



ROYAL COLLEGE
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA
COLLÈGE ROYAL
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA

Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design Model of Residency Training

April 2019

These regulations supersede previously published editions.

The Royal College reserves the right to change these regulations at any time, without prior notification.

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1. General/Background

The Royal College is the national professional association that oversees the assessment of medical specialists in Canada. In its mandate articulated by a Royal Charter in 1929, the Royal College plays a key role in the oversight of the system of specialty medicine in Canada. The Royal College verifies that a physician has met all the requirements necessary for Royal College certification. To become eligible for examination — physicians must meet an array of credentialing requirements set by the Credentials Committee and a designated specialty committee of the Royal College. With significant assistance from volunteer Fellows, The Royal College produces and administers the national certification exams.

Competency by Design (CBD)

The CBD initiative is based on a competency-based model of education and assessment. The Royal College and its partners are bringing the best of this learning to the development of CBD to achieve the ultimate end goal: improving patient care through an explicit focus on the outcomes desired of our trainees and practicing physicians and surgeons.

In the Competence by Design model, learners will progress through their residency education program and stages of training by demonstrating competence on Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) and related milestones within their current stage of training. Promotion decisions are based on observations made of the learner as successful completion of EPAs and other observations and feedback on the candidate. An electronic portfolio that captures trainee information and observations of competence is required to document trainee progression. In addition to successful completion of stages of training, and an electronic portfolio, successful completion of specialty specific examinations remains necessary for Royal College certification.

2. Definitions/Terminology

Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee is responsible for the governance of assessment matters relevant to Royal College specialty certification and continuing professional development.

Clinical Supervisor

The clinical supervisor oversees the trainee for a specific milestone or milestones. He or she approves the documented evidence for the milestones that he/she supervised.

Competence

Competence is the array of abilities across multiple domains or aspects of physician performance.

Competence is both conditional on, and constrained by, each physician's practice context, is dynamic and continually changes over time.

Competence by Design (CBD)

Competence by Design (CBD) is the Royal competence-based medical education (CBME) approach to residency training and specialty practice in Canada, which focuses on outcomes that are based on a framework of competence.

Competence Committee (CC)

A Competence Committee (CC) is responsible for assessing the progress of trainees in achieving the specialty-specific requirements of a program. These requirements are established for each stage of training.

Each University's residency program committee commissions the creation of a CC with designated members who will regularly review and synthesize the various assessment information in each trainee's portfolio.

Credentials Committee

The Credentials Committee is a subcommittee of the Assessment Committee. It advises on policy relating to credentialing issues and provides insight on credentials policy by determining the criteria and conditions for eligibility for Royal College certification.

Discipline-Specific Examination Boards

Exam Boards act on behalf of the Royal College in matters relating to the content, format, evaluation of candidates and marking of the examination. The discipline-specific examination board is supported by Royal College staff in the production and execution of the examination. Planning of logistics and psychometric analysis is the responsibility of the McLaughlin Centre for Evaluation, Office of Specialty Education. The board must ensure that the examination effectively tests the Royal College objectives of training for the discipline.

Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA)

EPAs are "units of professional practice", that are built of tasks and abilities. Once sufficient competence is achieved, these tasks are "entrusted to the unsupervised execution by a trainee". EPAs can be completed independently and are to be observed and measured (in both process and outcomes) for use in entrustment decisions (ten Cate, 2013).

- Typically, each EPA integrates multiple milestones
- EPAs are a measure of assessment defined by the Royal College and assessed by the schools.

Examination Format

Each specialty determines the construct of their examination and uses these components to examine candidates based on an examination blueprint. Specialty specific examination format documents outline the exam components that will be administered for an examination cycle. These components may change from time to time and candidates should refer to the specialty specific examination format found on the Royal College website.

Exam Components

The Royal College develops and administers various exam components as determined by the Specialty Committee, Examination Committee and Discipline Specific Examination Boards. Each examination cycle could be comprised of one or more components. These components include:

- **Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ):** MCQs consist of an opening question or stem that asks the learner to choose the most correct answer from a list that also includes two to five plausible yet incorrect distractors.
- **Short Answer Questions (SAQ):** The SAQ format consists of a brief, highly directed question designed to elicit a reliable, constructed response from the learner. Answers usually consist of a few short words or phrases. The model answer key is designed to comprehensively anticipate all correct answers.
- **Applied Exam** – An Applied exam may be comprised of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), Structured Oral Examinations (Orals), and or Practical Examinations (Practical).
- **Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE):** The OSCE samples the performance of learners as they rotate through a series of stations representing various clinical scenarios. At each station, learners may encounter a standardized patient (SP), a structured oral examination, visual information (e.g., diagnostic images, electrocardiograms), a high- or low- fidelity simulation (e.g., part-task trainer), or a written task. Learners are usually asked to perform a specific skill, to simulate part of a patient encounter, or to answer questions based on the presented material.
- **Structured Oral Examinations (Orals):** Oral examinations provide an opportunity for an assessor or panel of assessors to pose a series of questions to a learner in order to assess and react to the learner's responses. Oral
- **Practical Examinations (Practical):** A Practical examination is one where candidates are required to undertake practical tasks while observed by an examiner. Practical examinations can take different forms depending on the subject material. They can be individual performance of a task (e.g. use of a microscope for diagnosis), or examination in which a number of tasks or questions would be completed. In some instances, there are time limits for each question.

Examination Committee

The Examination Committee oversees the discipline- specific examination boards and advises on all matters relevant to Royal College specialty examinations, including timing, content, and evaluation of exams.

Examiner

Examiners have many roles in the development and delivery of exams. These roles include development of written and applied exam questions. Is involved in the development of the examination and evaluates candidate's performance. For the Written examination, the examiner would mark assigned SAQ component of the examination. For the Comprehensive objective examination (COE), the examiner would examine candidates during the "applied" oral and OSCE components as well as marking the SAQ portion of the examination.

Milestone

A milestone is the expected ability of a health care professional at a stage of expertise. CanMEDS milestones illustrate the expected progression of competence from novice to mastery associated with each enabling CanMEDS competency. Each milestone is an observable marker of a person's ability along a developmental continuum. In the context of CBD, milestones are used for planning, teaching and assessment.

- Milestones are observable and can therefore be linked with feedback
- Milestones are the organizational framework for the curriculum; and,
- EPAs are made up of milestones. Milestones are more detailed and are clear descriptions with explicit statements.

