NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF NURSING

NSCN CONTINUING COMPETENCE PROGRAM

GUIDE FOR NURSES

The Nova Scotia College of Nursing (NSCN) is the regulatory body for licensed practical nurses (LPNs), registered nurses (RNs) registered psychiatric nurses (RPNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in Nova Scotia. Our mandate is to protect the public by promoting the provision of safe, competent, ethical and compassionate nursing services by its registrants. The term nurse in this document refers to LPNs, RNs, RPNs and NPs unless otherwise stated.

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Our practice support tools are developed using current reference material. The source of this material is available upon request.

Overview of CCP

WHAT IS CCP?

Continuing competence is career-long enhancement of knowledge, skill, and judgment required to practise safely and ethically.

The CCP is a regulatory program and quality assurance mechanism outlined in the Nursing Act. Every nurse in Nova Scotia is required to complete the CCP requirements as part of their annual licensure requirement, regardless of their employment status.

The CCP provide a level of assurance to the public that nurses are continuously meeting their professional practice standards. This program contributes to our mandate of public protection by requiring every nurse in Nova Scotia to participate in reflective learning activities designed to help them maintain and enhance their professional competence every year.

INTEGRATION OF STANDARDS OF PRACTICE RELATED AND CCP

All nurses are accountable for their own practice and actions at all times and have a professional obligation to attain and maintain competence relevant to their practice area(s).

Competence is acquired and maintained through lifelong learning, the integration of learning into practice and reflective practice. As a result, the standards of practice serve as the foundation for the CCP requirements and is integrated into all of the CCP tools.

> For the purpose of CCP, the client includes any individuals, families, groups or communities who are the recipient of nursing services. For nurses in non-clinical positions, such as education or management, the client is the recipient of your services. As an educator for example, your client may be a student, nurse or other care provider. As a manager, your client may be your team or individuals on your team.

This obligation to attain and maintain competence is inherent in the standards of practice:

LPN STANDARD 1: Professional Accountability and Responsibility

Licensed Practical Nurses are accountable for their practice and responsible for ensuring that their practice and conduct meet both the standards of the profession and legislative requirements.

- 1.2 LPNs engage in ongoing self-assessment of their professional practice and competence, and seek opportunities for continuous learning.

RN STANDARD 1: Responsibility and Accountability

Registered nurses are responsible to practise safely, competently, compassionately and ethically and are accountable to clients, the employer, the profession and the public.

- 1.9 Demonstrating continuing professional development, including compliance with the NSCN Continuing Competence Program.

RN-AP STANDARD 1: Responsibility and Accountability

Registered nurse prescribers are accountable to prescribe (which includes medications, devices, and/or ordering screening and diagnostic tests) safely, competently, compassionately and ethically and are accountable to clients, the employer, the profession and the public.

- 1.10 Participate in NSCNs continuing competence program.

RPN STANDARD 3: Professional Responsibility and Accountability

The Registered Psychiatric Nurse is accountable for safe, competent and ethical psychiatric nursing practice that meets the standards of the profession and legislated requirements.

- 3.5 Assumes responsibility and accountability for continuing competence and for meeting continuing competence requirements.

NP STANDARD 1: Responsibility and Accountability

Nurse practitioners are accountable to provide safe, competent, compassionate and ethical care within their legislated scope of practice, educational preparation and individual competence. In their role, nurse practitioners are accountable to critically appraise evidence and to apply best practice in their client care.

- 1.3 Meet all requirements for licensure, quality assurance and auditing programs.
- 1.10 Engage in education and professional development activities to maintain their competence.

In addition to the NP standards, NPs must also to adhere to the RN Standards.

How to Complete the Program

WHAT ARE THE CCP STEPS?

STEP 1: Complete a Self-Assessment

Every year, you must conduct and document an assessment of your individual competence. The self-assessment must use the Standards of Practice as a reference point and be relevant to your current practice environment. The NSCN self-assessment tools are designed to stimulate personal and thoughtful reflection of individual nursing practice.

Complete your self-assessment using your specific nursing designation (LPN, RN, RN-AP or NP) Self-Assessment Tool.

