



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

Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship

October 2020

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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SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION**1.1 Introduction**

The Royal College *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* is a detailed policies and procedures manual that outlines the process leading to certification by the Royal College. The guide is divided into four main sections for easy reference and clearly outlines each step in the certification process.

The following represents the basic steps to achieving Royal College certification:

- The applicant has obtained a medical qualification acceptable to the Royal College (refer to Section III of this guide).
- The applicant has trained in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program (refer to Section IV of this guide) or for non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved training, the applicant has trained in a postgraduate medical education system deemed acceptable by the Royal College (see Section VII of this guide).
- The applicant has satisfactorily completed the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements (refer to Section V of this guide).
- The applicant has successfully completed all examination requirements (refer to Section VI of this guide).

1.2 Contact Information

For further information, to request an application for assessment of training for examination eligibility, or to obtain objectives of training or specialty training requirements, please contact the Office of Specialty Education at:

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

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

Telephone: (613) 730-8191
Toll Free: 1 (800) 267-2320
Extension: 7750
Fax: (613) 730-3707
E-mail: credentials@royalcollege.ca
Website: www.royalcollege.ca

Please note: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the Royal College has their correct mailing address and telephone numbers on file at all times.

1.3 Acronyms

Common acronyms include:

ACGME	- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (in the United States)
CACMS	- Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools
CanMEDS	- Canadian Medical Education Directions for Specialists
CBME	- Competency-based medical education
CCT	- Confirmation of completion of training
CFPC	- College of Family Physicians of Canada
FAIMER	- Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research
FITER	- Final In-Training Evaluation Report
FRCPC	- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada
FRCSC	- Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada
IMG	- International Medical Graduate
LCME	- Liaison Committee on Medical Education
MCC	- Medical Council of Canada
MCCEE	- Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination
MCCQE	- Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination
MD	- Doctor of Medicine
RC	- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
USMLE	- United States Medical Licensing Examinations
WHO	- World Health Organization

1.4 Definitions, Terms and Quick Reference

Postgraduate medical education, training and residency training are used interchangeably throughout this guide.

1.4.1 Accreditation Without Certification Subspecialties

“Accreditation Without Certification” is a process whereby the Royal College recognizes subspecialties for the purpose of accrediting programs, but does not offer examinations leading to certification in the designated subspecialty.

1.4.2 Assessment of Training for Eligibility to Access the Royal College Certification Examination

All applicants must have their residency training assessed by the Royal College to ensure that the specialty specific training requirements have been met in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College. More specific information about “Applications for Assessment of Training” is outlined in Section II of this policy. Applicants seeking credit towards examination eligibility for training in a postgraduate medical education system outside of accredited Royal College/ACGME approved programs should refer to Section VII “International Training (non-Royal College Accredited/Non-ACGME Approved)” for additional information regarding the application process

1.4.3 Citizenship

Applicants do not have to live in Canada or hold Canadian citizenship in order to become eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College certification.

1.4.4 Elective

An elective is defined as a discretionary, non-mandatory component of training. More specific information on electives is outlined in Section IV, Part B “Other Postgraduate Medical Education”.

1.4.5 Licensure

The Royal College does not grant licences to practice medicine. Applicants who intend to obtain a licence to practice in one of the provinces or territories of Canada must hold appropriate registration with the provincial/territorial regulatory authority. Applicants should contact the provincial/territorial medical regulatory authority directly for more information. Links to the regulatory authorities can be found on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

1.4.6 Objectives of Training and Specialty Training Requirements

Each specialty and subspecialty recognized by the Royal College has specific mandatory Objectives of Training and Specialty Training Requirements. Specific information about the objectives of training and specialty training requirements developed for each specialty and subspecialty should be read in conjunction with this guide. The objectives of training and specialty training requirements for postgraduate medical education for all Royal College recognized specialties and subspecialties are available on the Royal College website at www.royalcollege.ca

1.4.7 Preceptor

A qualified practitioner who supervises practice-based training in which the learner is immersed in the practitioner’s clinical practice for a defined period of time.

1.4.8 Preceptorship

For the purposes of credentialing requirements of the Royal College, the definition of preceptorship is a defined period of clinical education organized around focused immersion in a single supervisor’s practice. It is educationally sound, meaning it must have educational objectives, direct supervision, and assessment, and is under the auspices of an accredited RCPSC/ACGME approved program. Focused immersion in a physician’s practice includes clinical duties, observation, feedback and non-patient related experiences.

1.4.9 Royal College Certification Examinations

Applicants are ruled eligible to take the examinations leading to Royal College certification if all of the criteria of eligibility and residency training requirements have been met. Candidates for the examinations must register with the Royal College in order to take the examination. More specific information on examinations is outlined in Section VI “Royal College Examinations” of this guide.

1.4.10 Reciprocity

The Royal College has no reciprocal arrangements for recognizing examinations or qualifications of any other College or Board in any specialty or subspecialty. Applicants with certification from any other specialty or subspecialty examinations, College or Board, are not exempt from any of the requirements of the Royal College.

1.4.11 Residency

A residency is a specialty training program that is completed after medical school. These programs offer supervised and specific training for the resident in their chosen specialty/subspecialty. The Royal College has no jurisdiction over appointment to or promotion in residency programs, or residents’ salaries.

