

# Policy on: The Practice Eligibility Route (PER)

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## 1. Objective & Scope

The Practice Eligibility Route is intended to be the primary route to certification for International Medical Graduates. The purpose of the Practice Eligibility Route is to remove barriers to primary specialty certification for practicing specialists, both in Canada as well as abroad, who are not currently Royal College certified and did not complete their training in a Royal College-accredited residency program or the United States. The PER is intended to provide a route to Royal College certification for all specialists who meet the established training and experience requirements. It provides an opportunity for specialists to have their credentials assessed and compared to Royal College medical graduate standards and, subsequently, the ability to challenge the Royal College specialty examination.

Successful application to the PER does not guarantee Royal College certification, rather it provides access to the Royal College examination which must be successfully completed (all components) in addition to meeting the outlined practice requirements before the candidate is eligible for certification.

## 2. Definitions and Acronyms

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| <b>CCT</b>                            | Confirmation of Completion of Training.  |
| <b>Credentials Committee</b>          | The Credentials Committee is a decision-making body comprised of volunteers and Royal College staff tasked with overseeing credentialing policies and routes to certification. |
| <b>International Medical Graduate</b> | A physician who completed post-graduate training in a jurisdiction outside of Canada.  |
| <b>PER</b>                            | Practice Eligibility Route: the primary route for certification for International Medical Graduates.   |
| <b>PGME</b>                           | Post graduate medical education.   |
| <b>Physicians Apply</b>               | A service used by the Royal College to verify authenticity of documents.   |

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| <b>MRA</b>                            | Medical regulatory authority: The MRAs are the provincial and territorial bodies responsible for granting physicians a license to practice within their jurisdiction.  |
| <b>MSF</b>                            | Multisource feedback.  |
| <b>Royal College</b>                  | Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national professional association that oversees the medical education of specialists in Canada. In its mandate articulated by a Royal Charter in 1929, it is entrusted with a key role in the oversight of the system of specialty medicine in Canada. |
| <b>Royal College Credentials Unit</b> | The unit of the Royal College responsible for evaluating and processing applications for exam eligibility received from specialists and trainees.  |
| <b>Specialty Committee</b>            | Each Royal College specialty has a committee comprised of Fellows certified in the respective specialty.   |
| <b>STRs</b>                           | Specialty training requirements.   |

### 3. Policy

#### Overview of the Procedure for Submission of a PER Application

The Practice Eligibility Route is available to applicants currently practicing in Canada or abroad, who have training equivalent to Royal College standards. Substantial training equivalence is required to be eligible for the examination, and 5 years of practice with a minimum of 2 in Canada are required to become certified. A license to practice in Canada is not required to initiate a PER application but will be required to complete the process and receive certification (to meet time in practice in Canada requirements). Applicants currently without a license to practice in Canada may access the exam component(s) of their discipline's examination. Success at the examination may be considered by the MRAs in the licensure application process. The Royal College does not have the authority to issue licenses to practice in Canada and cannot guarantee that success at an exam component will lead to being conferred a license by an MRA.

The applicant must ensure they are able to submit all the documents listed in Section 6 for their application to be evaluated by the Credentials Unit. An application must be submitted along with the required fee and addressed to the Royal College Credentials Unit. The review of the applicant's credentials will result in a determination of whether the applicant's training is sufficient to receive Royal College exam eligibility.

An application for the Practice Eligibility Route can be found on the Royal College website.

### 3.1 Eligibility Criteria

3.1.1 Medical specialty training completed outside Canada

3.1.2 Time in training substantially equivalent to Royal College training standards

### 3.2 Credentials Review

The Credentials Unit requires the following as part of the initial assessment of medical training and practice abroad, as further detailed below:

- Details of the applicant's training (to be compared with Royal College's training standards)
- Source verification of training documents by Physicians Apply

These documents must be compiled and completed alongside the PER application form found on the Royal College website. The non-refundable application fee must be paid at the time of submission of the application. This application package is reviewed by the Credentials Unit and a ruling letter is issued either confirming or denying exam eligibility.

3.2.1 The Royal College requires proof that the applicant has completed training which is substantially equivalent to the specialty training requirements (STRs) in the respective specialty and is recognized as a specialist in the jurisdiction of training. The applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of completion of all postgraduate medical education (PGME) training requirements of the jurisdiction in which training occurred.

### 3.3 Royal College Specialty Examinations

3.3.1 Following approval by the Credentials Unit of a successful initial credentials review, the Royal College will issue a ruling letter granting eligibility to the specialty examination(s).

3.3.2 Candidates may have access to the examination, at any point of the 5 years in practice, including immediately following completion of training abroad if training is determined to be substantially equivalent.

3.3.3 Applicants with exam eligibility must register and pay for the examination using the e-booking system. The exams are on fixed dates and take place annually. Registration deadlines can be found on the Royal College site. Applicants must appear at the Royal College examination center in-person to sit the written examination.

3.3.4 Royal College examinations typically consist of multiple components. A typical model consists of a written examination component followed by an applied component. Examination formats vary by specialty.

3.3.5 Applicants successful at the written component will receive eligibility towards any subsequent exam components (if applicable).

3.3.6 Applicants who have met all the PER requirements (including assessment of practice in Canada) outlined in this policy and have successfully completed all the exam components in their discipline, are eligible to become certified by the Royal College. The Credentials Unit will issue this letter when all requirements have been met.