You will never be required to submit your completed self-assessment to NSCN as part of the CCP audit process. Keep your completed self-assessment in a personal file at home.

STEP 2: Develop a Professional Growth Plan

The development and implementation of a professional growth plan is the blueprint you use to set, meet and reflect on your professional development goals.

Your professional growth plan must:

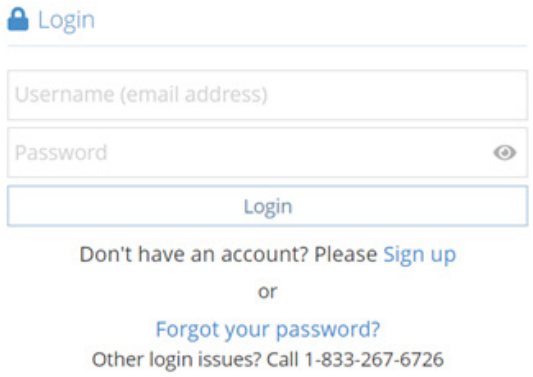
- Identify at least two activities with objectives on how you will gain that knowledge as well as clear timelines for completion.
- Identify which standard and indicator corresponds with your learning goals.

Some learning goals do ***not*** meet CCP requirements. It is important to note employer-mandated education and/or review of knowledge (e.g. CPR, WHMIS, lifts and transfers, etc.) are not considered acceptable learning goals as ***they are not specific to nursing*** and they also apply to a variety of non-nurse care providers .

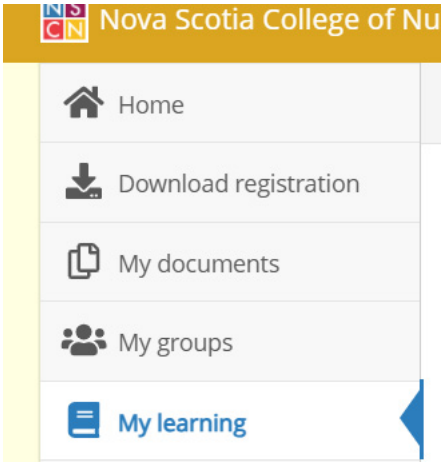
Complete your professional growth plan via the CCP module in the NSCN registrant portal.

How To Develop Your Professional Growth Plan (PGP) in Registrant Portal

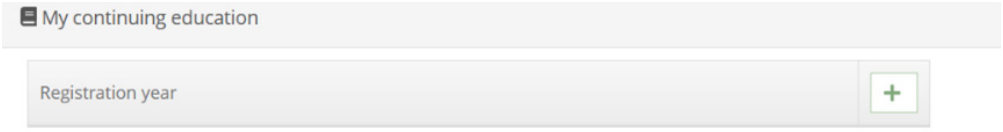
1. Your PGP can now be developed in the CCP module in the NSCN portal. This is the same portal you would be familiar with to renew your annual licence. Log in to the portal using the same username and password.



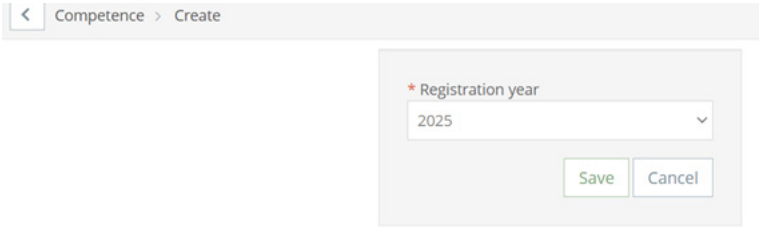
2. Once logged in to the portal, view the left-hand column and select 'My Learning'. Nurses will have the option of starting their professional growth plan for the current (in-progress) year through the "my learning" section. It is not a requirement to enter your PGP into the portal, unless you are selected to participate in the audit, it is an option if you would like to track your learning through the portal.



