



ROYAL COLLEGE
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA
COLLÈGE ROYAL
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA

Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship

July 2017

**These regulations supersede previously published editions.
The Royal College reserves the right to change these regulations
at any time, without prior notification.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHANGES

4.3 Modifications to Residency Training

The Royal College understands that it may be necessary for some residents to modify their training due to personal circumstances described under applicable human rights legislation. The Royal College will support and permit modifications that are necessary to prevent discrimination, except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the Royal College. Undue hardship includes, among other things, any compromise to the validity, reliability and/or integrity of the Royal College certification and examination process and outcome.

4.3.1 Fractional (part-time) residency training

- (i) The program director and postgraduate dean must approve the resident's fractional training syllabus.
- (ii) The program director and postgraduate dean must certify that the supervision and assessment of the part-time resident is at least equivalent to that of other residents in the residency program and that the total educational experience is fully equivalent to normal full-time residency.

4.3.2 Waiver of training after a leave of absence from residency

Accommodation

The policy detailed in this Section 4.3.2 is subject to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) commitment to accommodate residents with personal characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, as provided in Sections 4.3 and 6.9 of this guide.

Policy on granting a leave of absence

The Royal College expects that all residents must have achieved the goals and objectives of the training program and be competent to commence independent practice by the completion of their training program. It is understood by the Royal College that residents may require leaves of absence from training. The circumstances that would qualify residents for leaves of absence are determined by the university. It is expected that any time lost during a leave will be made up upon the resident's return.

Policy on granting a waiver of training:

The postgraduate office may allow a waiver of training following a leave of absence, in accordance with university policy and within the maximum time for a waiver determined by the Royal College. A decision to grant a waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of the program but cannot be granted after the resident has taken the certification examinations. Similarly, the end-of-training date for a resident cannot be changed to an earlier date after the resident has taken the certification examinations.

Each university will develop its own policy on whether or not it is willing to grant a waiver of training for time taken as a leave of absence. However, in

the case where waivers of training are acceptable to the university, they must be within the acceptable times listed below. In addition, regardless of any waived blocks of training, the decision to grant a waiver of training must be based on the assumption that the resident will have achieved the required level of competence by the end of the final year of training.

A waiver of training can only be granted by the postgraduate dean on the recommendation of the resident's program director.

The following are the maximum allowable times for waivers:

1. One year program – no waiver allowed
2. Less than one year for remediation or enhanced skills – no waiver allowed
3. Two year program – six weeks
4. Three year program – six weeks
5. Four year program – three months
6. Five year program – three months
7. Six year program – three months
8. In Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, where residents are undertaking three years of training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director, a maximum of six weeks may be waived for these three years of training. Subsequently, a maximum of six weeks of training may be waived in the following 2 years of training under the subspecialty Program Director. The process for these programs is as follows:
 - i. Three years of training completed with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director followed by 2 or 3 years of subspecialty training with a different program director are treated separately for the purpose of the waiver of training.
 - ii. A waiver must be recommended by the Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean on the Core in-Training Evaluation Report (CITER). A decision to grant a waiver is made in the PGY3 for a maximum duration of 6 weeks.
 - iii. In the subspecialty years, a decision to grant a waiver is recommended in the final year by the Subspecialty Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean. A maximum 6 week waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of training.
 - iv. If the resident undertakes three years of Internal Medicine or Pediatrics training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director at one university and switches to another university for subspecialty training, it is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Dean at the corresponding institution to approve the waiver of training. For example, if a resident does pediatric training at the University of Toronto and switches to pediatric nephrology at McGill, the Postgraduate Dean from Toronto would approve the six week waiver in pediatrics and the Postgraduate Dean from McGill would approve the six week waiver in pediatric nephrology.

5.8 Renewal of Examination Eligibility

- 5.8.1** A candidate whose eligibility for the examinations leading to Royal College certification has expired after three (3) years through failure on the examinations or through failure to appear at the examinations or who are in the category of severe fail may be required to satisfactorily complete a study plan and/or an additional six (6) months of residency in order to regain examination eligibility.
- 5.8.2** Application for the renewal of eligibility must be made by the deadline in the year before the candidate hopes to be examined.
- 5.8.3** The Credentials Unit retains the authority to deny a candidate the option of doing a study plan and grant him or her eligibility conditional upon successful completion of one six (6) month block of broad-based senior residency in the specialty.
- 5.8.4** If a candidate reaches a point where they have not passed the examination after completion of one study plan and one six (6) month period of additional training in the specialty, no further eligibility for the specialty examination will be granted.
- 5.8.5** Under exceptional circumstances, a candidate who has completed a study plan and additional training and has not passed the examination, may be eligible for a final attempt at the examination. Eligibility for this final attempt may be contingent upon completion of a further two years (minimum) of accredited residency training with a successful FITER at the conclusion of the training. The Credentials Committee may, in its sole and absolute discretion, deny any further eligibility for the certification examinations regardless of a candidate's completion of any further study plans and/or training. The Credentials Committee's decision in this regard shall be final, subject only to the rights of appeal herein (see Section 5.6).
- 5.8.6** A renewal of eligibility is valid only for the examination session in the year following the granting of the renewal.

5.9 Study Plan criteria to regain eligibility to the certification examinations

- 5.9.1** A study plan must be a minimum of six months.
- 5.9.2** A study plan must be completed in the six months before the examination is held.
- 5.9.3** A candidate must engage the assistance of a mentor, who must:
- i. be a Fellow of the Royal College in the same specialty as the candidate
 - ii. assist the candidate in developing a study plan
 - iii. attest in writing to the Credentials Unit of the Royal College that they agree to be the candidate's mentor
 - iv. monitor the progress of the study plan
 - v. attest to the successful completion of the study plan by the deadline.
- 5.9.4** Study plans are a minimum of 6 months duration, and must include 6 out of the 8 tools listed below, with the exception of Surgical Foundations (see 5.10.5).
- Practice short answer examination questions (SAQs)
 - Practice oral and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs)
 - Discipline-specific preparatory courses for examinations

- Detailed sessions set up with mentors to discuss the history/physical treatment plan for specific patients
 - Participation in Grand Rounds
 - Participation in study groups with final year residents in your specialty who are preparing for the Royal College examination
 - If written communication skills are an issue, participation in a medical writing course
 - If oral communication is an issue, completion of a relevant course
- 5.9.5** Study plans for Surgical Foundations must be a minimum of 6 months duration and include a minimum of 7 of the 10 tools listed below:
- Schwartz's Principles of Surgery, 9e
 - Schwartz's test questions
 - Online surgical foundation review lectures (given by Canadian universities)
 - Participation in Grand Rounds
 - Practice short answer examination questions (SAQs)
 - Practice oral and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs)
 - Discipline-specific preparatory courses for examinations
 - Detailed sessions set up with mentors to discuss the history/physical treatment plan for specific patients
 - If written communication skills are an issue, participation in a medical writing course
 - If oral communication is an issue, completion of a relevant course
- 5.9.6** The deadline for the mentor to submit the form that attests that the candidate has successfully completed the study plan is March 1 for the specialty examinations of the same year and August 15 for the subspecialty examinations of the same year.
- 5.9.7** In order for a study plan to be considered complete, the candidate must register for the exam.
- 5.9.8** If the candidate does not complete the study plan, the candidate must restart the process and resubmit a study plan for the following examination session. However, this can only be done one time. After the second year of a study plan, the candidate must write the examination or the attempt is lost. The candidate will then be required to complete additional training to regain eligibility.

