

1. The Accreditation Process

As a voting member of a Specialty Committee or an AFC Committee/Subcommittee (Committee) of the Royal College, you will be involved in the accreditation process. This process seeks to ensure that standards are being maintained in all programs, and that all necessary resources are available and utilized efficiently and effectively to enable residents/trainees to meet the training requirements of the discipline.

Please note that if a voting member is affiliated with the program being surveyed, they must be excluded from the review process to avoid any conflicts of interest. In the cases where a Committee chair is affiliated with the program, the vice-chair will be requested to act as chair for this review; in the absence of a vice-chair or a conflict of interest, a deputy-chair will be nominated by the chair. Furthermore, should a Committee member participate as a member of the survey team, this member would be excluded from any accreditation process related to the review.

a. Prior to the Survey (for both regular surveys and external reviews)

Although much of the survey information is obtained by means of pre-survey questionnaires, other important information is not easily presented on paper and the acquisition and assessment of this latter information will require a team of Fellows of the Royal College who are experienced in postgraduate medical education and familiar with the standards of the Royal College to survey programs by means of an onsite visit. These surveyors do not survey programs from their own discipline unless the program requires an external review (refer to the Categories of Accreditation for details on external reviews).

As a Committee voting member of your discipline, you will be sent these pre-survey questionnaires to provide comments and/or identify areas of concern, particularly with respect to the availability and utilization of the resources necessary to provide adequate training in the discipline. These comments and/or areas of concern will be very important and extremely useful to the surveyor during the review of this component of the program while onsite.

Approximately four to six weeks prior to the survey, the voting members will receive instructions on how to access the pre-survey information documentation using the Royal College Alfresco Collaboration tool for their respective Committee. Each voting member will be asked to review the pre-survey questionnaire and, within a two to three week timeline, submit comments and/or identify areas of concerns using the Opinio online survey tool (the link to the survey will be provided on the Alfresco site).

b. During the Survey (for both regular surveys and external reviews)

While onsite, the surveyor will investigate the comments and/or areas of concern identified by the Committee members and address the findings in the survey report. The survey team will meet daily to discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of all of the programs and will determine which category of accreditation they will recommend for each of the disciplines.

c. After the Survey (for both regular surveys and external reviews)

After the onsite visit, the surveyor will submit a survey report, which will be circulated to each respective Committee voting member for their comments and recommendation. The survey report will enable the Residency Accreditation Committee (Res-AC), AFC-Accreditation Committee (AFC-AC) the Committee and the program/AFC director to appreciate the reasons for the survey team's recommendation, and will be the venue for the surveyor to address the voting member comments and/or areas of concern which were identified prior to the onsite visit. In addition, the survey report will be sent to the university for a program response, which will provide them with the opportunity to respond to any errors of fact or interpretation cited within the report.

Four to eight weeks after the survey, the voting members will receive an email explaining the post-survey steps to follow which will also indicate the Royal College Alfresco collaboration site where the following documents will be accessible (same site as the pre-survey process):

- the survey report
- the program response to the survey report
- the Committee comments
- the suite of documents:
 - Specialty-specific
 - Objective of Training Requirements (OTR)
 - Specialty Training Requirements (STR)
 - Specific Standards of Accreditation (SSA)
 - AFC
 - Competency Training Requirements (CTR)
 - Standards of Accreditation (SA)
 - Competency Portfolio for Educators
- the voting recommendation form
- the chair recommendation form
- the Opinio link to evaluate the quality of the survey report

Voting members will provide their comments and recommendation directly to their Committee chair who will gather the information and, on behalf of the voting members, provide the Res-AC or AFC-AC with a narrative summary of the comments and a consensus for their recommendation on the category of accreditation.

The categories of accreditation available for recommendation by the Committee are:

- Accredited program, with follow up by
 - next regular survey
 - external review
 - internal review
- Accredited program on notice of intent to withdraw accreditation
- Withdrawal of accreditation

The deadline for submission of the recommendation will be clearly indicated in the email, on the recommendation form and on the Alfresco site.

At a predetermined meeting, the Res-AC or AFC-AC will discuss all the findings for each program and decide on the category of accreditation. In addition to the categories listed above, the Res-AC or AFC-AC has the option of giving the program the status of accredited program with follow-up by progress report. A progress report is required when a program has more than one issue across more than one standard, which would typically require follow-up by internal review; however, the issues identified are amenable to a written response highlighting the actions taken (as opposed to full mandated internal review of the program).

The university will be informed of the Res-AC's or AFC AC's decision in a decision letter, which will be copied to the Committee chair, who will in turn inform its voting members if a decision does not parallel the recommendation of the Specialty Committee. There is a two-step process the university can exercise should they choose to appeal a decision.

2. Other Roles for the Committee in the Accreditation System

- Recommend and review the Standards of Accreditation for the discipline
- Develop and review the pre-survey questionnaire (PSQ)
- Review and make recommendations on applications for new programs
- Review and make recommendations to the Res-AC or AFC-AC on progress reports and internal review reports
- Nominate specialists to participate in the survey process

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