Report from Peer Assessor
- Recommendations to registrant from Peer Assessment Committee (PAC)

Frequency (When):

- As needed - based on Peer Assessment recommendations

2. Individualized Improvement Plan Developed

Participants (Who):

- Registrants whose Peer Assessment recommends areas for improvement

Tools (What):

- An Individualized Improvement Plan
- Letter of recommendations from PAC

Frequency (When):

- As required

3. Individualized Improvement Plan Completed

Participants (Who):

- Registrants who have Individualized Improvement Plan

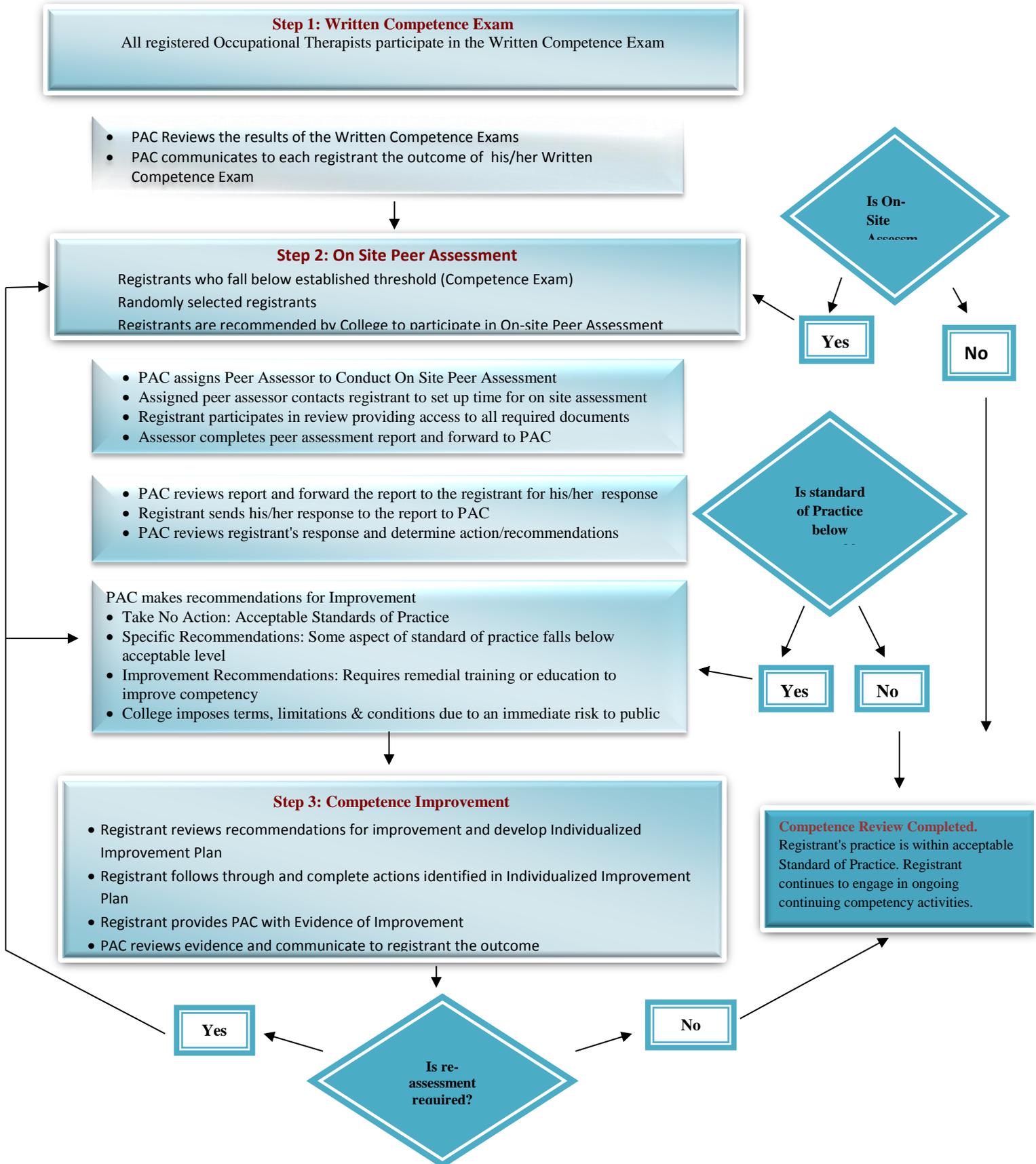
Tools (What):

- Evidence of improvement
- Is re-assessment required
- Evidence review by PAC. Letter to registrant

Frequency (When):

- As required

Competence Review and Competence Improvement Flowchart Diagram



Credentials Committee Update

The mandate of the Credentials Committee is to deal with the registration and licensing of members and applicants for registration as well as the development and review of policies related to registration for presentation to the Board.

