

Frequently Asked Questions (QA Practice Reviews)



College of
Speech and Hearing
Health Professionals of BC

Regulator of Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Practitioners and Speech-Language Pathologists

1. Why did the College implement a Practice Review component to its QA Program?

A: In 2015, after researching a number of successful practice review modules for health profession regulators in BC and across Canada, the College's Quality Assurance (QA) Program decided to develop practice review modules for the speech and hearing professions; ones that would provide for continuous cycles of QA and more comprehensive performance measurement, and better protect the public by ensuring that competency standards among registrants remain current and are maintained.

Like other colleges, we believe that this new practice review component will greatly enhance and complete the College's QA Program by adding a 4th module to the existing portfolio; one that adds the important elements of practice review and performance measurement and supplements the other three modules:

MODULE 1: Continuing Competency Credits (CCCs) -- *global, with random audits on a 3-year cycle*



MODULE 2: Advanced Competency (AC) Certification -- *certification as required by legislation; performance-based blend of knowledge, skills, and abilities in the acceptable program of study*

MODULE 3: Practice Support and Consultation -- *available to all registrants at any time for their inquiries, issues, and questions*

MODULE 4: Practice Reviews -- *global, starting with the Hearing Instrument Dispensing profession*



2. Do I have to participate?

A: Yes. Registrants have a duty to comply with professional regulation requirements including the QA Program. The QA Program is created pursuant to s. 26.1 of the *Health Professions Act* and College Bylaws 24 and 160.

3. How long will the review take?

A: Typically, QA Assessors require one business day to complete a practice review.

4. Do practice reviews only involve one profession?

A: No. All registrants will be required to participate in the College's QA Program. By participating in the Program, Hearing Instrument Practitioners, Audiologists, and Speech-Language Pathologists will demonstrate to the College (which is mandated to protect the public) that they are maintaining their competence to practice, and that they take their professional obligations seriously. Meeting this obligation is an important way to uphold the public's trust in each of our College's three professions.

This is only the first stage of a **multi-phase, multi-year approach** to implementation, which will be applied as follows:

PHASE 1: Summer 2017 – *pilot phase; a random sample (30) of Hearing Instrument Practitioners*

PHASE 2: Fall 2017 -- *evaluation of the pilot outcomes and development of strategies for the remainder of Hearing Instrument Dispensing (pending)*

PHASE 3: Summer 2018 -- *Audiology (pending)*

PHASE 4: Summer 2019 -- *Speech-Language Pathology (pending)*

5. When will QA Assessors start performing practice reviews on registrants?

A: They've already started! A random sample of active HIPs were drawn from the Register in May. Selected HIPs were advised of the information and documentation they needed to submit to the College. QA Assessors began scheduling and conducting reviews in the field in early June.

6. Does my practice review report remain confidential?

A: Yes. Screeners do not know the identity of the registrants they screen. Obviously, QA Assessors do; however, Practice Review reports remain confidential.

7. What happens if my practice review results don't meet standards?

A: Typically, you can expect to receive one of three outcomes resulting from a QA Assessor's final report – meets standards (no remediation required), minor recommendations, or concerns with major recommendations (i.e., where identified deficiencies represent substandard practice or a danger to the public).

Reports containing concerns with major recommendations are forwarded to a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) panel to ensure that a remediation plan is in place with appropriate timelines for completion. This may include a follow-up by a QA assessor by a prescribed date.

8. Should I be concerned about punitive action or discipline?

A: Where a registrant refused to participate in a practice review, or refused to comply with the Practice Review report's recommendations, the QA Committee (QAC) have no option but to refer the matter to the Inquiry Committee for further action outside the QA stream. The QAC must also notify the Inquiry Committee if it has reasonable grounds to believe that the registrant's conduct amounts to professional misconduct, demonstrates professional incompetence, or that the registrant has an impairing condition under s. 33(4)(e) of the *Health Professions Act*.

9. Do I need to obtain client consent for the assessor to be present?

A: Yes. You need to obtain client consent in advance of the QA Assessor's practice review at your clinic.

10. If I'm dually registered for audiology and hearing instrument dispensing. Is it possible that I could be assessed twice?

A: Yes. The Practice Review module will evaluate the competency standards of each profession that a registrant is registered in.

11. Why are you collecting demographic information as part of the Practice Review module?

A: To see if there is any relationship between demographics (e.g., age, years of experience), and the results of the screening and/or review.

12. Why is there a screening portion and a review portion?

A: To see if the screening tool can reliably predict who may require practice support. The screening needs to be validated to see if it is predictive of practice performance.

13. Should I be worried about the reputation of my clinic?

A: Practice reviews are a standard component of the quality assurance regimes of many health profession regulatory bodies. By participating in the College's QA Program throughout the year, Hearing Instrument Practitioners (HIPs), Audiologists (AUDs), and Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) indicate to the public – who the College is mandated to protect – that they are maintaining their competence to practice, and that they take their obligation seriously. Meeting this obligation is an important way to foster and uphold the public's trust in each of our College's three professions.

14. If assessed, will I receive a copy of the practice review report?

A: Yes. All registrants will be able to discuss the review with the QA Assessor, and receive a copy of their final QA Practice Review report.

15. Will I hear from the QAC panel if there are minor recommendations or concerns with major recommendations?

A: Yes. You and your assessor will have discussed any minor recommendations and timelines which will be in your final report. The QAC panel will confirm the plan for minor recommendations and will be checking in with you to see if the recommendations have been implemented.

If there are any concerns with major recommendations involved, a HIP panel appointed by the Quality Assurance Committee will be responsible for approving a plan and timelines for those concerns. This will occur after your final Practice Review report has been submitted by the QA Assessor and will be sent to you in writing.