



The College of Naturopaths of Ontario

ELECTION HANDBOOK

Council Elections 2026
Two positions available



Introduction

This Election Handbook is provided to inform registrants of the College of Naturopaths of Ontario (the College) about the upcoming election to the Council of the College. Registrants are being advised about the election, its timing, and the process to stand for election to the Council.

About the Council and the College

The College regulates naturopathic doctors to protect and serve the public interest. The College protects Ontarian's rights to safe, competent, and ethical care by supporting naturopathic doctors to maintain the standards of practice of the profession, and by holding them accountable for their conduct and practice.

The College is one of 26 health regulatory colleges in Ontario that are established as self-regulating professions. This means first, that naturopathic doctors take part in determining the rules that govern the profession, i.e., they are members of Council. Second, self-regulation means that naturopathic doctors are accountable for their own conduct, i.e., they are accountable to self-regulate, with the College providing assistance and oversight.

A Council, like a board of directors, directs the work of the College. The role of Council¹ is to:

- ensure the College follows its mandate and the law,
- set strategy and check performance, and
- hold the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to account for delivery.

The work of the Council is undertaken solely in the interest of the public.

The Council is made up of naturopathic doctors (who have been elected by their peers) and members of the public (who have been appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario). The College is given its mandate to regulate naturopathic practice in Ontario and give health-care consumers a strong voice in the regulatory process through the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA).

When registrants of the profession elect a peer to sit on the Council, they do so because they believe that the individual is best able to stand for the public interest. **Elected Council members are not responsible to the registrants who elect them, but rather to the public of Ontario.**

When an individual seeks election to the Council, they do so because they believe that they can make sound and reasoned decisions that serve the public interest.

Process for Election

¹ An Inquiry into the performance of the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia and the Health Professions Act. Harry Cayton, CBE, FFHP. December 2019, page 20 (paragraph 3.47).

On December 10, 2025, the Council of the College approved by-law amendments changing the process for the election of professional members to the Council. The new process is set out in article 10.08 of the by-laws and may be summarized as follows:

- 120 days before the election, the Governance Committee will review the Council Profile to determine where there are gaps in the desired skills, expertise, and diversity of the Council in accordance with the Council's policy. In doing so, the Committee will establish the desired skills for applicants seeking to be elected.
- 90 days before the election, the CEO will notify all registrants of the date, time and place of the election and the application procedure to be a candidate, including the deadline for applications as well as the desired skills, expertise and diversity requirements established by the Governance Committee.
- The Governance Committee will establish a panel to review the applications to stand for election against the following criteria:
 - The eligibility requirements set out in article 10.05 of the by-laws,
 - The competencies set out by the Council in its Qualifying Program Policy,
 - The skills, expertise and diversity requirements established in accordance with the Council policy of the same name.
- After the panel completes its review, but no later than 40 days before the election, the CEO will inform applicants of the outcome of the review and the process for appealing the outcome to the Governance Committee.
- At the end of the review by the Governance Committee, the final slate of candidates will be established, and the CEO will inform all registrants of the candidates in the election.
- 15 days before the election, all registrants will be invited to cast their ballot electronically.
- At the close of balloting, the candidates will be informed of the outcome, and, after the conclusion of the recount opportunity, registrants will be informed.

Districts

On December 10, 2025, when the Council of the College approved the by-law amendments noted above, it also eliminated the seven electoral districts in favour of a single district for the Province of Ontario. There will continue to be seven professional members elected to the Council on a staggered basis based on the former district model. In 2026, two positions will be open for election.

In any election, each registrant will be able to cast the same number of votes as the number of positions open. That means that for 2026, each registrant will be entitled to vote for two candidates from the final slate of candidates.

Terms

To maintain the staggered election schedule for the future, those candidates elected in 2026 will serve a three-year term and will be subject to re-election in 2029.

Acclamation

If the final slate of candidates is equal to or less than the two positions available, those candidates approved to stand for election will be deemed elected by acclamation. If this occurs, no balloting will be required.

