

# Recertification focus groups

## Introduction

Thank you for taking part in our focus groups.

After [consulting](#) with practitioners and stakeholders on proposed changes, Council issued an [outcomes document](#) in March 2019 outlining its decision to implement a new recertification programme.

We have now developed a preliminary design for the new recertification programme to put Council's decisions into practice. We want to test our thinking with practitioners and key stakeholders before we finalise this design and present it to Council for approval at its December meeting.

We want to be sure that we get the design right as this will be the basis for writing the new recertification programme policy, developing additional guidance for practitioners and designing the new information technology (IT) systems required.

Please note that the focus group discussion will not revisit the decisions Council has already made. However, we are open to amending how the processes will work if practitioners suggest something that is better than we have come up. We are seeking your perspective and feedback on the detailed processes that are needed to implement Council's decisions.

## The preliminary design – areas for discussion

The focus group will be interactive. Please read the attached one-page information sheets prior to the focus group. These cover the policy and processes related to the key requirements of the new recertification programme that will be set in 2020:

- Professional peer
- Professional peer confirmation
- Professional development plan (PDP)
- Professional development activities (PDAs)
- Written reflection
- Eye health.

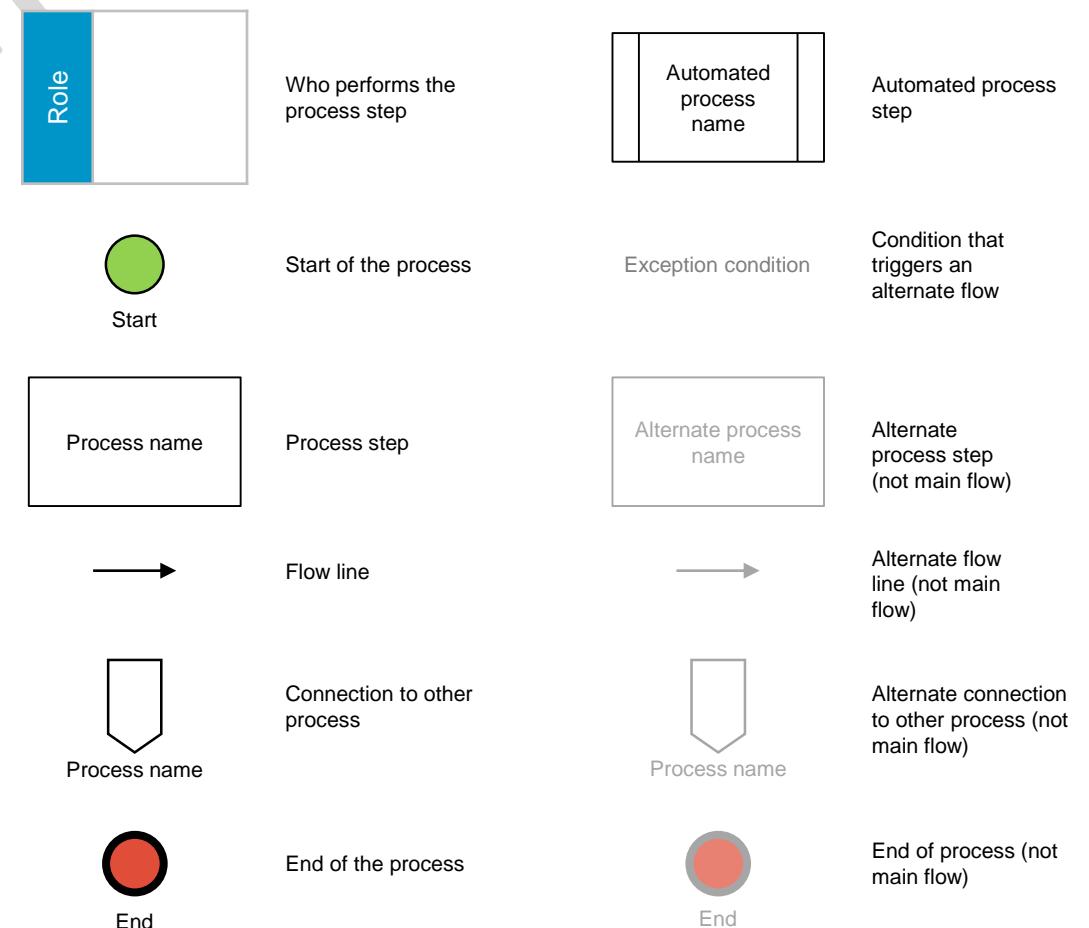
## The preliminary design – background materials

The discussion at the focus groups will cover a range of design topics for each requirement. Some items in particular have been highlighted as “key questions” for discussion during the focus groups.

On the next page is an end-to-end view of the new processes, who is responsible for the process and when the first set of declarations need to be made to the Registrar. It also includes our thinking about how much notice Council needs to give under section 41(4) of the Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) allowing practitioners reasonable time to comply with the requirements.