5.10 Additional training criteria to regain eligibility to the certification examinations

- 5.10.1** All training plans must be sent to the Royal College for approval prior to commencing any additional training. The goal of an additional training plan is to optimize the principles of competencies. The supervisor and the candidate work together to tailor the training plan to address the candidate's needs and areas of weakness, to allow for the best chance of success at the examination.
- 5.10.2** At the conclusion of the training program, an agreed-upon period of time prior to the examination is to be used as protected time for final preparation. During that time, it is recommended that the candidate be relieved of all clinical duties.

5.10.3 If a candidate is required to successfully complete additional training to regain eligibility to the certification examinations under the circumstances outlined in sections 5.8 and 5.9, they must demonstrate that they meet all in the requirements listed below in either category A or category B

Category A

- the training takes place in an approved university setting including distributed sites, or under the auspices of a Canadian PGME office
- the institution where the training takes place must have a Royal College accredited program in the candidate's specialty
- the applicant must be registered at a Royal College-approved university setting including distributed sites.
- the Royal College, in consultation with the program director, postgraduate dean, or approved supervisor, will be responsible to: determine the length of the program (minimum 6 months in duration); ensure that the program carries the same duties as that of a final year resident in the specialty; ensure that the program adheres to the Royal College Specialty Training Requirements.
- the training plan must be sufficiently broad to cover the breadth of the specialty but also include focus on areas of weakness as identified by the candidate and program director
- the program director overseeing the training must be the same as for the accredited residency program
- candidates registered as a resident with the postgraduate office of a university will receive a Confirmation of Completion of Training form and a Final In-Training Evaluation Report or submit an attestation indicating that the candidate has successfully completed the training and is deemed to be ready for unsupervised practice.
- All training plans must be submitted to the Royal College for approval prior to training commencing.

Category B

- The training is taken in a non-accredited training site or in the community setting
- The training plan must be a minimum of 6 months and must be submitted to the Royal College for approval prior to the start of the training.
- The proposed training must follow and include all applicable components that are set out in the Guidelines for an Acceptable Training Plan.
- In a non-accredited or community setting, the approved supervisor must sign a letter of attestation indicating that the candidate has successfully completed the training and is deemed to be ready for unsupervised practice.
- The supervisor must meet the following criteria:
 - Supervisors must have a valid license and be practicing independently.
 - Supervisors must be practicing at the same site in the same city in which the training is taking place.
 - Supervisors must be certified by the Royal College.

- Supervisors must be in practice in the same specialty or subspecialty, as appropriate, as the candidate.
- Supervisors must be experienced in, or willing to learn about, the education and assessment of practicing physicians.
- Supervisors must be able to provide constructive and honest feedback to the physician and the Royal College.
- Supervisors must possess a strong sense of professional responsibility and commitment to the training of the physician and to their future patients.
- Supervisors must be active in the Maintenance of Certification Program.
- Supervisors must be willing to comply with all terms of the Royal College agreement.

5.10.4 Responsibilities of a Supervisor

- Supervisors must verify that patient care provided by the physician meets the expectations of the highest standard of care mandated by the Royal College.
- Supervisors must be able to provide direct and immediate feedback to the physician.
- Supervisors must report immediately to the Royal College as well as their Medical Regulatory Authority, any and all demonstrations of unsafe or dangerous practices by the physician.
- Supervisors must report immediately to the Royal College any and all apparent breaches by the physician of his or her obligations to the Royal College.
- Supervisors should be aware of real or perceived biases in the relationship with the physician in training. Supervisors should not be an immediate family member nor hold a close personal relationship or business relationship with the physician.
- Supervisors must provide an attestation and report with confidence that the physician is ready for the exams, is ready for unsupervised practice and has completed all components in the agreed-upon training plan with the Royal College.
- Supervisors must be willing to report on the physicians' performance at least every 2 months.

5.10.5 Guidelines for an acceptable training plan

Direct observation of patient encounter at facility

Clinical Supervision/Assessment

- Observation in clinic visits
- Observation of leading healthcare teams
- Case discussions of patients seen
- Review of medical charts
- Review of adverse cases
- Chart stimulated recall
- Review of clinic patients

- Random cases deemed worthy of discussion should be discussed.
- Operating Room assessment (if applicable). A supervisor will scrub in with the candidate to observe the candidate's surgical skills in the operating room.

Oral examination and case discussions

There should be discussions of cases deemed difficult or worthy of discussion, in person with one of the supervisors throughout the month. These discussions should take place in the oral examination style.

Study plan

The supervisor and candidate should create a reading plan focused on core materials that will prepare the candidate to write the exams.

Educational program

It is highly recommended that the candidate include participation in the following activities as part of the training program:

- academic half days and academic rounds
- formal exam preparatory courses
- grand rounds
- Royal College Maintenance of Certification Program

OSCE Practice Sessions

A suggested part of this training program is for the candidate to join in the OSCE practice sessions given to the senior residents of the relevant specialty, or a similar activity.

Final Assessment

The final assessment will be done by all of the supervisors/mentors. The final attestation or assessment form will be completed by one supervisor and signed off after the team members all agree.

Periodic Updates

In terms of periodic updates, a log of educational encounters and activities will be kept and will be made available for verification at any time. The College may make periodic contact with the supervisor by phone or mail as it finds necessary. An update of activities will be provided to the College every two months along with feedback on how the candidate is progressing.

SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

The Royal College *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship* is a detailed policies and procedures manual that outlines the process leading to certification by the Royal College. The guide is divided into seven main sections for easy reference and clearly outlines each step in the certification process.

The following represents the basic steps to achieving Royal College certification:

- The applicant has obtained a medical qualification acceptable to the Royal College (refer to Section III of this guide).
- The applicant has trained in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program (refer to Section IV of this guide) or for non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved training, the applicant has trained in a postgraduate medical education system deemed acceptable by the Royal College (see Section VII of this guide).
- The applicant has satisfactorily completed the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements (refer to Section V of this guide).
- The applicant has successfully completed all examination requirements (refer to Section VI of this guide).