Election Schedule

The following Schedule will govern the 2026 Council Election:

Step	Date/Deadline
A formal Call for Applications will be issued by the College.	January 12, 2026
Any registrant who may be interested in seeking nomination must attend a mandatory orientation session.	January 28, 2026, 1:00 p.m., or February 5, 2026, 10:30 a.m.
<p>The College must receive Part 1 of the Application to Stand as a Candidate in the Election. The form includes the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background of the applicant Confirmation of eligibility Conflict of interest declarations Agreement on Duties if Elected Competency Assessment. 	February 12, 2026, 5:00 p.m.
Panel Review – A panel of the Governance Committee will review the applications and determine whether the individuals meet the competencies, are eligible for election and meet the criteria set under the Skills, Expertise, and Diversity policy of the Council.	February 26, 2026
Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the Governance Committee Panel Review.	March 3, 2026
Applicants who were not approved to stand as a candidate may appeal to the Governance Committee.	March 9, 2026
Approved applicants will be invited to complete Part 2 of the Election Form and	March 9, 2026

provide the required information by the deadline.	
Applicants notified of Governance Committee appeal outcome.	March 13, 2026
Registrants who are ineligible to vote will be informed and given an opportunity to appeal. (See "Eligibility to Vote" below).	March 13, 2026
Balloting of registrants opens.	March 23, 2026, 12:01 a.m.
Close of balloting.	April 13, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
Candidates advised of the outcome of election.	April 19, 2026
Deadline for request for recount.	April 20, 2026, 5:00 p.m.
Deadline for recount.	April 24, 2026
Profession advised of election outcome.	April 25, 2026
Council initial training.	May 26, 2026
First meeting of Council.	May 27, 2026

Additional information about the various aspects of this schedule is provided below. Registrants and candidates will be advised throughout this process of the dates for each step of the elections.

Eligibility to Vote

A registrant is eligible to vote in an election for members of Council if, on the day of the election, the registrant,

- i. holds a certificate of registration, i.e., they have not been suspended
- ii. has their principal place of practice or, if they hold a certificate of registration in the Inactive Class of Registration, their principal place of residence, in the Province of Ontario.
- iii. is not in default of any fees or other amounts owed to the College; and
- iv. is not in default of returning any required form or information to the College.

All registrants will be advised by e-mail as to whether they are eligible to vote and if they are eligible, how to submit a ballot, and if they are not eligible, why they have been deemed to be ineligible by the CEO.

Any registrant who is deemed ineligible may ask the Governance Committee to review their status. The process for seeking an appeal will be outlined in the e-mail advising a registrant that they are ineligible. The Governance Committee's decision on the matter will be final.

Eligibility to Stand for Election

A registrant is eligible for election to Council if: the registrant has applied to the Governance Committee and been approved to be a candidate for election in accordance with the by-laws; the registrant has completed and returned the Election Package; and if, on the deadline for the receipt of nominations and up to and including the date of the election, the registrant:

- (i) holds a certificate of registration in the General Class or Inactive Class;
- (ii) is principally engaged in the practise of the profession in Ontario or, if they hold a certificate of registration in the Inactive Class of Registration, they principally reside in the Province of Ontario;
- (iii) is not in default of payment of any fees or other amounts owed to the College;
- (iv) is not the subject of any disciplinary or incapacity proceeding;
- (v) has not been the subject of any professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity finding in the preceding three years;
- (vi) has not had their certificate of registration revoked or suspended in the preceding six years for any reason other than non-payment of fees or failure to return information to the College;
- (vii) holds a certificate of registration that is not subject to a term, condition, or limitation imposed by either the Discipline Committee or the Fitness to Practise Committee;
- (viii) has not held any position such as director, owner, board member, officer, or employee with a professional association relating to naturopathy for a minimum of two years prior to seeking election;
- (ix) has not held any position such as director, owner, board member, or officer that with an educational institution relating to naturopathy for a minimum of two years prior to seeking election;
- (x) has not been disqualified from Council within the preceding three years;
- (xi) is not a member of a council of any other college established pursuant to Schedule 1 of RHPA;
- (xii) is not an employee of the College;
- (xiii) does not have any real or perceived conflict of interest as defined in the by-laws and as determined by the CEO or has agreed to remove any such conflict of interest before taking office;
- (xiv) has complied with the Election Package of the College;
- (xv) is not in default of returning any required form or information to the College;
- (xvi) has no concerning social media posts relating to any regulated profession;
- (xvii) has not initiated, joined, materially contributed, or continued a legal proceeding against the College or any Committee or representative of the College; and

(xviii) meets the competencies required and has successfully completed any qualifying process established by the Council.