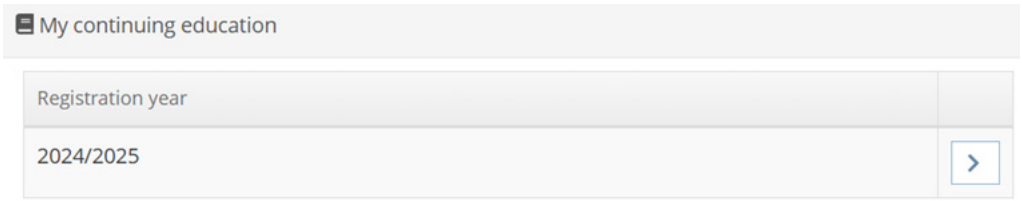
3. Once you select 'My Learning', next, click the + sign across from registration year and select the appropriate year.



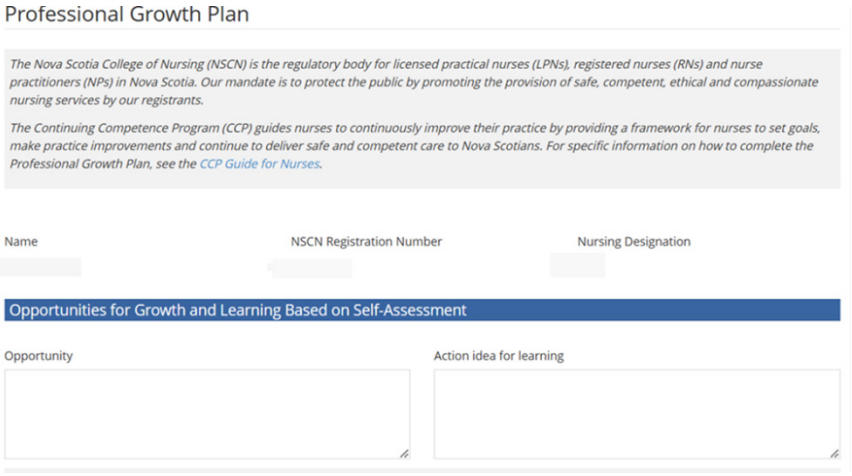
4. Once the appropriate year is selected using the dropdown, click save.



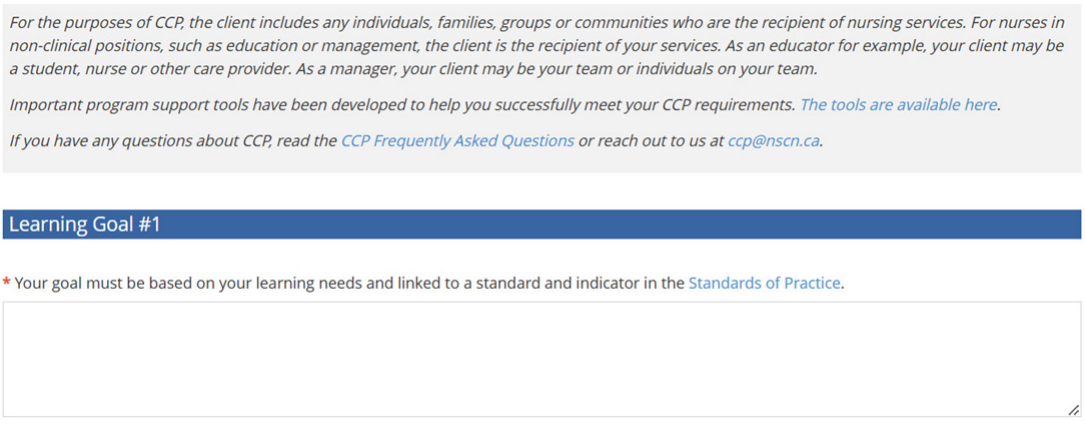
5. Next, click on the small arrow (>) to open the CCP module. Enter your 2024/2025 plan, which aligns with annual licence renewal from November 1st, 2024, to October 31st, 2025. After selecting the year, the professional growth plan will show.



