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1.1 (Section 8.1.2) Appendix to Policy and Procedure: Discipline Recognition Application – Specialty Committee and AFC (Diploma) Working Group Roles and Responsibilities in Reviewing Applications for the Recognition of New Disciplines

Policy Number:	Appendix
Section:	Office of Specialty Education, Committee on Specialties
Subject:	Discipline Recognition – Roles of Specialty Committees

1. BACKGROUND

Policy 1.1 articulates the means by which the Royal College recognizes each of its main categories of discipline recognition: fundamentals, specialties, subspecialties, and AFC-diplomas. Section 8.1.2 also describes the requisite components of a complete application for the recognition of a fundamentals, specialty, subspecialty, or AFC-diploma discipline. This appendix is intended to complement Policy 1.1, specifically Section 8.1.2, by providing further context on the roles of a Specialty Committee in such applications.

2. PURPOSE

Specialty Committee and AFC Committee members have a mandate to function as stewards of their respective disciplines. As such, these committee members have several roles and responsibilities with respect to the review of, and in some cases, contribution to applications for the recognition of new disciplines. Specialty committee members are regularly presented with requests to review applications for the recognition of new disciplines. In order to lend clarity to the COS' application policies, the potential roles and their associated responsibilities and conditions are outlined as part of this appendix.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The policy governing applications for the recognition of new disciplines stipulates that a completed application must include formal support from impacted disciplines. In some cases, formal lack of support from an impacted discipline will prohibit an application from coming forward for consideration by the Committee on Specialties (COS). There are both general responsibilities, and in some cases, specific responsibilities and implications, depending on the role of the Specialty Committee in the application.

General Responsibilities for all Specialty Committees in Review Applications for New Disciplines

The following general responsibilities apply to each role assumed by a specialty committee:

- a) To collectively review and reach a decision regarding whether or not they are in support of the application,
- b) To submit an unambiguous written response, signed by the chair of the committee, indicating their support for the application or lack thereof. Support for the application does not have to include a rationale; however, a letter expressing a specialty committee's lack of support must elaborate on the underlying principles of the decision.
- c) To provide a written response to the applicant and/or to the COS within **sixty days** after receipt of a complete, draft application. If a response is not obtained, the application will proceed for consideration by the COS, whereby the COS may deduce that the committee is supportive. Please see section **4.1.2** for information regarding an extension to this timeline.

In all cases, in the event that a specialty committee is unsupportive of an application, the applicant and the parent discipline may choose to engage in dialogue to resolve any identified issues. If a consensus can be reached and support is granted, a new letter can be submitted by the specialty committee and the most recent letter will be considered by the COS.

3.1 Specialty Committee as Applicant

3.1.1 Role

The Specialty Committee may function as primary applicant, i.e. submitting an application on behalf of the full committee. This is most often seen in times when the proposed discipline has only one entry route, the committee seeking approval, and is typically representative of a scope of practice building on that specialty/subspecialty. However, this may not be the only circumstance. At times, applications are sponsored by one individual on the Specialty Committee.

3.1.2 Specific Responsibilities

The specialty or AFC committee has an obligation to:

- a) Engage in appropriate collaboration and facilitate input from all specialty committee members in order to understand the intent and scope of the proposal.
- b) Submit a letter, signed by the chair of the committee, confirming that the specialty committee endorses the proposal.

3.1.3 Implications

- a) An application cannot come forward until such a time that the specialty committee (applicant) reaches a decision.

3.2 Specialty Committee as Parent Discipline

3.2.1 Role

The parent discipline of an application for the recognition of a new discipline is the specialty, and in some cases, the subspecialty, that is considered the foundation for training that will occur in the proposed new discipline. There is typically a small number (one or two) primary "parent" disciplines, although a variety of other disciplines may be considered "entry" disciplines (see section 3.3).

3.2.2 Implications

- a) If the parent discipline is not in support of the application for the recognition of the new discipline, and they have submitted a written response detailing their rationale, the application cannot come forward for consideration by the COS (that is, their lack of support constitutes a veto).
- b) If the parent discipline is not in support of the application, and additional dialogue between the specialty committee and the applicant is ineffectual, the prospective applicant may initiate the mechanism for adjudicating disputes between new discipline applications and existing disciplines.
- c) Should the application for the recognition of a new discipline progress to the Part II stage and undergo a national consultation of stakeholders, the initial letter of support from the parent discipline will be presumed to indicate support at this stage as well, unless the Office of Specialty Education is notified otherwise and a specialty committee wishes to rescind their support (see section 4.2).