1.4.12 Ruling

A ruling is a decision on examination eligibility only. Once the applicant’s residency training has been assessed, the Royal College will make a “ruling” (decision) on examination eligibility. The Royal College retains the authority to review all applications for assessment of training on a case-by-case basis and to determine the ruling on examination eligibility. The Royal College also retains the

authority to withdraw acceptance of an applicant's credentials and/or require that an applicant complete additional training. Please refer to the conditions on rulings outlined in Section V "Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility".

1.4.13 Specialist Certification

Certification in a specialty or subspecialty will be granted upon the satisfactory completion of all credentials, training, and examination requirements. The Royal College certification confirms that specialist physicians and surgeons have met Royal College standards and training requirements.

1.4.14 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. In years where candidates from both CBD and traditional training programs have their exams at the same time, a Written-before-Applied format will apply to all candidates.

1.5 List of Specialties and Subspecialties Recognized by the Royal College

The Royal College currently recognizes 65 specialties and subspecialties.

Examinations leading to Royal College certification are conducted in the following specialties and subspecialties:

SPECIALTIES

Anatomical Pathology	Neurosurgery
Anesthesiology	Nuclear Medicine
Cardiac Surgery	Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dermatology	Ophthalmology
Diagnostic Radiology	Orthopedic Surgery
Emergency Medicine	Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery
General Pathology	Pediatrics
General Surgery	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Hematological Pathology	Plastic Surgery
Internal Medicine	Psychiatry
Medical Genetics and Genomics	Public Health & Preventive Medicine
Medical Microbiology	Radiation Oncology
Neurology (adult or pediatric)	Urology
Neuropathology	Vascular Surgery

SUBSPECIALTIES**Subspecialties with Examination**

prior Royal College certification in specialty of:

Adolescent Medicine
Pediatrics
Cardiology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Psychiatry
Clinical Immunology and Allergy (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology
Anesthesiology / Emergency Medicine / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics / Psychiatry
Colorectal Surgery
General Surgery
Critical Care Medicine (adult or pediatric)
Anesthesiology / Cardiac Surgery / Emergency Medicine / General Surgery / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Developmental Pediatrics
Pediatrics
Endocrinology and Metabolism (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Forensic Pathology
Anatomical Pathology / General Pathology
Forensic Psychiatry
Psychiatry
Gastroenterology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
General Internal Medicine
Internal Medicine
General Surgical Oncology
General Surgery
Geriatric Medicine
Internal Medicine
Geriatric Psychiatry
Psychiatry
Gynecologic Oncology
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Gynecologic Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Hematology
Internal Medicine
Infectious Diseases (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Interventional Radiology
Diagnostic Radiology
Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Medical Biochemistry
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
Medical Oncology
Internal Medicine
Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine

Pediatrics

Nephrology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Neuroradiology
Diagnostic Radiology

Occupational Medicine
Internal Medicine

Pain Medicine
Anesthesiology

Palliative Medicine
Multiple entry routes

Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Emergency Medicine / Pediatrics

Pediatric Surgery
General Surgery

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Pediatrics

Pediatric Radiology
Diagnostic Radiology

Respirology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Rheumatology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Thoracic Surgery
General Surgery

Special Programs

Clinician Investigator Program
Surgical Foundations

Areas of Focused Competence (diploma)

Entry route (Note: CBME = Competency-based medical education)

Acute Care Point of Care Ultrasonography
Any MD, although usually from Emergency Medicine, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, or any acute care related specialty + CBME

Addiction Medicine
Any Royal College specialty + CBME

Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Hematology, Medical Oncology or Radiation Oncology + CBME

Adult Cardiac Electrophysiology
Cardiology + CBME

Adult Echocardiography

- Cardiology, Diagnostic Radiology, Internal Medicine, Anesthesiology, Cardiac Surgery or Critical Care Medicine + CBME*
- Adult Hepatology
 - Gastroenterology or Internal Medicine which includes 12 months Adult Hepatology + CBME*
- Adult Interventional Cardiology
 - Cardiology + CBME*
- Adult Thrombosis Medicine
 - Internal Medicine or Emergency Medicine + CBME*
- Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation
 - Cardiology + CBME*
- Aerospace Medicine
 - Any MD, although historically come from Internal Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health and Preventive Medicine, and Family Medicine + CBME*
- Brachytherapy
 - Radiation Oncology + CBME*
- Child Maltreatment Pediatrics
 - Pediatrics + CBME*
- Clinician Educator
 - CBME*
- Cytopathology
 - Anatomical Pathology or General Pathology + CBME*
- Emergency Medical Services
 - Emergency Medicine, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Anesthesiology or Critical Care Medicine + CBME*
- Hyperbaric Medicine
 - Any MD, + Royal College certification, or enrolment in a residency training program from the Royal College or CFPC*
- Patient Safety and Quality Improvement
 - Any MD, + Royal College certification, or enrolment in a residency training program from the Royal College or CFPC*
- Pediatric Urology
 - Urology + CBME*
- Sleep Disorder Medicine
 - Psychiatry or Neurology or Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery or Respiriology or Developmental Pediatrics + CBME*
- Solid Organ Transplantation
 - Cardiology, Cardiac Surgery, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, Infectious Diseases, Nephrology, Respiriology, Thoracic Surgery or Urology + CBME*
- Sport and Exercise Medicine
 - Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Orthopedic Surgery, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation or Rheumatology + CBME*
- Transfusion Medicine
 - Internal Medicine + Hematology, Pediatrics + Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Hematological Pathology, Anesthesiology or General Pathology + CBME*
- Trauma General Surgery
 - General Surgery + CBME*

SECTION II – APPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING**General Information**

All applicants for certification, even if residency training is in a postgraduate medical education program accredited by the Royal College, must be assessed by the Royal College. Applicants should carefully study this guide and the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements before submitting an application for assessment of training. The 'Application for Assessment of Training' is available by contacting the Royal College Credentials Unit (see contact information in Section I) or by download (PDF format) on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca. The specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements are also available on the Royal College website.

