



College of Dietitians of Ontario
Ordre des diététistes de l'Ontario



Orientation Module

Introduction

Welcome to the Board and Committee Orientation Module of the College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO).

The purpose of this module is to provide individuals who are interested in serving on the Board of Directors or as a Committee Member with a greater understanding of the roles, requirements and responsibilities of the College, its Board and Committees, as well as the role they play in the healthcare system.

The goal of this module is to position prospective candidates for success.

At the end of this module, there is a link to an assessment, which will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of CDO.

Successfully completing this module and assessment is one of the eligibility requirements for serving on the Board or a Committee.

Members of the CDO Board and committees help the College in its duty to serve and protect the public interest. We appreciate your interest in serving and hope that you enjoy learning more about governance at the College of Dietitians of Ontario.

Section I: An Overview of CDO Governance

What is the College of Dietitians of Ontario?

The College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO) is a regulatory body with a mandate to protect the public. Our governing legislation states that **the College has a duty to serve and protect the public interest**. Everything CDO does is related to public protection.



What is Self-Regulation?

Self-regulation is a regulatory model where the government has delegated its regulatory authority over a profession to those practising the profession. This is the type of regulatory model the CDO operates under.

Unlike professional associations, which are voluntary and have a mandate to further the interests of their membership, professional regulators have a public protection mandate and the right and responsibility to license and discipline registrants.

A key part of self-regulation is public accountability — operating in an open and accountable manner with the public interest central to all decisions, and prioritizing transparency. A regulator:

- Is accountable to the public and the government
- Protects the public interest by regulating its registrants
- Requires individuals to be registered to practice the profession
- Has a mandatory quality assurance program
- Has a mandatory complaints and discipline process

To support public accountability, the Ministry of Health established a new annual reporting requirement for all health regulatory colleges. The [College Performance Measurement Framework](#) (CPMF) enables colleges to measure and report, in a standardized manner, how they are acting in the public interest.

What is Right Touch Regulation?

Right touch regulation is the minimum regulatory force required to achieve the desired results. This is an approach to regulatory decision-making – a way of thinking about regulatory problems to find a balanced solution – that is considered best practice and is used by the CDO. There are eight elements central to right touch regulation:

- Identify the problem before the solution
- Quantify and qualify the risks
- Get as close to the problem as possible
- Focus on the outcome
- Use regulation only when necessary
- Keep it simple
- Check for unintended consequences
- Review and respond to change

Legislation, Regulations and Bylaws

CDO is one of 26 health regulatory colleges in Ontario that regulate a combined 29 health professions. These colleges are all governed by the [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#) (RHPA), which grants the authority to act as a regulatory body, and states each College has a duty to serve and protect the public interest. The Health Professions Procedural Code, which is part of the RHPA, sets out consistent rules and processes for all health regulatory colleges that inform how the public interest is protected.

Each profession also has its own statute. CDO has the [Dietetics Act, 1991](#). There are regulations under the RHPA and the Dietetics Act, which are rules that have the power of law. CDO has two bylaws, which are the rules and procedures that have been adopted to govern and regulate the College: [Bylaw 1: General](#) and [Bylaw 2: Fees](#).

How CDO Protects the Public

The CDO achieves its public protection mandate in the following ways:

- We establish entry to practice requirements so that only qualified individuals can practice dietetics in Ontario.
- We develop and implement standards of practice to ensure that Ontarians obtain safe, ethical and competent nutrition services from dietitians.
- We monitor dietitians through our quality assurance program to make sure they keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

- We maintain a public register of dietitians on our website, where the public can verify the status of RDs registered to practice in Ontario.
- We investigate complaints about dietitians and take disciplinary and/or remedial measures when appropriate.
- We protect the dietitian title by only allowing individuals registered with the CDO to use the titles “Dietitian,” “Registered Dietitian,” or the French equivalents, or hold themselves out to be a dietitian.