Over the past year, the Committee's activities included:

- The review of 38 new applications for registration and 12 applications for re-registration
- The development and review of registration policies
- Identification of changes to policies related to the new SEAS process
- Continued work towards compliance with the Fair Registration Practices Act

Practice Committee Update

The mandate of the Practice Committee is to review and revise the College Standards of Practice; to educate members on identified practice issues and to act as an advisory to the Board.

Activities of the last year include:

- Completion of the Code of Ethics which was approved by the board in May 2015
- Completion of the Guide to the Code of Ethics which was approved by the board in November 2016
- Review of ethical decision making frameworks.
- Exploration of educational strategy related to the new Code of Ethics and related documents
- Continued work on the development of a Practice Standards for Collection, Maintenance and Use of Client Information (previously known as the Guideline on Documentation)
- Responding to 4 complex practice related questions received from members, employers and government, including competencies related to palliative care.

Investigations Committee Update

The mandate of the Investigations Committee is to do all things necessary to see that full and proper investigation is completed of all written complaints received by the College or all matters referred to it by the Registrar.

Over the past year, the Committee's activities included:

- Completion of the investigation of 2 outstanding complaints from the previous year
- Completion of the review of the investigation process following completion of the investigations
- Providing the Registrar with recommendations for improving the investigation process
- The investigation of 2 additional complaints received in 2016 (investigations ongoing)

Registration Statistics

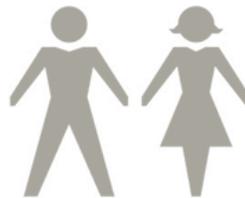


Total Number of Registrants

2016	523
2015	478
2014	466
2013	472
2012	459
2011	434
2010	414
2009	385

Number of New Applicants:

2016	38
2015	17
2014	30
2013	37
2012	43
2011	37
2010	53
2009	40



2016	11%	89%
2015	10%	90%

All statistics as of May 31st. 2016

Members by Regions

	2016	2015
Capital	65%	62%
Cape Breton	10%	9%
Annapolis Valley	7%	6%
South Shore	7%	5%
Guysborough/Antigonish	3%	4%
Pictou	3%	3%
Colchester East Hants	2%	2%
Cumberland	2%	1%
Other	1%	8%

Surrenders for 2015-2016 = 14

Surrenders for 2014-2015 = 28

Auditor's report -Collins Barrow

COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Membership fees	195,563	187,500
Administrative charges	3,600	3,233
Interest income	<u>8,064</u>	<u>8,533</u>
	207,227	199,266
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Administration	27,753	27,390
Board and committees	11,770	13,603
Collaborative partnerships	5,436	1,234
Continuing competency expense	1,003	4,561
Occupancy	16,806	16,318
Professional fees	7,949	9,748
Public and member education	678	1,035
Salaries and wages	<u>117,074</u>	<u>113,847</u>
	<u>188,469</u>	<u>187,736</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	18,758	11,529

Auditor's report -Collins Barrow (Con't)

COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OF NOVA SCOTIA STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2016

	\$	\$
		Unaudited
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	69,395	74,422
Investments	365,633	358,139
Accounts receivable & Prepays	<u>2,862</u>	<u>3,136</u>
LIABILITIES		
	437,890	435,697
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	14,968	22,533
NET ASSETS		
CONTINUING COMPETENCY FUND	123,483	123,483
HEARING FUND	200,000	200,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND	80,681	78,152
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>18,758</u>	<u>11,529</u>
	422,922	413,164
COMMITMENTS	437,890	435,697

Approved by the Board of Directors -May 25th, 2016



COLLEGE of OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPISTS of NOVA SCOTIA

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