

## Policy Review Template

### **Policy Title: Protocol re Council Member Attendance at Consultations or Focus Groups Related to Council Initiatives**

Policy #: EX-20	Location: <a href="#">CouncilNet</a>
Reviewed by: Executive Committee	
Initial Approval Date: September 2007	Approved by Council: October 2010
Review Cycle: 3 years	Next Review Date: February 2023
Version History: 2007/2010/February 2020/July 8, 2020	

#### 1. **Policy Statement**

The Ontario College of Teachers organizes consultations and focus group sessions to obtain member and/or education stakeholder opinions on a variety of College and committee-related policy and communication initiatives.

[The purpose of this protocol is to formalize the decision-making rules to facilitate attendance by Council members at focus group sessions and consultations.](#)

#### 2. **Policy Purpose**

~~The purpose of this protocol is to formalize the decision-making rules to facilitate attendance by Council members at focus group sessions and consultations.~~

#### 3. **Consultations**

~~Consultation sessions are conducted by College staff and, when conducted in person, are generally hosted at the College facility.~~

~~The number and composition of participants is dependent upon the input/information the College is attempting to gather. Consultations will usually include members of the profession as well as representatives from various education groups and/or members of the public or regulatory sector.~~

~~The College uses three primary methods for consultation, including face-to-face interactions, surveys conducted through email or regular mail, and web-based consultations.~~

~~Consultations are helpful in determining the broad direction the College may wish to follow with respect to a particular policy or initiative. A consultation may be followed by additional qualitative and quantitative research activity to determine a more specific direction.~~

#### 4. **Focus Groups**

~~Focus group sessions are moderated by a trained facilitator and hosted in major centres across Ontario.~~

~~Ten to 15 College members or members of the public are typically invited to participate in each focus group session. Sessions are organized in both English and French, depending upon the College membership demographic in the host community, and are approximately 90 minutes in length. Participants are typically provided with a small cash incentive for their participation.~~

~~Rented facilities include recording devices (for report writer reference) and the ability to accommodate five to 10 observers in a separate room.~~

~~Council members attending a consultation or focus group should endeavour not to interact with participants before or after the session to preserve the integrity of the qualitative data collection.~~

## 2. Recommended Council Member Participation

Each Council member will have the opportunity to observe one consultation or focus group session during each three-year term of Council. All costs associated with attendance at these sessions will be covered by the Council and Committees budget cost centre and will not be considered part of a Council member's professional development allocation.

With the exception of the Chair of Council, Council members cannot interact with participants to preserve the integrity of the data collection.

### **Consultations:**

To provide members of Council with an opportunity to observe a **consultation**, the following protocol is recommended:

1. Council members will be informed of College consultation dates and locations using the monthly activity calendar posted to CouncilNet.
2. Council members will be invited to inform the Chair of Council of their interest in attending.
3. When multiple consultation opportunities are being scheduled on the same topic, Council members will be asked to consider the session closest to their residence wherever possible.
4. The College will cover all costs associated with the Council member's attendance, including travel, accommodation, meals and per diems or release time as necessary to facilitate the member's participation as an observer.
5. While every effort will be made to accommodate all Council member requests, facility capacity may limit attendance numbers.
6. In instances where the consultation is oversubscribed, Council member observers will be confirmed in the order in which the observation requests are received.

7. The Registrar will request release time for elected members to attend a consultation. Release time for activity unrelated to Council, committee or panel meetings is at the discretion of the employer.

### **Focus Groups:**

To provide members of Council with an opportunity to observe a **focus group**, the following protocol is recommended:

1. The Chair of Council will be invited to observe all College focus groups.
2. The chair of a committee triggering a focus group activity (if applicable) will be invited to attend one or more sessions relevant to their request.
3. Council members will be informed about focus group dates and locations via CouncilNet.
4. Council members will be invited to inform the Chair of Council of their interest in attending. The Chair of Council will ensure that the Registrar is informed of all expressions of interest.
5. When multiple focus group sessions are being scheduled on the same topic, Council members will be asked to consider the session closest to their residence wherever possible.
6. The College will cover all costs associated with the Council member's attendance, including travel, accommodation, meals and per diems or release time as necessary to facilitate the member's participation as an observer.
7. While every effort will be made to accommodate all Council member requests, facility capacity may limit attendance numbers.
8. In instances where the focus group is oversubscribed, Council member observers will be confirmed in the order in which the requests are received.
9. The Registrar will request release time for elected members to attend a focus group session. Release time for activity unrelated to Council, committee or panel meetings is at the discretion of the employer.

### **3. Evaluation**

This [policy protocol](#) will be evaluated every three (3) years or earlier as required by Council.