

# Frequently Asked Questions: Trainee assessment for accredited AFC programs

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## **Is it mandatory that a trainee apply and pay the assessment fee at the start of training, or can they apply later?**

We encourage trainees to apply for assessment at the start of training as the Royal College checks the discipline's eligibility requirements (found in the Competency Training Requirements, or CTR) to determine whether the trainee is eligible to apply for the credential. Confirmation of eligibility at the start of training ensures there are no surprises later when the trainee has completed training. Applying at the start also ensures a more seamless exit from training, reducing the number of communications needed at an already busy time.

Based on your feedback, we know that paying the assessment fee at the start of training is not always possible nor preferred by some trainees. While we are exploring ways to make applying at the start of training a value-add for trainees, to clarify, payment is only required when a trainee submits an AFC Application Form. Applications can be submitted to the Royal College at the start of training or at any time during training. Both payment and the application are required to be considered for the AFC credential with the Royal College.



For various reasons, a trainee may not complete training in the time expected (i.e., illness, maternity/ parental leave, redeployment, etc.) In such cases, the trainee's application is simply extended until they can return to training to achieve the credential.

## **There is no external assessment, so why do trainees pay an assessment fee?**

There are two fees for trainees - the [assessment fee](#) and the [Diplomate fee](#), to have their AFC credential recognized by the Royal College.

These fees, like residency assessment fees and Fellowship fees, cover the cost of a variety of activities in the AFC category such as the development and maintenance of national standards, on-going support for discipline-specific committees to oversee the discipline and staff time to process applications, including the application for assessment.

Only those who pay the annual fee to have their AFC credential recognized by the Royal College can use the designation Diplomate (or DRCPSC).

## **I don't know if my trainee became a Diplomate. How do I get this information?**

We suggest first checking our public, [online directory](#) of Royal College Fellows and Diplomates. You can search by the name of your discipline or your trainee's name. If your trainee does not appear, you can also contact the [Royal College](#) for confirmation of your trainee's status.

## **How does my program track evidence of a trainee's competence?**

Programs and sites are encouraged to use or create any system that demonstrates their ability to track, file and archive evidence of a trainee's competence. Your system can be as simple or as complex as required by your program – we simply ask that there be a robust and consistently-used system in place. We encourage you to use existing systems and processes to avoid duplication of work or effort.

Most AFC Directors have indicated that they are using a basic, digital filing architecture on their site's server, creating a folder for each trainee where each piece of evidence is saved by milestone. Others are using hard copy systems, creating a binder of evidence for each trainee. And yet others are using a hybrid system of both digital and hard copy record keeping. All of these are acceptable practices from the perspective of the Royal College, and we encourage you to consult your own faculty policies for guidance on storage, retention, privacy, etc. For



accreditation purposes it is recommended that, to the extent permitted by local data retention policies and best practices, programs save evidence for any trainee who was registered in the program during the previous 8 years. This allows accreditation surveyors to request evidence of the program's processes and systems that track decisions regarding trainees' completion of requirements, program completion, etc., for the complete regular review cycle, or across multiple 2-year follow-ups if applicable.

### **The current model of assessment requires programs to keep a record of trainee evidence, which is now part of an accreditation activity. What will surveyors be looking for?**

Surveyors will be looking for evidence that a robust system of assessment exists at your program which includes the system's policies and processes as well as records of decision-making related to trainees' achievement of program requirements. A surveyor may ask to see evidence from a particular milestone in the portfolio for each trainee in the program. A surveyor will not evaluate this evidence as it relates to an individual trainee's competence. Instead, the availability of the evidence demonstrates that the policies and processes are in place to maintain trainee files, and to make decisions related to trainee competence. Similarly, a surveyor's request for the minutes from your AFC Program Committee and/or Competence Committee (or equivalent) validates the existence of policies and processes and provides evidence of the program's rationale for decisions regarding a trainee's achievement of the program requirements.

### **I have a question about applying the standards to the training and assessment of a trainee. Who should I ask?**

Any feedback about the standards should be brought to the attention of the Chair of the discipline's Royal College AFC Committee or the full AFC Committee for discussion. These committees are charged with the ongoing maintenance and continuous quality improvement of the document suite. Ambiguities can be clarified through discussion with committee members, and if necessary, a revision to the standard. Without external assessment of portfolios, it is vital that input from AFC Directors, based on their experience of applying the standards, be part of the ongoing, regular continuous quality improvement of the standards and the usual business of the AFC Committee. Chairs will also be encouraged to facilitate this discussion at each meeting.