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

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

A Royal College 'Application for Assessment of Training' form should only be completed by those who can document that they meet one of the following requirements:

- 2.1.1 a resident currently or previously enrolled in a specialty or subspecialty residency program accredited by the Royal College or approved by the ACGME in the United States.
- 2.1.2 Medical graduates who are seeking recognition of any training in a postgraduate medical education system outside of an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program should also refer to Section VII for more information about the application process.

2.2 Documentation

- 2.2.1 Applicants are responsible for providing documentation of all credentials by appropriate authorities and for all periods of training. The Royal College retains the right to request additional documentation from an applicant (e.g. letters of reference) in order to complete an assessment of training.
- 2.2.2 Verification by appropriate authorities of all credentials and all periods of non-Canadian training must be forwarded with the application.
- 2.2.3 Documentation of a medical degree must certify that the degree has been awarded. A certificate showing that the candidate has passed the final examinations of a medical school is not sufficient.
- 2.2.4 All documents and information obtained by the Royal College during the course of an assessment of training become the property of the Royal College and will remain confidential. Applicants are therefore requested to provide certified copies and NOT original documents. All personal information is managed in accordance with the [Royal College Privacy Policy](#). Please refer to the Privacy Policy on the Royal College website (www.royalcollege.ca) for further detail on how personal information is managed.
- 2.2.5 Under the Royal College Privacy Policy, individuals have the right to view information stored in their personal files. To access your personal information, forward a written request to the Royal College Privacy Officer at privacy@royalcollege.ca. In some instances, information must be severed from the documents before access is granted.
- 2.2.6 The Royal College requires an applicant's consent whenever personal information is collected and/or disclosed to appropriate parties. For more details, please refer to the Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

2.3 Confirmation of Completion of Training

- 2.3.1** Satisfactory completion of postgraduate medical education must be documented and verified by a program director and the postgraduate office on a Royal College 'Confirmation of Completion of Training' (CCT) form. The CCT will be obtained part way through the final year of residency. Applicants are responsible for providing the name of the program director who will be responding to requests from the Royal College for evaluation reports and CCT forms.

2.4 Assessment Fees

- 2.4.1** Assessment fees are non-refundable and must accompany an application for assessment of training. To obtain the Credentials Fee Schedule please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 2.4.2** The assessment fee for Royal College/ACGME applicants covers the cost of assessment services for as long as the applicant is continuously enrolled as a resident in a specialty or subspecialty residency program in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved 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.
- 2.4.3** Assessment fees are reviewed annually by the Royal College and are subject to change.
- 2.4.4** *Additional fees* will be charged for the assessment of training for the examinations in second or subsequent specialties.
- 2.4.5** *Additional fees* may be charged for the assessment of training taken outside of Canada, including the United States.

2.5 Application Deadlines

- 2.5.1** Applicants are encouraged to apply well in advance of the application deadlines to avoid late penalty fees. To view the specialty or subspecialty deadline dates by which the completed assessment form must be received in the Royal College Credentials Unit, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca for application deadlines.
- 2.5.2** Assessment of training normally takes at least six (6) months, but may take up to eighteen (18) months, if periods of non-Canadian training, including the United States, must be assessed, or if the application requires supplementary analysis.
- 2.5.3** All applications for assessment of training or for updated assessment of additional training must be received before the end of the business day 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.

2.6 Penalty Fees

- 2.6.1** Applications received between 1 and 90 days 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.
- 2.6.2** Applications received 91 or more days 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.

SECTION III – EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**General Information**

The Royal College will assess whether an applicant's training and credentials meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the examinations for their specialty or subspecialty area. These eligibility criteria are:

3.1 Medical Qualification Acceptable to the Royal College**Definition**

- 3.1.1** 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.
- 3.1.2** The Royal College defines the term "medicine" to include surgery and obstetrics, and does not include chiropractic, homeopathy, podiatry, stomatology, or veterinary science.
- 3.1.3** 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.

Eligibility

- 3.1.4** 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 WHO listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
 - (iii) **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable
- 3.1.5** 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.

3.2 Demonstration of Satisfactory Moral, Ethical and Professional Standing

- 3.2.1** 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.
- 3.2.2** 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.
- 3.2.3** 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.

Prior to denying, suspending or revoking a candidate's eligibility, the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate shall disclose to the candidate the nature of the information received and allow the

candidate an opportunity to provide relevant information and make submissions as to his/her satisfactory moral, ethical and/or professional standing.

3.2.4 The candidate may appeal the decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate pursuant to the procedure in Section 5.5 of this Policy.

3.3 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.

