

# Rules & Procedures Applicable to: Delivery of Royal College Examinations

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## 1. Introduction

The quality of the Royal College examination process is paramount and the rules and procedures applicable to the delivery of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (the “Royal College”) examinations have been established to provide a foundational guideline to ensure the maintenance of the integrity and rigour of the examination process. These rules and procedures apply to all Royal College examination candidates and proctors/invigilators participating in a Royal College specialty or sub-specialty examination. All Royal College examination candidates are also subject to the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* and/or *Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design Model of Residency Training*.

## 2. Definitions and Acronyms

This section defines key terms used in this policy.

<b>Electronic, Mechanical, Recording and/or communication devices</b>	Items which include, but are not limited to, mobile cellular phones, pagers, smartphones, tablets, cameras, personal-use laptops, USB or memory sticks, smartwatch, or any other digital device.
<b>Misconduct</b>	Includes any breach of the rules set out in sections 5 or 6 of these Rules and Procedures, or any other act or omission intended to undermine the integrity of the examination.
<b>Proctor</b>	The proctor is the individual monitoring the candidate remotely during the examination. The proctor supervises and facilitates the exam. They may provide support on the exam interface but will not advise the candidate on exam content.
<b>Invigilator</b>	The invigilator is the individual monitoring the candidate at the test centre during the examination. The invigilator supervises the examination. They may provide candidate support but will not advise the candidate on exam content.
<b>Royal College</b>	The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national professional association that oversees the medical

education of specialists in Canada. In its mandate articulated by a Royal Charter in 1929, it is entrusted with a key role in the oversight of the system of specialty medicine in Canada.

**Remote exam** Remote examinations are examinations written at a site other than a test centre, with the prior written approval of the Royal College.

## **3. Candidate Conduct**

### **3.1 Candidate Permitted Conduct**

- 3.1.1 The Royal College is committed to ensuring fairness and integrity in the completion of exams and requires examination candidates to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner during examinations.
- 3.1.2 Bathroom breaks are permitted. The candidate may leave their computer for the purpose of using the washroom. Candidates are not required to inform the invigilator/proctor, but the absence may be reported by the invigilator/proctor. For applied examinations, the candidate must inform the invigilator/proctor if they step away from the camera view. The clock will not be stopped while the candidate is absent. Candidates are prohibited from referring to textbooks, study materials, or accessing any electronic, mechanical, recording and/ or communication devices during the bathroom break.
- 3.1.3 Note taking is permitted at any time during the examination. The invigilator/proctor may request that the candidate display the contents of any notes. Any notes or paper materials must be left behind in the examination room at the end of the examination or destroyed.
- 3.1.4 Earplugs are permitted to be used during the examination, but they may not be an electronic device, e.g., ear buds and/or headphones. The invigilator/proctor may request verification of any earplugs that the candidate is using.
- 3.1.5 Analogue watches are permitted for timekeeping purposes. A timer is also included within the examination interface.
- 3.1.6 Food and drinks are permitted and must be in the room prior to the examination start time. Food and drinks can also be accessed during the sequestering period, if applicable. If applicable, the invigilator/ proctor may request that the food be presented for inspection or visible on camera.

### **3.2 Candidate Prohibited Conduct**

- 3.2.1 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. Candidates must not provide or attempt to provide examination content to any other person or entity.

- 3.2.2 Candidates must not engage in any form of misrepresentation, dishonesty, cheating, or any other form of misconduct in relation to the examination process.
- 3.2.3 Candidates must be respectful and abide by the directions or instructions of the proctor/invigilator/examiner.
- 3.2.4 Candidates are not to use or have in their possession during the entirety of the examination any electronic, mechanical, recording and or communication devices. Any electronic, mechanical, recording and/or communication devices (or devices with similar appearance) in the examination area may be verified by the invigilator/proctor.
- 3.2.5 Candidates are not allowed to have textbooks or study materials in the room or to access them throughout the duration of the examination.
- 3.2.6 Talk or any other form of communication between candidates during examinations is not allowed. The candidate is not permitted to speak with anyone other than the invigilator/proctor or Royal College personnel during the examination.
- 3.2.7 Candidates are not permitted to use their own calculator. A calculator is available for use within the examination platform. The Royal College will provide a physical calculator in the event of technical difficulties.