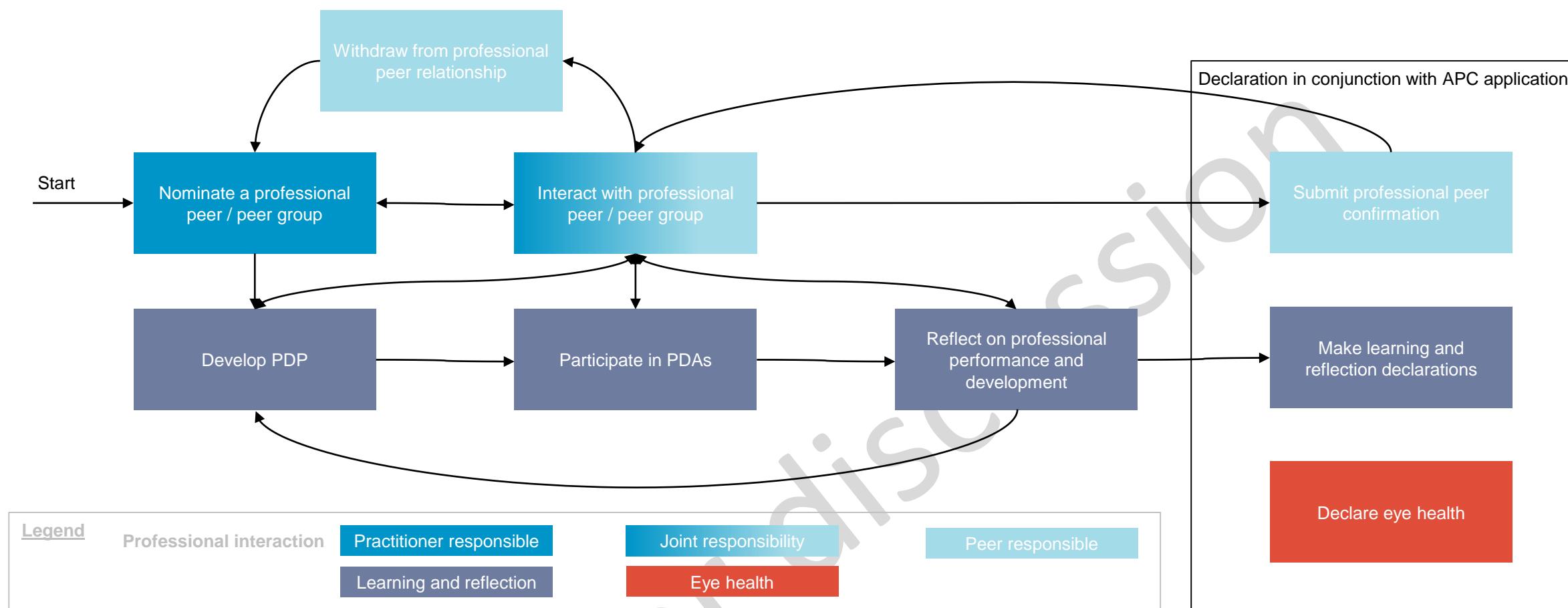
On subsequent pages each process is described in more detail:

- **Consultation outcomes** – a reminder of the decisions Council has already made about how the new recertification programme will work
- **Draft policy features** – our current thinking about how Council will articulate the recertification programme requirements as required by the Act. Please note, we will also develop additional guidance that may include videos, handbooks, templates and examples to help practitioners understand the policy. This additional guidance will be the subject of further focus group sessions in March 2020.
- **How the process will work** – this section is made up of a number of parts:



# End-to-end view of recertification processes

This diagram shows the relationships between and the sequencing of the various recertification processes, who is responsible and when declarations are required:



## Start dates for the new recertification programme

Council proposes to set the new programme before the end of March 2020 and allow sufficient time for practitioners to get ready to meet the new requirements\*. In the first year practitioners will need to find a professional peer and declare their peer to Council. In the following year practitioners will need to make declarations about all requirements of the recertification programme:

### Dentists and dental specialists

Requirement	Declaration by 1 October 2020	Declaration by 1 October 2021
Professional peer	✓	✓
PDP		✓
PDAs		✓
Written reflection		✓
Peer confirmation		✓
Eye health		✓

### Other oral health professions

Requirement	Declaration by 1 April 2021	Declaration by 1 April 2022
Professional peer	✓	✓
PDP		✓
PDAs		✓
Written reflection		✓
Peer confirmation		✓
Eye health		✓

#### Key question:

Do these timeframes allow enough time for practitioners to meet the requirements before they submit their first declarations?

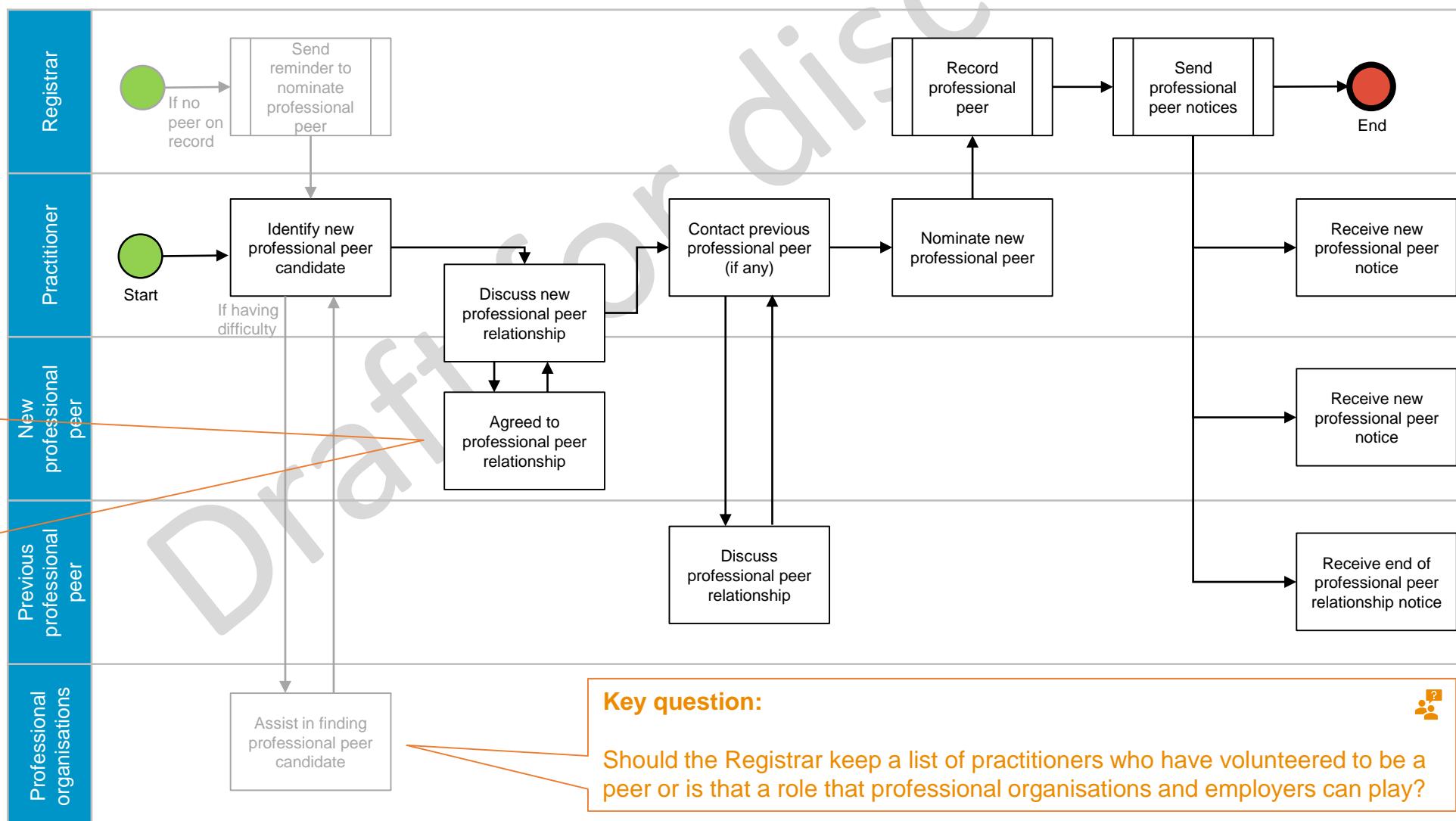
\* Section 41(4) requires that “every recertification programme must allow a reasonable time for a practitioner to whom it relates to comply with its requirements”