SECTION IV – POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**PART A – RESIDENCY EDUCATION****4.1 Residency Education****4.1.1 Definition**

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

- (i) the applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in the United States or Canada,
- (ii) the applicant is admitted to and enrolled in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved residency program, the content of which is defined, supervised and evaluated by the residency program director and the residency program committee, and
- (iii) the applicant's postgraduate clinical training is in a specialty or subspecialty recognized by the Royal College.

4.1.2 Principles

- (i) Residency is characterized by increasing levels of independent decision-making on the part of the resident within the context of the supervision and counsel of the teaching staff who maintain ultimate responsibility for the professional services provided.
- (ii) The senior resident must report to and have direct access to the supervising staff physician in order to achieve senior responsibility.
- (iii) The residency program must develop and refine the resident's decision-making skills so that at completion of training the resident can function as an independent consultant in their chosen specialty/subspecialty.
- (iv) The residency requirements must be fulfilled in a progressive fashion to include senior responsibility.

4.2 Residency Training Requirements

4.2.1 Residency training requirements are subject to change. Normally, when amendments are made, an appropriate period is allowed to protect the interest of the resident who has already embarked on a program recognized by the Royal College. However, should a resident interrupt training, no assurance can be given that all training taken prior to the interruption will still be acceptable, even though previously recognized by the Royal College.

4.2.2 By the end of training, the resident must have achieved the objectives of the specialty/subspecialty, and must successfully meet the requirements of the CanMEDS competencies as they relate to their specialty/subspecialty. At any point during a resident's training, the Program Director with the approval of the Post Graduate Dean, has the authority to lengthen or change a resident's program if evaluations reveal that the resident is not meeting the specialty training requirements. For more information about CanMEDS and the specialty/subspecialty objectives of training, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

4.2.3 Applicants for Royal College certification in some specialties will be required to provide evidence that they have completed at least one (1) year of approved postgraduate basic clinical training. For basic clinical training, the Royal College Credentials Unit will normally accept: rotating, transitional, mixed or straight internships; residency training in family medicine; and/or basic clinical training that is integrated into specialty residency programs. The basic clinical training year is a mixed clinical educational experience incorporating rotations on a variety of settings, such as surgical, medical,

pediatrics and ambulatory. For more information, please refer to the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

4.2.4 Overlap of Training Between Specialties

- a. The Royal College will accept overlapped training between specialties if the specialty training requirements of the disciplines allow it and the credit is recommended by the program directors. For example, in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics the fourth year of specialty training is often the first year of subspecialty training. This kind of overlapped training is allowed by the Credentials Unit if the residency training programs are taken consecutively.
- b. In the case where an applicant applies for a double-counting of credit when there has been a gap in training between two specialties, the Royal College reserves the right to withhold an application of credit for an overlapping year unless recommendations of credit from the program directors and post graduate deans of both specialties accompany the application and the corresponding Specialty Committees of the Royal College agree that the overlap of training can be granted.

4.3 Modifications to Residency Training

The Royal College understands that it may be necessary for some residents to modify their training due to personal circumstances described under applicable human rights legislation. The Royal College will support modifications that are necessary to prevent discrimination, except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the Royal College. Undue hardship includes, among other things, any compromise to the validity, reliability and/or integrity of the Royal College certification and examination process and outcome.

4.3.1 Fractional (part-time) residency training

- (i) The program director and postgraduate dean must approve the resident's fractional training syllabus.
- (ii) The program director and postgraduate dean must certify that the supervision and assessment of the part-time resident is at least equivalent to that of other residents in the residency program and that the total educational experience is fully equivalent to normal full-time residency.

4.3.2 Waiver of training after a leave of absence from residency

Accommodation

The policy detailed in this Section 4.3.2 is subject to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) commitment to accommodate residents with personal circumstances enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, as provided in Section 6.12 of this guide.

Policy on granting a leave of absence

The Royal College expects that all residents must have achieved the goals and objectives of the training program and be competent to commence independent practice by the completion of their training program. 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. It is expected that any time lost during a leave will be made up upon the resident's return.

Policy on granting a waiver of training:

The postgraduate office may allow a waiver of training following a leave of absence, in accordance with university policy and within the maximum time for a waiver determined by the Royal College. A decision to grant a waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of the program but cannot be granted after the resident has taken the certification examinations. Similarly, the end-of-training date for a resident cannot be changed to an earlier date after the resident has taken the certification examinations.

Each university will develop its own policy on whether or not it is willing to grant a waiver of training for time taken as a leave of absence. However, in the case where waivers of training are acceptable to the university, they must be within the acceptable times listed below. In addition, regardless of any waived blocks of training, the decision to grant a waiver of training must be based on the assumption that the resident will have achieved the required level of competence by the end of the final year of training.

A waiver of training can only be granted by the postgraduate dean on the recommendation of the resident's program director.

