# Practice Guideline -
# Use of Title and Designations

**Approved: May 2013** **Last revised: N/A**

## Introduction

The *Kinesiology Act, 2007* states that only members of the College of Kinesiologists of Ontario (the College) are permitted to use the protected title "kinesiologist" or any variation or abbreviation thereof or an equivalent in another language. Members of the College are permitted to use the following titles:

- Registered Kinesiologist in the General Class
- Registered Kinesiologist in the Inactive Class
- Registered Kinesiologist
- Kinesiologist
- R.Kin
- R.Kin (Inactive)

The following titles are **not** permitted for use by anyone, regardless of whether or not they are registered with the College:

- Certified Kinesiologist or C.K.
- Professional Kinesiologist
- Practical Kinesiologist
- Applied Kinesiologist
- Specialist

A title or designation is a representation of oneself to the public. It provides information and creates expectations about the person. The public will make certain assumptions about a person's skills and knowledge when they use a title of a regulated health profession. The purpose of the legislation is to protect the public by ensuring appropriate and authorized use of these titles.

The use of the title kinesiologist is a privilege granted to a successful registrant. A successful registrant has demonstrated that they have the necessary educational requirements, skills and knowledge application to practise safely and ethically. Members are accountable to the College and the public for delivering service that meets the practice standards established by the College. The

title “Kinesiologist” provides the public with this assurance. Those who misuse the title or any abbreviation undermine the public’s confidence and may pose a risk to the public interest.

## The Protected Title

The *Kinesiology Act, 2007* and the College’s Registration Regulation outline what titles can be used, when, how and where. Only a member of the College can use the title, “registered kinesiologist in the General Class” or any abbreviation or variation listed above. For the purposes of this Guideline, the term “kinesiologist” will be inclusive of all the titles listed herein.

The restricted title “kinesiologist” must be listed immediately after the practitioner’s name. It may be followed by a recognized degree, diploma or certificate. If a member is a dual registrant, it is his/her choice as to which registered title is placed first, but both titles must be used ahead of any other qualification or designation. It is advisable for a member registered in another profession to list first the approved title of the profession which they practise the majority of the time.

The title “kinesiologist” is protected in Ontario. Only members of the College can use this title. Members of the College must use a version of the restricted title both within and outside of Ontario. For example, a member who works in both Quebec and Ontario must use the title “kinesiologist” in both provinces to indicate their membership in the College of Kinesiologists of Ontario. They cannot change their title in another province to a title not permitted in Ontario, such as “certified kinesiologist”.

A non-member of the College cannot refer to himself/herself as kinesiologist in any manner in Ontario.

## Specialties

The College’s Registration Regulation allows for two classes of registration- General and Inactive. A specialty designation is a designation that has been earned by a specific training program and has been assessed and/or recognized by the College. It also implies that there are separate and differing standards of practice applicable to that specialty. The College has not undertaken to formally recognize any specialties within the practice of kinesiology. For a member to use the term “specialist” or imply “specialization” with respect to an area of their practice or job title is considered professional misconduct.

## Other Designations & Advanced Qualifications

### Principle 1

***In determining what credentials or designations may be used in advertising and in professional representation, the member should distinguish between additional qualification and ongoing professional development.***

Registered kinesiologists are expected to participate in ongoing professional development to maintain currency with developments in the field that enhance their ability to provide competent service to patients/clients. Such professional development may include courses, some of which may award a certificate of completion e.g. First Aid. Regulated professionals do not include such awards or recognition of completion as part of their professional representation. This type of information may be provided in a résumé.

## Principle 2

***Inclusion of any designation or certification in addition to R. Kin must be with the intent of better informing the public about the member's practice area or additional qualification(s), and must not be misleading, but legitimate and verifiable.***

Members are, at all times, governed by the Professional Misconduct Regulation made under the *Kinesiology Act, 2007*. Inclusion of designations and or certifications should inform the public. Ontario is the first jurisdiction in the world to regulate kinesiology as a profession. The College has not determined that there is a need for a specialty in kinesiology. Hence no member of the College may use the term "specialist" as a professional designation. Where this term is part of a conferred certificate or diploma, the member should seek guidance from the College and from the conferring organization.

## Principle 3

***Any designation or certification included in a member's advertising or professional representation must serve to enhance the image of the profession of kinesiology.***

As regulated professionals, the actions of every member of the College and the manner in which they represent themselves will reflect upon the entire profession. Excessive use of certifications and designations may lead to confusion for members of the public in trying to understand what service the member is actually competent to provide. Furthermore, excessive use of certificates and designations undermines the confidence of the public in the meaning of the legitimate title R. Kin.

## Principle 4

***Any designation or certification used by a member must relate to the scope of practice of kinesiology***

Kinesiologists may gain a number of certifications or designations in addition to those directly related to the scope of practice of kinesiology. Examples include certificates relating to business. These may be described in a résumé but should not be included in advertising or in professional representation (e.g., business cards). Advanced degrees may be added to titles, but only after the R. Kin designation.