# 1. Nominate a professional peer

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to nominate a professional peer to support and help them maintain or advance their professional knowledge and skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practitioners who are not already participating in a collegial study group or collegial programme through their professional association or workplace (set up for the purpose of maintaining or advancing professional knowledge and skills) will need to find a peer.</li> <li>All practitioners will nominate a professional peer before the beginning of the recertification period.</li> </ul>

## How the process will work



## Draft policy features

Requirement to identify a professional peer:

- A practitioner subject to the recertification programme must have a nominated professional peer recorded with the Registrar before the start of their next APC cycle.
- The Registrar must advise:
  - any previous professional peer that the practitioner has withdrawn from the professional peer relationship
  - the new professional peer that they have been nominated by the practitioner.

Definition of a professional peer:

- Section 5 of the Act defines a professional peer "in relation to a health practitioner, is a person who is registered with the same authority with which the health practitioner is registered"
- For the purposes of the recertification programme, a professional peer must also:
  - be freely chosen by the practitioner
  - have freely agreed to be the professional peer for that practitioner
  - be willing and able to provide knowledge and credible feedback relevant to the practitioner's professional development.
- A professional peer may be part of a peer group, but one practitioner from the peer group must be nominated to the Registrar as the professional peer.

### Key questions:

Would you fit this definition of a professional peer?

What training should be provided to a peer?

### Key question:

Will this arrangement work for existing peer groups?

What is a workable size for peer groups?

### Key question:

Should the new professional peer be required to actively "accept" the relationship via the Dental Council online system, or should it be the practitioner's responsibility to confirm that the professional peer has agreed?

### Key question:

Should the Registrar keep a list of practitioners who have volunteered to be a peer or is that a role that professional organisations and employers can play?

## 2. Interact with professional peer

### Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to nominate a professional peer to support and help them maintain or advance their professional knowledge and skills.	Practitioners will work with their professional peer (as appropriate) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and review their PDP</li> <li>• Choose PDAs to meet the learning objectives identified in their PDP</li> <li>• Complete their written reflective statement of their PDP learning objective and outcomes from participation in their chosen PDAs.</li> </ul>

### Draft policy features

Requirement for a practitioner to interact:

- A practitioner must:
  - initiate interactions with their professional peer during their APC cycle
  - make their PDP, PDAs and written reflection available to the professional peer
  - take reasonable steps to:
    - provide advance notice of interactions
    - agree a mutually convenient time, medium and location.
  - consider any feedback given by a professional peer in good faith, but is not obliged to accept the feedback
  - keep a record of professional peer interactions as part of their PDP.
- If a practitioner does not meet these requirements a professional peer may:
  - seek independent facilitation or mediation
  - raise a concern with the Registrar
  - decline to confirm that the practitioner has met the recertification programme requirements
  - withdraw from the professional peer relationship.