The following are the maximum allowable times for waivers:

1. One year program – no waiver allowed
2. Less than one year for remediation or enhanced skills – no waiver allowed
3. Two year program – six weeks
4. Three year program – six weeks
5. Four year program – three months
6. Five year program – three months
7. Six year program – three months
8. In Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, where residents are undertaking three years of training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director, a maximum of six weeks may be waived for these three years of training. Subsequently, a maximum of six weeks of training may be waived in the following 2 years of training under the subspecialty Program Director. The process for these programs is as follows:
 - i. Three years of training completed with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director followed by 2 or 3 years of subspecialty training with a different program director are treated separately for the purpose of the waiver of training.
 - ii. A waiver must be recommended by the Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean on the Core in-Training Evaluation Report (CITER). A decision to grant a waiver is made in the PGY3 for a maximum duration of 6 weeks.
 - iii. In the subspecialty years, a decision to grant a waiver is recommended in the final year by the Subspecialty Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean. A maximum 6 week waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of training.
 - iv. If the resident undertakes three years of Internal Medicine or Pediatrics training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director at one university and switches to another university for subspecialty training, it is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Dean at the corresponding institution to approve the waiver of training. For example, if a resident does pediatric training at the University of Toronto and switches to pediatric nephrology at McGill, the Postgraduate Dean from Toronto would approve the six week waiver in pediatrics and the Postgraduate Dean from McGill would approve the six week waiver in pediatric nephrology.

4.3.3 Residents with Special Needs, Conditions or Disabilities

Policy

- (i) The supervision of the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities must not be less than that of the other residents in the residency training program; the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities may require **more** supervision than that of the other residents if recommended by the Specialty Committee(s).
- (ii) All objectives considered essential to practice, as defined by the appropriate Specialty Committee(s), must be achieved by the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities at the same level of competence as other residents.
- (iii) The evaluation methods used to assess objectives in the domains:
 - affected by the special need, condition or disability may be different from that applied to other residents in the residency training program,
 - not affected by the special need, condition or disability must be identical to all other residents in the residency training program.
- (iv) The Specialty Committee(s) may consult the Royal College Examination Committee for their recommendations regarding evaluation methods and assessment of residents with special needs, conditions or disabilities.

Procedures

- (v) The Royal College Credentials Unit must be notified **in advance** of any modified residency training.
- (vi) Where applicable, the Royal College may require a written verification by the treating physician of a resident, describing the special need, condition or disability, or other personal characteristic enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, and its potential impact on residency training and evaluation.
- (vii) The special need, condition or disability or other personal characteristic enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, must be verified, documented and considered valid by the program director, the postgraduate dean, the appropriate Specialty Committee(s) and the Royal College Credentials Unit.
- (viii) The modified residency program must be approved by the program director, the appropriate Specialty Committee(s) and the Royal College Credentials Unit.
- (ix) The program director must provide a syllabus for the applicant's entire residency program.

PART B – OTHER POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

At the discretion of the Royal College Credentials Unit, some credit may also be given for postgraduate medical education other than residency training.

4.4 Family Medicine Training

Training taken in Canadian programs accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) may be accepted for partial credit in some specialties.

4.5 Clinical or Basic Research

The guidelines for credit given towards meeting specialty training requirements for a research experience are available from the Royal College Office of Education, Credentials Unit. The advice and support of the residency program director must be sought **before** commencing the research experience.

Eligibility

- 4.5.1** Credit is only given at the discretion of the Royal College Credentials Committee:
- (i) where the specialty training requirements permit,
 - (ii) where the specialty residency program director can provide assurance that the postgraduate clinical residency requirements can be reduced appropriately, and
 - (iii) if the research experience, in the judgment of the Royal College Credentials Unit, is of outstanding quality.
- 4.5.2** Credit will be considered if the research has been done in an academic centre:
- (i) as part of a program in which research methodology is taught,
 - (ii) where the research supervisor or mentor has an established research record,
 - (iii) when it is documented that the applicant had a significant role in the research project,
 - (iv) when it is documented that the research is relevant to the specialty in which the applicant seeks certification, and
 - (v) where there are defined objectives for the research experience and a formal evaluation process for the resident.

Conditions

- 4.5.3** Research conducted outside of a recognized residency or higher degree program in an approved university **may** be considered for a maximum of one (1) year of credit, in some specialties.
- 4.5.4** An advanced degree or full-time training in a relevant discipline taken before or after graduation in medicine can be considered for a maximum of one (1) year of credit in some specialties. Documentation of the advanced degree or full-time training must be provided, together with evidence that the study or research was relevant to the objectives of the specialty in which the candidate is seeking certification.

4.6 Electives

Eligibility

- 4.6.1** Electives taken in an unaccredited setting may be accepted towards specialty or subspecialty training requirements if **all** of the following conditions are met:
- (i) the resident must be enrolled in a recognized program at the time the elective is taken,
 - (ii) the total duration of rotations taken at unaccredited sites must not exceed six (6) months of the total training for the specialty or subspecialty,
 - (iii) the elective period is planned by the program director and the resident, which is then accepted by the program director as meeting the specialty training requirements,
 - (iv) there is a clearly defined elective supervisor,
 - (v) there are clearly defined and understood educational objectives, and
 - (vi) there is a well defined in-training evaluation system to include evaluation of the resident during the elective period that is based on the educational objectives of the elective and that is clearly understood beforehand by the resident, the elective supervisor, and the program director.

4.7 Other Acceptable Postgraduate Clinical Training to meet Royal College Training Requirements

- 4.7.1** The Royal College Credentials Unit **may** recognize other postgraduate clinical training only if the trainee requires a single additional year of training in order to meet Royal College requirements. This

training must take place at the site of an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program and meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (i) the content of the postgraduate clinical training is the same as that of a Royal College accredited/ACGME approved residency program,
- (ii) the training is directed, evaluated and supervised in the same manner as a resident's training,
- (iii) the applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in Canada or with the office of graduate medical education of a medical school in the United States.