Observer

The observer supports learning, contributes to the narrative and reviews evidence. Observations made by the observer are noted in the learner's portfolio. Observers may include preceptors, nursing staff, and senior residents who have already achieved the EPA that is being observed.

Postgraduate Dean

Part of the role of the Postgraduate Dean is to attest that the trainee has acquired all the competencies.

Program Director

The Program Director guides learning, meets with learners regularly, and reviews/monitors a learner's progress. The Program Director attests that the trainee has acquired all the competencies required to progress through their learning plan.

Resident

The Royal College classifies postgraduate clinical trainees in accredited Royal College approved programs as residents if they meet all of the following criteria:

- The applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in Canada. The applicant is admitted to and enrolled in an accredited Royal College residency program, the content of which is defined, supervised and assessed by the residency Program Director and the Residency Program Committee, informed by a Competence Committee, and
- The applicant's postgraduate clinical training is in a discipline recognized by the Royal College.

Royal College Mainport ePortfolio

The Royal College ePortfolio provides evidence of a physician's development and maintenance of competence from residency until retirement. It tracks the learner's progress as he or she meets milestones and develops competencies, and it identifies assessment strategies to evaluate the performance of Royal College Entrustable Professional Activities (RC EPAs).

Royal College Entrustable Professional Activity (RC EPA)

"RC EPA" is used to distinguish the Royal College's unique utilization of the concept of an EPA.

RC EPAs refer to the tasks of a discipline that may be delegated to a trainee once competence in that task has been demonstrated. An RC EPA is linked to a specific stage of the competence continuum and integrates multiple CanMEDS milestones from various CanMEDS Roles relevant to that stage. As resident's progress through the stages, the RC EPAs become progressively more complex reflecting the resident's achievement of more complex milestones. Royal College EPAs allow for authentic, work-based observation. Within CBD, RC EPAs are used for overall assessment. Preceptors can observe (directly or indirectly) and assess these activities in the workplace.

Stages of Training – (Competence Continuum)

The CBD Competence Continuum is a series of integrated stages, which begin upon entry into a discipline specific residency training program. Residents will transition through the stages of training upon attestation by the Program Director, and Postgraduate Dean, in consultation with the Competence Committee and Residency Program Committee.

- *Transition to discipline*

This stage emphasizes the orientation and assessment of new trainees arriving from different medical schools and programs.

- *Foundations of discipline*

This stage covers broad based competencies that every trainee must acquire before moving on to more advanced discipline specific competencies.

- *Core of discipline*

This stage covers the core competencies that make up the majority of the discipline

- *Royal College examination*

Residents will appear for the written and/or applied component of the Royal College examination during the core of discipline stage and the transition to practice stage

- *Transition to practice*

In this stage, the senior trainee should demonstrate readiness to make the transition to independent practice

Experiences

A training experience replaces the 'rotation' in the traditional residency education model. Training experiences include both mandatory and recommended training activities, which support a resident's acquisition of competence. These activities can include, for example: clinical care such as inpatient care, ambulatory clinics, performing technical procedures; or extra-clinical activities (e.g. simulation exercises, scholarly projects, journal clubs, etc.).

Written-before-Applied

Written-before-Applied is an exam format requiring candidates to complete the written component of the exam with a passing grade before being invited to take the applied (oral, OSCE, practical) component of the exam. This format will be applied to all candidates in programs that have moved to a competence-by-design training model.

3. Units within the Royal College Credentials Unit of the Royal College

The Credentials Unit of the Office of Specialty Education is responsible for the assessment of credentials, examination eligibility and Royal College Certification.

For further information, to request an application for assessment of training for examination eligibility, or to obtain Discipline Competencies and Training Experiences, please contact the Office of Specialty Education at:

Office of Specialty Education - Credentials Unit 774 Echo Drive
Ottawa, ON K1S 5N8
Canada

Telephone: (613) 730-8191

Toll Free: 1 (800) 668-3740
Extension: 7750
Fax: (613) 730-3707
E-mail: credentials@royalcollege.ca
Website: www.royalcollege.ca

4.0 Royal College Eligibility for Certification

Policy Name:	Policy and process for Royal College certification for residents in a CBD model
Date approved:	November 2017
Section:	4.0 Certification
Subject:	Certification
Review Date:	November 2017
Revision No.:	
Approved by:	Royal College Assessment Committee

4.1 Introduction

The following represents the basic requirements for achieving Royal College certification, each step in the process is outlined in more detailed in the accompanying policies and processes:

- The applicant registers with the Royal College Credentials unit:
- The applicant is currently enrolled in an accredited Royal College residency program.
- The candidate applies for examination eligibility one year prior to the examination date as posted here <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/credentials-exams/exam-eligibility/assessment-route/apply-for-traditional-training-assessment-e>
- The candidate's credentials, including undergraduate medical qualifications are assessed by the Royal College credentials unit.
- The Royal College receives attestation by the applicant's Postgraduate Dean and Residency Program Director, in consultation with a Competence Committee, that the applicant has demonstrated competence in the required Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) prescribed by the discipline and other methods of assessment as determined by the Program Director.
- After attestation is received by the Royal College and the candidate has successfully completed all competence requirements as prescribed by the discipline the candidate will receive a Royal College Ruling Letter for examination eligibility.

4.2 Policy

Royal College certification in a specialty or subspecialty will be granted upon the satisfactory completion of all credentials (submitted via the ePortfolio), specialty training, examination requirements, and the most recent version of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) that apply to the learner. Final Royal College certification confirms that specialist physicians and surgeons have met the Royal College standards and competency training requirements of their specialty or subspecialty. Assessment of credentials, EPAs required for that specific stage of training, and other training requirements set out by the discipline is the first step towards Royal College certification.

4.3 Purpose

The Royal College Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design model of residency training outlines the requirements leading to eligibility for certification by the Royal College for disciplines that have converted to Competence by Design.

Disciplines that have not converted to Competence by Design will follow the Royal College Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship: <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/credentials-exams/exam-eligibility-e>

4.4 Demonstration of Satisfactory Moral, Ethical and Professional Standing

- 4.4.1 Candidates must demonstrate satisfactory moral, ethical and professional standing in clinical and/or research activities. This requires that the candidate appropriately relates to patients, students, colleagues, and other health care professionals with respect to gender, ethnicity and cultural, religious and personal values.
- 4.4.2 If, at any time prior to certification, the Royal College receives information pertaining to a restriction of a medical license, a criminal conviction or charge and/or other relevant information which puts into issue a candidate's satisfactory moral, ethical and/or professional standing, the matter will be investigated and reviewed by the Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.
- 4.4.3 Upon completion of the investigation and review, the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate has the following options for decision:
- deny eligibility,
 - suspend a candidate's eligibility (with or without conditions for re-instatement of eligibility); or,
 - revoke a candidate's eligibility.
- 4.4.4 The candidate may appeal the decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate pursuant to the procedure in Section 6.7 of this Policy.