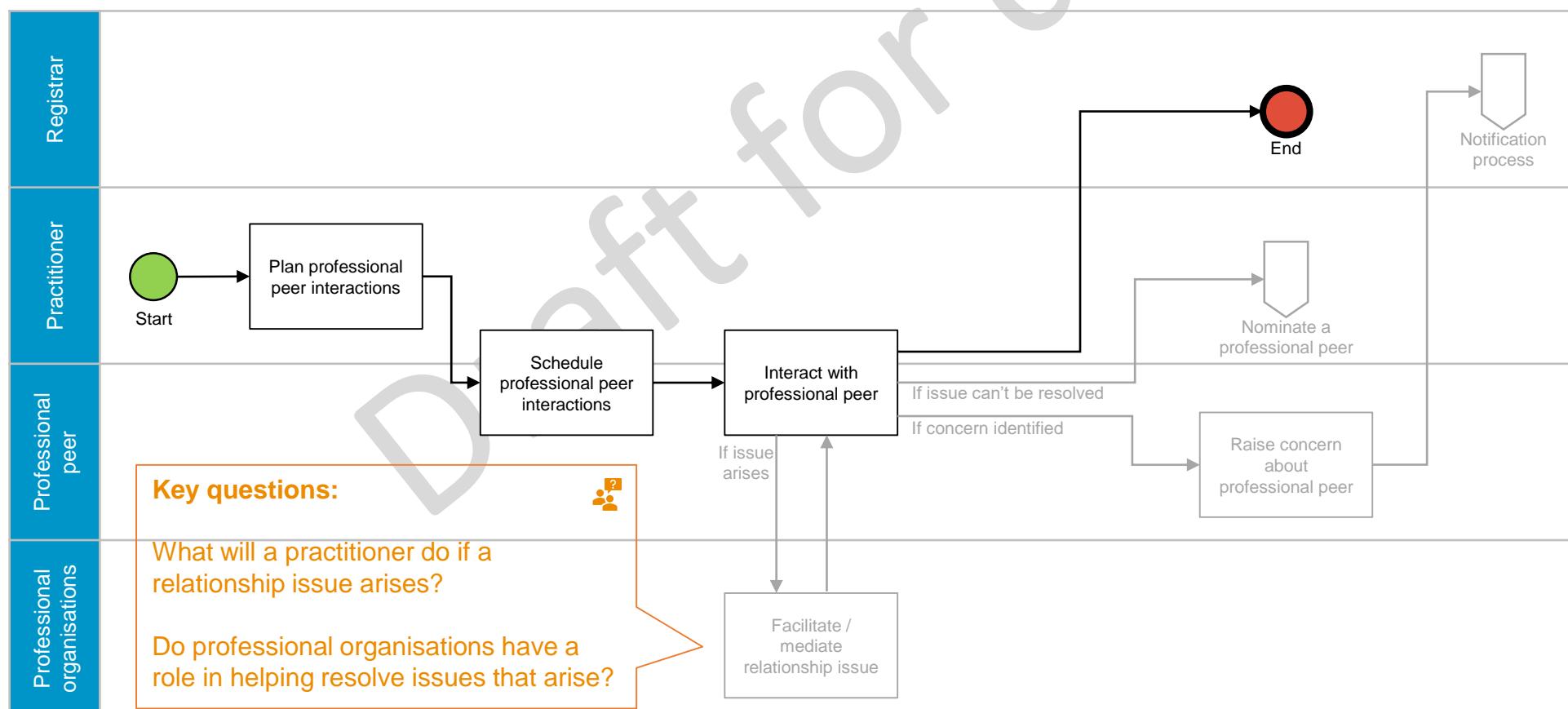
Requirement for a professional peer to interact:

- A professional peer must:
  - interact with the practitioner during the practitioner's APC cycle
  - take reasonable steps to:
    - make themselves available
    - agree a mutually convenient time, medium and location.
  - provide feedback on the practitioner's PDP, PDAs and written reflection
  - keep sufficient records to enable them to confirm the professional peer interactions to the Registrar.
- If a professional peer does not meet these requirements a practitioner may:
  - seek independent advice, facilitation or mediation
  - raise a concern with the Registrar
  - nominate a new professional peer.

Confidentiality of professional peer interactions:

- A professional peer must keep confidential any information discussed with a practitioner unless that information meets the requirements of disclosure of:
  - risk of harm to the public by notifying the Registrar under section 34(1)
  - a mental or physical condition by notifying the Registrar under section 45(2)
  - information about practice, conduct, or competence to Council under section 118(f).

### How the process will work



**Key questions:** 

Might the statutory requirements to notify the Registrar under section 34 and 45 and Council under section 118(f) limit the candour of professional peer interactions?

If so, how can we ensure this doesn't undermine the value of professional interactions?

# 3. Submit professional peer confirmation

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to receive confirmation* from their professional peer when they renew their APC	<p>Every professional peer will provide confirmation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>of guidance and assistance they have provided to their practitioner</li> <li>whether the practitioner achieved their learning objectives to a satisfactory standard and/or provide an explanation if these objectives were not achieved</li> </ul>

\* Following feedback from consultation Council has changed the terminology "written attestation" to "confirmation".

## How the process will work

## Draft policy features

Requirement to submit a professional peer confirmation:

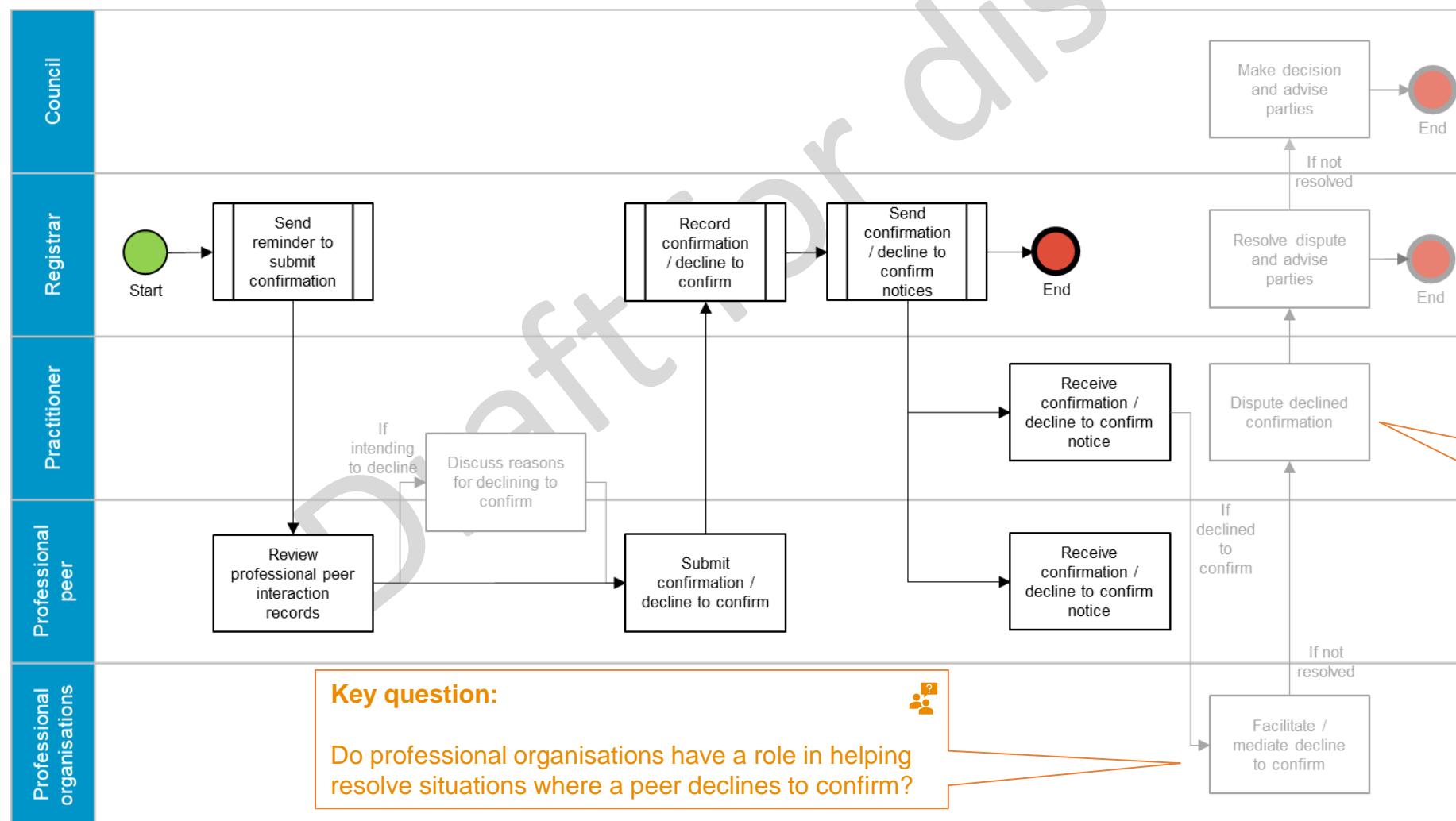
- A professional peer must confirm, before the end of the practitioner's APC cycle, whether the practitioner has met the requirements of the recertification programme for: PDP, PDAs, written reflection and professional peer interactions.
- If the practitioner has changed professional peer during their APC cycle the confirmation must be submitted by:
  - The professional peer that was in the relationship for the longest period during the APC cycle
  - If the professional peer that was in the relationship for the longest period during the APC cycle is unable to complete the confirmation then the person who is professional peer at the end of the APC cycle must submit the confirmation.
- If a professional peer does not believe that the practitioner has met the requirements of the recertification programme they must:
  - inform the practitioner that they intend to decline to confirm, and discuss their rationale
  - declare to the Registrar
    - which requirements they decline to confirm
    - provide a reason for declining to confirm
    - provide an explanation of their rationale for declining to confirm
  - the Registrar must advise the practitioner that the professional peer has declined to confirm and provide the reasons and explanation.