### 3.4 Time in Practice in Canada Requirement

The Practice Eligibility Route requires applicants to complete two years of practice in Canada before becoming eligible for certification. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a license to practice and to complete a minimum two years of practice in Canada. The Royal College does not issue licenses. It is at the discretion of the Medical Regulatory Authorities to grant licenses to practice in Canada. Typically, the applicant will use the letter confirming success at the examination to apply for a license with an MRA.

- 3.4.1 The two years in practice may be completed in any jurisdiction in Canada. Each province and territory have a local medical regulatory authority responsible for issuing licenses to practice medicine in their jurisdiction. The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada does not grant licenses to practice. These two years must be the equivalent of two full-time years in practice.
- 3.4.2 It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain a license to practice and to meet the time in practice requirement. During this period of 2 years, the Royal College keeps the application on file and, pending the completion of two years, the applicant may submit documents to complete the subsequent stage of the PER process, the assessment of practice in Canada.
- 3.4.3 Applicants already in Canada and in practice at the time of PER application may have already met the minimum time in practice requirement. If the applicant already has a total of two years of practice in Canada, they may immediately apply for an assessment of practice.

Note: Practice during a fellowship or postgraduate medical education (PGME) is not considered independent practice; it is considered a learning experience for the specialty.

### 3.5 Assessment of Practice

Following demonstration of completion of the required time in practice requirements (completion of two years of practice in Canada and a minimum of 5 years total practice), the applicant is required to submit the following documents to have this time in practice assessed. Approval of an assessment of practice is necessary for certification.

- 3.5.1 Feedback from a chief of staff (or other relevant supervisor): A supervisor verifies the applicant's declared scope of practice and answers a confidential questionnaire about the quality of the applicant's practice.
- 3.5.2 Multisource feedback (MSF) survey: Feedback on the professional competencies relating to the CanMEDS roles is gathered and then benchmarked against scores from similar practices. This process allows the applicant to reflect on their performance across the range of CanMEDS roles and to identify their areas of strength and areas for growth.
- 3.5.3 A current Certificate of Professional Standing (CPS) is required to prove that the applicant is a member in good standing with their medical regulatory authority in Canada.
- 3.5.4 Scope of practice review: The applicant's declared scope of practice is reviewed by members of the respective discipline's Specialty Committee.

Note: If the current practice profile does not meet that of a Royal College specialist, the applicant will not be able to continue with the PER route. However, the applicant can submit additional information on their practice for a second review, if appropriate.

### **3.6 Royal College Certification**

Applicants who have met all the PER requirements including: a successful credentials review verifying training equivalence to Canadian programs and 5 years of practice with a minimum of 2 in Canada, success at the examination component(s), and a successful assessment of time in practice in Canada as outlined in this policy the individual will be eligible to become certified by the Royal College. The Credentials Unit will issue this letter when all requirements have been met.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Applicant**

The applicant is responsible for compiling all necessary documents required for a complete application and providing required information to the Royal College at all stages of the process. Following a successful credentials review, the applicant will receive eligibility to the Royal College examination and will be responsible for registering and completing the examination. Further, to complete the PER process, the applicant must complete two years of practice in Canada and complete the required assessment of this time in practice. The applicant must work with a medical regulatory authority (MRA) to receive the necessary licensure to complete this requirement.

All PER applicants will remain subject to the policies and procedures of the Royal College, as applicable, including those listed in section 5 of this policy. This includes examination eligibility and renewal policies.

### **4.2 Royal College Credentials Unit**

The Credentials Unit receives applications and renders decisions on behalf of the Royal College. The Credentials Unit is responsible for reviewing credentialing documents and determining equivalency to Canadian training programs. The Credentials Unit issues ruling letters regarding exam eligibility.

### **4.3 Medical Regulatory Authority (a Canadian licensing body)**

For an applicant to meet the entirety of the PER requirements, the physician will need to complete a minimum of 2 years of practice in Canada. The applicant will have to apply to an MRA to receive licensure and the ability to practice in Canada. A list of MRAs can be found here: <https://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/resources/provincial-medical-regulatory-licensing-authorities-e>

### **4.4 Credentials Committee**

The Credentials Committee makes decisions regarding the PER policy. Panels made up of members of the Credentials Committee also hear appeals for reconsiderations of eligibility rulings.

## 4.5 Specialty Committees

The Specialty Committee is responsible for viewing the scope of practice of PER applicants. Following completion of the requirements for time in practice in Canada, a second scope of practice review is performed to ensure the practice meets the criteria to be considered a specialist in the respective discipline.

## 5. References

*Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship:* The policies can be found on the Royal College website at: <http://www.royalcollege.ca/rcsite/credentials-exams/exam-eligibility-e>.

[Policy on Formal Review of Examinations](#)

## 6. Contact(s)

For information or clarification, please contact:

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada  
Office of Specialty Education, Assessment  
774 Echo Drive  
Ottawa ON K1S 5N8  
Telephone (toll-free): 1-800-668-3740  
[assessmentpolicies@royalcollege.ca](mailto:assessmentpolicies@royalcollege.ca)

## 7. Appendices

This policy has no appendices.

## 8. Policy record

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