4.7.2 Credit will not be given for postgraduate clinical training time spent in preceptorship practice except where defined in the specialty training requirements and within the definition as outlined in section 1.4.8.

4.7.3 Credit will not be given for postgraduate clinical training time spent in teaching positions.

4.7.4 Credit will not be given for training taken in disconnected periods in blocks of less than six months.

SECTION V – ROYAL COLLEGE RULINGS ON EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY

General Information

The attestation to the satisfactory completion of specialty or subspecialty residency training (e.g. CCT) does not alone ensure admission to the examinations leading to Royal College certification.

Important Note: As training programs in Canada transition to a Competence-by-Design (CBD) model, exam components will be de-coupled (the written and applied components will become independent components) and success at the written will be a requirement to continue to the subsequent component. All disciplines will use this format in CBD, but certain disciplines have opted to move to this model before they shift to CBD. In those disciplines, the *below exam policy does not apply*. Rather, the applicable exam policy can be found in the *Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design Model of Residency Training* on the Royal College website.

The new exam format applies to the following specialties in 2020:

- Internal Medicine
- Psychiatry
- Pediatrics
- Any CBD cohort presenting to the examination

5.1 Issuing a Royal College Ruling Letter

5.1.1 When the assessment of training for eligibility to access the Royal College certification examination has been completed, the Royal College will issue a “ruling letter” on examination eligibility and/or conditions to be met to attain eligibility.

5.1.2 A successful Final In-Training Evaluation Report (FITER) is a criterion of eligibility to the Royal College certification examinations. The summary attestation component of the FITER must be completed by a Residency Program Director on behalf of the Residency Program Committee (RPC). It must be signed by the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean. Under exceptional circumstances, applicants who cannot obtain a FITER will be required to submit for approval a Comprehensive Competency Report (CCR) completed by a supervisor, a letter of attestation of competence (from supervisor or Chief of Staff) or a FITER-equivalent document.

5.1.3 Applicants who have **not met** the residency training requirements of the Royal College will be required to take further residency training in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College if they wish to be eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College Certification. A requirement for further residency training imposes no obligation on any residency program to provide such training.

5.2 Examination Eligibility Rulings

5.2.1 In order to be ruled eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College certification, an applicant must demonstrate that:

- (i) there is documentary evidence that skills essential to the practice of the specialty or subspecialty have been evaluated as satisfactory,
- (ii) the requirements for full specialty or subspecialty residency training including senior responsibility have been achieved,
- (iii) the professional and ethical standing of the applicant has been assessed as satisfactory,
- (iv) the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements have been completed satisfactorily, and

(v) the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* have been followed.

5.3 Conditions Pertaining to Rulings

5.3.1 A ruling on training credit or eligibility for the examinations is only valid when it is signed by an executive officer of the Royal College.

5.3.2 A ruling is valid for:

- 3 years for certification examinations administered yearly (this includes the Surgical Foundations examination)

5.4 Reconsideration of a Ruling on Examination Eligibility

5.4.1 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.

5.4.2 Requests for reconsideration of a ruling will be considered by the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate.

5.4.3 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.

5.4.4 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.

5.4.5 The applicant may appeal the decision of the Director of Assessment or his or her delegate following the procedure set out in Section 5.5 of this Policy.

5.5 Appeal of a Reconsideration Decision on a Royal College Ruling

5.5.1 An applicant who wishes to appeal a decision made under Sections 3.2 or 5.4 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).

5.5.2 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.

5.5.3 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.

5.5.4 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.

- 5.5.5. 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.
- 5.5.6. 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.
- 5.5.7. 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 3.2 or 5.4 of this Policy, as the case may be.
- 5.5.8. There is no provision for further appeal to the Royal College of the decision of the appeal panel, which is considered final.

5.6 Withdrawal of Examination Eligibility

- 5.6.1. The Royal College retains the authority to withdraw acceptance of an applicant's credentials or withdraw permission to access the examinations leading to Royal College certification on the recommendation of an Examination Board, the Royal College Credentials Unit, or the applicant's program director.
- 5.6.2. The Royal College may require that the applicant satisfy specific requirements as a condition of accessing the examination leading to Royal College certification.
- 5.6.3. Withdrawal of a satisfactory CCT or FITER form, or questionnaire attestation will result in withdrawal of examination eligibility.
- 5.6.4. Candidates who have had their examination eligibility withdrawn under section 5.6.1 may only re-apply for examination eligibility upon substantive changes in their application pursuant to the reconsideration of a ruling process set out in section 5.4 of this Policy.

5.7 Renewal of Examination Eligibility

- 5.7.1. 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.
- 5.7.2. A renewal of eligibility is valid only for the examination session in the year following the granting of the renewal.
- 5.7.3. 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 5.8).
- 5.7.4. Application for the renewal of eligibility must be made by the deadline in the year before the candidate wishes to be examined.
- 5.7.5. 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.
- 5.7.6. Candidates who have exhausted their eligibility under section 5.7.5 may only re-apply for examination eligibility upon completion of additional accredited residency training and submitting a request for a reconsideration of a ruling on exam eligibility pursuant to the reconsideration of a ruling process set out in section 5.4.