Disputes about a professional peer declining to confirm:

- If a practitioner receives advice from the Registrar that the professional peer has declined to confirm the practitioner may:
  - seek independent facilitation or mediation
  - dispute the decline to confirm via the Registrar, if facilitation or mediation is not successful.
- If a dispute is raised the Registrar will look at the circumstances of the decline to confirm and may:
  - uphold the declined confirmation
  - request that the professional peer submit a confirmation
  - refer the decision to Council.
- Council may decide to:
  - uphold the declined confirmation
  - override the declined confirmation.

Conflict of interest:

- A professional peer must declare to the Registrar any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that arises in fulfilling the requirements of a professional peer under the recertification programme.



**Key question:**  
Is the meaning of interested in Schedule 3 clause 11 of the Act a useful definition (may derive a material financial benefit; has a material financial interest; director, officer, member, or trustee; parent, child, spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner)?

**Key question:**  
Should there be a disputes process via the Registrar (and Council if need be) if other methods don't resolve the matter?

**Key question:**  
Do professional organisations have a role in helping resolve situations where a peer declines to confirm?

# 4. Withdraw from professional peer relationship

## Consultation outcome

This process was not specifically addressed in the consultation process.

### Key question:

Should a professional peer need to tell the Registrar directly that they have withdrawn from the relationship (the main reason would be if they have been nominated when they haven't agreed to be a peer, or if they have asked the practitioner to nominate someone else and the practitioner has not done so)?

## Draft policy features

Withdrawal from professional peer relationships:

- A professional peer may withdraw from a professional peer relationship
- When withdrawing from a professional peer relationship they have previously agreed to the professional peer must:
  - advise the practitioner of their intention to withdraw before advising the Registrar
  - take reasonably practicable steps to give the practitioner sufficient notice to enable them to find a new professional peer before the start of their next APC cycle
  - advise the Registrar of the withdrawal using the online system.
- If a professional peer has been nominated without having agreed to the relationship, they:
  - may withdraw from the professional peer relationship without giving notice to the practitioner
  - must advise the Registrar that they were nominated without having agreed to the professional peer relationship.
- The Registrar must advise the:
  - professional peer that the withdrawal has been completed
  - practitioner that the professional peer has withdrawn and remind them to nominate a new professional peer.

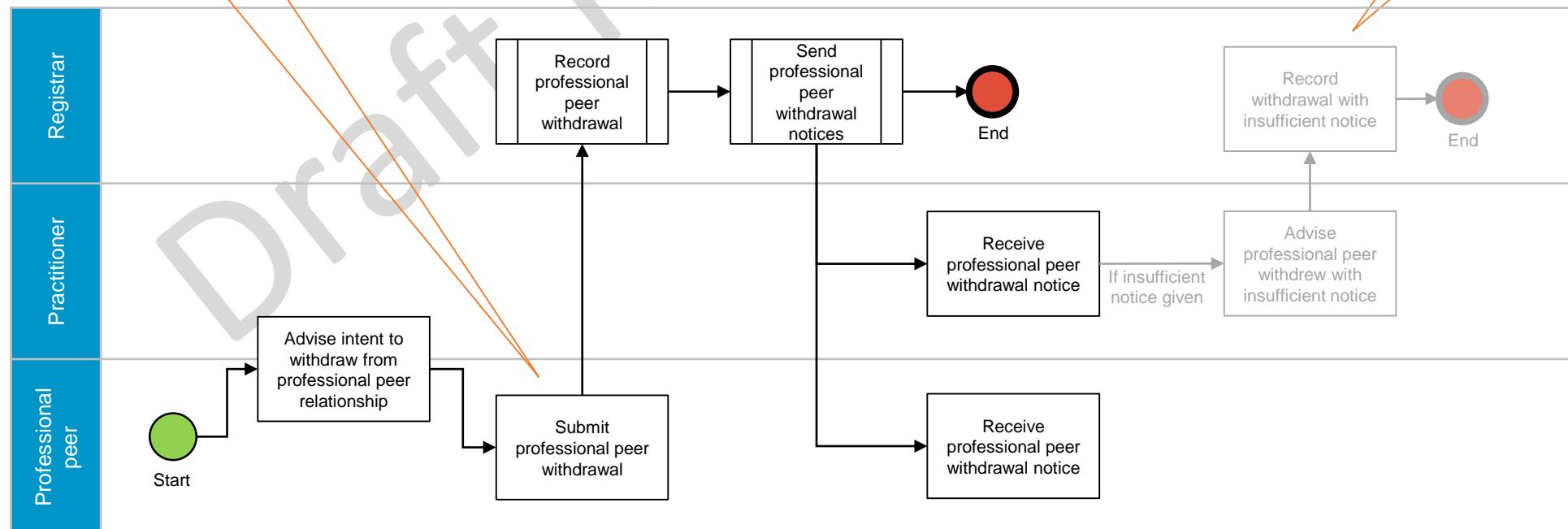
### Key question:

