

MEETING GUIDELINES

Prescription Review Panel

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Introduction

Prescription Review Panel (PR Panel) meetings are the primary forum for board decision-making in support of the Prescription Review Program (PR Program), one of the quality assurance programs at the College. The mandate of the panel is set out in section 1-19(2)(d) of the College Bylaws.

These guidelines are intended to help panel meetings be efficient, effective, inclusive and result in clear, informed decisions. The College Bylaws set out the structure of the Quality Assurance Committee (and its panels), its Board and how decisions are made within the College, and the code of conduct for board members and committee and panel members.

These guidelines are also informed by agreements that extend beyond the College, notably the Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility, signed by all provincial health regulators in March 2017 that sets out a vital pledge to increase the level of cultural safety, humility, health literacy and relationship-based care to improve health outcomes for First Nations people. The College is committed to creating a space that is safe, inclusive, and not intimidating to any individual, and how the PR Panel chooses to conduct itself in meetings must align. These guidelines have also been, and will continue to be, informed by international trends and best practices emerging in regulation, governance, and the scientific literature on prescription medications that pose a risk of misuse, abuse, or other dangers to the public.

These guidelines are designed to help panel members understand how panel meetings are planned, how they work and how decisions are made. The guidelines do not refer to general College meetings, such as the annual general meeting or special general meetings, as defined in the Bylaws. Separate, more formal, procedural rules govern those types of meeting.

A simple definition of an effective meeting is “the assembly of people gathering to discuss ideas and make decisions that produce an outcome of value.” Meetings succeed when individuals are well informed and engaged in a culture of trust and respect, empowered to contribute freely, and participate in positive and robust interactions with their peers. This approach, together with alignment behind a clear mandate, strong values, coherent strategic priorities, and a commitment to continuous improvement, grounds the way in which PR Panel meetings are conducted at the College.

Getting started

Upon appointment to the panel, each member will receive an appointment letter from the registrar, which will include:

- College email and temporary password instructions
- Board governance policies for review and signature to be returned to the registrar’s office:
 - Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Code of Conduct Policy
 - Confidentiality Policy
 - Committee Use of Electronic Communication Policy

- Finance and CRA tax forms for review and completion to be returned to finance department:
 - Board and Committee Personal Information Form
 - Federal Personal Tax Credits Return Form
 - British Columbia Personal Tax Credits Return Form
 - Election to Stop Contributing to the Canada Pension Plan, or Revocation of a Prior Election Form
- Board governance policies for review:
 - Media Relations Policy
 - Social Media Policy
- Other documents for review:
 - College Webmail User Guide
 - Board and Committee Honoraria Policy and Rate Limits
 - Travel and Business Expense Policy
 - *What is a Record?*
 - Expense Management System User Guide for Board and Committees

Types of meetings

PR Panel meetings are “in camera” pursuant to Bylaw 1-20 (8) and all activities all correspondence and documentation concerning an affected registrant’s illness, will be maintained in confidence except as provided for in sections 1-20(9), 1-20(10) and 1-20(11). See below. This type of meeting is open to staff involved in discussion items but closed to registrants and the public. Minutes are recorded for these meetings but are not published on the College’s website.

How and where a meeting takes place are important considerations for staff. Technology provides greater flexibility than ever, so multiple channels can be made available to participants wherever possible to help manage time, availability, cost and quorum.

In-person

In-person meetings are the most usual type of meeting for panel members, predominantly because panel meetings involve significant discussion, planning, problem solving and decision-making. This is the best type of meeting to hold when it is important to reduce distractions and fully engage participants; being face-to-face with colleagues helps build shared understanding, co-operation and empathy. PR Panel will conduct half (2 of 4) of its meetings in person, the timing of these will be determined by workflow, volume of cases, and convenience to panel members.

Teleconference/videoconference/hybrid meetings

The option to attend a meeting remotely, either by teleconference or videoconference, is available to anyone unable to participate in person. This might mean that a meeting becomes

a hybrid meeting where some members are attending in person and some are attending virtually. Members will be encouraged to meet in person if it is a designated “in person” meeting. If a panel member cannot attend in-person, they will be required to seek consent of the panel chair to attend virtually and ensure that the staff member organizing the meeting is notified. Remote meetings tend to work best for straightforward discussions, where no group work is taking place or controversial decisions are being made.

Email

Email meetings are convened for one specific purpose only: either when information needs to be disseminated quickly, or an urgent decision is required that cannot wait until the next scheduled panel meeting.

The meeting: before, during and after

Before the meeting

Agenda

Agendas are prepared by staff in consultation with the chair, based upon the responsibilities of the panel laid out in 1-20(3) of the Bylaws.

Agendas follow a standard template, which includes the time, date, location and type of meeting, the names of participants who have confirmed their attendance or forwarded their regrets, and a formal acknowledgment of the territory on which the meeting is taking place. The agenda will list each matter that will be brought forward to the panel, whether the panel is receiving the item for information, discussion or decision, and the material that will be provided to the panel to support its consideration of a matter.