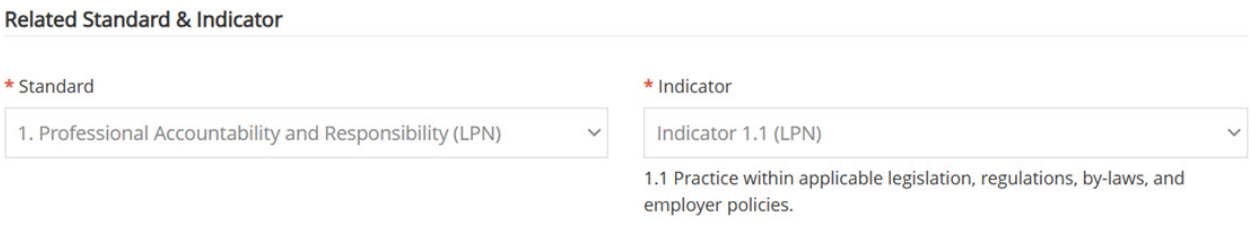
6. The first area of the PGP is the Opportunities for Growth and Learning Based on Self-Assessment section. Review your self-assessment and from it select the opportunities from the standards you identified as areas of growth and learning, and then add your action ideas for learning.



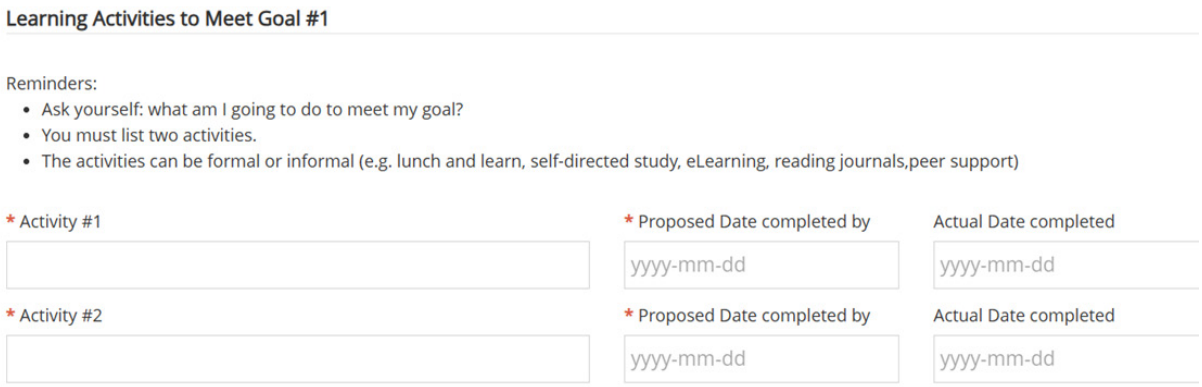
7. When you scroll down, type your learning goal in the box provided. We want to remind you to refer to the Standards of Practice to ensure your learning goal is aligned with them.



8. Using the dropdown arrows, select a relevant standard and indicator for your learning goal. You will see this repeated again for your second learning goal. It is important to note that the appropriate standards and indicators will show according to your designation. The example shown here uses the LPN standards and indicators. Your learning goal could be aligned with several standards and indicators; however, choose the most appropriate one from the dropdown.



9. For the next step, enter two learning activities that will help you to reach your learning goal. Enter a proposed date for completion, and when the activity is completed enter the actual date of completion at that time.

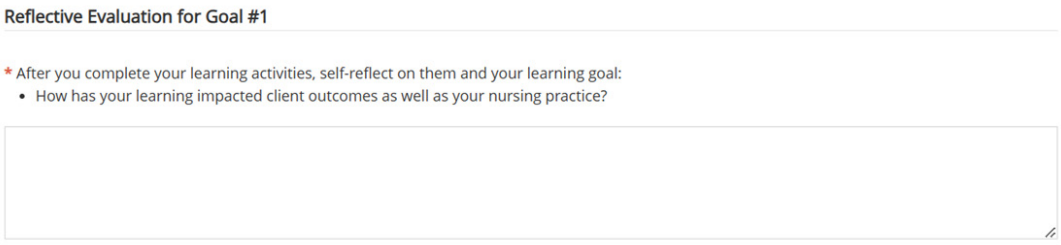


STEP 3: Complete a Reflective Evaluation

The purpose of the reflective evaluation is to give you an opportunity to think about the overall impact of your learning and to articulate how meeting the learning goals has improved client outcomes and enhanced your everyday practice.

