

Royal College Qualifications and Fellowship Designations

Definitions and Guidelines for Use



Royal College Membership Services &
Programs Unit

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Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada

Qualifications and Fellowship Designations

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada is the national professional body overseeing the medical education of specialists in Canada. The Royal College's Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program, which is mandatory for all Fellows of the Royal College, supports specialist physicians in lifelong learning and professional development and ensures their continued competence in a constantly evolving medical environment.

The Royal College issues designations and related documents which confirm achievement of and adherence to the high standards set by the Royal College. This document defines the various qualifications and designations bestowed by the Royal College, and provides guidance for acceptable use of those designations.

Royal College Official Designations

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada issues three official designations:

FRCP Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada
(Division of Medicine)

FRCS Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada
(Division of Surgery)

The above two designations may only be used by current, active Fellows and Retired Fellows (members) of the Royal College.

DRCPS Diplomat of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

The above designation may only be used by current, active Diplomates and Diplomat Affiliates of the Royal College. Diplomates who are also Fellows may use the DRCPS following their Fellowship designation.

Special Notes:

Royal College designations are the same in English and in French.

There are no designations for specialist or subspecialist Certificants who are not Fellows of the Royal College.

Use of the Designations

The following provides recommended ways to describe your Royal College qualifications. If you have questions about correct use of designations and descriptors of practice, contact the Royal College Services Centre.

If you are a Fellow with a specialty certification:

- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Pediatrics
- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Anatomical Pathology
- Dr. J. Example, FRCSC, Neurosurgery

If you are a Fellow with a subspecialty certification:

For those certified in a Royal College subspecialty, both the primary specialty and subspecialty may be listed, or only the subspecialty, based on the preference of the certified individual.

- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Gastroenterology
- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Geriatric Psychiatry

If you are a Fellow and a Founder:

If you have been approved as a Founder, you may include the subspecialty in which you are a Founder as part of your credentials.

- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Pediatrics, Founder in Maternal Fetal Medicine

If you are a Fellow and a Diplomate:

The Diplomate designation and the name of your AFC Diploma may be added after your Fellowship designation. The Diploma name may be abbreviated if desired.

- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Pediatrics, DRCPSC, Transfusion Medicine
- Dr. J. Example, FRCPC, Pediatrics, DRCPSC, TM, Adult IC¹

If you are a Diplomate without Royal College specialty or subspecialty certification:

- Dr. J. Example, DRCPSC, Transfusion Medicine
- Dr. J. Example, DRCPSC TM, Adult IC

¹ TM, Adult IC are the abbreviations for Transfusion Medicine, Adult Interventional Cardiology.

If, in addition to naming your Royal College specialty you wish to describe your field of practice, the medical term(s) used must not include names of other Royal College specialties in which you are not certified.

Improper use of the Designations

Royal College Fellowship or Diplomate designations should not be shortened or modified in any way. Periods should not be inserted between the letters of the designations. Additionally, the C at the end of the designation should not be placed in parentheses.

Examples of improper modifications to the Royal College Fellowship designation include:

- FRCP / FRCS [when used in reference to a Canadian designation]
- FRCPQ/FRCSQ
- FRCP(C)/FRCS(C)
- F.R.C.P.C / F.R.C.S.C
- frcpc/frcsc

Information on Recognized Royal College Disciplines

Brief descriptions of each discipline (including specialties, subspecialties, special programs, and AFC-Diplomas) can be found on the [Royal College website](#).

Detailed information on all disciplines recognized by the Royal College including training objectives, examination dates, accredited programs and specialty training requirements can also be found on the [Royal College website](#).

Definition of Qualifications Bestowed by the Royal College

Certification by Examination

Specialty and subspecialty certification: The Royal College offers a number of routes to certification, including traditional (for Canadian-trained specialists), Practice Eligibility (for International Medical Graduates and subspecialists), and Practice Ready Assessment. Regardless of the route, Royal College certification attests to the fact that the certificant has met the highest Royal College standards of assessment for the certificant's specialty or subspecialty discipline. With the exception of Academic Certification and CMQ Certification (see below), Royal College certification is not time limited (i.e., certification is lifetime, and recertification is not required).

CMQ Certification: Specialists who are certified by examination through the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) may apply for recognition as a Royal College certificant. CMQ Certificants must maintain Fellowship in order to maintain their certification status.