## Principle 5

***There should be general acceptance among the membership that the conferring body is qualified.***

The College recognizes that there are many organizations offering training and education, and that some trainers may lack rigour and a true scientific basis in the program of certification. Members should carefully select certification programs and ensure that there is evidence of broad acceptance within the profession. Advice may be provided by professional associations, the College, other regulated professionals and by accredited educational institutions. In making decisions about seeking additional certifications, members should look for organizations that have the following characteristics:

- well established and recognized at the national or international level;
- requires a directed course of study or program at the provincial or national level, and/or a requirement of supervised practice hours;
- conducts a formal written or oral exam and/or requires proof of practice hours

- renewal of certification requires a minimum number of practice hours or professional development credits; and/or
- a code of conduct or code of ethics exists for the organization.

The College will not endeavour to pre-approve certifying bodies. The complaints process will enable the College to govern this issue.

If members have questions about their additional qualifications and how they can be used, they are encouraged to contact the College.

## Educational Accreditation

Educational qualifications must be clearly described as such and not mislead the public. A member is permitted to list any other degrees or diplomas that were obtained outside the study of kinesiology, such as an MBA degree or a PhD in kinesiology, as long as they are relevant to the member's practice.

## Job Titles

The diversity in kinesiology practice and the many ways in which kinesiology practitioners are able to apply their knowledge skills and judgement have led to a wide range of job titles used to help explain a practitioner's role to employers and the public. A job title can be listed in a member's title, often as a second line under the person's name. Whether or not a member's role requires hands-on health care delivery or treatment to a patient/client, this does not eliminate the need for a member to indicate they are a regulated professional. Even when a member performs an administrative or managerial role, he/she is still required to act in accordance with the professional standards and the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) and it is important for the public to be aware of this. The public must know that they have recourse to the College if they have any concerns about the conduct of a member. For example:

- John Doe, Registered Kinesiologist,
  Director

- John Doe, R.Kin,
  Director

The same rule that applies to the use of unrecognized qualifications applies to job titles as well.

The College has determined that job titles which refer to an area of practice and which do not include the word "specialist" are common practice within the field of kinesiology, and serve to better inform the public of the types of services which may be expected from kinesiologists and that are authorized by the College. If a member's current job title includes the term "Specialist" or a variation thereof, this places the member in a position of using a title which is not authorized by the College. The member is required to inform the employer that the title is misleading. The member may seek advice from the College if necessary.

## Use of the Title "Doctor"

Members should be aware that the RHPA restricts use of the title "Doctor". This title is to be used only by those professions listed in Section 33 of the RHPA (i.e. chiropractic, optometry, medicine, psychology and dentistry). Kinesiology is not included in the list.

The prohibition against the use of the title "Doctor" only applies in the course of providing or offering to provide healthcare to individuals. However, members who hold a doctorate degree must be very careful when using this title and must consider the intended purpose and audience. In the course of practice, it is not permitted to use the abbreviation "Dr."; however, a member could list the abbreviation "PhD" after his/her name and registration and in which course of study the degree was earned. For example:

- John Doe, R.Kin, PhD (Kinesiology)

It may also be acceptable for a member who holds a doctorate degree in kinesiology to use the title "Doctor" in a non-clinical setting, such as a university where the member teaches. However, the member should be careful not to allow colleagues, staff or students to address them as "Doctor" in front of patients/clients or in a clinical setting.

The reasoning for such a restriction on the use of the term "Doctor" while in the course of practice is to avoid potential confusion and misrepresentation to the public. The term "Doctor" in the healthcare setting denotes certain knowledge and skills and the ability to perform many controlled acts, which kinesiologists are not permitted to perform.

## Misuse of the Restricted Title

The most common case of misuse is when an individual who is not a member of the College uses the title "kinesiologist" or an abbreviation thereof. Such individuals are considered illegal practitioners engaged in unauthorized practice and are a threat to public safety. They also undermine public confidence in the profession. It is important that members, employers and facility operators understand the importance of protecting the title and report any suspected illegal practitioners to the College. Anyone may access the College's Public Register of Kinesiologists to check whether an individual is a member of the College. Persons not registered with the College who are holding themselves out as kinesiologists are investigated by the Registrar and are subject to prosecution under the *Provincial Offences Act, 1990*. Penalties for proven misuse of title bring a maximum penalty of $25,000 for the first offence and up to $50,000 for a second offence.

Kinesiologists who are members of the College can also be investigated for professional misconduct if they misuse a title. For example, a member registered in the Inactive Class should not use the title "registered kinesiologist" without also adding that they are registered in the Inactive Class. To do otherwise would be misleading as those registered in the Inactive Class are not authorized to practise the profession.