All applications received by the College will be reviewed by a Panel of the Governance Committee for the eligibility of the nominated individual to stand for election. If you have any questions about whether you are eligible to stand for election to the Council, please contact the CEO of the College. Contact information is provided below.

Application Procedures

Registrants who are interested in being a candidate for election will be invited to complete two forms as part of the process.

Part 1 is the Application to be a Candidate for Election to Council 2026. This form collects vital information for the Panel of the Governance Committee to determine the eligibility of the applicant, including:

- the name, registration number, and contact information of the applicant,
- the applicant's background information, including whether they meet the skills, expertise and diversity requirements established by the Governance Committee,
- whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria set in article 10.05 of the by-laws,
- whether the applicant has any conflicts of interest that may affect their eligibility or ability to serve on the Council,
- whether the applicant agrees to be bound by the duties of a Council member if they are elected.

This on-line form must be completed by 5:00 pm on February 12, 2026.

Applicants who are approved by the panel of the Governance Committee to be candidates, and those who appeal and are approved by the full Governance Committee, will be invited to complete Part 2 – Candidate Information to Stand for Election to Council 2026. This form collects the final information to support the election, including:

- confirmation of the name, registration number, and contact information of the applicant,
- whether the candidate will agree to the Election Undertaking,
- whether the candidate will agree to the Fiduciary Duties Undertaking,
- the statement and biography of the candidate for presentation to the registrants.

This on-line form must be completed by March 9, 2026.

Competency and Qualifying Program

In September 2021, the Council of the College approved a new policy that instituted a Qualifying Program in accordance with Section 10.05 of the by-laws. Under this policy, for a registrant to be eligible for election to the Council or appointment to Council Committees, an individual must

have the competencies necessary to perform the duties assigned to them and must have successfully completed the Qualifying Program.

Competency Framework

The competency framework instituted by the Council establishes two sets of related competencies. The first set of competencies are those for election of a candidate and what they must have to be eligible. The second set of competencies are those that a candidate must be willing to learn while on the job.

The competencies that a candidate must have include the following.

- An understanding of and ability to provide leadership, including:
 - The importance of dialogue and the ability to interact with others to draw out thought and information.
 - The importance of working in collaboration with management.
 - The importance of Council and committee evaluation processes.
 - The importance of competency-based selection processes.
 - The importance of succession planning.
- An understanding of the public sector and health systems, including:
 - A broad commitment to the public and people of Ontario.
 - Knowledge of the public interest and can place the public's interest above the profession's interests.
 - Knowledge of the health care system broadly.
 - Knowledge of health regulation.

The competencies a candidate must be willing to learn include the following.

- An understanding of or willingness to learn about governance responsibilities, including:
 - The role of the Council and committees.
 - The role of the Council Chair and management.
 - The role of individual Council and committee members.
 - The legal and ethical responsibilities when holding a position of trust.
 - The importance of being independent in thought.
- An understanding of or willingness to learn about financial and organizational oversight, including:
 - The concept of risk management and risk mitigation.
 - The process for managing people, including recruiting, and retaining people.
 - Assessing financial information and can read, interpret, and question financial statements.
- An understanding of or willingness to learn about governing effectively, including:
 - The meaning and importance of conflict of interest.
 - The importance of ethical decision-making.
 - How unconscious bias can negatively impact decision-making and ways to identify these biases.
 - How the above noted issues can impact the reputation of the organization.

Competencies are assessed through a self-assessment questionnaire and reviewed by the Governance Committee of the Council. The questionnaire is a 30-question multiple choice assessment.

Qualifying Program

The Qualifying Program includes two elements. The first is an orientation presentation and discussion conducted by the CEO on key components of the Council and its responsibilities, including but not limited to the qualifications to seek election or appointment, the mandate of the College, the role of Council and staff, duties and responsibilities for Council and Committee members, time commitments, compensation provided, training and evaluation requirements, on-going support from Council, Committees and staff and the processes for election/appointment.