Does giving sufficient notice need to be specified or would professional courtesy adequately address the risk that a practitioner wouldn't have time to find a new professional peer before their next APC cycle starts?

### Key question:

Should the Registrar take into account a professional peer providing insufficient notice when looking at a failure to comply with recertification programme requirements?

## How the process will work



# 5. Prepare PDP

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to complete a written PDP (which may have a longer time period than 12 months).	Practitioners will prepare a written PDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>containing learning objectives</li> <li>identifying areas of competence which need maintenance, review, upskilling or development</li> <li>which may include areas of competence deficiency based on a practise incident or event they were involved in (in the previous 12 month period)</li> <li>which may include areas of competence deficiency.</li> </ul>

## Draft programme-wide policy features

The following apply to **all** aspects of the recertification programme (not just PDP):

Evidence of meeting a recertification programme requirement:

- A practitioner subject to the recertification programme must:
  - make an annual declaration as evidence of meeting a requirement, when they submit their APC application
  - retain documentary evidence of meeting a requirement:
    - in written, printed or electronic form
    - for at least 3 years.
  - provide documentary evidence of having met a requirement to the Registrar if requested.
- A professional peer must submit an annual confirmation as to whether a practitioner has met recertification programme requirements for a PDP, PDAs, written reflection and professional peer interaction.

Failure to meet a recertification programme requirement:

- If a practitioner subject to the recertification programme fails to meet a requirement, when they submit their APC application they must provide to the Registrar:
  - A reason for not having met the requirement
  - An explanation of the circumstances and how they propose to meet the requirement as soon as reasonably practicable.

## Draft PDP policy features

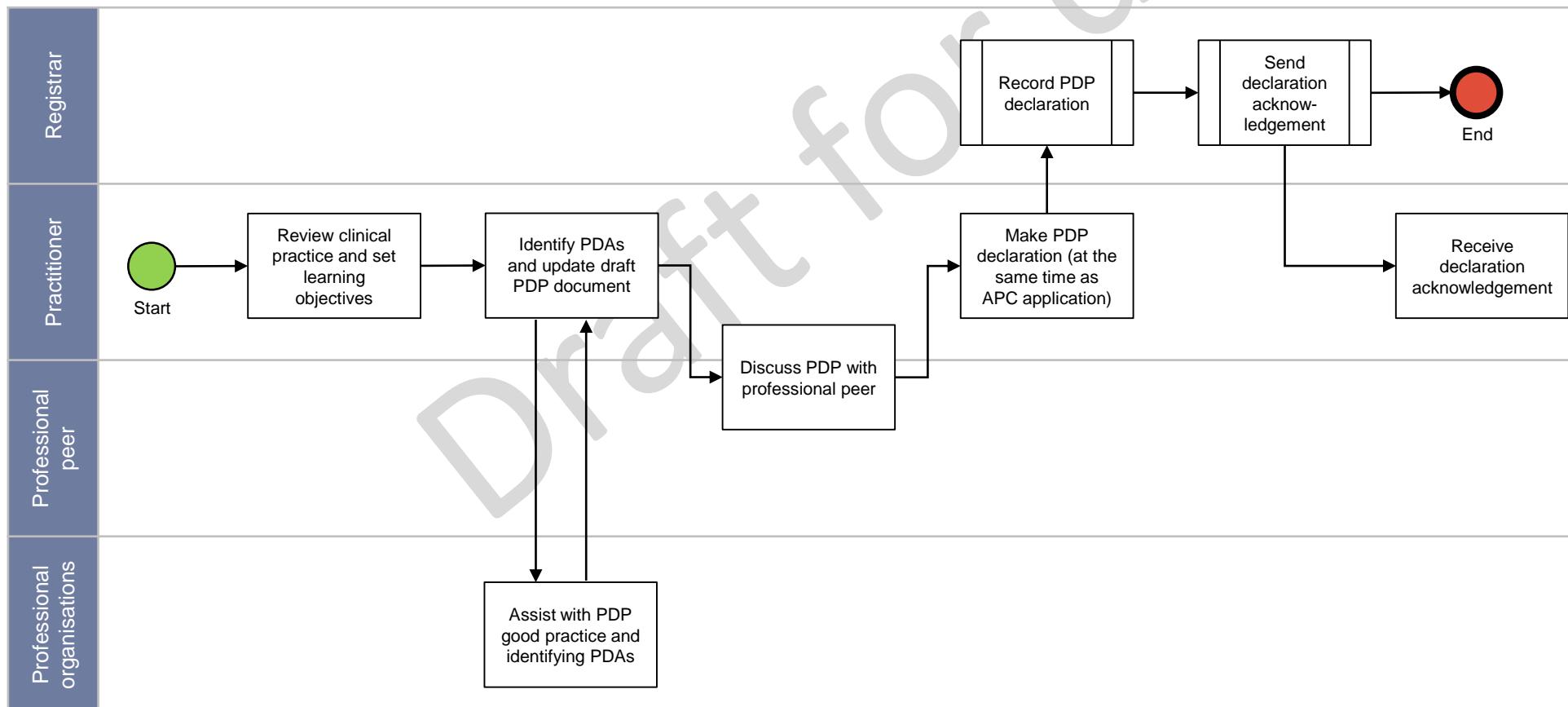
Requirement to have a PDP:

- All practitioners subject to the recertification programme must have a PDP.