4.5 Satisfactory Completion of Postgraduate Medical Education

Eligibility for the examinations leading to Royal College certification requires satisfactory completion of all requirements of postgraduate medical education as defined in the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements, in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College.

5.0 Application for Examination Eligibility and Assessment of Training

Policy Name:	Application for eligibility for Royal College Examinations for residents in a CBD model of training
Date approved:	November 2017
Section:	5.0
Subject:	Credentialing
Review Date:	November 2017
Revision No.:	
Approved by:	Royal College Assessment Committee

5.1 Policy

All candidates applying for eligibility to a Royal College examination must first be assessed by the Royal College. The '[Application for Assessment of Canadian Residency Training](#)' is available by download (PDF format) on the Royal College website: <http://www.royalcollege.ca>

Please note that the submission of a Royal College 'Application for Assessment of Canadian Residency Training' does not guarantee that the Royal College will recognize the applicant's postgraduate medical education.

5.2 Purpose

This Royal College policy and procedure provides a standardized mechanism for oversight of and decision-making regarding the Royal College process for residents seeking eligibility to their discipline-specific examination. This policy is applicable to residents completing a Royal College accredited training program in Canada under a Competence by Design model.

5.3 Procedure for applications for assessment of training

5.3.1 Registration

- a) Applicants are responsible for registering with the Royal College credentials unit.
- b) The discipline specific deadline dates by which the completed assessment of Canadian residency training form must be received by the Royal College Credentials Unit, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca
- c) All applications for assessment of Canadian residency training or for updated assessment of additional training must be received before midnight, Eastern Standards Time (EST) on the date of the relevant deadline. Subsequent requests for updated assessment of additional training must be received before the relevant deadline for the next year's examination session.
- d) Applicants are responsible for ensuring correct contact details at all times.

5.3.2 Assessment of Medical Qualification

Medical Qualification Acceptable to the Royal College

- a) The Royal College bylaws define "medical qualification" as a degree granted by a faculty, college or school of medicine, upon satisfactory completion of a full curriculum of studies in medicine.
- b) The Royal College defines the term "medicine" to include surgery and obstetrics, but does not include chiropractic, homeopathy, osteopathy, podiatry, stomatology, or veterinary science.

- c) The Royal College defines "practice of medicine" to mean the practice of the medical, surgical, and laboratory disciplines, and the specialties and areas of subspecialties thereof.
- d) The Royal College recognizes qualifications from medical schools that grant the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) and:
 - i. Are accredited by the CACMS or the LCME, or
 - ii. Are recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
- e) **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable to the Royal College.
- f) Applicants with medical qualifications from medical schools other than CACMS/LCME accredited medical schools OR DOs recognized by the American Osteopathic Association must have succeeded at one of the following screening examinations in order to have their medical qualifications recognized by the Royal College:
 - i. The MCCQE, Part I for Royal College Examination Eligibility, and Part II for Royal College Certification, or
 - ii. The United States Medical Licensing Examination, Parts I, II and III.
- g) Applicants with qualifications from medical schools in countries other than Canada and the United States of America may be required to provide the Royal College with information concerning the curriculum of their undergraduate medical experience.

5.4 Assessment Fees

- a) Assessment fees for credentials are non-refundable and must accompany an application for assessment of Canadian residency training. To obtain an assessment fee schedule please refer to the Royal College website: <http://www.royalcollege.ca>
- b) Assessment fees cover only the cost of assessment services, which includes the assessment by the Royal College of all documentation related to the attestation that training requirements have been met.
- c) It covers the period when the applicant is enrolled as a resident in an accredited Royal College program, or for four (4) years, whichever is longer. Once this time period has lapsed, a request for a new assessment must include another non-refundable assessment fee.
- d) This assessment fee does not cover reconsiderations of rulings, formal reviews, review of marks, or any other additional services.
- e) Assessment fees are reviewed annually by the Royal College and are subject to change.
- f) Additional fees will be charged for the assessment of training for the examinations in a second or subsequent discipline.

5.5 Accelerated Achievement of EPAs

It is understood by the Royal College that residents may have training or clinical experiences prior to entering a CBD residency program. The Competence Committee should use evidence from those previous clinical experiences to recommend achievement of an EPA to the Program Director and RPC. In such circumstances, the previous clinical experiences must be documented as justification as to why they represent a valid substitute for clinical observations and workplace based assessments.

5.6 Version of EPAs

The discipline-specific standards under which trainees are assessed (EPAs) will naturally evolve over time. In order to ensure that residents are assessed on contemporary standards, the Royal College requires that the most current standards are applied to the resident when the resident promotes to their next stage of training. Their current stage of training, as well as any completed stage of training, will not be affected.

5.7 Penalty Fees

Applications received after the deadline date will be accepted on payment of a non-refundable penalty fee (see Royal College website for current fees), with no guarantee that the application can be processed in time for the next examination session.

5.8 Modifications to Residency Training

It is understood by the Royal College that residents may require leaves of absence from training. The circumstances that would qualify residents for leaves of absence are determined by the university. Following leave, trainees must be reassessed on their performance on their most recent stages of training, which allows the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean to determine if any adjustments to the training program are required.

5.9 Transferability of EPAs between Universities

Required EPAs are the same for the specific discipline regardless of the university.

If a resident transfers to another university for training it is the responsibility of the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean of the leaving institution to identify to the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean of the accepting institution which EPAs and milestones have been achieved to date. It is the responsibility of the accepting Program Director and Postgraduate Dean to approve the achievement of any EPAs and milestones.

5.10 Transferring from CBD to Non-CBD program

In the event that a trainee transfers from a specialty using a Competence-by-Design model of training to a specialty that does not utilize a CBD model, the program director will work alongside the trainee to assess his or her knowledge and create a plan for transitioning the trainee into a traditional time-based residency program. The program director will be required to submit a letter to the Royal College Credentials Unit recommending credit for previous training. This letter must be supported by the post-graduate dean. This information will be necessary for the trainee to register for the examination. The letter may be submitted via email to credentials@royalcollege.ca.

