



ACSLPA INSIGHTS

Developing Key College Documents

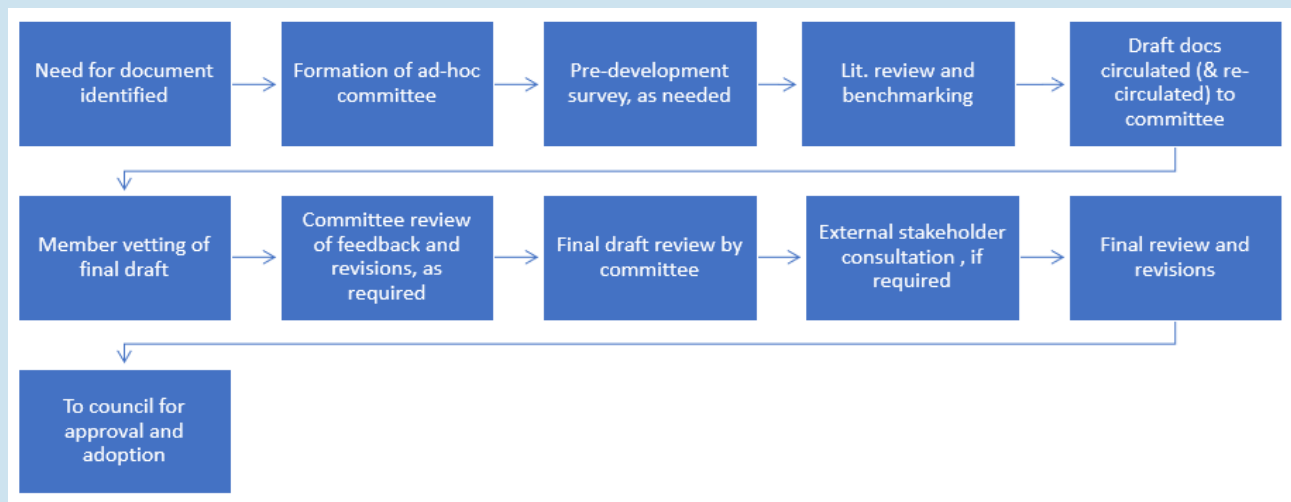
Ever thought about what goes into the development of a *Standard of Practice* or an *ACSLPA Guideline* or *Advisory Statement*? The truth is it involves countless hours of toil: outlines, staff and committee discussions, literature and website searches, benchmarking with other regulatory organizations, surveying members for feedback, and writing, writing, and re-writing!!

Some documents are mandated by our legislation: Our *Standards of Practice* and *Code of Ethics*, for example, by which regulated members are expected to abide. Others, such as practice guidelines, advisory, and position statements are meant to support regulated members in their interpretation of our Standards and of other guiding legislation such as privacy statutes, information sharing, and public health orders (such as the ones created in response to COVID-19).

What's common to all of our documents is starting with the identification of a need. All documents are created to ensure members of the professions and members of the public understand what the expectations of regulated speech-language pathologists and audiologists are. In developing these documents we aim to ensure that the information is provided in a clear and forthright manner, that those who will be impacted by the requirements have the opportunity to reflect on the content, to ask questions and provide feedback, and that the final product makes sense and is reasonable.

The development of ACSLPA's *Standards of Practice* and *Code of Ethics* receive an extra layer of scrutiny! In addition to committee review and feedback from the membership-at-large (who can comment and question as part of a member vetting process), these documents must also be sent to government. They are circulated for **external stakeholder consultation** across various government departments, to Alberta Health Services, and to related educational institutions and health care agencies. While ACSLPA does not have to act on the recommendations from the external stakeholder consultation, the feedback must be reviewed and considered prior to final approvals by our Council.

The general process that is followed when developing or editing Key College Documents can be seen in the flowchart below:



Development and revision of documents is so important at ACSLPA that in 2021 we developed a *Practice Document Development and Review Tool*. The tool outlines the process for review of ACSLPA documents, general formatting tips and framework, and determinations of when member vetting and various levels of approval are required, dependent on whether we are dealing with minor, moderate, or major reviews or entirely new documents. Timelines from the start of a document review to final approvals can vary: Advisory documents related to the pandemic, for example, by their nature require an incredibly short turnaround with little to no member input. Practice guidelines or a Standard of Practice, on the other hand, can involve several months of back and forth to ensure the appropriate content is captured and that all relevant feedback has been considered. Anything that is sent to government for external stakeholder consultation will also have significantly longer timelines, as many stakeholders are involved.

Consistent with our focus on anti-racism and anti-discrimination, we are hoping to start including more external stakeholders in the review of our documents; for example, clients from multicultural and minority groups.

We hope this article provides a bit of insight into the document development process. Next time you see a call out for participation on an ad-hoc committee, or a request for feedback as part of member vetting, consider participating!

If you have any questions about the topics in this article please send them to feedback@acslpa.ca. ■