Certification Without Examination

Subspecialty Accreditation without Certification Exam (AWC): Qualified individuals are issued an *attestation certificate*, equivalent to subspecialty certification. The attestation acknowledges that the doctor is a qualified subspecialist as demonstrated by successful completion of training in an accredited program. Attestations are provided in circumstances in which there was no subspecialty exam in the discipline at the time individual was trained. The individual is a recognized subspecialist in his/her discipline regardless if he/she chooses to take the subspecialty exam now available.

Academic Certification: Deans of Medicine may apply for Academic Certification on behalf of their non-certified full-time clinical faculty at the rank of full or associate professor, with five years' experience. Academic Certification remains in effect only for as long as the Certificant maintains a full-time academic appointment in the same specialty practice, at the same medical school and its affiliated institutions. Academic Certificants must maintain Royal College Fellowship in order to maintain their certification status.

Attestation without Examination (does not lead to certification)

Founder: Founders are Fellows of the Royal College who have been involved in the creation of a new subspecialty (for example, the creation and development of standards, training requirements, and examinations for a new or transitioning subspecialty) and are therefore unable to gain eligibility to the certification examinations of the subspecialty. Recognition as a Founder involves an application process through the Royal College Credentials Unit. Once approved, Founders may include "Founder in [subspecialty name]" as part of their credentials.

Area of Focus Competence (Diploma) attestation (AFC Candidate): Areas of focused competence (diploma) [*AFC (diploma)*] are highly specialized disciplines of specialty medicine that address legitimate societal needs, but do not meet the Royal College criteria for a specialty, foundation program, or subspecialty. AFC (diplomas) do not prepare a physician for practice, but rather recognize areas of supplemental or advanced training. AFC Candidates are offered the option to become a Royal College Diplomate (where also certified by the Royal College) or Diplomate Affiliate.

Attestation with Examination (does not lead to certification)

Subspecialty Examination Affiliate Program (SEAP Candidate): SEAP Candidates are physicians who have completed a Royal College subspecialty examination, however have done so without completing the Royal College primary specialty examination. SEAP Candidates are not Royal College certified nor are they eligible for Fellowship. SEAP Candidates receive an attestation of successful completion of the Royal College subspecialty examination in their discipline, and are offered the option to become a Royal College Subspecialist Affiliate.

Fellowship

Fellow: Those who hold Royal College certification are eligible to apply for admission to Fellowship. Only Royal College Fellows and Retired Fellows are entitled to use the designations FRCPC or FRCSC. Active Fellows must participate in the MOC Program in order to maintain their Fellowship status and, in most provinces across Canada, their license to practice. Retired Fellows may participate on a voluntary basis. Only Fellows hold rights and privileges of membership, including eligibility to vote and hold office.

Diplomate: Individuals **who are Fellows of the Royal College** and who have successfully completed all of the requirements of an AFC (Diploma) and who annually maintain their status as a Diplomate of the Royal College receive an added qualification known as Diplomate of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or DRCPSC. Diplomates must hold membership (Fellowship) in the Royal College and must participate in the MOC Program in order to maintain their Fellowship and Diplomate status.

Affiliation

Diplomate Affiliate: Individuals **who are not Fellows or Certificants of the Royal College** and who have successfully completed all of the requirements of an AFC (Diploma) and who annually maintain their status as a Diplomate Affiliate of the Royal College receive an added qualification known as Diplomate of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or DRCPSC. Diplomate Affiliates are not eligible to hold membership (Fellowship) in the Royal College. Diplomate Affiliates must participate in the MOC Program in order to maintain their Affiliate status.

Subspecialist Affiliate: Subspecialist Affiliates have successfully completed a Royal College subspecialty examination through the Subspecialist Examination Affiliate Program (SEAP). Maintenance of Subspecialist Affiliate status requires ongoing participation in the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program.

Resident Affiliate: Residents who are not already certified by the Royal College and are registered in a Royal College accredited residency program

may join as Resident Affiliates. Affiliation with the Royal College during residency provides an opportunity to become familiar with the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program, in which Resident Affiliates may participate on a voluntary basis up to certification.

Honorary Fellow: Royal College Council may bestow Honorary Fellowship on individuals who are not eligible for Fellowship, but who have demonstrated outstanding performance in a particular vocation or a specific area of professional activity directly or indirectly related to the field of medicine. Honorary Fellows may use the designation FRCPSC (Hon). Honorary Fellowship is an affiliate status, and individuals in this category are not Royal College certified.

For More Information

Royal College Services Centre
1-800-461-9598
613-730-2410
membership@royalcollege.ca

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NOTE: Canada's provincial Medical Regulatory Authorities are responsible for establishing and enforcing requirements for licensure, complaints and disciplines of physicians and surgeons.