6.0 Administration of a Royal College Ruling Letter

Policy name:	Royal College Ruling Letter
Date approved:	November 2017
Section:	6.0 Examination policy
Subject:	
Review Date:	November 2017
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Approved by:	Royal College Assessment Committee

6.1 Policy

When the Royal College's Credentials Unit has completed an assessment of the Canadian residency training of a candidate, they will determine if the candidate is eligible to take the Royal College examination. The Royal College will issue a "ruling letter" on examination eligibility and/or conditions that must be met in order to attain eligibility for the discipline-specific examination.

6.2 Purpose

Royal College policy and procedure provide a standardized process for oversight of and decision-making regarding access to the Royal College discipline-specific examinations through the provision of a "ruling letter" which confers examination eligibility. Receiving a Royal College "ruling letter" does not mean certification has been granted, rather, it is a step in the process of becoming certified. This policy is applicable to residents completing a Royal College accredited training program in Canada under a Competence by Design model.

6.3 Procedure

6.3.1 Obtaining a Royal College Examination Eligibility Ruling Letter

- Once registered, examination eligibility will be conferred by the Royal College Credentials Unit after receiving the "Anticipation of Completion of Core" document. Candidates will be eligible for their discipline specific examination after the ACC document has been received by the Royal College credentials unit
- A successful 'Anticipation of Completion of Core' (ACC) document is a criterion of eligibility to the Royal College examinations. The ACC must be completed by a Residency Program Director on behalf of the Residency Program Committee (RPC), and informed by the Competence Committee.
- It must be signed by the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean. Submission of this document is required during Core and 6 months prior to planned written examinations and/or applied examination.

6.4 Renewal of Examination Eligibility

- 6.4.1 A candidate whose eligibility for the examinations leading to Royal College certification has expired after three (3) years through failure on the examinations or through failure to appear at the examinations may apply up to two (2) times for one additional year of eligibility for the examination, resulting in a maximum of five (5) years of eligibility.
- 6.4.2 A renewal of eligibility is valid only for the examination session in the year following the granting of the renewal.
- 6.4.3 If a candidate chooses not to renew their eligibility in the fourth or fifth year, then the candidate loses that year of eligibility. The only exception is a circumstance where the Royal College has granted a deferral of eligibility (see Section 6.5).

- 6.4.4 Application for the renewal of eligibility must be made by the deadline in the year before the candidate wishes to be examined.
- 6.4.5 A candidate will be granted no further eligibility on the occurrence of either of the following:
- exhausted five years of eligibility; or
 - five years have passed from their initial grant of eligibility.
- 6.4.6 Candidates who have exhausted their eligibility under section 6.4.1 may only reapply for examination eligibility upon substantive changes in their application pursuant to the review of a ruling process set out in section 6.7.

6.5 Deferral of examination eligibility

In the event that the candidate cannot attend or unexpectedly misses an examination due to a serious accident, illness or other impediment, the Royal College will consider a deferral of examination eligibility for one attempt.

NOTE: Deferrals will only be granted in exceptional situations. Deferrals will generally not be granted for missed flights and other travel delays, minor illness, lack of preparedness or scheduling conflicts.

- 6.5.1 Candidates who know in advance of the examination that they will miss the examination should contact the Royal College to request a deferral as early as possible.
- 6.5.2 Candidates who miss an examination unexpectedly must submit a request for deferral within five business days of the missed examination date.
- 6.5.3 All requests for deferral must include the following documentation:
- A written request for deferral and a detailed description of the circumstances leading to the request, signed by the candidate;
 - In the case of serious accident or illness, an original letter, on office letterhead, from the candidate's qualified treating professional identifying and confirming the accident or illness, together with verification that the accident or illness is or was serious enough to warrant missing the examination; and,
 - In the case of any other impediment, appropriate documentation, from a source with direct involvement or knowledge of the circumstances in question.

NOTE: The Royal College may request additional information and/or confirmation, as it considers necessary on a case-by-case basis.

- 6.5.4 The final decision regarding a request for deferral lies with the Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.

6.6 Reconsideration of a Ruling on Examination Eligibility

- 6.6.1 A reconsideration of a ruling on examination eligibility may be initiated at the request of an applicant or by the Director of Assessment of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College, or his or her delegate, if substantive new information about an applicant's credentials or training is received or if there was an error in the administration of policy in an applicant's assessment of training. New information may be received from the applicant or any other knowledgeable source and should be sent to the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College to the attention of the Director of Assessment.
- 6.6.2 Requests for reconsideration of a ruling will be considered by the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate.
- 6.6.3 In the event that a reconsideration of a ruling is initiated by the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate, the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate shall disclose to the applicant the nature

of the information received and allow the applicant an opportunity to provide relevant information and make submissions as to his or her examination eligibility.

6.6.4 The Director of Assessment or his or her delegate shall issue a written decision either confirming or amending the original ruling with respect to examination eligibility and provide a copy of the decision to the applicant.

6.6.5 The applicant may appeal the decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate following the procedure set out in Section 6.7 of this Policy.

6.7 Appeal of a Decision on a Royal College Ruling Policy

6.7.1 An applicant who wishes to appeal a decision made under Sections 4.4 or 6.6 of this Policy must notify the Director of Assessment of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College within 30 working days of the date of the decision with a written statement of the reasons for the request. The appeal request must be submitted with a non-refundable administrative fee (see Royal College website for current fees).

6.7.2 The appeal of the decision will be conducted by a panel of three (3) members of the Royal College Credentials Committee designated by the Director of Assessment of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College or his or her delegate.

6.7.3 If a conflict of interest exists or any other impediment such that a panel of three (3) members selected from the Royal College Credentials Committee is unfeasible in the circumstances, the Director of Assessment of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College or his or her delegate shall appoint appeal panel members from outside of the Royal College Credentials Committee.

6.7.4 Appeals shall be conducted by way of a written hearing. In extraordinary circumstances, the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate may, in his or her sole discretion, direct that the appeal be conducted by way of an oral hearing, in whole or in part, instead of a written hearing. The decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate in this regard is final and not subject to review or appeal.

6.7.5 Prior to the date of the oral hearing or the date for deliberations in the case of a written hearing, the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate shall provide to each member of the appeal panel all materials, documents and evidence submitted by the parties as well as any other relevant information to the matters at issue.