### **3.3 Candidate Misconduct**

- 3.3.1 The Royal College considers misconduct on any examination to be a serious offence which could lead to expulsion from the examination and affect future eligibility.
- 3.3.2 If a candidate is known or suspected of misconduct during an examination, the Director of Assessment and Certification, or delegate, will investigate and make such inquiries as they may consider useful. If after investigation the Director of Assessment and Certification concludes that misconduct occurred, they may void the exam, suspend, or withdraw the candidate's eligibility for future Royal College examinations, or take such other action as may be deemed appropriate. The candidate may appeal the Director's decision following the procedure outlined in Section 5.5 of the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* and/or Section 4.5 of the *Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design Model of Residency Training*.

## **4. Onsite Examination Procedures**

- 4.1 **The following procedures apply to written and applied examinations held at a Royal College test centre:**
  - 4.1.1 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. Royal College personnel will verify the identity of the exam candidate and direct them to the computer they will use for their examination.

- 4.1.2 For written examinations, candidates that do not arrive by the time the examination starts may not be able to sit the examination and/or additional time may not be granted. Candidates will be required to complete a waiver upon late arrivals.
- 4.1.3 For applied examinations, candidates that do not arrive by the time the examination starts could result in not being able to sit the examination. Candidates will be required to complete a waiver upon late arrivals.
- 4.1.4 Candidates completing their examination in a Royal College test centre will be provided with a computer.
- 4.1.5 Candidates will be invigilated by Royal College assigned personnel on-site in the test centre. The invigilator may not be in the same room as the candidate but will have the right to access the room at any time. In circumstances where exams are administrated in large group settings, invigilators will be visible and available to assist candidates.
- 4.1.6 For applied examinations the candidate will interact virtually with Royal College examiners who will deliver the applied examination content.
- 4.1.7 Questions concerning possible errors, ambiguities, or omissions in the examination must be directed to the Invigilator/proctor, who will investigate them through the proper channels. The Invigilator/proctor is not permitted to answer questions other than those concerning the examination.
- 4.1.8 Candidates are required to report examination process irregularities to the Royal College to the invigilator/proctor or by email to the Candidate Unit at [candidates@royalcollege.ca](mailto:candidates@royalcollege.ca)
- 4.1.9 For applied examinations, the candidate may experience brief periods between stations or during examiner marking time where they have no contact with an examiner. The candidate is not permitted to access material or other resources during this time. The candidate may not leave the room during this time.
- 4.1.10 For applied examinations, if an examiner determines that a station cannot be satisfactorily completed because of technical issues, they may conclude the station at that point. In this situation, at the discretion of the Royal College, the candidate may be asked to re-take that station immediately following completion of their regular applied exam rotation.
- 4.1.11 In the case of any technical issue, the candidate must immediately inform the invigilator/proctor. The invigilator/proctor and/or an onsite technician will work with the candidate to resolve the issue. This may involve providing a secondary computer to the candidate. Time lost during this process may be added at the end of the exam, at the discretion of the Royal College.
- 4.1.12 In situations where a significant technical failure renders the exam impossible to complete, the Royal College will work to resolve the situation with the candidate.
- 4.1.13 Candidates must remain seated. A candidate needing to speak to the Invigilator (e.g., to ask additional supplies) should indicate this by raising their hand.

- 4.1.14 No candidate will be permitted to leave the examination room during the final fifteen minutes of the examination.
- 4.1.15 Candidates requiring examination accommodations must follow the procedure outlined in Section 6.12 of the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* and or Section 5.14 of the *Policies for Certification in a Competence by Design Model of Residency Training*.