Definition of a PDP:

- A PDP is a planned programme of individualised professional development aimed at maintaining or developing a practitioner's competence to practise, given their scope of practice, practice setting and patient group.
- A PDP must:
  - include:
    - a review of the practitioner's clinical practice
    - learning objectives
    - a record of PDAs planned and completed
    - written reflection, when completed
    - a record of professional peer interactions.
  - be reviewed:
    - to ensure it remains relevant, current and planned
    - at least once per year
    - with the practitioner's professional peer.
  - not contain confidential patient information.

## How the process will work



### Key questions:

Are these the key components of a PDP?

Is there anything missing?

What additional guidance should Council provide to help practitioners comply e.g. videos, handbooks, templates, worked examples?

What is the role of professional organisations, employers and education providers in supporting practitioners and promoting good practice in developing PDPs?

# 6. Participate in PDAs

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to participate in PDAs that contribute to or support maintenance or improvement of their professional knowledge and skills.	Practitioners will participate in PDAs that help them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achieve their PDP learning objectives</li> <li>• facilitate reflection on their practise.</li> </ul>
	It is anticipated each profession will have a minimum annual quota of PDAs expressed in hours.

### Key question:

Having done further design work Council's preference is to not specify an annual quota of PDAs expressed in hours. Council would like to hear the views of focus group participants on this.

## Draft policy features

Requirement to participate in PDAs:

- All practitioners subject to the recertification programme must participate in the PDAs set out in their PDP.

Definition of a professional development activity (PDA):

- A PDA is any activity that a practitioner can participate in to maintain and build their competence (skills, knowledge and experience):
  - in their scope of practice
  - relevant to the services to patients that a practitioner:
    - currently provides
    - is planning to provide in the future.

Documentary evidence of completion of a PDA:

- Documentary evidence of a PDA must include:
  - A description of the activity
  - The date the activity was performed
  - The location where the activity was performed.

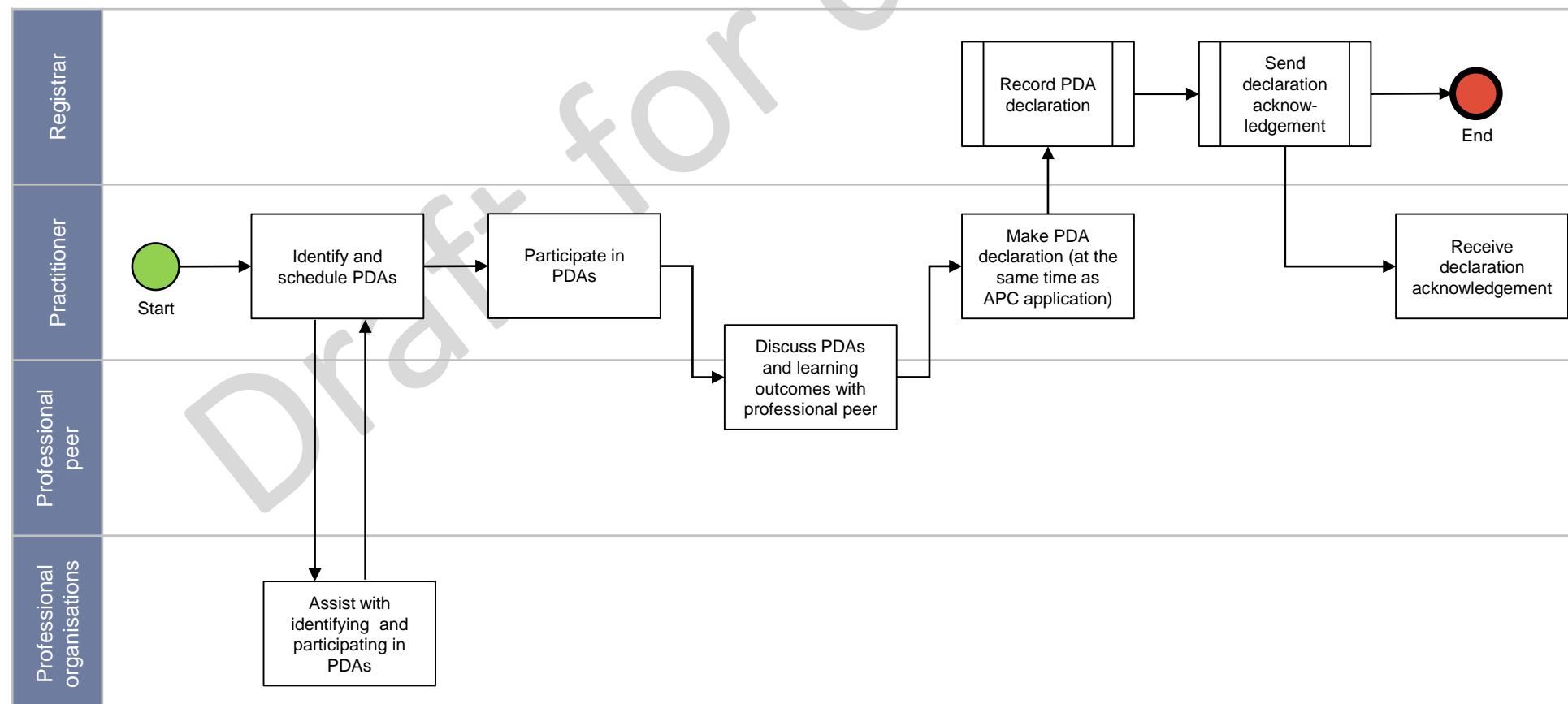
(The programme-wide policy features on page 7 also apply).