6.7.6 Within 30 days of its deliberations, the Chair of the Panel shall issue in writing the panel's decision and any other relevant information or recommendation to the Office of the Director of Assessment.

6.7.7 The appeal panel may confirm or amend, in whole or in part, the decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate made under Section 4.4 or 6.6 of this Policy, as the case may be.

6.7.8 There is no provision for further appeal to the Royal College of the decision of the appeal panel, which is considered final.

7.0 Examination Delivery

Policy Name:	The process and procedures for the delivery of Examinations in a CBD model of residency training
Date approved:	November 2017
Section:	7.0 Examination policy
Subject:	
Review Date:	November 2017
Revision No.:	
Approved by:	Royal College Assessment Committee

7.1 PURPOSE

Examination Policy for Candidates in a CBD Program outlines the policies and procedures for the administration of the Royal College examination for CBD Disciplines.

7.2 Frequency of Examinations

- 7.2.1 The Royal College will offer discipline specific examinations on a yearly basis as directed by the Assessment Committee.
- 7.2.2 Where specialties have more than one examination component, each component will be offered once during an examination year. For example, if a discipline has a written exam component and an applied exam component, each component will be offered only once during an exam year.

7.3 Language of Examinations

- 7.3.1 The Royal College examinations are offered in both English and French.
- 7.3.2 Standard medical terminology is used in both English and French examinations. All candidates must anticipate that examination text will be presented in Standard Medical Terminology. "Standard Medical Terminology" means language used to describe medical components, processes, conditions and procedures. Its source may include medical textbooks, lexicons, dictionaries, and journals; it may be specific to a medical specialty. It is differentiated from medical colloquialisms and jargon, which may be influenced by local or regional practices.
- 7.3.3 Candidates must declare at the time of examination registration whether they wish to be examined in English or French for each component of the exam. The candidate must consistently respond to answers on the respective exam components using the declared language.
- 7.3.4 Candidates whose first language is not English or French should ensure that they have reasonable fluency, written and oral, in either English or French.

7.4 Examination Format

- 7.4.1 In disciplines where there is a written and an applied (oral, OSCE, practical) component residents must be successful at the written component in order to be deemed eligible for the applied component. The Royal College examination incorporates combined written and oral components that may include one or more short answer written papers and/or multiple-choice questions, oral, OSCE, clinical, practical or other examination components.

Note: Residents who are unsuccessful at the written examinations may continue into the next stage of training.

- 7.4.2 As disciplines transition to a Competence-by-Design training model, there may be an occurrence of candidates from both the traditional and CBD programs writing exams in the same exam season.

In this case, the written-before-applied format that applies to CBD candidates will also be applied to traditional candidates.

Note: A written-before-applied format requires candidates to pass the written component of the exam before they are invited to take the applied (oral, OSCE, practical) exam.

- 7.4.3** Information about the examination format for each discipline is available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca. Candidates are notified as soon as possible of changes in the examination format or examination timing

7.5 Date of Examinations

Examination dates will be published prior to the examinations and current dates are available on the Royal College Website.

7.6 Examination Sites

Examinations, including the Surgical Foundations examination, may be held in various centres across Canada. Candidates will be notified of the site(s) where the examination(s) will occur when candidates receive the Royal College examination form.

7.7 Registration

Candidates must register for the examinations by the published deadlines.

<http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/credentials-exams/writing-exams/registration/exam-registration-instructions-information-e>. Candidates faxing, mailing or emailing their registration need to ensure that they have a confirmation of delivery of their registration to ensure that the Royal College has received their registration.

7.8 Payment of Examination fees

Examination fees must be paid in full and are due by the posted deadline

- 7.8.1** Examination fees for the components of the examinations will be published prior to the examination registration deadline. Candidates need to refer to the published fees prior to submitting their registration to the exams.
- 7.8.2** Non-payment of fees by the appropriate deadline may result in the candidate's registration to the examination to be declined.
- 7.8.3** Examination fees are reviewed annually by the Royal College and are subject to change. To obtain an Examination Fee Schedule please refer to the Royal College website.

7.9 Withdrawals from Examinations

- 7.9.1** Notification of withdrawal must be received by the Examination Unit at least 20 business days prior to the first component of the examination. Upon receipt, 50% of the examination fees will be refunded. Notification of withdrawal less than 20 days prior to the examination will result in no refund of the fees.
- 7.9.2** All candidates who withdraw from the examination, or do not appear at the examination, will have been considered to have used one year of eligibility, unless granted a deferral pursuant to section 6.5.

7.10 Deadlines

All applications must be received before the end of the business day on the date of the relevant deadline. Please refer to the Royal College website to see the current deadlines for the spring and fall examinations.

7.11 Access to Exams

Access to the examinations will be granted to candidates that have registered and have received a

confirmation of their examination registration. Candidates are also required to provide government issued photo identification at the time of the examination.

7.12 Confidentiality

Candidates will be required to sign a confidentiality statement as part of the registration and examination process on their registration form.

7.13 Candidate Conduct

Examination candidates need to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. The following will apply during all examinations:

- a) All examination information is confidential. Any transmission of examination information, either written or verbal, is expressly prohibited without prior consent of the Royal College. No one is permitted to make written notes or to record, in any way, the contents of an examination.
- b) Candidates must not procure, use, or attempt to use or distribute any improper or unauthorized materials.
- c) No examination candidate may bring into the examination room any books, notes, electronic communication devices with memory capability; e.g., smart phones, cell phones, pagers or other materials containing information pertaining to the examination.
- d) Talk or any other form of communication between candidates during examinations is not allowed. All communication devices must be deposited with the invigilators prior to the start of the examination.
- e) Candidates are not permitted to leave the examination room until one half hour after the examination has begun, and in no case before attendance has been taken. A candidate who leaves before the examination is over must hand in all completed and attempted work, examination materials and notes.
- f) If books, notes, etc., cannot be left outside the examination room, they must be put in a place designated by the Invigilator before the candidate takes a seat.
- g) Candidates are responsible for arriving at the right time and place for the examination and must have with them government issued photo identification to gain access to the examination.
- h) The doors of the examination room will normally be opened at least 10 minutes before the starting hour. Candidates that are late for the start of the examination will need to sign a waiver. Candidates should be aware that a portion of time will be lost while the examination is being distributed and instructions are being given by an invigilator. They must enter the room quietly, and time will not be extended for the examination.
- i) Candidates must remain seated. A candidate needing to speak to the Invigilator (e.g., to ask for additional supplies) should indicate this by raising their hand.
- j) Questions concerning possible errors, ambiguities, or omissions in the examination paper must be directed to the Invigilator, who will investigate them through the proper channels. The Invigilator is not permitted to answer questions other than those concerning the examination paper.
- k) All work must be done in accordance with the examination instructions and must be handed in to the Invigilator.
- l) At the close of the examination, candidates must stop writing and submit their work at once.
- m) Food is permitted at the discretion of the Chief Invigilator. Food should be brought in prior to the exam. Students will not be permitted to go to vending machines/the cafeteria during an examination.
- n) Bathroom privileges: only one student at a time will be allowed to go to the bathroom, and the student may be escorted there and back by an Invigilator (at the Invigilator's discretion).