## 5. Approved Remote Examinations

- 5.1 Remote examinations are only available to candidates that have received prior written approval from the Royal College. Such requests are only considered in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.2 **The following procedures apply to approved remote examinations:**
  - 5.2.1 Candidates are required to ensure their electronic device meets the software and hardware requirements of the exam platform by completing a system check by the deadline listed on the Royal College website. Failure to complete this check before the deadline may result in an inability to take the exam.
  - 5.2.2 Candidates challenging the written examination may be required to create a profile with the proctoring company by the deadline identified on the Royal College website. A profile is required to set up proctoring in an online format. Failure to set up a profile before the deadline may result in an inability to take the exam.
  - 5.2.3 Candidates challenging the written examination are provided with connection and compatibility requirements at the time the remote request is approved and should be verified by the candidate before the exam day. Verification process by the proctor can begin fifteen (15) - twenty (20) minutes before the scheduled examination time and the window remains open until thirty (30) minutes after the official start time. After the window closes, candidates will not be permitted to complete the verification process or take their examination.
  - 5.2.4 Candidates challenging the applied examination are required to enter the provided login credentials fifteen (15) – twenty (20) minutes prior to the exam start time. The candidate will be directed to a holding screen and will be required to wait. The exam will start automatically at the appointed time. Failure to wait, clicking on links or using the keyboard may cause a delay in starting the exam.
  - 5.2.5 The exam time will begin once the proctor has granted access to the exam and the scheduled exam start time has arrived. For candidates who initiate the verification process after the exam start time, the time used to establish connection and access the exam will continue to count towards exam time. Additional time will not be granted to compensate for missed time.
  - 5.2.6 During the verification process, the proctor will make several requests to the candidate to authenticate their identity, including verification of photo identification, and to ensure the examination environment meets the requirements outlined in this policy. The proctor may

collect personal information from the candidate. This information will be managed in accordance with the [Royal College Privacy Policy](#).

- 5.2.7 For applied examinations, the candidate will interact virtually with Royal College examiners who will deliver the applied exam content. In some circumstances a Royal College Fellow may invigilate the candidate's remote applied examination, but such arrangements must be approved in advance by the Royal College.
- 5.2.8 For applied examinations, the proctor or examiner may, at any time, request that the candidate use their device's camera to show the proctor the area surrounding the candidate's computer, the room, and any items in the room.
- 5.2.9 In the case of any technical issue, the candidate must immediately inform the proctor. The proctor will work with the candidate to resolve the issue. When the proctor and candidate agree that the issue has been addressed properly, the proctor may add additional time to the exam to compensate for any lost time.
- 5.2.10 The Royal College recommends that the candidate has a second computer that meets the technology requirements for the examination ready to use as a backup should issues occur with their primary device. If the candidate is required to switch devices, they may be required to go through the verification process with the proctor to verify their identification on the new device.
- 5.2.11 If the candidate experiences technical issues but is not able to inform the proctor, such as losing internet connectivity, the proctor will notice the loss of connection and will attempt to phone the candidate on the number provided at registration. The proctor will work with the candidate to resolve the issue. The candidate may switch to a secondary computer.
- 5.2.12 A candidate who switches to a second computer mid-exam may be required to restart the exam if their original computer lost internet connectivity and did not have the ability to upload the responses. If the internet connection was maintained and the responses were uploaded, the candidate will resume the exam from their second device from the point they discontinued on the original device. Additional time may be granted if the switch was made because of issues encountered with the candidate's primary computer.
- 5.2.13 In an emergency only, where primary internet connectivity was lost, the candidate may use a new source as an internet hotspot to notify the proctor that primary internet connectivity was lost.
- 5.2.14 In cases where technology issues occur, experienced either by the proctor or the candidate, and the candidate either cannot or chooses not to complete the exam, the exam will be considered concluded. The exam will not be marked, and the candidate will not receive feedback on the completed portion. They will be asked to re-take the exam at the next scheduled exam date.
- 5.2.15 Refunds will not be granted to candidates who are unable to complete the exam because of matters beyond the control of the Royal College, including technology failures.

5.3 The following additions and exceptions to the rules set out in sections 4 and 5 apply to approved remote examinations:

5.3.1 Mobile phones are permitted in approved remote examinations only. The phone may only be used in the event of technology failures to contact the Royal College or proctor and must not be used for any other purpose. Following rectification of the technological issue the mobile phone must be removed from the examination room. Smart phones are allowed in case the candidate needs to use it to contact the Royal College or proctor in the event of technology failure.

5.3.2 If the candidate is required to speak with the proctor or examination personnel, the candidate must stay within range of the camera.

5.3.3 The candidate is required to keep the sound level in the room to a minimum. Music is not permitted.

5.3.4 The Royal College and their invigilators/proctors have the authority to monitor the approved remote written or applied examination.

## 6. References

6.1 *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship*

6.2 *Policies for Certification in a Competency by Design Model of Residency Training*

6.3 *Policy on Formal Reviews of Examinations*

6.4 *Privacy Policy*

## 7. Contact(s)

For information or clarification, please contact:

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

## 8. Policy record

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