1.2 Contact Information

For further information, to request an application for assessment of training for examination eligibility, or to obtain objectives of training or specialty training requirements, please contact the Office of Education at:

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

Office of Education - Credentials Unit

774 Echo Drive

Ottawa, ON K1S 5N8 Canada

Telephone: (613) 730-8191

Toll Free: 1 (800) 668-3740

Credentials Unit – Extension: 7750

Fax: (613) 730-3707

E-mail: credentials@royalcollege.ca

Website: www.royalcollege.ca

Please note: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the Royal College has their correct mailing address and telephone numbers at all times.

1.3 Acronyms

Common acronyms include:

ACGME	- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (in the United States)
CACMS	- Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools
CanMEDS	- Canadian Medical Education Directions for Specialists
CBME	- Competency-based medical education
CCT	- Confirmation of completion of training
CFPC	- College of Family Physicians of Canada
FAIMER	- Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research
FITER	- Final In-Training Evaluation Report
FRCPC	- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Canada
FRCSC	- Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada
IMG	- International Medical Graduate
LCME	- Liaison Committee on Medical Education
MCC	- Medical Council of Canada
MCCEE	- Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination
MCCQE	- Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination
MD	- Doctor of Medicine
RC	- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
USMLE	- United States Medical Licensing Examinations
WHO	- World Health Organization

1.4 Definitions, Terms and Quick Reference

Postgraduate medical education, training and residency training are used interchangeably throughout this guide.

1.4.1 Accreditation Without Certification Subspecialties

“Accreditation Without Certification” is a process whereby the Royal College recognizes subspecialties for the purpose of accrediting programs, but does not offer examinations leading to certification in the designated subspecialty.

1.4.2 Assessment of Training for Eligibility to Access the Royal College Certification Examination

All applicants must have their residency training assessed by the Royal College to ensure that the specialty specific training requirements have been met in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College. More specific information about “Applications for Assessment of Training” is outlined in Section II of this guide. Applicants seeking credit towards examination eligibility for training in a postgraduate medical education system outside of accredited Royal College/ACGME approved programs should refer to Section VII “International Training (non-Royal College Accredited/Non-ACGME Approved)” for additional information regarding the application process

1.4.3 Citizenship

Applicants do not have to live in Canada or hold Canadian citizenship in order to become eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College certification.

1.4.4 Elective

An elective is defined as a discretionary, non-mandatory component of training. More specific information on electives is outlined in Section IV, Part B “Other Postgraduate Medical Education”.

1.4.5 Licensure

The Royal College does not grant licences to practice medicine. Applicants who intend to obtain a licence to practice in one of the provinces or territories of Canada must hold appropriate registration with the provincial/territorial regulatory authority. Applicants should contact the provincial/territorial medical regulatory authority directly for more information. Links to the regulatory authorities can be found on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

1.4.6 Objectives of Training and Specialty Training Requirements

Each specialty and subspecialty recognized by the Royal College has specific mandatory Objectives of Training and Specialty Training Requirements. Specific information about the objectives of training and specialty training requirements developed for each specialty and subspecialty should be read in conjunction with this guide. The objectives of training and specialty training requirements for postgraduate medical education for all Royal College recognized specialties and subspecialties are available on the Royal College website at www.royalcollege.ca

1.4.7 Preceptor

A qualified practitioner who supervises practice-based training in which the learner is immersed in the practitioner’s clinical practice for a defined period of time.

1.4.8 Preceptorship

For the purposes of credentialing requirements of the Royal College, the definition of preceptorship is a defined period of clinical education organized around focused immersion in a single supervisor’s practice. It is educationally sound, meaning it must have educational objectives, direct supervision, and assessment, and is under the auspices of an accredited RCPSC/ACGME approved program. Focused immersion in a physician’s practice includes clinical duties, observation, feedback and non-patient related experiences.

1.4.9 Royal College Certification Examinations

Applicants are ruled eligible to take the examinations leading to Royal College certification if all of the criteria of eligibility and residency training requirements have been met. Candidates for the examinations must register with the Royal College in order to take the examination. More specific information on examinations is outlined in Section VI “Royal College Examinations” of this guide.

1.4.10 Reciprocity

The Royal College has no reciprocal arrangements for recognizing examinations or qualifications of any other College or Board in any specialty or subspecialty. Applicants with certification from any other specialty or subspecialty examinations, College or Board, are not exempt from any of the requirements of the Royal College.

1.4.11 Residency

A residency is a specialty training program that is completed after medical school. These programs offer supervised and specific training

for the resident in their chosen specialty/subspecialty. The Royal College has no jurisdiction over appointment to or promotion in residency programs, or residents' salaries.

1.4.12 **Ruling**

A ruling is a decision on examination eligibility only. Once the applicant's residency training has been assessed, the Royal College will make a "ruling" (decision) on examination eligibility. The Royal College retains the authority to review all applications for preliminary assessment of training on a case-by-case basis and to determine the ruling on examination eligibility. The Royal College also retains the authority to withdraw acceptance of an applicant's credentials and/or require that an applicant complete additional training. Please refer to the conditions on rulings outlined in Section V "Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility".

1.4.13 **Specialist Certification**

Certification in a specialty or subspecialty will be granted upon the satisfactory completion of all credentials, training, and examination requirements. The Royal College certification confirms that specialist physicians and surgeons have met Royal College standards and training requirements.

1.5 **List of Specialties and Subspecialties Recognized by the Royal College**

The Royal College currently recognizes 61 specialties and subspecialties. Examinations leading to Royal College certification are conducted in the following specialties and subspecialties:

SPECIALTIES

Anatomical Pathology	Neurosurgery
Anesthesiology	Nuclear Medicine
Cardiac Surgery	Obstetrics and Gynecology
Dermatology	Ophthalmology
Diagnostic Radiology	Orthopedic Surgery
Emergency Medicine	Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery
General Pathology	Pediatrics
General Surgery	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Hematological Pathology	Plastic Surgery
Internal Medicine	Psychiatry
Medical Biochemistry	Public Health & Preventive Medicine
Medical Genetics and Genomics	Radiation Oncology
Medical Microbiology	Urology
Neurology (adult or pediatric)	Vascular Surgery
Neuropathology	

SUBSPECIALTIES

Subspecialties with Examination

prior Royal College certification in specialty of:

Adolescent Medicine
Pediatrics

Cardiology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
Psychiatry

Clinical Immunology and Allergy (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology
Anesthesiology / Emergency Medicine / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics / Psychiatry

Colorectal Surgery
General Surgery

Critical Care Medicine (adult or pediatric)
Anesthesiology / Cardiac Surgery / Emergency Medicine / General Surgery / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Developmental Pediatrics
Pediatrics

Endocrinology and Metabolism (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Forensic Pathology
Anatomical Pathology / General Pathology

Forensic Psychiatry
Psychiatry

Gastroenterology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

General Internal Medicine
Internal Medicine

General Surgical Oncology
General Surgery

Geriatric Medicine
Internal Medicine

Geriatric Psychiatry
Psychiatry

Gynecologic Oncology
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Gynecologic Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Hematology
Internal Medicine