- o) No student will be permitted to leave during the final fifteen minutes of the examination.
- p) Candidates are required to report examination process irregularities to the responsible local authority (i.e., the Chair of the Discipline Specific Examination Board (or a delegate), an invigilator, or the local coordinator)

Candidates are reminded that cheating on any examination is considered a serious offence which could lead to expulsion from the examination and affect future eligibility. Candidates are not permitted to have in their possession, or to use, any unauthorized materials during an examination.

7.14 Conflicts

The Royal College tries to ensure that potential examiner and examinee conflicts are minimized. A conflict that could exist may include:

- a past candidate/faculty teaching relationship;
- a past work based candidate/examiner relationship;
- past candidate/ examiner encounters in other exams; and
- all other relationship encounters that could present a bias at an examination.

In the event that a candidate identifies a conflict they are obligated to bring the conflict to the attention of the examination invigilator who will then bring it to the attention of the Chair of the Discipline-Specific Examination Board who will identify a substitute member of the same Discipline-Specific Examination Board to take over the examiner duties.

The Royal College cannot guarantee that a candidate will have new examiners when re-writing or taking multiple examinations. Candidates may not request substitute examiners unless there is a legitimate conflict.

If you perceive a conflict of interest with an examiner, please report it to the Royal College Credentials Unit at candidates@royalcollege.ca before the exam.

7.15 Candidates requiring an Examination Accommodation

7.15.1 The Royal College will attempt to accommodate candidates with specific requirements for the examination provided that the validity of the examination is maintained and the accommodation does not cause undue hardship or unreasonable expense for the Royal College.

7.15.2 Requests for examination accommodation must be submitted to the Royal College at the time of application for the examination. Candidates may submit their request to examaccommodation@royalcollege.ca. Requests must include the following documentation:

- A signed letter from the candidate with a description of the need for accommodation and its severity, along with a description of the required accommodation;
- If the candidate has previously been provided accommodations by their university or other medical education programs, the candidate should provide documentation of the accommodations provided;
- Supporting documentation from a qualified treating professional confirming the need for accommodation, its severity, the candidates' functional limitations, and specific recommendations for the accommodation. All supporting documentation must be provided on office letterhead, from the candidate's fully licensed practising physician, clinical

psychologist, or other appropriate licensed healthcare provider (the practitioner cannot be a relative or spouse of the candidate);

- Written confirmation from a qualified professional that the candidates' functional limitations are still valid should the supporting documentation be more than two years old.

Note: The Royal College may request additional information, as it considers necessary, on a case-by-case basis.

- 7.15.3** In the event that the need for an examination accommodation arises after the application for examination is submitted, the candidate must inform the Program Manager, Formal Reviews and Accommodations at examaccommodation@royalcollege.ca and submit the documentation described in section 7.15.2 as soon as possible. It may not be possible to arrange examination accommodations requested to close to the examination date.
- 7.15.4** The final decision regarding an accommodation request lies with the Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.
- 7.15.5** Prior to taking the Royal College examination, the candidate and the Royal College must confirm special arrangements in writing.
- 7.15.6** Candidates requesting exam scheduling accommodations in relation to religious observances may do so using the exam accommodations process.

7.16 Results/posting of marks

Candidate results will be posted to a secure server on the date specified on the Royal College website link for accessing results. Results are typically posted 10 days after the completion of the exam or sooner. Please refer to the information link to review your results posting date. Exam results will be posted after 12pm Eastern Daylight Time on the specified date for your specialty.

Examination results go through a rigorous data verification process to ensure that posted results have been audited and verified as complete and accurate.

7.17 Review of Marks

All examination scores are subjected to multiple levels of verification and quality assurance prior to being reported to candidates. This ensures that each candidate's performance is appropriately assessed and their scores are accurately reported. The Royal College has implemented a thorough and rigorous process in this regard involving numerous steps and safeguards, including a dedicated data verification and quality assurance team that conducts the following activities:

- Verification of Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) answer sheets and data transfer;
- Verification of Short Answer Question (SAQ) scores and data; and,
- Verification of Oral, OSCE and Practical scores and data.

Once candidate performances have been reported by the Royal College and the Summary of Performance has been issued, candidates who wish to request a further review of their marks may do so by submitting the following form: formalreviews@royalcollege.ca. All such requests must be submitted within **30 days** of the date appearing on the Summary of Performance and must be accompanied by a certified cheque or money order in the amount of **\$300** payable to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. A request for a review of marks that does not include the required administration fee within the time set out above shall not be processed or considered.

Please note that any request for a review of marks by the Royal College will be strictly limited to a review for any potential mathematical or mechanical errors (e.g., marks mistabulated, answer sheets missed, etc.). A review of marks will NOT include any form of re-reading and/or re-grading of a candidate's answers.

In the event that a marking error is identified, the \$300 administration fee will be reimbursed.

7.17 Formal Reviews of Examinations

7.17.1 Policy

Formal reviews of examinations and practice based assessments are conducted only on the basis of alleged significant procedural irregularities in the assessment process, not because of alleged errors in content. The exclusion of errors in content applies to allegations of errors in either the questions and structure of the examination, or the evaluation and content of the responses provided by the candidate.

The review process is not a re-grading or re-scoring exercise. This scope of review is designed to act as a safeguard for the validity of the examination and assessment process.

The distinction between content reviews and process reviews is of the utmost importance. Requests for reviews based on alleged errors in content will not be processed. A request for a formal review will only be considered in the event of a procedural irregularity serious enough to affect materially the candidate's performance.