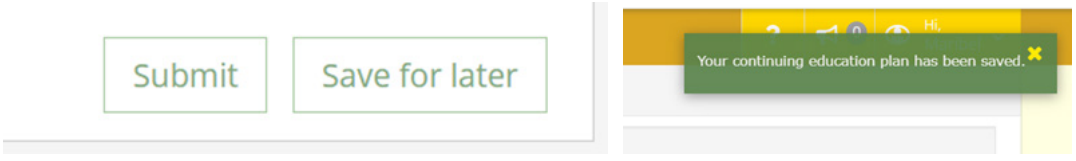
- There is a section in your professional growth plan tool that prompts you to document your reflection. You have successfully completed this step when you have completed this section of the professional growth plan.

10. When developing your professional growth plan, you will be able to enter your reflective evaluation in the space provided for each goal. If you have not completed your goal, you will not be able to complete this section. You can save it and complete it at a later time.



11. Scroll down and repeat this process for your second learning goal.

12. Next select, save for later. While your PGP is in the **development stage**, it is best to select **save for later**, so that you can continue to work on it throughout the year. When you select save for later, a message will appear at the top right-hand corner of the page to let you know it has been saved.



STEP 4: Participate in the Audit Process, If Selected

On a rotational basis, a randomly selected group of nurses must participate in the audit process.

More on the Audit Process

NSCN is required to conduct a CCP audit as part of meeting its mandate of public safety.

A randomly selected list of nurses is generated each year and registrants are notified by email in February.

Declaration of Compliance

As part of the audit process, those selected are required to complete the four-question declaration of compliance survey, which indicates that you are in compliance with the CCP expectations. The declaration of compliance survey will be sent to those nurses who are randomly selected.

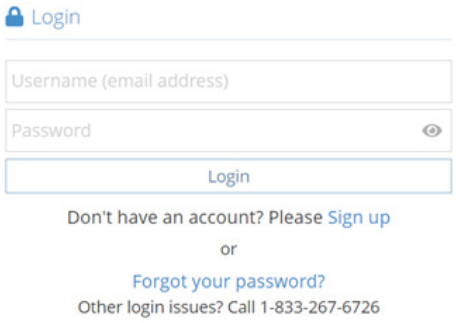
Professional Growth Plan Submission

If selected, you are required to submit a copy of your completed retrospective professional growth plan to NSCN (the plan you developed from Nov 1, 2023-Oct 31, 2024 dates) for verification. For those selected for an audit, this plan will be required to be submitted using the NSCN portal. You will be notified in February with further instructions and support including a recorded webinar and the option of a live webinar session.

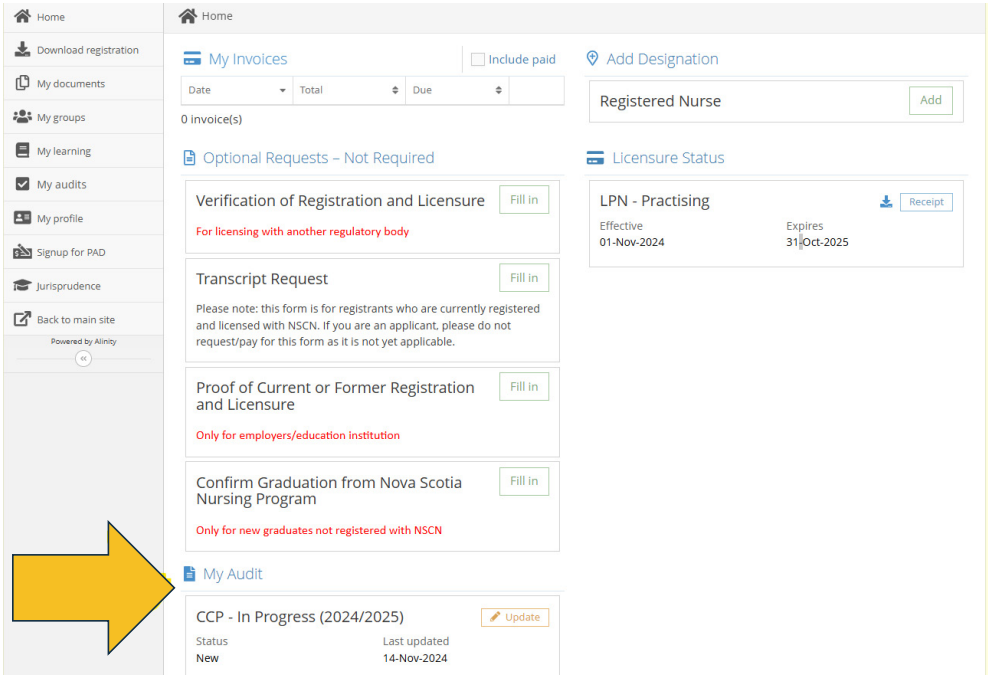
Those randomly selected to submit their professional growth plan will have 60 days to review and submit a copy of their completed plan to NSCN.

How to Submit Your Professional Growth Plan for Audit in the Registrant Portal

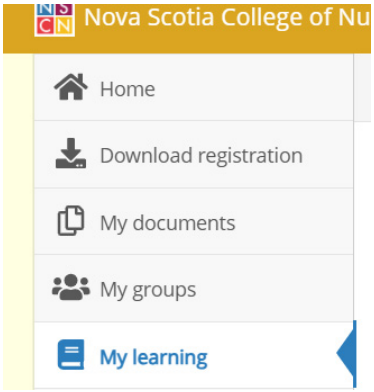
1. Log in to the NSCN Registrant Portal.



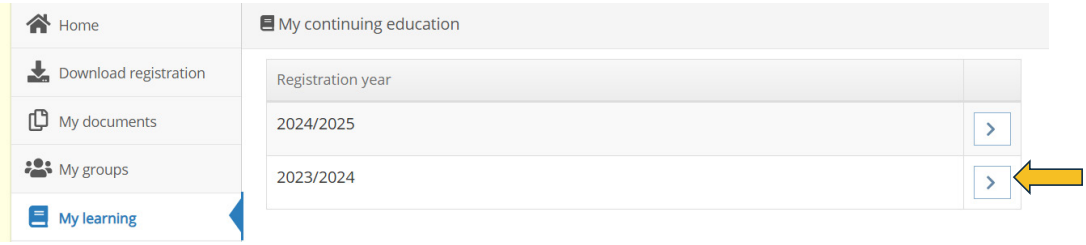
2. If you are selected for the audit, when you sign into your portal you will see a 'my audit section' as shown in the image below. If you have not been selected for the audit this year, there will be no section for 'my audit' showing on your portal.



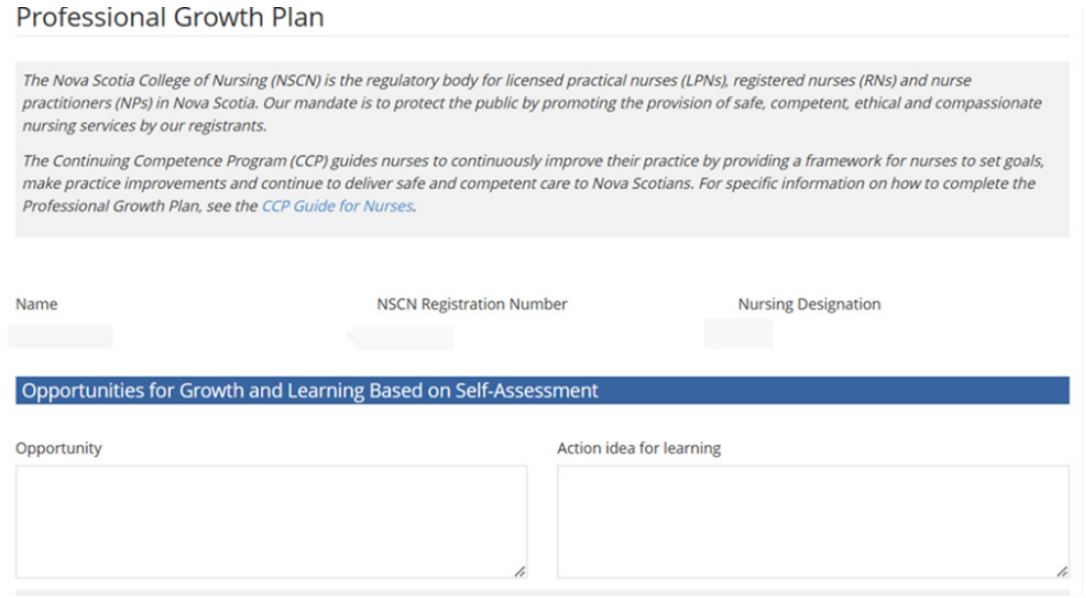
3. Once logged in to the registrant portal, view the left-hand column and select ‘My Learning’ which will open the image shown in the next step. Nurses who have been audited will enter their learning plan for the previous year (ie. Audit for 2025 will select dropdown year 2023/2024 through the “my learning” section).