Section II: The Role of the Board

Governance refers to the structures, policies, processes and controls in place that allow an organization to make decisions and allocate resources. Good governance requires Board directors to understand their roles, manage differences constructively, communicate effectively and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The principles of good governance are:

- *Legitimacy and voice.* All participants have a say in responding to matters presented at a meeting.
- *Direction and purpose.* Developing a common vision and strategic framework.
- *Effective performance.* Making a difference in quality and outcomes.
- *Accountability and transparency.* Open processes and procedures that promote acceptance of responsibility for outcomes.
- *Fairness and ethical behaviour.* Respect for legitimate differences, setting and maintaining high standards of process and performance.

The Differences between Board and Management

The Board of Directors provides strategic and policy direction for the College. It makes decisions to protect and promote the public interest. Management carries out the Board’s direction and the day-to-day work of the CDO, which is overseen by the Registrar & Executive Director.



Essentially, the role of the Board is to focus on the “why” and “when,” not “how.” The “how” is operationalized by staff under the leadership of the Registrar. The Board and staff work in partnership to regulate the profession of dietetics in the public interest.

The Board (Strategy)	Management (Operations)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining mission, vision and values • Develop strategy (strategic direction) • Hiring and evaluating Registrar & Executive Director • Providing financial oversight • Ensuring adequate financial resources • Ensure risk is managed • Approve laws, by-laws, standards and guidelines 	<p><i>The Registrar & Executive Director:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees the operations of the College • Carries out the strategic goals of the Board • Provides information and support to the Board • Implements and operationalizes Board decisions • Builds external relationships • Serves as the spokesperson for the CDO • Ensures CDO’s compliance with the legislation, regulations, by-laws and other obligations • Ensures financial viability • Identifies and monitors risks to the organization and the public and takes steps to mitigate risks <p><i>Staff functions include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administering regulatory activities such as the registration and quality assurance programs • Providing administrative support to committees • Conducting the day-to-day work of running the organization • Conducting policy work and providing subject matter expertise • Dealing directly with systems and technology issues • Development and implementation of the budget • Establishing and managing day-to-day operating procedures • Maintaining the public register

Duties of the Board

The Board is composed of dietitians (professional directors), who are elected by registrants, and members of the public who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (public directors). The Board’s duties include:

- **Establishing the strategic direction** of the organization and monitoring progress towards the desired results. Creating a strategic plan and goals for CDO staff to pursue. To achieve this, Board directors are required to think strategically about what’s happening in the environment, what the risks and opportunities are, what would serve the interests of the public and being mindful of the available college resources.

- **Managing risk** by monitoring operational risks to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the College to fulfill its mandate. The Board confirms that operationally, risks are being appropriately managed, mitigated or controlled.
- **Providing financial oversight** by making key decisions about how funds are earned, spent, saved and invested, borrowed and protected. The Board sets the budget, allocates resources to operating the College and to support the programs, projects and initiatives that move the strategic goals forward.
- **Monitoring performance** of the Registrar and the organization.
- **Maintaining good governance** by adopting the best practices for decision-making structures, policies and processes and adhering to the agreed upon code of conduct for the Board.
- **Governing the profession** by acting as decision makers that set the standards of practice and guidelines for Registered Dietitians and how they are required to engage with the College.
- **Upholding integrity** by operating within the laws, regulations and by-laws and assuring controls and systems are in place to ensure productive use of CDO resources and accurate reporting information.

What is the key to an effective Board?

- Clear roles, structures and processes
- Consensus in decision making
- Collegial and professional
- Respectful challenge of ideas
- Well prepared
- Support the staff-Board partnership
- Make effective use of meetings
- Focus on results vs. activities
- Be responsive to CDO communications
- Focus on the right thing
- Be a team player – remember the value of praise, acknowledgement and appreciation

Section III: The Board Code of Conduct

The Board is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of public trust and integrity in its governance of the College. The purpose of the Board Code of Conduct is to maintain this standard and applies to all Board directors and to all non-Board committee members.



Board directors and committee members are responsible for applying an appropriate standard of conduct and acting in an ethical and professional manner.

The principles set out in this code are founded on the professional and ethical values as approved by the College, which are set to uphold the primary duty of the College to serve and protect the public interest and to govern its registrants.

Fiduciary duties

Board directors have a fiduciary relationship with CDO and have the legal responsibility to act honestly, in good faith, and in the best interests of the College consistent with its mandate to protect the public. Personal interests and the interests of other dietitians or groups cannot influence the decision-making rationale.