Examples of potential issues that do NOT constitute process irregularities include:

- Disagreements or concerns regarding the content and/or structure of the examination or practice based assessment;
- Disagreements or concerns regarding the grading of the examination or practice based assessment;
- Concerns regarding the extent of post-examination or post-practice based assessment feedback provided to candidates;
- Requests for disclosure of Royal College documentation and/or records;
- Mere fact of repeat examiners;
- Requests for the Royal College to consider information not normally considered as part of the evaluation process, such as FITERS (for non- borderline candidates) and reference letters.

7.17.2 Purpose

Formal reviews of examinations and practice based assessments are part of the evaluation and quality improvement system used by the Royal College to grant specialist certification. They provide a means to investigate the circumstances of the written, oral or other type of examination or practice based assessment administered to one or several candidates, and to ascertain whether the process was carried out under conditions appropriate to the conduct of an examination or practice based assessment as determined by the Discipline Specific Examination Boards and approved by the Examination Committee of the Royal College. Formal reviews of examinations and practice based assessments involve candidates, Royal College examiners, the Examination Committee, and the Office of Specialty Education in an effort to identify any significant irregularities in the conduct of the examination process and any procedural unfairness materially affecting one or several candidates.

7.17.3 Principles

Examiners in a given specialty are authorities on content. Their judgment relative to the correctness of a candidate's answers is not open to challenge.

An examiner's decision with respect to the correctness or completeness of a response and their assessment of a candidate's knowledge and/or skills is final. While a candidate may disagree with their decision, such disagreement does not constitute grounds for review.

On occasion, deviations from the stated format or conduct of the examination may be unavoidable and irregularities may occur that do not result in any unfairness or significantly affect the performance of the candidate.

7.17.4 Procedures

There are three pathways to initiate a formal review:

1. Immediate notification to the local examination or practice based assessment authority by the candidate:

If a candidate believes that one or several process irregularities has occurred in the course of an examination or practice based assessment, he or she should immediately bring this to the attention of the responsible local authority (i.e., the Chair of the Discipline Specific Examination Board (or a delegate), an invigilator, or the local coordinator). Examiners and staff of the Office of Specialty Education are also expected to immediately report any material process irregularities. The person in charge may then contact the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, for immediate advice with respect to correcting the irregularity, whenever possible. In any such case, a written report must be sent as soon as possible to the Office of the Director of Assessment.

Reporting at the time of the incident affords an opportunity to resolve most concerns or irregularities. It also provides a record of events. This pathway does not preclude further requests for review on the part of the candidate concerned.

2. Reviews originating within the Office of Specialty Education:

Where the Office of Specialty Education becomes aware of a material process irregularity, it may initiate the review mechanism on behalf of one or several candidates. In such a case, the procedure described in this document shall be adhered to, but no fee shall be required from the candidate(s) involved. The Office of Specialty Education may initiate a formal review at any time, even beyond the deadline stated for candidates. Where a candidate or candidates are materially affected by such a review, they will be notified by the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, at the most opportune time.

Where a review initiated by the Office of Specialty Education identifies a material process irregularity in the procedure, the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, will make a recommendation regarding appropriate remedial actions to the Chair of the Discipline Specific Examination Board. The recommendations may include allowing a repeat examination.

3. Reviews initiated by a candidate submitting a written request after the examination:

A candidate wishing to request a formal review must notify the Office of the Director of Assessment of the Royal College in writing to formalreviews@royalcollege.ca within 30 days of the date appearing on the Summary of Performance or, in the event that a Review of Marks was previously requested, within 30 business days of receipt of the Royal College's response in that regard.

Before submitting a request for a formal review, candidates must ensure that their concerns relate to one or more alleged irregularities in the evaluation process, not a content, grading or other non-process issue. As noted previously, candidates should also keep in mind that process irregularities are only considered relevant when serious enough to affect materially the candidate's performance. Procedural irregularities of a minor nature or that are appropriately addressed and rectified (if necessary) at the time of the examination, and that do not significantly affect his or her performance will NOT be considered material for the purposes of a formal review.

The request must explain, completely and in detail, all of the circumstances surrounding the alleged process irregularity and its effect on the candidate's performance.

The request must include a certified cheque or money order in the amount of **\$500** payable to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

The Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, shall acknowledge receipt of the request and deposit the administration fee.

A request for a formal review that does not include the required administration fee in the prescribed form within the time set out above shall not be processed or considered.

7.17.5 Performing reviews initiated by candidates submitting written requests

Step I: Initial Review by the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate

Where a candidate initiates a request for review, the request shall be reviewed by the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, to determine:

- whether the request sets out in sufficient detail the grounds for review and the relief sought;
- whether the request pertains to a process issue or a content issue; and
- whether the request is scandalous, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith or otherwise an abuse of process.

If the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, determines that the request for review does not set out in sufficient detail the grounds for review and the relief sought, or that the request pertains exclusively to a content issue rather than a process issue, or that the request is scandalous, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith or otherwise an abuse of process, he or she shall advise the candidate in writing within 15 days of making the determination. In such a case, the candidate shall be provided a further 15 days from the date of notification by the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, in which to remedy any deficiency and/or to make written submissions outlining reasons why the request for a formal review should be permitted to proceed. Within 15 days of receipt of such additional submissions, the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, shall determine whether the request for a formal review should proceed. The decision of the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, is final and not subject to review.

If the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, determines that the request for a formal review should proceed, he or she shall, within 45 days of receipt of a complete and final request for a formal review, evaluate the request and conduct any enquiries that he or she may deem useful, and provide a written decision to the candidate as to whether or not the grounds for a formal review alleged by the candidate are founded and, if so, what remedy should be accorded, if any. The decision of the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, shall be final subject only to a formal review as set out below.

Where a candidate disagrees, in whole or in part, with the decision of the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, the candidate may, within 15 days of the date appearing on the written decision, advise the Office of the Director of Assessment, in writing, that he or she wishes for the decision to be reviewed by a Formal Review Panel. The candidate shall specify whether he or she wishes for the Formal Review Panel to proceed by way of paper review **or** an oral review. Requests for a paper review by a Formal Review Panel must be accompanied with an administration fee in the amount of \$750 by certified cheque or money order, payable to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Requests for an oral hearing by a Formal Review Panel must be accompanied with an administration fee in the amount of \$1,000 by certified cheque or money order, payable to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Step II: Review by a Formal Review Panel

If a candidate seeks a review of the decision of the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, whether by way of a paper review or an oral hearing, a Formal Review Panel consisting of three members from the Review Subcommittee shall be appointed. The members of the Formal Review Panel may NOT be members of the Discipline Specific Examination Board in the candidate's specialty, or faculty members in the candidate's residency program, nor certified in the candidate's specialty. One of the Formal Review Panel members will be designated as its Chair.

The Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, in consultation with the Formal Review Panel, shall set a date for the deliberations of the Formal Review Panel (in the case of a paper review) or for the oral hearing by the Formal Review Panel (in the case of an oral hearing) within **90 days** of receipt of a candidate's request for a review by a Formal Review Panel.

At least 45 days prior to the date for the Formal Review Panel's deliberations or oral hearing, as the case may be, the Office of the Director of Assessment shall provide to the candidate the documents and records relevant to the request for a formal review. The Office of the Director of Assessment may refuse to disclose certain information, records and/or documents that may, in the opinion of the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate:

- undermine the integrity of any aspect of the examinations and/or practice based assessments process, the formal review process, or any other function of the Royal College or other matter within its authority;
- disclose financial or personal information or other matters of such a nature that the desirability of avoiding their disclosure in the interest of any person affected, or in the public interest, outweighs the desirability of adhering to the principle that reasonable disclosure be made;
- be subject to privilege; or
- for any other reason of public interest.

A candidate in receipt of documentary disclosure from the Royal College who wishes to address any new facts or

issues raised by the disclosure may prepare and deliver to the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, within 30 days of the Formal Review Panel's deliberations or oral hearing, as the case may be, further brief written submissions.

In the case of a paper review by the Formal Review Panel, the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, may reply in writing to any new submissions and/or evidence tendered by the candidate that was not already provided during the course of the review.

Within 21 days of the date for the Formal Review Panel's deliberations or oral hearing, as the case may be, the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, shall provide to each member of the Formal Review Panel all materials, documents and evidence submitted by the parties.

In the case of a paper review, the Formal Review Panel's deliberations shall be carried out under conditions of strict confidentiality. Deliberations amongst the members of the Formal Review Panel may be conducted in person or by electronic means (telephone conference, video conference, etc.), in whole or in part.

In the case of an oral hearing:

- At least 20 days prior to the oral hearing, a candidate must notify the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, whether the candidate intends to appear in person or be represented by counsel, or both, and whether the candidate wishes for the oral hearing to proceed by way of an electronic hearing (telephone conference, video conference, etc.), in whole or in part.
- A candidate's request for an electronic hearing may be denied on the grounds that it would be unduly cumbersome, is likely to cause prejudice to any party, or is likely to prevent or limit the Formal Review Panel's ability to apprehend the evidence and submissions to be made.
- The Royal College may be represented by counsel at all stages of the formal review process and shall have full standing at the oral hearing, including the right to make representations, lead evidence and challenge the evidence of the candidate.
- Where the Chair of the Formal Review Panel considers it appropriate, he or she may, prior to the oral hearing, request that independent legal counsel be retained for the Panel at the Royal College's expense. Such counsel shall be appointed from a law firm other than that of counsel to the Royal College. In making such a determination, the Chair may consider the complexity and nature of the request for a formal review, the likelihood that significant legal or procedural issues will arise in the course of the review, or any other factors that may be relevant in the circumstances.
- Requests for adjournments will not be granted as of right and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A request for adjournment must be made as soon as possible to the Formal Review Panel, and shall include the reasons for the request, and the amount of time needed for the adjournment. The Formal Review Panel may decline to accept the candidate's convenience or that of its representative as a sufficient reason for adjournment.
- The Formal Review Panel is the master of its own procedure in relation to the conduct of the oral hearing. However, in the ordinary course, the conduct of the oral hearing shall proceed as follows:
 - Absent permission from the panel, no new evidence is to be introduced at the hearing.
 - Counsel for the Royal College will provide a brief (5 minutes) opening statement outlining the material facts and its position in relation to the request for a formal review;
 - The candidate, or his or her counsel, will provide a brief (5 minutes) opening statement outlining the material facts and its position in relation to the request for a formal review;

- The candidate will then be asked to present his or her case (40 minutes).
- Counsel of the Royal College will then be asked to present its case (40 minutes).
- The members of the Formal Review Panel may at any time ask any question of the candidate, counsel for the candidate, or counsel for the Royal College for further clarification.
- The candidate, or his or her counsel, may then provide a closing statement (5 minutes);
- Counsel for the Royal College will then provide a closing statement (5 minutes)
- At the close of the oral hearing, the Formal Review Panel shall retire and deliberate.

Within 30 days of its deliberations, whether in the case of a paper review or oral hearing, the Chair of the Formal Review Panel shall issue in writing the Panel's decision and any other relevant information or recommendation to the Office of the Director of Assessment. The available decision options are as follows:

- No process irregularities occurred;
- There was a process irregularity, but NOT of such a magnitude or impact that it could affect materially the candidate's outcome of the examination or practice based assessment; or
- There was a process irregularity of sufficient magnitude or impact to affect materially the candidate's outcome of the examination or practice based assessment, and a repeat examination or practice based assessment is allowed at the next examination session or practice based assessment session of the specialty.

In cases when a repeat examination or practice based assessment is granted, the examination or practice based assessment subjected to review is to be considered null and must not be counted in determining the candidate's eligibility for certification, but such eligibility remains subject to confirmation by the Credentials Unit.

A repeat examination shall include all components of the original examination, in those specialties using comprehensive objective (COE) examinations, in which success on one component is not a prerequisite for passing the other component or components, nor for achieving certification.

Where a candidate is successful, in whole or in part, on review, the Formal Review Panel may, in its discretion, recommend a refund of the examination or practice based assessment fee, the formal review fee, or both fees where a repeat examination or practice based assessment is granted. The Royal College shall also waive the examination or practice based assessment fee for the repeat examination/assessment.

There is no provision for further review by the Royal College of the decisions of the Formal Review Panel after a paper review or oral hearing, as the case may be, which are considered final.

The Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, shall inform the candidate of the Formal Review Panel's decision. The deliberations of the Formal Review Panel and the documents used in the formal review are strictly confidential.

8.0 PRIVACY POLICY

All documents and information obtained by the Royal College during the course of an assessment of training will be kept confidential, except as required or permitted by law. Applicants are requested to provide copies and NOT original documents. All personal information is managed in accordance with the Royal College General Privacy Statement. Please refer to the Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca for an explanation of how personal information is managed.