3.3 Specialty Committee as Entry Route

3.3.1 Role

The specialty or AFC committee may be listed by the applicant as a route of entry to the proposed new discipline.

3.3.2 Implications

- a) If the entry route discipline is not in support of the application for the recognition of a new discipline, and they have submitted a written response detailing their rationale, the COS will determine whether or not their lack of support and exclusion as an entry route can prohibit the progression of the application (i.e. the entry route is deemed fundamental to the scope envisioned), or if the application can feasibly proceed in their absence.
- b) The COS, as part of their consideration of an application after its submission and before its final decision, may direct the applicant to consult with additional disciplines, to determine the appropriateness of their potential inclusion as routes of entry.
 - Additional entry routes explored should be logical to the proposed discipline's scope, and should not change the original conception within the application to recognize the new discipline.
 - Where a potential candidate has exceptional training experiences that meet the criteria for entry into an AFC, eligibility may be determined on a case-by-case basis via the credentialing process.
- c) Should the application for the recognition of a new discipline progress to the Part II stage and undergo a national consultation of stakeholders, the initial letter of support from the parent discipline will be presumed to indicate support at this stage as well, unless the Office of Specialty Education is notified otherwise and a specialty committee wishes to rescind their support (see section 4.2).

3.4 Specialty Committee with Overlapping Competencies

3.4.1 Role

The specialty or AFC committee may be identified by the applicant and/or the Office of Specialty Education as a discipline whose competencies overlap to some degree with the competencies within the application for the recognition of a new discipline.

3.4.2 Implications

- a) If the discipline with which there are overlapping competencies is not in support of the application for the recognition of a new discipline, the COS will determine the extent of the overlap, and whether or not a lack of support from the discipline can prohibit the application from coming forward for review (that is, whether or not their lack of support constitutes a veto).
- b) Should the application for the recognition of a new discipline progress to the Part II stage and undergo a national consultation of stakeholders, the initial letter of support from the parent discipline will be presumed to indicate support at this stage as well, unless the Office of Specialty Education is notified otherwise and a specialty committee wishes to rescind their support (see section 4.2).

3.5 Specialty Committee: Other

3.5.1 Role

The specialty committee may not have overlapping competencies, but for other reasons, may provide input on the application for the recognition of a new discipline.

3.5.2 Implications

- a) The specialty committee could submit a letter expressing their views on the application; however, it would not be considered as a mandatory component of the application.

4. CONDITIONS

4.1 Letters of Support

Regarding the requirement for letters of support from impacted specialties, subspecialties, and/or AFC-diplomas, any application whose competencies overlap with an existing Royal College discipline, or that includes an existing Royal College discipline as a route of entry to the proposed discipline, must seek formal, written support for their application from those specialty committees. The parameters by which formal expressions of support are upheld are outlined below.

4.1.1

Letters of support must be from the Royal College (sub) specialty committee or AFC (sub) committee of the impacted discipline, and be received no later than sixty days after receipt of a complete draft application. The letter should be addressed from the chair of the specialty committee; however, due diligence on the part of the specialty committee chair should involve fulsome consultation with the specialty committee's full membership.

4.1.2

Regarding the sixty-day timeline for the submission of a letter of support following a specialty committee's receipt of a complete draft application, a specialty committee will have the option to request an extension to this timeline, pending approval by the Office of Specialty Education (OSE).

4.2 Changes that necessitate a new letter of support/allow rescindment of a preceding letter of support

Applications for the recognition of new Royal College disciplines often undergo a period of review by the Royal College, in advance of formal consideration by the COS. This period of review, often referred to as "coaching" typically lasts between six to eighteen months. During that time, the applicant may secure formal support from a Royal College (sub) specialty or AFC (sub) committee. Once an applicant is ready to formally submit their application to the COS, any of the following changes would necessitate new letters of support from impacted disciplines, or allow an impacted discipline to rescind their support, even if the applicant had submitted preceding letters from those same disciplines:

- Any fundamental change to the Competency Training Requirements (CTR), involving the addition or removal of a core set of competencies, such that the scope of the discipline being proposed is altered, or
- Any fundamental change to the eligibility criteria for the proposed discipline, or
- A minimum of three years has elapsed since the submission of the original letter of support.

4.3 Changes that do not necessitate a new letter of support/allow rescindment of a preceding letter of support

The following changes would not necessitate that an application for the recognition of a new discipline obtain new letters of support:

- Specialty committee of AFC sub(committee) turnover, including the appointment of a new chair, new voting members, or observer members (in this case, the original letter of support still stands), and
- Any change that does not affect the scope or overall structure of the application.