Infectious Diseases (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Interventional Radiology
Diagnostic Radiology

Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Medical Oncology
Internal Medicine

Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
Pediatrics

Nephrology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Neuroradiology
Diagnostic Radiology
 Occupational Medicine
Internal Medicine
 Pain Medicine
Anesthesiology
 Palliative Medicine
Multiple entry routes
 Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Emergency Medicine / Pediatrics
 Pediatric Surgery
General Surgery
 Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Pediatrics
 Pediatric Radiology
Diagnostic Radiology
 Respiriology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
 Rheumatology (adult or pediatric)
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics
 Thoracic Surgery
General Surgery

Special Programs

Clinician Investigator Program
 Palliative Medicine (conjoint with College of Family Physicians of Canada)
 Surgical Foundations

Areas of Focused Competence (diploma)

Entry route (Note: CBME = Competency-based medical education)

Acute Care Point of Care Ultrasonography
*Any MD, although usually from Emergency Medicine, Pediatric
 Emergency Medicine, or any acute care related specialty +CBME*
 Addiction Medicine
Any Royal College specialty+CBME
 Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Oncology
*Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Hematology, Medical Oncology or
 Radiation Oncology + CBME*
 Adult Cardiac Electrophysiology
Cardiology + CBME
 Adult Echocardiography
*Cardiology, Diagnostic Radiology, Internal Medicine, Anesthesiology,
 Cardiac Surgery or Critical Care Medicine + CBME*
 Adult Hepatology
*Gastroenterology or Internal Medicine which includes 12 months Adult
 Hepatology + CBME*
 Adult Interventional Cardiology
Cardiology + CBME

- Adult Thrombosis Medicine
Internal Medicine or Emergency Medicine + CBME
- Advanced Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation
Cardiology + CBME
- Aerospace Medicine
Any MD, although historically come from Internal Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health and Preventive Medicine, and Family Medicine + CBME
- Brachytherapy
Radiation Oncology + CBME
- Child Maltreatment Pediatrics
Pediatrics + CBME
- Clinician Educator
CBME
- Cytopathology
Anatomical Pathology or General Pathology + CBME
- Emergency Medical Services
Emergency Medicine, Pediatric Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Anesthesiology or Critical Care Medicine + CBME
- Hyperbaric Medicine
Any MD, + Royal College certification, or enrolment in a residency training program from the Royal College or CFPC
- Patient Safety and Quality Improvement
Any MD, + Royal College certification, or enrolment in a residency training program from the Royal College or CFPC
- Pediatric Urology
Urology + CBME
- Sleep Disorder Medicine
Psychiatry or Neurology or Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery or Respiriology or Developmental Pediatrics + CBME
- Solid Organ Transplantation
Cardiology, Cardiac Surgery, Gastroenterology, General Surgery, Infectious Diseases, Nephrology, Respiriology, Thoracic Surgery or Urology + CBME
- Sport and Exercise Medicine
Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Orthopedic Surgery, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation or Rheumatology + CBME
- Transfusion Medicine
Internal Medicine + Hematology, Pediatrics + Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Hematological Pathology, Anesthesiology or General Pathology + CBME
- Trauma General Surgery
General Surgery + CBME

SECTION II – APPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING**General Information**

All applicants for certification, even if residency training is in a postgraduate medical education program accredited by the Royal College, must be assessed by the Royal College. Applicants should carefully study this guide and the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements before submitting an application for assessment of training. The 'Application for Preliminary Assessment of Training' is available by contacting the Royal College Credentials Unit (see contact information in Section I) or by download (PDF format) on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca. The specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements are also available on the Royal College website.

Please note that the provision of a Royal College 'Application for Preliminary Assessment of Training' form does not guarantee that the Royal College will recognize the applicant's postgraduate medical education.

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

A Royal College 'Application for Preliminary Assessment of Training' form should only be completed by those who can document that they meet one of the following requirements:

- 2.1.1** a resident currently or previously enrolled in a specialty or subspecialty residency program accredited by the Royal College or approved by the ACGME in the United States.
- 2.1.2** Medical graduates who are seeking recognition of any training in a postgraduate medical education system outside of an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program should also refer to Section VII for more information about the application process.

2.2 Documentation

- 2.2.1** Applicants are responsible for providing documentation of all credentials by appropriate authorities and for all periods of training. The Royal College retains the right to request additional documentation from an applicant (e.g. letters of reference) in order to complete an assessment of training.
- 2.2.2** Verification by appropriate authorities of all credentials and all periods of non-Canadian training must be forwarded with the application.
- 2.2.3** Documentation of a medical degree must certify that the degree has been awarded. A certificate showing that the candidate has passed the final examinations of a medical school is not sufficient.
- 2.2.4** All documents and information obtained by the Royal College during the course of an assessment of training become the property of the Royal College and will remain confidential. Applicants are therefore requested to provide certified copies and NOT original documents. All personal information is managed in accordance with the Royal College General Privacy Statement. Please refer to the Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca for an explanation of how personal information is managed.
- 2.2.5** Under the Royal College General Privacy Statement, individuals have the right to view information stored in their personal files. To access your personal information, forward a written request to the Royal College Privacy Officer at privacy@royalcollege.ca. In some instances,

information must be severed from the documents before access is granted. Please refer to the General Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca for more information.

- 2.2.6** The Royal College requires an applicant's consent whenever personal information is collected and/or disclosed to appropriate parties. Depending on the nature of the information, an individual's consent may be collected on a form, within a letter, orally, or in some instances, consent will be implied. For more details, please refer to the Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

2.3 Confirmation of Completion of Training

- 2.3.1** Satisfactory completion of postgraduate medical education must be documented and verified by a program director and the postgraduate office on a Royal College 'Confirmation of Completion of Training' (CCT) form. The CCT will be obtained part way through the final year of residency. Applicants are responsible for providing the name of the program director who will be responding to requests from the Royal College for evaluation reports and CCT forms.

2.4 Assessment Fees

- 2.4.1** Assessment fees are non-refundable and must accompany an application for preliminary assessment of training. To obtain an Assessment Fees Schedule please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 2.4.2** The assessment fee for Royal College/ACGME applicants covers the cost of assessment services for as long as the applicant is continuously enrolled as a resident in a specialty or subspecialty residency program in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program, or for four (4) years, whichever is longer. Once this time period has lapsed, a request for a new assessment must include another non-refundable assessment fee.
- 2.4.3** Assessment fees are reviewed annually by the Royal College and are subject to change.
- 2.4.4** *Additional fees* will be charged for the assessment of training for the examinations in second or subsequent specialties.
- 2.4.5** *Additional fees* may be charged for the assessment of training taken outside of Canada, including the United States.

