

Role of the Specialty Committee in Credentialing Matters

The Specialty Committees advise the Credentials Committee on matters relating to the training standards necessary to adequately train a specialist in their discipline. This is accomplished through the following responsibilities:

Objectives of Training (OTR) and Specialty Training Requirements (STR)

The Specialty Committee is responsible for the creation and regular review of the OTR and STR for their discipline. These documents, once drafted by the specialty committee, must be presented and approved by the Specialty Standards Review Committee (SSRC) before being ultimately approved by the Education Committee. During this process, the SSRC may send the OTR and STR back to the specialty committee with suggested changes or further questions for consideration. The specialty committee must address these comments and return the revised OTR and STR back to the SSRC. If the specialty committee does not agree with the SSRC's suggested changes, they must provide a complete rationale as to why the committee disagrees. It is important to keep in mind that the responsibility of the specialty committee is to ensure that the OTR and STR reflect what is truly needed to practice the specialty across the country and not just in a single location (such as an Academic Health Sciences Centre, Medium Community, in rural settings).

Credentialing Recommendations

The specialty committee will be requested to make credentialing recommendations, which will be presented for ultimate approval by the Credentials Committee. Specialty committees may make recommendations on specific training requirements or eligibility criteria for their discipline. The Credentials Committee is responsible for making decisions that are in line with current Royal College policy while taking the recommendations of the specialty committee into consideration. When the Credentials Committee makes a decision that is contrary to the recommendation put forth by the specialty committee, the Credentials Unit will contact the specialty committee to outline the reasons for this decision.

Ruling Cases

The Credentials Committee relies on the expertise of the specialty committees to advise them on rulings in cases where the training is unusual, difficult to assess or is outside the norm but within the realm of possibility. In cases when acceptability of training is unclear, the nucleus group of the specialty committees will be sent confidential information on a resident's training and asked for their opinion on how it should be handled and if any exceptions should be made. The names are always blacked out and all information should be deleted after the advice has been given.

PER for Primary specialties

Specialty committees (for primary specialties) will be requested to develop a scope of practice document that is tailored for the specialty; this document allows PER applicants to describe his/her current practice profile to determine if the practice profile includes all of the core competencies needed for a practice based credentials review and examination/assessment in the primary specialty applied for. Committee members (either voting or non-voting) are asked to determine if an applicant's practice profile includes the core competencies of the discipline. A guide and examples of scopes are available for committee members.

PER for Sub-Specialties (PER-sub)

Specialty committees for sub-specialties (new or converting) will be requested to develop three assessment tools: scope of practice, referee verification, and a comprehensive competency report. The scope of practice document allows PER-sub applicants to describe his/her current practice profile to ensuring that an applicant's current practice profile has the necessary breadth to be assessed for certification in the subspecialty applied for. The referee verification describes the current practice as attested to by physicians who are knowledgeable about the applicant's practice, and the Comprehensive Competency Report is a form that attests to the applicant's eligibility to the certification examination and is completed jointly by two specialty committee appointed assessors.

Committee members are asked to review the applicant's portfolio in pairs (either voting or non-voting members) and to jointly determine that the applicant meets the requirements as defined by the specialty committee.

A guide and examples of assessment documents are available for committee member.