### Key questions:

Council's intent is that PDAs include a wider range of activities (e.g. case reviews, clinical observation, non-clinical practice-related activities) than have traditionally been considered CPD by some practitioners. How should Council convey this intent to practitioners?

Are there other activities that should be considered?

## How the process will work



# 7. Reflect on professional development

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner to complete a written reflective statement.	Practitioners will prepare a written statement reviewing and reflecting on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achievements linked to the learning objectives in their PDP</li> <li>• learnings and the impact participation in PDAs has had on their practice.</li> </ul>

## Draft policy features

Requirement to reflect on professional development:

- All practitioners subject to the recertification programme must reflect, in writing, on their professional development.

(The programme-wide policy features on page 7 also apply).

Definition of written reflection:

- Written reflection must:
  - consider professional development, including previous or current:
    - PDP
    - PDAs
    - written reflection
    - professional peer interactions.
  - not contain confidential patient information.

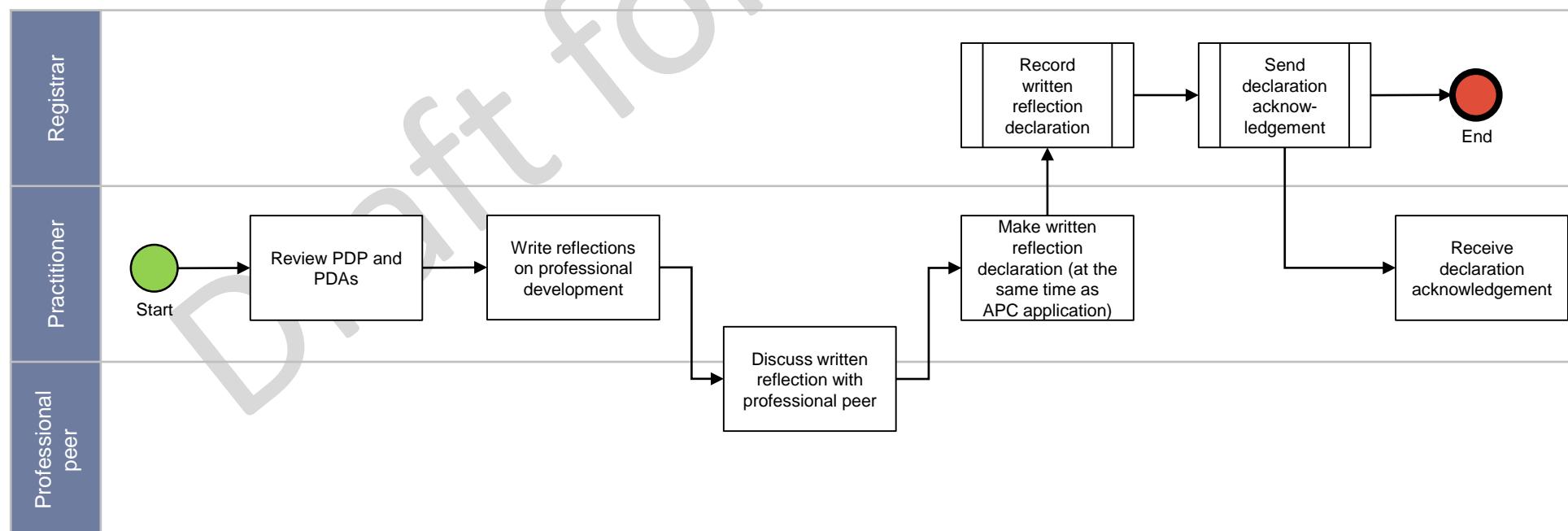
### Key questions:

Are these the key components of written reflection?

Is there anything missing?

What is the role of professional organisations, employers and education providers in supporting practitioners and promoting good practice in written reflection?

## How the process will work



# 8. Declare eye health

## Consultation outcome

Outcome	What this means for practitioners
We will require every practitioner over 50* years of age to prove their vision is adequate to perform the tasks associated with their scopes of practice.	<p>Every practitioner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>under 50 years of age will make a declaration about their eye health as part of their APC renewal</li> <li>over 50 years of age will undertake an eye examination every two years (or as required) and provide evidence of this as part of their APC renewal.</li> </ul>
	<p>Practitioners whose vision is not adequate to perform the tasks associated with their scopes of practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will have to take appropriate steps to address vision issues identified</li> <li>may have a condition of practice relating to their vision placed on their APC.</li> </ul>

\* Following feedback from consultation Council changed the threshold from 40 to 50 years of age.

## Draft policy features

Requirement to submit an eye health declaration for recertification:

- A practitioner subject to the recertification programme who will be over 50 years of age at the start of their next APC cycle must:
  - have had an eye examination within the past two years
  - provide the Registrar with the date of their most recent eye examination when they submit their APC application.

Documentary evidence of an eye examination:

- Documentary evidence of an eye examination must contain the:
  - date of the eye examination
  - nature of the eye examination
  - outcome of the eye examination
  - name of the examiner
  - profession or qualifications of the examiner
  - phone number of the examiner
  - address of the of the examiner.

Requirement to submit an eye health declaration for an APC application:

- A practitioner applying for an APC must declare whether they have been diagnosed with an eye condition that could affect their ability to practise.

Requirement to notify the Registrar of an eye condition:

- Section 45(2) requires a practitioner to promptly give the Registrar written notice if they are diagnosed with an eye condition that makes them unable to perform the functions required for the practice of their profession.

(The programme-wide policy features on page 7 also apply).

### Key questions:

Should the eye examination be done by a registered optometrist or ophthalmologist?

In the normal course of events a practitioner only needs to make a declaration. However, a practitioner needs to keep documentary evidence of the eye examination. What would be satisfactory documentary evidence?

### Key question:

Is it useful for the Registrar to send automated reminders when a practitioner turns 50 and 2 years after their most recent eye examination for practitioners over 50?

## How the process will work