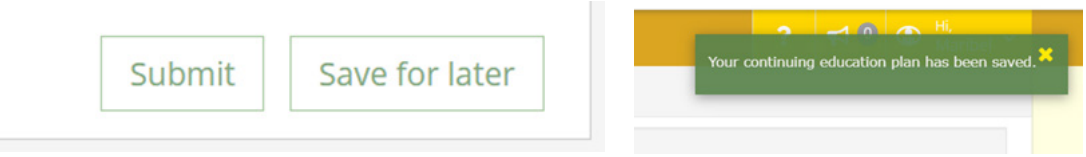
4. If you have been selected for audit, you must select the 2023/2024 registration year by clicking the blue arrow. When the year is selected, a PGP form will open as shown in the next step.



5. Enter your PGP using the same instructions noted above in the How To Develop Your Professional Growth Plan in Registrant Portal section. **Please note:** All fields with a red asterisk will need to be completed before you can select submit. If there are areas missing the system will let you know, complete those sections and submit again.



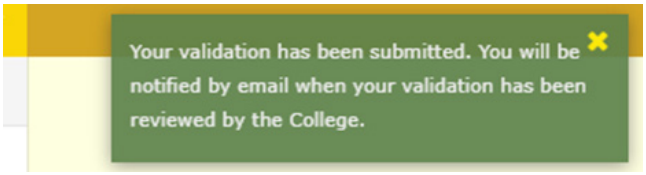
6. When finalizing your PGP for the CCP audit, you are required to select submit. **Do not select submit unless you have received notification that you have been selected for audit.**



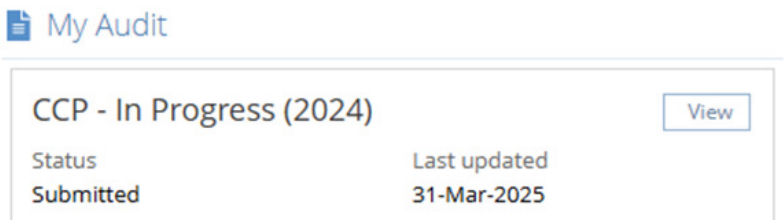
7. Next, from left hand column select ‘My Audit’, then click the arrow in the CCP- In progress (2024) section, the PGP you entered under my learning will automatically show here.

8. Then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click submit again.

9. After clicking submit a message will appear at the top of your screen to let you know it has been submitted the college will review.



10. On the bottom of the homepage, you will now see that it has been submitted for the audit and is in progress until verified by the College.



Once NSCN receives your submission

Each professional growth plan will be reviewed by NSCN staff against a scoring rubric to determine if there is enough information to verify compliance with the CCP as evidenced by:

- Appropriate learning goals and activities to meet the identified goals
- Implementation within the prescribed time frame
- Clear reflection articulating the impact the learning has had on client outcomes and individual nursing practice.

You will be notified of the outcome and whether you:

- Meet verification criteria
- Are required to submit more information or;
- Are required to resubmit a professional growth plan

Additional Support

CCP RESOURCES

- CCP FAQs
- NSCN Self-Assessment Tools
  - LPN
  - RN
  - RN-AP
  - RPN
  - NP
- NSCN Professional Growth Plan Tool
- RPN FAQ

Do you have any other CCP-related question?

Please contact a NSCN Practice Consultant by emailing ccp@nscn.ca.