Acting in the public interest

When making decisions on behalf of the College, Board directors must act in the public interest. This means that the objectives and outcomes of the decision-making process are in the public interest, and that the process and procedures followed to make the decision are in the public interest.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

The College is committed to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDI-B) as a critical component of public protection and safety. The Board supports and fosters an environment that is culturally safe and that promotes belonging at the College, within the profession, and for the public. Accordingly, Board directors are expected to engage in EDI-B training and reflection with an open-mind and approach all College work and decision making with an EDI-B lens.

Respectful Conduct

Board directors are expected to recognize and respect the value of diversity and the contributions of all other members. Board discussions and debate will take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility, avoiding discrimination and bias. In support of this principle a Board director must refrain from any conduct or communication that would reasonably be viewed as verbal, physical or sexual abuse or harassment.

Board Solidarity

The Board speaks with one voice. Board directors acknowledge that Board decisions must be supported by all Board directors – even those who have abstained or voted against a decision.

Conflict of Interest

As fiduciaries, Board directors must avoid situations where their personal or financial interests conflict with their duties to the College.

Confidentiality

Board directors must respect the confidentiality of the information they obtain through exercising their duties on behalf of the College.

College Spokesperson and Media Contact

A Board director must not speak on behalf of the College unless they have Board authorization, or authorization from the Chair and Registrar.

Social Media Use

Board directors who use social media must ensure that they engage in social media in a way that is consistent with the Code of Conduct and their fiduciary role with the College. They should generally refrain from commenting or otherwise responding to posts, which could create the appearance of speaking on behalf of the College or the Board.

Commitment

All Board directors must devote the time and effort necessary to regularly attend meetings and engage in constructive discussion, which requires preparing appropriately for meaningful participation.

Compliance with Board and College By-laws and Policies

All Board directors must comply with the College's by-laws, policies and processes, as well as applicable provisions under the Regulated Health Professions Act, the Dietetics Act and other statutory requirements.

External Advice and Counsel

A Board director must have Board approval to retain external advice or counsel with respect to College or Board business. A Board director who wants to retain external opinions or advice should make a request to the Chair.

Section IV: The Role of a Board Director

The Benefits of Serving

Serving on the Board and/or Committees can be beneficial in many ways. In general, serving in a governance role at CDO can be an opportunity to:

- Network
- Use one's talents in new ways
- Develop transferable leadership skills
- Be involved in public protection by making a meaningful contribution to safe, ethical and competent dietetic services to people in Ontario
- Learn and grow by developing and enhancing valuable competencies that can be applied to Board and committee work, as well as other professional roles
- Receive fair compensation for meaningful work

Responsibilities

Board directors play an important role at the CDO and contribute to public protection. Directors have the following responsibilities:

- Serve on the Board and the committees to which they are appointed
- Serve on ad hoc committees and working groups as needed
- Properly prepare for meetings by reviewing all materials in advance and develop a reasonably comprehensive knowledge of it
- Acquire and apply a working knowledge of the statutory requirements and policies related to their committees
- Develop and maintain knowledge of the regulatory framework of CDO and current issues facing the Board
- Be available for meetings and attend them
- Contribute to Board and committee discussions
- Raise issues in a respectful manner that encourages open discussion
- Demonstrate independent judgment through a willingness to voice concerns, take an independent stand or share an unpopular or controversial idea
- Acquire and apply a working knowledge of health system issues and financial issues relevant to the role
- Raise matters arising in the broader environment for Board consideration for action
- Publicly support the decisions of the Board
- Redirect matters to CDO staff as appropriate

- Understand and abide by the legislation, regulations, bylaws and policies that govern the Board
- Recognize conflicts of interest and withdraw from Board and committee work as appropriate

The role does not include:

- Advocating for the profession
- Making decisions that benefit the profession over the public interest
- Overseeing operational activities

Board directors and committee members must always act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of the public.

Competencies and Attributes

The Board of Directors functions best when it collectively possesses a range of governance competencies and attributes to make evidence-informed decisions in the public interest. To support this, the CDO has identified competencies and attributes for Board directors. Individual directors are not expected to have every competency and attribute. Rather, the identified competencies and attributes are intended to reflect the overall complement of the Board.