Meeting package

Briefing notes, with supplemental documents, form the basis of the meeting package. Along with the agenda, the meeting package provides participants with the information they need to understand the goal of each discussion, as well as the background information, context, and analysis to be able to contribute meaningfully to such discussions. Management will also be present during the meeting to address any questions that arise.

Two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting, the panel members will be emailed a notification that the committee meeting package is available on MS Teams. The package includes an agenda, briefing notes, supporting material and prior meeting minutes.

Upon notification, members should:

- confirm access to the meeting package,
- review the agenda and notify the chair and deputy registrar if a conflict of interest is identified such as
 - any interest, involvement with or connection to any issue discussed at the committee level, or
 - a personal or family connection which may create a conflict or a perception of conflict,

- read the material carefully,
- notify staff if they are unable to attend the meeting (if this has not already been done), and
- notify staff if they will be attending in-person or remotely (if this has not already been done).

Agenda items may need to be added to the meeting package after the meeting package has been made available on MS Teams. If this occurs, added items will be noted as “Yes” under the heading “Is Addition” and the date that it was added.

Logistics for remote participants

To maximize meeting effectiveness for participants joining remotely, they should:

- inform the chair in advance if they plan to join the meeting late or leave early
- test equipment ahead of time
- make sure internet access is available and working
- have a contingency in place in the event one mode of technology does not work
- if on camera, dress appropriately, avoiding stripes or bold patterns which can be visually distracting
- if on camera, try to have a natural light source in front of the screen and turn off any light sources behind them
- minimize background noise
- try to call from a landline if possible (cell phones are prone to static interference)
- have the dial-in number, codes or login details ready
- keep audio on mute unless speaking
- join the meeting at least 10 minutes early to resolve technical glitches
- not place the call on hold, in case the call plays news or music as part of its hold system

During the meeting

Section 3 of the College’s [Code of Conduct Policy](#) sets out the requirements for board members’ conduct during meetings. The same code applies to PR Panel members, specifically:

- accountability, integrity and respect
- active participation
- diversity and inclusion
- cultural safety and humility

In addition to the tenets of the code, participants connected to the meeting remotely are advised to:

- give full attention to the meeting as they would if in the same room

- identify themselves if they wish to speak
- wait to be acknowledged by the chair before speaking
- speak clearly
- address participants by name if asking specific questions
- ask for clarity if any part of the discussion is unclear
- be patient if there is a slight delay in transmission
- mute the line when not speaking

After the meeting

All panel members are required to complete an online evaluation of how the meeting was conducted. The survey link will be sent electronically to each panel member and their completed form is due within one week. Survey results will be tabulated and provided to the chair and registrar and CEO. Survey results will also be shared with the Governance Committee as well as the panel itself at its next meeting.

If there have been any problems with the meeting, participants should provide feedback to staff as soon as possible so these can be addressed.

Management will ensure that any action items or communications are attended to following the meeting, consulting with the chair and vice-chair, where necessary. The chair will also follow up with participants separately after the meeting if a commitment to discuss matters offline was made.

Decision-making

Staff/panel recommendations

Depending on the nature of the decision, staff may include a recommendation in a briefing note or other panel package material. Recommendations are never brought forward in isolation; previous discussions, analysis of strategic priorities, consideration of external factors, consultation with stakeholders, and previous panel discussions are considered.

Decision-making process

The chair is responsible for the meeting and makes sure that it runs on time. Decisions are made predominantly by consensus with a confirmation vote.

Currently, the standard process for moving through discussion to decision includes the following:

- Each item on the agenda will be introduced by an identified member of staff, a panel chair or anyone else invited by the chair to introduce the topic.
- The chair will open the floor for any questions and discussion arising from the briefing note or other meeting package materials.
- The chair will ensure that every panel member has an opportunity to share their perspective.

- For the sake of efficiency and effectiveness, the chair will ensure that discussion is confined to issues that fall within the panel's authority and are relevant to the issue being discussed.
- Throughout the discussion, the chair will highlight important points, clarify misunderstandings, and keep the discussion focused on the matters at hand.
- When the chair believes panel members have the information they need to consider the issue fully, they will request that the panel moves to a decision by way of asking for a motion.
- Panel members are also free to state that they feel comfortable with the information presented and would be prepared to move to a decision on the matter.
- The chair will check in with panel members in turn to ensure they have each had an opportunity to share their opinion, ask any questions, and are comfortable with the decision reached.

Consensus decision-making

The Board has agreed that its decisions will be achieved through consensus whenever possible; this applies to the PR Panel as well.

Process

A consensus process needs to incorporate the following elements:

- clarity of the issue that needs to be resolved
- open, but coordinated discussion where everyone can voice their perspectives
- formation of a proposal based on perspectives and information
- test for agreement and amend proposal if required
- clarity of the decision for the minutes and actions required

PR Panel decisions are resolved by majority vote as cast by attending committee members.