5.8 Deferral of examination eligibility

5.8.1 In the event that the candidate misses an examination due to a serious accident, illness or other impediment the Royal College will consider deferral of examination eligibility for one year. In practice, this will provide the candidate with one additional year of eligibility.

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.

5.8.2 Candidates who know in advance of the examination that it will be missed should contact the Royal College to request a deferral as early as possible.

5.8.3 Candidates who miss an examination unexpectedly must submit a request for deferral within five business days of the missed examination date.

5.8.4 All requests for deferral must include the following documentation:

1. A written request for deferral and a detailed description of the circumstances leading to the request, signed by the candidate;
2. 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 was serious enough to warrant missing the examination; and,
3. In the case of any other impediment, appropriate documentation, from a source with direct involvement or knowledge of the circumstances in question.

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

5.8.5 The final decision regarding a request for deferral lies with the Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate, and is not subject to reconsideration or appeal.

SECTION VI – ROYAL COLLEGE EXAMINATIONS**General Information**

In the context of a candidate preparing for the Royal College examination, the Royal College does not provide or endorse any preparatory courses, syllabi or reading lists. The candidate should seek the advice of the program director for examination preparation.

6.1 Surgical Foundations Examination

- 6.1.1** In the surgical specialties of Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Plastic Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery, candidates must successfully complete the Surgical Foundations examination to attain eligibility for any examination in the relevant surgical specialty.
- 6.1.2** The Surgical Foundations examination is held annually in the fall and examination dates are set on a yearly basis. A ruling for the Surgical Foundations examination is valid for three years as noted under section 5.3. For more information about the registration deadline, examination dates, sites and format for the Surgical Foundations examination, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

6.2 Examinations in Accreditation without Certification (AWC) disciplines that convert to subspecialty with examination

- 6.2.1** All graduates of Royal College accredited AWC programs that convert to subspecialty with examination are eligible to take the certification examinations starting with the first set of examinations offered. Eligibility to the certification examinations is contingent upon the applicant's successful completion of an approved primary entry specialty residency for the discipline (e.g., Maternal Fetal Medicine applicants must have completed an accredited or approved Royal College residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology).
- 6.2.2** All graduates of ACGME or other approved programs in disciplines that convert from an AWC to a subspecialty with examination are eligible to take the certification examinations if the program was approved subsequent to the recognition of the subspecialty as an Accreditation Without Certification program by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.
- 6.2.3** Eligibility for all of these applicants is contingent upon fulfilling all the requirements outlined in the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* and the Specialty Training Requirements of the subspecialty, as with all other disciplines.
- 6.2.4** If a graduate of an AWC program that has converted to certification with examination chooses to challenge the certifying examinations and fails, the physician maintains their AWC status with the Royal College.

6.3 Examination Registration

- 6.3.1** Residents who intend to register for the examination leading to Royal College certification must have:
- (i) applied for assessment of credentials/training, and
 - (ii) received from the Royal College an official ruling letter confirming their eligibility for the examination.
- 6.3.2** Registration forms for the examination are sent, on request, only to those who have been ruled eligible for the examination in their specialty or subspecialty.
- 6.3.3** Residents who have applied for assessment of credentials/training and who are ruled eligible for the next examination session will receive information about the examination with their official ruling

letter. More specific information on rulings is outlined in Section V "Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility" of this guide.

6.4 Payment of Examination fees

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

6.4.1 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.

6.4.2 Non-payment of fees by the appropriate deadline may result in the candidate's registration to the examination to be declined.

6.4.3 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.

6.5 Withdrawals from Examinations

6.5.1 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.

6.5.2 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 5.8.

6.6 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.

6.7 Confidentiality

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

6.8 Deadline for Examination Registration

6.8.1 The registration deadlines for each respective specialty and subspecialty are available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca

6.8.2 The "registration deadline" is the last day for receipt by the Royal College of the registration form for the examination leading to Royal College certification.

6.9 Examination Dates

Examination dates are subject to change without notice. Please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca to obtain the official examination dates.

6.10 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.

6.11 Examination Format

- 6.11.1 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.
- 6.11.2 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.

- 6.11.3 Information about the examination format of each specialty and subspecialty is available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 6.11.4 Candidates are notified as soon as possible of changes in the examination format or timing approved by the Royal College Examination Committee.

6.12 Candidates requiring an Examination Accommodation

- 6.12.1 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.
- 6.12.2 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.

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

- 6.12.3 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 6.13.2 as soon as possible. It may not be possible to arrange examination accommodations requested too close to the examination date.

- 6.12.4 The final decision regarding an accommodation request lies with the Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.
- 6.12.5 Prior to taking the Royal College examination, the candidate and the Royal College must agree upon special arrangements in writing.
- 6.12.6 Candidates **requesting** exam scheduling accommodations in relation to religious observances may do so using the exam accommodations process.

6.13 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.

6.14 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.

6.15 Language of Examinations

6.15.1 The Royal College examinations are offered in both English and French.

6.15.2 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.

6.15.3 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.

6.15.4 Candidates whose first language is not English or French should ensure that they have reasonable fluency, written and oral, in either English or French.