Terms of Office

Dietitians are elected to the Board for a three-year term. Following the three-year term, Board directors can choose to run for re-election. Board directors can serve for nine consecutive years on the Board or as a committee appointee, or any combination of the two roles. If, after serving nine consecutive years, an individual wants to continue to participate in CDO work, they are required to wait three-years before running in another election or applying to the CDO as a committee appointee.

Public appointees serve terms as approved by the Lieutenant Governor.

Commitment

- The Board meets at least four times a year. Meeting materials are provided to the Board approximately two weeks before the meeting and are made publicly available one week before the meeting. Active participation in meetings is expected, and to support this, Board directors should come prepared by reviewing all meeting material in advance.
- Mandatory orientation is provided to all new Board directors and committee members before they can begin participating in CDO work.
- Regular training is provided to the Board, which sometimes occurs outside scheduled meetings.
- All Board directors also serve on several committees. The workload for each committee varies, but Board directors can expect to spend 1-2 days each month preparing for and participating in committee work.
- Sitting on the CDO's Board is a rewarding experience but also comes with a significant amount of accountability and requires a strong commitment.

Section V: Role of a Committee Member

Committees supplement the work of the Board by making recommendations to the Board for consideration. Committees cannot make policy decisions without the approval of the Board.

The College has three types of committees:

- *Statutory*. Committees that all RHPA colleges are required to have.
- *Non-statutory*. Committees that have been established by the Board but are not required.
- *Ad Hoc*. Committees that have been established by the Board for specific and short-term roles.

Committees are largely comprised of Board directors, with the addition of professional members who are not part of the Board (committee appointees). Statutory committees have specific roles and authorities as outlined in the RHPA. The Board cannot interfere with decisions made by these committees and case-specific information is restricted to those on the committee.

Committee Appointees

Committee members, who are not also on the Board, are dietitians with specific skills, knowledge and experience, who are appointed to committees to bring their insight and assist with the committee work.

Statutory Committees

Executive Committee

Has the powers of the Board between Board meetings with respect to any matter that requires immediate attention other than approving by-laws, proposing regulations and the Registrar & ED's employment with the College. This committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and two other Board directors (one must be a publicly appointed director).

Discipline

Holds hearings regarding allegations of professional misconduct or incompetence.

Fitness to Practise Committee

Holds hearings to determine whether a dietitian is incapacitated (suffering from a physical or mental condition or disorder that may pose a risk to the public interest).

Quality Assurance Committee

Develops, reviews and evaluates the College's Quality Assurance program and identifies quality standards that promote excellent dietetic care and make related program proposals to the Board for implementation.

Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee

Screening committee for concerns about the conduct, competence or capacity of dietitians.

Patient Relations Committee

Administers the funding program for therapy and counselling for patients who have been sexually abused by a dietitian, Responsible for patient relations program.

Registration Committee

Receives referrals from the Registrar if there are doubts about whether an applicant meets the registration requirements or if the Registrar believes terms, conditions and limitations should be imposed on a certificate of registration.

Non-Statutory Committees

Finance and Audit Committee

Assists the Board in fulfilling its obligations and oversight responsibilities by making recommendations relating to financial planning and reporting, external audit, internal control systems, investments and policies.

Governance Committee

Makes recommendations to the Board that promote governance excellence.

Professional Practice Committee

Considers and makes recommendations to the Board regarding professional practice standards, policies and guidelines relevant to the practice of dietetics.

Registrar Performance & Compensation Review Committee

Evaluates Registrar's performance and compensation package and makes recommendations to the Board.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you for completing the Board and Committee orientation module.

As an eligibility requirement to run in the CDO election or be considered for appointment to a committee, you are required to complete a short assessment to demonstrate your understanding of the College, the Board, the committees, and the work we do.

Click [here](#) to begin the assessment.

After its successful completion, you will be provided with a code to enter into the application form to notify the College that you have met this eligibility requirement.

We hope that you have learned more about the College of Dietitians of Ontario. We applaud your interest in serving in a governance role at CDO.