Important considerations for panel members

For a regulatory board, the primary test for any decision will always be whether the outcome serves and protects the public. PR Panel members should keep the scope of the College's mandate and objects uppermost in mind, and may wish to ask themselves the following questions:

1. Why are we having this discussion/making this decision? Is it in our mandate?
2. Do we trust the decision-making process in light of the importance of the decision (risk implications, strategic importance, budget implications, and impact on stakeholders)? If not, what needs to change?
3. Are the right people with the right experience and knowledge in the room to support a good decision?
4. Have we understood all the necessary facts and information?
5. Is there additional information we need to make a good decision?

6. Are the assumptions made reasonable?
7. Is there more than one possible course of action?
8. Do we have agreement on the outcome?
9. Would it be better to defer making a decision now, until we have further information or additional time to continue the discussion?

Timeliness of decisions is a key consideration for the panel. When the panel decides to defer a decision, it is best practice to think about what the unintended consequences of that deferment might be.

Resolutions

A resolution is a written statement of an action approved by the panel. It usually deals only with single or directly related issues.

Once a decision has been reached, the chair will call for a motion for resolution. Following any further discussion, the chair will ask the panel to indicate, usually by a show of hands, or verbal acknowledgment for participants attending remotely, acceptance of the resolution. For the sake of clarity, the chair will then restate the decision that has been approved, so it can be captured correctly for the minutes.

All motions must begin with the words "I move that..." and all resolutions recorded as "Resolved that..." and the language of the body of both motion and resolution must track exactly.

Recording decisions

Once finalized, resolutions should be explicit, not only so there is no room for misinterpretation or misunderstanding, but also so that anyone reviewing the resolution in the future can understand its meaning and intent.

Individual votes are not recorded unless the panel has agreed to record the vote, or unless an individual panel member requests that their vote be noted.

The minutes are the official record of the meeting. They follow a standard template, as with agendas, the minutes record the time, date, location and type of meeting, the names of participants who attended the meeting or forwarded their regrets, the names of staff and guests in attendance, and a formal acknowledgment of the territory on which the meeting is taking place. The minutes state the nature of the matter before the panel, the reason the panel was asked to consider it, a note of the questions asked, and what action was taken by the panel, if any.

The draft minutes are added to the next meeting agenda for review and approval by the panel. The minutes are signed by the chair once approved by the panel. A log of all resolutions is kept by staff of the registrar's office and is a resource to the panel, if required. The panel will meet in camera, as per 1-19 (3) of the Bylaws, and the panel's activities, including all correspondence and documentation, will be maintained in confidence, subject to sections 26.2(2) to (6) of the Act.

The chair

As meeting facilitator, the chair is responsible for setting the tone of the meeting and ensuring good governance practices are adhered to. It is an active role to keep panel members engaged while building a safe, cohesive, and collaborative forum in which discussions can take place and clear decisions can be made. The chair opens the meeting with a First Nations land acknowledgement.

During the meeting

- For remote participants, check they are available to start the meeting and have the relevant material.
- Verify that remote participants can see and hear properly and review the general guidelines with them (e.g. muting the line when not speaking, identifying themselves, etc.).
- At the outset of the meeting (or, if need be, at any time during), ask attendees if they know of any conflicts of interest with agenda items under discussion.
- If a conflict of interest is identified by an attendee, allow time for them to leave the room, log off or disconnect their call, and then later rejoin the meeting.
- Remember that every agenda item has a purpose. Encourage participants to express their opinions but make sure that any decision reached is based on facts, and close the discussion ensuring that either its purpose is achieved, or another process has been triggered.
- Take time to seek views from each panel member. If discussion stalls, ask questions to unearth why, to ensure there are no gaps in understanding that need to be addressed.
- Actively promote good debate by asking for alternative or dissenting views when decisions are not straightforward.
- Acknowledge participants who ask an uncomfortable question or continue to ask questions because they are not yet satisfied or comfortable with the response.
- Draw attention to the College and PRP mandate to ensure panel members stay on track.
- If a question is asked, allow participants a moment to think of an answer, perhaps even giving them the opportunity to spend time formulating questions on their own or in pairs.
- Go around the table, asking participants by name for their comments or answers.
- Make sure there are sufficient pauses after asking a question to someone attending remotely.
- Ask a specific person a specific question rather than asking open-ended questions to the group (to avoid multiple people speaking up at once, which can happen on teleconferences).
- Read the room—if energy is low or conversation is waning, call a short break.

- When a resolution has been put forward, make sure that everyone understands what is being asked of them.
- Keep a list of issues that are more appropriately discussed offline or at another meeting.
- Remember to formally close the meeting, thanking all participants, including those attending remotely.
- Most importantly, inject warmth, humour and fun into the meeting wherever appropriate.

After the meeting

It is always good practice for the chair to debrief regularly with management and support staff as soon as possible to maintain strong and trusting relationships, and ensure that meetings continue to be managed effectively.

It is mandatory for all panel members to complete the meeting evaluation form within one week of the meeting.