6.16 Decisions of Royal College Examination Boards

6.16.1 The Royal College Examination Boards are empowered by the Royal College Examination Committee and by the Council of the Royal College to make final decisions on the examinations of all candidates, following procedures approved by the Royal College Examination Committee and Council of the Royal College.

6.16.2 Unsuccessful candidates will receive a brief summary of their performance from the Exam Board Chair. The intent of this report is to indicate where the performance did not meet the standards set by the examination board. The report will provide very general comments and will not include details on specific questions. Candidates are not permitted access to their exam books and they are not allowed to review their exams.

6.17 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.

6.18 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 email their request to 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.

6.19 Expiration of Exam Results

Candidates who successfully complete all exam components in their specialty will receive a letter from the Credentials Unit acknowledging the candidate's successful result. Additionally, this letter will contain an invitation to become certified by the Royal College pending any further requirements (e.g., completing training). This results letter will be valid for five years. If the outstanding requirements outlined in the letter have not been met and certification has not been achieved within five years, the candidate would

be required to re-take all examination components in their specialty and complete all outstanding requirements to re-qualify for certification.

6.20 FORMAL REVIEWS OF EXAMINATIONS**Policy**

Formal reviews of examinations 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 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;

- Disagreements or concerns regarding the grading of the examination;
- Concerns regarding the extent of post-examination 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.

Purpose

Formal reviews of examinations 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 administered to one or several candidates, and to ascertain whether the process was carried out under conditions appropriate to the conduct of an examination as determined by the Discipline Specific Examination Boards and approved by the Examination Committee of the Royal College. Formal reviews of examinations 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.

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.

Procedures

There are three pathways to initiate a formal review:**1. Immediate notification to the local examination authority by the candidate:**

If a candidate believes that one or several process irregularities has occurred in the course of an examination, 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 **\$750** 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.

Procedure: 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 the Director of Assessment, or his or her delegate, decides the grounds for the formal review are founded, and to grant a repeat examination at the next examination session of the specialty and a refund of the candidate's examination or assessment fees, this concludes the formal review process and the candidate may not move the formal review process forward to an appeal panel.

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 \$1500 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 \$1,750 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 examination 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
- There was a process irregularity of sufficient magnitude or impact to affect materially the candidate's outcome of the examination, and a repeat examination is allowed at the next examination session of the specialty.

In cases when a repeat examination is granted, the examination 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, the formal review fee, or both fees where a repeat examination is granted. The Royal College shall also waive the examination fee for the repeat examination.

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.

SECTION VII – INTERNATIONAL TRAINING (NON-ROYAL COLLEGE ACCREDITED/NON-ACGME APPROVED)

General Information

By resolution of Council, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) has discontinued the process of assessing Postgraduate Medical Education systems (PGME) for International Medical Graduate (IMG) applicants seeking Royal College Certification.

Therefore, the Royal College will not process any application for credit for training in International PGME Systems not listed on the Royal College website at www.royalcollege.ca.

The requirements stated below are in addition to all other policies and procedures outlined in this guide. Non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved trained applicants must fulfil all other requirements as stated in Sections II, III, IV, V, and VI of this guide, in addition to meeting the prerequisites stated in this section.

Residency training from non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved systems listed on the website does not confer eligibility to the Royal College examinations. The Royal College must conduct an in-depth evaluation of training in order to determine an applicant's eligibility to the Royal College examinations.

7.1 Individual In-Depth Assessment of Training for acceptable systems

7.1.1 Criteria for Individual In-Depth Assessment of Training

- (i) The applicant's training must satisfy all of the Royal College postgraduate medical education requirements in the specialty as detailed in the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- (ii) The applicant must meet **all** other requirements for examination eligibility as outlined in Sections II, III, IV and V of this guide.

7.1.2 Procedures for In-depth Assessment

- (i) Applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable assessment fee. For assessment fees please consult the website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- (ii) Once the in-depth assessment of training has been completed, applicants will receive a "ruling letter" on examination eligibility and/or conditions to be met to attain eligibility. More specific information on rulings is outlined in Section V of this guide 'Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility'.

SECTION VIII – APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF AN AREA OF FOCUSED COMPETENCE (DIPLOMA)**General Information**

An area of focused competence (diploma) program is a highly specialized discipline of specialty medicine that addresses a legitimate societal need, but does not meet the Royal College criteria for a specialty, foundation program, or subspecialty. Normally, AFCs (diplomas) represent either a) *supplemental* competencies that enhance the practice of physicians in an existing discipline, or b) a *highly specific and narrow* scope of practice that does not meet the criteria of a subspecialty. In both scenarios, AFCs (diplomas) do not prepare a physician for practice, but rather recognize areas of supplemental or advanced training.

8.1 Eligibility Criteria

8.1.1 Applicants must have medical degree qualifications acceptable to the Royal College to enter an Area of Focused Competence program (diploma). 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 WHO listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
- (iii) **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable.

8.1.2 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.

8.2 Entry criteria for individual AFC programs

There are 4 types of eligibility, based on the entry criteria of individual programs as outlined by the specialty committee in the Competency Training Requirements (CTR):

- (i) Primary specialty prerequisite;
- (ii) Subspecialty prerequisite;
- (iii) Conjoint programs with the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) (entry limited to those with Royal College or CFPC certification);
- (iv) Non-clinical programs such as clinician educator, medical administration, or patient safety (entry limited to those with the "MD" designation).

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