Orientation sessions for the Qualifying Program have been scheduled for January 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. EST and on February 5, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. EST. You may register for either session using [this on-line form](#).

The second element is a meeting with a panel of the Governance Committee where the Committee and potential nominee will review the orientation session, the competency assessment results, their education and experience as well as whether and how they meet the skills, expertise and diversity requirements established by the Committee.

The intent of the Qualifying Program is to ensure that the nominee is aware of the work involved in being on Council, the people that they will serve and how the Council conducts its business. The desired outcome is to approve as many qualified candidates as possible.

Balloting

The by-laws of the College enable registrants to vote electronically. As a means of managing the resources of the College effectively, electronic balloting will be instituted for this election of the Council.

All registrants who are eligible to vote will be provided with a unique username and password (herein referred to as “log on information”) for the College website, which enables them to review candidate information and complete the ballot. This log on information for elections is different than the log on information registrants use to complete renewals or update their own records.

Registrants will be able to vote for the number of positions available on the Council. For 2026, that is two positions. Each registrant will therefore have access to one ballot where they may select up to two of the candidates listed on the slate.

The database will track whether a registrant has voted, and the candidates selected (although this latter information is not available for general review by the registrants or staff of the College and is only required for recount purposes). Once a registrant has voted, they will not be able to vote again or change their vote.

Online balloting will open on March 23, 2026, at 12:01 a.m. EST and will close on April 13, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. EST.

Biography and Personal Statement

Registrants who are seeking to be a candidate in the election are required to provide a biography and personal statement. The biography should be a brief (300 words or less) outline of their professional history. It must be in paragraph form (bullet points are not permitted). The biography is not a curriculum vitae or resume but a summary of the highlights of one's career.

The personal statement should also be brief (300 words or less) and should outline why the nominee wishes to sit on the Council. The personal statement must also be in paragraph form and not include bulleted lists.

Both the biography and personal statement submitted must:

- not be (or potentially be) libelous, offensive or in bad taste.
- not be in violation of any law or the College's Rules of Conduct.
- reflect the College's mandate of protecting the public interest.
- not make promises to change or commit to making changes to the College's by-laws, regulations, standards of practice, policies, or position statements.
- not promote or advocate on behalf of the profession or indicate an intent to do so if elected.
- be submitted in either English or French (note: the College will not translate the summary or the statement into English or French should it be provided in any other language).
- be limited to the 300 words or less for each section as noted above; and
- a Word format version may be uploaded to the form.

The Governance Committee will review and approve all materials submitted. If in the sole discretion of the Governance Committee the candidate's biography and/or personal statement do not meet the stated specifications, the Committee reserves the right to truncate the documents unilaterally, without further input from, or consultation with, the respective candidate.

Any candidate who cannot provide an approved biography and/or statement by the required deadline will be listed on the information sent to registrants with their name only.

Campaigning Principles

As noted above, the College will circulate information about candidates standing for election to registrants. The College will not release the mailing address or any other information of registrants to any candidates. Candidates who wish to engage in additional campaign activities do so at their own cost.

Any campaign activities must reflect the College's mandate of protecting the public interest. Candidates must not make promises to change or commit to making changes to the College's by-laws, regulations, standards of practice, policies, or position statements. Candidates must not promote or advocate for the profession or any advocacy group.

All activities and statements must comply with the regulations, by-laws and [Ontario Human Rights Code](#).

Candidates for election to the Council must neither seek nor allow an endorsement from a current (sitting) member of the Council nor imply that the College has endorsed their candidacy. Candidates may not use the logo, colours or any symbols or watermarks of the College.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists where a reasonable person would conclude that a Council or Committee member's personal or financial interest may affect their judgment or the discharge of their duties to the College. A conflict of interest may be real or perceived, actual or potential, or direct or indirect.

All Council and Committee members have a duty to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that serves and protects the interest of the public. As such, they must not engage in any activities or in decision-making concerning any matters where they have a direct or indirect personal or financial interest. All Council and Committee members have a duty to uphold and further the intent of the *Naturopathy Act, 2007*, to regulate the practice and profession of naturopathy in Ontario in the public interest, and not to represent the views of advocacy or special interest groups.

A conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest by a member of Council or its Committees could:

- bring discredit to the College,
- amount to a breach of the fiduciary obligation of the person to the College, and
- create liability for the College and/or the person involved.

As a result, the Council has very clear rules outlined in the by-laws surrounding conflict of interest and very clear governing policies that establish how a member of the Council or its Committees must behave if they are in a conflict of interest about a matter upon which they are expected to make a decision.

Many conflicts of interest are situational in nature, that is, they arise because of a specific issue or matter before the Council and can therefore be addressed through procedure. Other conflicts are inherent in a position an individual might hold in a separate organization. In these instances, the conflict of interest goes beyond specific issues or matters before the Council or its Committees and is pervasive among all matters. In such cases, the individual who might be seeking to be a candidate for election would be disqualified.

The by-laws of the College detail two situations where the conflict of interest is pervasive and unresolvable. These are as follows:

- an individual holds a responsible position in any professional association relating to naturopathy, including but not necessarily limited to a position as director, owner, board member, or officer or is an employee; or

- an individual holds a responsible position in any educational institution relating to naturopathy, including but not necessarily limited to a position as director, owner, board member, or officer.

A “responsible person” within an organization is an individual who directly or indirectly makes or influences decision-making within the organization. A person who is solely responsible for implementing decisions made by others would not likely be seen as a responsible person.

The by-laws provide some examples of typical titles of individuals in an organization who would be considered a responsible person. These include an owner, board member, officer, or director of an organization. However, this list is not exhaustive and positions carrying other titles might also be deemed a responsible person and individuals holding these titles might be deemed not to be a responsible person depending on the role that they play within that organization.

The College has developed a Conflict-of-Interest Declarations section within the application form which all nominees must complete and return as part of the election process. The elections process serves two purposes. First, it allows the College to identify candidates that may potentially be “responsible persons” for further evaluation. Second, for candidates who are elected to the Council, it allows the Council to identify in advance potential instances where a conflict of interest might arise. For example, a member of Council who is also active in a charity would declare a conflict of interest if the Council were determining whether to undertake charitable activities and if so, which charity or charities to support.

Members of councils and boards often have the belief that in declaring a conflict of interest that they may be suggesting some wrongdoing. In fact, the opposite is true. Declaring or even exploring when a member has a potential conflict of interest indicates that the member is aware of the importance of the decision-making body, and the issues in which they might participate, and that they have placed the interests of that body above their own. This is how one might act in the public interest.

The Governance Committee will address any concerns about unresolvable conflicts of interest. Individuals who have such a conflict of interest are given the opportunity under the by-laws to resign the other position that places them in conflict or withdraw their nomination for election.

Role of the CEO and Governance Committee in Elections

The CEO supervises and administers the election. The CEO may, subject to the by-laws:

- appoint returning officers and scrutineers.
- establish procedures and any necessary deadlines including procedures relating to the receipt of nominations, biographies, personal statements, and ballots (or equivalent if voting is done electronically).
- establish procedures for the opening and counting of ballots (or equivalent if voting is done electronically).
- provide for the notification of the results of the election to all candidates and registrants.
- provide for the destruction of ballots (or equivalent if voting is done electronically) following an election; and

- do anything else that the CEO deems necessary and appropriate to ensure that the election is fair and effective.

The Governance Committee is responsible for:

- reviewing and making a final ruling on any disputes regarding a registrant's eligibility to vote in an election,
- setting the skills, expertise and diversity requirements of applicants seeking election to the Council,
- ensuring applicants meet the eligibility requirements and competencies necessary of Council members,
- reviewing and deciding on the acceptability of the biography and personal statement submitted by a candidate for election.
- upon a referral from the Council, holding an inquiry into the validity of the election of the Council member and making a report and recommendations to the Council.

Training & First Council Meeting

All candidates elected must ensure that they block the full days of May 26 and 27, 2026, to attend Council training and the first Council meeting of the new cycle. Materials for this meeting will be provided on or before May 16, 2026.

Contact Information for Questions

Any registrant who has questions about the Election Handbook or related matters is invited to contact the College as follows:

Andrew Parr, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
Telephone: 416-583-6010
Toll Free: 1-877-316-1925
E-mail: general@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca