



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

# Methodology

Supplement to the AFC Special Review

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SUBMITTED TO COMMITTEE ON SPECIALTIES (COS)  
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## BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

A benchmark analysis was completed of all recognized AFC disciplines:

- **Fourteen** disciplines were identified as currently in the implementation phase and, based on the time to achieve individual milestones (i.e., development and dissemination of discipline-specific standards, the opening of the in-training route (first accredited training program), or the PER), were organized into three cohorts (cohorts A, B, and C) for review by the COS (Committee on Specialties) beginning in fall 2021 (see appendix). Two disciplines from cohort B and one discipline from cohort C achieved full implementation prior to their special review and were therefore moved into cohort AB.
- **Ten** disciplines were identified as having completed implementation (i.e., are fully implemented) and were excluded from the special review. These disciplines were invited to attend interviews or focus groups with staff to understand their experiences of AFC implementation and maintenance in a parallel process (“cohort AB”).
- **Seven** disciplines were identified as being recognized by COS less than 1.5 years before the time benchmark analysis was completed and were excluded from the special review due to a lack of data.

## ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

For every discipline, the Office of Standards and Assessment (OSA) then created a root cause analysis package. The root cause analysis focuses on the discipline’s work to achieve the three implementation milestones. Data and sources of information (e.g., minutes of meetings, annual discipline status reports, data on portfolio assessment, etc.) were used to identify barriers and successes. To contextualize each AFC’s implementation journey, the OSA also created individual implementation timelines. The root cause analysis identified questions for AFC chairs and operational units within the OSA (i.e., Specialty Support, Specialty Standards, the Educational Standards Unit, and the Credentials Unit) to respond to.

## VALIDATION

The root cause analysis and appendix were distributed for validation to the AFC committee chairs for each discipline and OSE operational units. For each milestone, chairs and operational units were asked to validate if the information was correct, to clarify any incorrect information, to answer specific questions raised by the root cause analysis, and to provide any additional comments.

## COS REVIEW

In alignment with the Policy on the Special Review of AFCs, the root cause analysis, an appendix of additional contextual information, and validations were sent to COS members for review. The reviewer provided a recommendation to the committee which discussed and determined an outcome for each discipline.

## **RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT**

Following the conclusion of the review, the OSA created a thematic summary of the challenges and facilitators identified during the special review. The eight Royal College operational units that support AFCs participated in several development sessions to draft recommendations with an aim to align operations to better support individual disciplines during the implementation phase and to set the category up for continued success and sustainability.