2.5 Application Deadlines

- 2.5.1** Applicants are encouraged to apply well in advance of the application deadlines to avoid late penalty fees. To view the specialty or subspecialty deadline dates by which the completed preliminary assessment form must be received in the Royal College Credentials Unit, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca for application deadlines.
- 2.5.2** Assessment of training normally takes at least six (6) months, but may take up to eighteen (18) months, if periods of non-Canadian training, including the United States, must be assessed, or if the application requires supplementary analysis.
- 2.5.3** All applications for preliminary assessment of training or for updated assessment of additional training must be received before the end of

the business day on the date of the relevant deadline. Subsequent requests for updated assessment of additional training must be received before the relevant deadline for the next year's examination session.

2.6 Penalty Fees

- 2.6.1** Applications received between 1 and 90 days after the deadline date will be accepted on payment of a non-refundable penalty fee (see Royal College website for current fees), with no guarantee that the application can be processed in time for the next examination session.
- 2.6.2** Applications received 91 or more days after the deadline date will be accepted on payment of a non-refundable penalty fee (see Royal College website for current fees), with no guarantee that the application can be processed in time for the next examination session.

SECTION III – EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**General Information**

The Royal College will assess whether an applicant's training and credentials meet the eligibility requirements for admission to the examinations for their specialty or subspecialty area. These eligibility criteria are:

3.1 Medical Qualification Acceptable to the Royal College**Definition**

- 3.1.1** The Royal College bylaws define "medical qualification" as a degree granted by a faculty, college or school of medicine, upon satisfactory completion of a full curriculum of studies in medicine.
- 3.1.2** The Royal College defines the term "medicine" to include surgery and obstetrics, and does not include chiropractic, homeopathy, osteopathy, podiatry, stomatology, or veterinary science.
- 3.1.3** The Royal College defines "practice of medicine" to mean the practice of the medical, surgical, and laboratory disciplines, and the specialties and areas of subspecialties thereof.

Eligibility

- 3.1.4** The Royal College recognizes qualifications from medical schools that grant the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) and:
 - (i) are accredited by the CACMS or the LCME, or
 - (ii) are recognized by the WHO listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
 - (iii) **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable
 - 3.1.5** Applicants with medical qualifications from medical schools other than CACMS/LCME accredited medical schools OR DOs recognized by the American Osteopathic Association must have succeeded at **one** of the following screening examinations in order to have their medical qualifications recognized by the Royal College:
 - (i) the MCC QE, Parts I and II, or
 - (ii) the United States Medical Licensing Examination, Parts I, II and III.
 - 3.1.6** Applicants with qualifications from medical schools in countries other than Canada and the United States of America may be required to provide the Royal College with information concerning the curriculum of their undergraduate medical experience.
- 3.2 Satisfactory Moral, Ethical and Professional Standing**
- 3.2.1** Applicants must demonstrate satisfactory moral, ethical and professional standing in clinical and/or research activities. This requires that the applicant appropriately relates to patients, students, colleagues, and other health care professionals with respect to gender, ethnicity and cultural, religious and personal values.
 - 3.2.2** Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of medical ethics by the end of their training. This includes the ability to recognize, analyze, and resolve ethical issues in clinical and research practice, as well as an understanding of the medical, legal, ethical and professional obligations to which physicians in Canada are bound.

- 3.2.3** If, at any time prior to certification, the Royal College receives information pertaining to a revocation of a medical licence, a criminal conviction or charge and/or other relevant information which puts into issue an applicant/candidate's satisfactory moral, ethical and/or professional standing, the Chair of the Credentials Committee shall appoint a subcommittee made up of no less than three members of the Credentials Committee (the Subcommittee) to investigate and review the matter. Upon completion of its investigation and review, the Subcommittee may refuse to grant eligibility, suspend a candidate's eligibility or revoke a candidate's eligibility. Prior to refusing to grant eligibility or to suspending or revoking a candidate's eligibility, the Subcommittee shall disclose to the applicant/candidate the nature of the information received and allow the applicant/candidate an opportunity to provide information and make submissions as to his/her satisfactory moral, ethical and/or professional standing. The decision of the Subcommittee is subject to review only in accordance with the reconsideration and appeal processes provided for at section 5.5 and section 5.6 herein.
- 3.3 Satisfactory Completion of Postgraduate Medical Education**
Eligibility for the examinations leading to Royal College certification requires satisfactory completion of all requirements of postgraduate medical education as defined in the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements, in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College.

SECTION IV – POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

PART A – RESIDENCY EDUCATION

4.1 Residency Education

4.1.1 Definition

The Royal College Credentials Unit classifies postgraduate clinical trainees in accredited Royal College/ACGME approved programs as **residents** if they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (i) the applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in the United States or Canada,
- (ii) the applicant is admitted to and enrolled in an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved residency program, the content of which is defined, supervised and evaluated by the residency program director and the residency program committee, and
- (iii) the applicant's postgraduate clinical training is in a specialty or subspecialty recognized by the Royal College.

4.1.2 Principles

- (i) Residency is characterized by increasing levels of independent decision-making on the part of the resident within the context of the supervision and counsel of the teaching staff who maintain ultimate responsibility for the professional services provided.
- (ii) The senior resident must report to and have direct access to the supervising staff physician in order to achieve senior responsibility.
- (iii) The residency program must develop and refine the resident's decision-making skills so that at completion of training the resident can function as an independent consultant in their chosen specialty/subspecialty.
- (iv) The residency requirements must be fulfilled in a progressive fashion to include senior responsibility.

4.2 Residency Training Requirements

4.2.1 Residency training requirements are subject to change. Normally, when amendments are made, an appropriate period is allowed to protect the interest of the resident who has already embarked on a program recognized by the Royal College. However, should a resident interrupt training, no assurance can be given that all training taken prior to the interruption will still be acceptable, even though previously recognized by the Royal College.

4.2.2 By the end of training, the resident must have achieved the objectives of the specialty/subspecialty, and must successfully meet the requirements of the CanMEDS competencies as they relate to their specialty/subspecialty. At any point during a resident's training, the Program Director with the approval of the Post Graduate Dean, has the authority to lengthen or change a resident's program if evaluations reveal that the resident is not meeting the specialty training requirements. For more information about CanMEDS and the specialty/subspecialty objectives of training, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

4.2.3 Applicants for Royal College certification in some specialties will be required to provide evidence that they have completed at least one (1) year of approved postgraduate basic clinical training. For basic clinical training, the Royal College Credentials Unit will normally accept: rotating, transitional, mixed or straight internships; residency training in family medicine; and/or basic clinical training that is integrated into specialty residency programs. The basic clinical training year is a mixed clinical educational experience incorporating rotations on a variety of settings, such as surgical, medical, pediatrics and ambulatory. For more information, please refer to the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

4.2.4 Overlap of Training Between Specialties

- a. The Royal College will accept overlapped training between specialties if the specialty training requirements of the disciplines allow it and the credit is recommended by the program directors. For example, in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics the fourth year of specialty training is often the first year of subspecialty training. This kind of overlapped training is allowed by the Credentials Unit if the residency training programs are taken consecutively.
- b. In the case where an applicant applies for a double-counting of credit when there has been a gap in training between two specialties, the Royal College reserves the right to withhold an application of credit for an overlapping year unless recommendations of credit from the program directors and post graduate deans of both specialties accompany the application and the corresponding Specialty Committees of the Royal College agree that the overlap of training can be granted.

4.3 **Modifications to Residency Training**

The Royal College understands that it may be necessary for some residents to modify their training due to personal circumstances described under applicable human rights legislation. The Royal College will support modifications that are necessary to prevent discrimination, except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the Royal College. Undue hardship includes, among other things, any compromise to the validity, reliability and/or integrity of the Royal College certification and examination process and outcome.

4.3.1 **Fractional (part-time) residency training**

- (iii) The program director and postgraduate dean must approve the resident's fractional training syllabus.
- (iv) The program director and postgraduate dean must certify that the supervision and assessment of the part-time resident is at least equivalent to that of other residents in the residency program and that the total educational experience is fully equivalent to normal full-time residency.

4.3.2 Waiver of training after a leave of absence from residency

Accommodation

The policy detailed in this Section 4.3.2 is subject to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) commitment to accommodate residents with personal circumstances enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, as provided in Sections 4.3 and 6.9 of this guide.

Policy on granting a leave of absence

The Royal College expects that all residents must have achieved the goals and objectives of the training program and be competent to commence independent practice by the completion of their training program. It is understood by the Royal College that residents may require leaves of absence from training. The circumstances that would qualify residents for leaves of absence are determined by the university. It is expected that any time lost during a leave will be made up upon the resident's return.

Policy on granting a waiver of training:

The postgraduate office may allow a waiver of training following a leave of absence, in accordance with university policy and within the maximum time for a waiver determined by the Royal College. A decision to grant a waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of the program but cannot be granted after the resident has taken the certification examinations. Similarly, the end-of-training date for a resident cannot be changed to an earlier date after the resident has taken the certification examinations.

Each university will develop its own policy on whether or not it is willing to grant a waiver of training for time taken as a leave of absence. However, in the case where waivers of training are acceptable to the university, they must be within the acceptable times listed below. In addition, regardless of any waived blocks of training, the decision to grant a waiver of training must be based on the assumption that the resident will have achieved the required level of competence by the end of the final year of training.

A waiver of training can only be granted by the postgraduate dean on the recommendation of the resident's program director.

The following are the maximum allowable times for waivers:

1. One year program – no waiver allowed
2. Less than one year for remediation or enhanced skills – no waiver allowed
3. Two year program – six weeks
4. Three year program – six weeks
5. Four year program – three months
6. Five year program – three months
7. Six year program – three months
8. In Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, where residents are undertaking three years of training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director, a maximum of six weeks may be waived for these three years of training. Subsequently, a maximum of six weeks of training may be waived in the following 2 years of training under the subspecialty Program Director. The process for these programs is as follows:

- i. Three years of training completed with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director followed by 2 or 3 years of subspecialty training with a different program director are treated separately for the purpose of the waiver of training.
- ii. A waiver must be recommended by the Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean on the Core in-Training Evaluation Report (CITER). A decision to grant a waiver is made in the PGY3 for a maximum duration of 6 weeks.
- iii. In the subspecialty years, a decision to grant a waiver is recommended in the final year by the Subspecialty Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean. A maximum 6 week waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of training.
- iv. If the resident undertakes three years of Internal Medicine or Pediatrics training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director at one university and switches to another university for subspecialty training, it is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Dean at the corresponding institution to approve the waiver of training. For example, if a resident does pediatric training at the University of Toronto and switches to pediatric nephrology at McGill, the Postgraduate Dean from Toronto would approve the six week waiver in pediatrics and the Postgraduate Dean from McGill would approve the six week waiver in pediatric nephrology.

4.3.3 Residents with Special Needs, Conditions or Disabilities Policy

- (i) The supervision of the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities must not be less than that of the other residents in the residency training program; the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities may require **more** supervision than that of the other residents if recommended by the Specialty Committee(s).
- (ii) All objectives considered essential to practice, as defined by the appropriate Specialty Committee(s), must be achieved by the resident with special needs, conditions or disabilities at the same level of competence as other residents.
- (iii) The evaluation methods used to assess objectives in the domains:
 - affected by the special need, condition or disability may be different from that applied to other residents in the residency training program,
 - not affected by the special need, condition or disability must be identical to all other residents in the residency training program.
- (iv) The Specialty Committee(s) may consult the Royal College Evaluation Committee for their recommendations regarding evaluation methods and assessment of residents with special needs, conditions or disabilities.

Procedures

- (v) The Royal College Credentials Unit must be notified **in advance** of any modified residency training.
- (vi) Where applicable, the Royal College may require a written verification by the treating physician of a resident, describing the special need, condition or disability, or other personal characteristic enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, and its potential impact on residency training and evaluation.
- (vii) The special need, condition or disability or other personal characteristic enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, must be verified, documented and considered valid by the program director, the postgraduate dean, the appropriate Specialty Committee(s) and the Royal College Credentials Unit.
- (viii) The modified residency program must be approved by the program director, the appropriate Specialty Committee(s) and the Royal College Credentials Unit.
- (ix) The program director must provide a syllabus for the applicant's entire residency program.

PART B – OTHER POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

At the discretion of the Royal College Credentials Unit, some credit may also be given for postgraduate medical education other than residency training.

4.4 Family Medicine Training

Training taken in Canadian programs accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) may be accepted for partial credit in some specialties.

4.5 Clinical or Basic Research

The guidelines for credit given towards meeting specialty training requirements for a research experience are available from the Royal College Office of Education, Credentials Unit. The advice and support of the residency program director must be sought **before** commencing the research experience.

Eligibility

- 4.5.1** Credit is only given at the discretion of the Royal College Credentials Committee:
 - (i) where the specialty training requirements permit,
 - (ii) where the specialty residency program director can provide assurance that the postgraduate clinical residency requirements can be reduced appropriately, and
 - (iii) if the research experience, in the judgment of the Royal College Credentials Unit, is of outstanding quality.
- 4.5.2** Credit will be considered if the research has been done in an academic centre:
 - (i) as part of a program in which research methodology is taught,
 - (ii) where the research supervisor or mentor has an established research record,

- (iii) when it is documented that the applicant had a significant role in the research project,
- (iv) when it is documented that the research is relevant to the specialty in which the applicant seeks certification, and
- (v) where there are defined objectives for the research experience and a formal evaluation process for the resident.

Conditions

4.5.3 Research conducted outside of a recognized residency or higher degree program in an approved university **may** be considered for a maximum of one (1) year of credit, in some specialties.

4.5.4 An advanced degree or full-time training in a relevant discipline taken before or after graduation in medicine can be considered for a maximum of one (1) year of credit in some specialties. Documentation of the advanced degree or full-time training must be provided, together with evidence that the study or research was relevant to the objectives of the specialty in which the candidate is seeking certification.

4.6 Electives

Eligibility

4.6.1 Electives taken in an unaccredited setting may be accepted towards specialty or subspecialty training requirements if **all** of the following conditions are met:

- (i) the resident must be enrolled in a recognized program at the time the elective is taken,
- (ii) the total duration of rotations taken at unaccredited sites must not exceed six (6) months of the total training for the specialty or subspecialty,
- (iii) the elective period is planned by the program director and the resident, which is then accepted by the program director as meeting the specialty training requirements,
- (iv) there is a clearly defined elective supervisor,
- (v) there are clearly defined and understood educational objectives, and
- (vi) there is a well defined in-training evaluation system to include evaluation of the resident during the elective period that is based on the educational objectives of the elective and that is clearly understood beforehand by the resident, the elective supervisor, and the program director.

4.7 Other Acceptable Postgraduate Clinical Training to meet Royal College Training Requirements

4.7.1 The Royal College Credentials Unit **may** recognize other postgraduate clinical training only if the trainee requires a single additional year of training in order to meet Royal College requirements. This training must take place at the site of an accredited Royal College/ACGME approved program and meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (i) the content of the postgraduate clinical training is the same as that of a Royal College accredited/ACGME approved residency program,

- (ii) the training is directed, evaluated and supervised in the same manner as a resident's training,
 - (iii) the program director is the same as that for the residency program, and
 - (iv) the applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in Canada or with the office of graduate medical education of a medical school in the United States.
- 4.7.2** Credit will not be given for postgraduate clinical training time spent in preceptorship practice except where defined in the specialty training requirements and within the definition as outlined in section 1.4.8.
- 4.7.3** Credit will not be given for postgraduate clinical training time spent in teaching positions.
- 4.7.4** Credit will not be given for training taken in disconnected periods in blocks of less than six months.

SECTION V – ROYAL COLLEGE RULINGS ON EXAMINATION ELIGIBILITY**General Information**

The attestation to the satisfactory completion of specialty or subspecialty residency training (e.g. CCT) does not alone ensure admission to the examinations leading to Royal College certification.

5.1 Issuing a Royal College Ruling Letter

- 5.1.1** When the preliminary assessment of training for eligibility to access the Royal College certification examination has been completed, the Royal College will issue a “ruling letter” on examination eligibility and/or conditions to be met to attain eligibility.
- 5.1.2** A successful Final In-Training Evaluation Report (FITER) is a criterion of eligibility to the Royal College certification examinations. The FITER must be completed by a Residency Program Director on behalf of the Residency Program Committee (RPC). It must be signed by the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean. Under exceptional circumstances, applicants who cannot obtain a FITER will be required to submit for approval a Comprehensive Competency Report (CCR) completed by a supervisor, a letter of attestation of competence (from supervisor or Chief of Staff) or a FITER-equivalent document.
- 5.1.3** Applicants who have **not met** the residency training requirements of the Royal College will be required to take further residency training in a program that is recognized and approved by the Royal College if they wish to be eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College Certification. A requirement for further residency training imposes no obligation on any residency program to provide such training.

5.2 Examination Eligibility Rulings

In order to be ruled eligible for the examinations leading to Royal College certification, an applicant must demonstrate that:

- (i) there is documentary evidence that skills essential to the practice of the specialty or subspecialty have been evaluated as satisfactory,
- (ii) the requirements for full specialty or subspecialty residency training including senior responsibility have been achieved,
- (iii) the professional and ethical standing of the applicant has been assessed as satisfactory,
- (iv) the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements have been completed satisfactorily, and
- (v) the policies and procedures for certification and fellowship have been followed.

5.3 Conditions Pertaining to Rulings

5.3.1 A ruling on training credit or eligibility for the examinations is only valid when it is signed by an executive officer of the Royal College.

5.3.2 A ruling is valid for:

- 3 years for certification examinations administered yearly (this includes Principles of Surgery examination)
- 5 years for certification examinations administered every second year (currently only Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology)

5.4 Review of a Ruling

5.4.1 A review of a ruling may be considered if substantive new information about credentials, training, or professional practice is received. New information may be received from the applicant or any other knowledgeable source and should be sent to the Executive Director of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College.

5.4.2 The request for a 'review' of a ruling will be considered by the appropriate Royal College credentialing body. The original ruling may be amended or reconfirmed with reasons given.

5.5 Reconsideration of a Ruling

Applicants may request a 'reconsideration' of a ruling if there was an error in the administration of policy or procedure in an applicant's assessment of training or practice. Applicants must follow this procedure:

- (i) the applicant must notify the Executive Director of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College by registered or certified mail within 60 working days of the date of the ruling, with a clear written statement outlining the ways in which policies or procedures were improperly applied,
- (ii) the reconsideration request must be submitted with a non-refundable fee (see Royal College website for current fees),
- (iii) the applicant will be notified in writing by the Royal College that the request for reconsideration of a ruling has been received, and
- (iv) the request for a 'reconsideration' of a ruling will be considered by the appropriate Royal College credentialing body. The Royal College may amend the original ruling or reconfirm it with reasons given.

5.6 Appeal of a Decision on a Royal College Ruling Policy

5.6.1 The 'appeal of a decision' on a Royal College ruling will be conducted by a panel of three (3) members of the Royal College Credentials Committee designated by the Executive Director of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College.

5.6.2 The criteria for membership on the appeal panel would include knowledge of credentialing. If a conflict of interest exists or any other impediment, the Executive Director of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College will appoint appeal panel members from outside of the Royal College Credentials Committee.

5.6.3 Appeals of a Royal College ruling are not intended for a review of a ruling on the grounds of substantive new information about credentials, training, or professional practice. Refer to Section 5.4 "Review of a Ruling" for the review process. On the other hand, if there was a misapplication of policy in an assessment of training, an applicant may appeal the decision on a Royal College ruling. In determining whether the decision on a Royal College ruling conformed with Royal College policies and procedures, the appeal panel will consider all the information that was available to the Royal College in reaching its decision, including the applicant's statement of misapplication of policy.

5.6.4 The appeal panel may amend or reconfirm the Royal College ruling.

5.6.5 There is no provision for further appeal to the Royal College of the decision of the appeal panel, which are considered final.

Procedures

5.6.6 An applicant who wishes to 'appeal' a decision on a Royal College ruling must notify the Executive Director of the Office of Specialty Education of the Royal College by registered or certified mail within 30 working days of the date of their final ruling, with a written statement of the reasons for the request. The appeal request must be submitted with a non-refundable fee (see Royal College website for current fees).

5.7 Withdrawal of Examination Eligibility

5.7.1 The Royal College retains the authority to withdraw acceptance of an applicant's credentials or withdraw permission to access the examinations leading to Royal College certification on the recommendation of an Examination Board, the Royal College Credentials Unit, or the applicant's program director.

5.7.2 The Royal College may require that the applicant satisfy specific requirements as a condition of accessing the examination leading to Royal College certification.

5.7.3 If a candidate performs poorly on a Royal College examination, the Royal College may require the candidate to undergo a study plan and/or additional training before regaining eligibility to repeat the examination leading to Royal College certification.

5.7.4 Withdrawal of a satisfactory CCT or FITER form, or questionnaire attestation will result in withdrawal of examination eligibility.

5.8 Renewal of Examination Eligibility

5.8.1 A candidate whose eligibility for the examinations leading to Royal College certification has expired after three (3) years through failure on the examinations or through failure to appear at the examinations or who are in the category of severe fail may be required to satisfactorily complete a study plan and/or an additional six (6) months of residency in order to regain examination eligibility.

5.8.2 Application for the renewal of eligibility must be made by the deadline in the year before the candidate hopes to be examined.

5.8.3 The Credentials Unit retains the authority to deny a candidate the option of doing a study plan and grant him or her eligibility conditional upon successful completion of one six (6) month block of broad-based senior residency in the specialty.

5.8.4 If a candidate reaches a point where they have not passed the examination after completion of one study plan and one six (6) month period of additional training in the specialty, no further eligibility for the specialty examination will be granted.

5.8.5 Under exceptional circumstances, a candidate who has completed a study plan and additional training and has not passed the examination, may be eligible for a final attempt at the examination. Eligibility for this final attempt may be contingent upon completion of a further two years (minimum) of accredited residency training with a successful FITER at the conclusion of the training. The Credentials Committee may, in its sole and absolute discretion, deny any further eligibility for the certification examinations regardless of a candidate's completion of any further study plans and/or training. The Credentials Committee's decision in this regard shall be final, subject only to the rights of appeal herein (see Section 5.6).

- 5.8.6 A renewal of eligibility is valid only for the examination session in the year following the granting of the renewal.

5.9 Study Plan criteria to regain eligibility to the certification examinations

- 5.9.1 A study plan must be a minimum of six months.
- 5.9.2 A study plan must be completed in the six months before the examination is held.
- 5.9.3 A candidate must engage the assistance of a mentor, who must:
- be a Fellow of the Royal College in the same specialty as the candidate
 - assist the candidate in developing a study plan
 - attest in writing to the Credentials Unit of the Royal College that they agree to be the candidate's mentor
 - monitor the progress of the study plan
 - attest to the successful completion of the study plan by the deadline.
- 5.9.4 Study plans are a minimum of 6 months duration, and must include 6 out of the 8 tools listed below, with the exception of Surgical Foundations (see 5.10.5).
- Practice short answer examination questions (SAQs)
 - Practice oral and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs)
 - Discipline-specific preparatory courses for examinations
 - Detailed sessions set up with mentors to discuss the history/physical treatment plan for specific patients
 - Participation in Grand Rounds
 - Participation in study groups with final year residents in your specialty who are preparing for the Royal College examination
 - If written communication skills are an issue, participation in a medical writing course
 - If oral communication is an issue, completion of a relevant course
- 5.9.5 Study plans for Surgical Foundations must be a minimum of 6 months duration and include a minimum of 7 of the 10 tools listed below:
- Schwartz's Principles of Surgery, 9e
 - Schwartz's test questions
 - Online surgical foundation review lectures (given by Canadian universities)
 - Participation in Grand Rounds
 - Practice short answer examination questions (SAQs)
 - Practice oral and objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs)
 - Discipline-specific preparatory courses for examinations
 - Detailed sessions set up with mentors to discuss the history/physical treatment plan for specific patients
 - If written communication skills are an issue, participation in a medical writing course
 - If oral communication is an issue, completion of a relevant course
- 5.9.6 The deadline for the mentor to submit the form that attests that the candidate has successfully completed the study plan is March 1 for the specialty examinations of the same year and August 15 for the subspecialty examinations of the same year.
- 5.9.7 In order for a study plan to be considered complete, the candidate must register for the exam.
- 5.9.8 If the candidate does not complete the study plan, the candidate must restart the process and resubmit a study plan for the following

examination session. However, this can only be done one time. After the second year of a study plan, the candidate must write the examination or the attempt is lost. The candidate will then be required to complete additional training to regain eligibility.

5.10 Additional training criteria to regain eligibility to the certification examinations

- 5.10.1** All training plans must be sent to the Royal College for approval prior to commencing any additional training. The goal of an additional training plan is to optimize the principles of competencies. The supervisor and the candidate work together to tailor the training plan to address the candidate's needs and areas of weakness, to allow for the best chance of success at the examination.
- 5.10.2** At the conclusion of the training program, an agreed-upon period of time prior to the examination is to be used as protected time for final preparation. During that time, it is recommended that the candidate be relieved of all clinical duties.
- 5.10.3** If a candidate is required to successfully complete additional training to regain eligibility to the certification examinations under the circumstances outlined in sections 5.8 and 5.9, they must demonstrate that they meet all in the requirements listed below in either category A or category B

Category A

- the training takes place in an approved university setting including distributed sites, or under the auspices of a Canadian PGME office
- the institution where the training takes place must have a Royal College accredited program in the candidate's specialty
- the applicant must be registered at a Royal College-approved university setting including distributed sites.
- the Royal College, in consultation with the program director, postgraduate dean, or approved supervisor, will be responsible to: determine the length of the program (minimum 6 months in duration); ensure that the program carries the same duties as that of a final year resident in the specialty; ensure that the program adheres to the Royal College Specialty Training Requirements.
- the training plan must be sufficiently broad to cover the breadth of the specialty but also include focus on areas of weakness as identified by the candidate and program director
- the program director overseeing the training must be the same as for the accredited residency program
- candidates registered as a resident with the postgraduate office of a university will receive a Confirmation of Completion of Training form and a Final In-Training Evaluation Report or submit an attestation indicating that the candidate has successfully completed the training and is deemed to be ready for unsupervised practice.
- All training plans must be submitted to the Royal College for approval prior to training commencing.

Category B

- The training is taken in a non-accredited training site or in the community setting
- The training plan must be a minimum of 6 months and must be submitted to the Royal College for approval prior to the start of the training.
- The proposed training must follow and include all applicable components that are set out in the Guidelines for an Acceptable Training Plan.
- In a non-accredited or community setting, the approved supervisor must sign a letter of attestation indicating that the candidate has successfully completed the training and is deemed to be ready for unsupervised practice.
- The supervisor must meet the following criteria:
 - Supervisors must have a valid license and be practicing independently.
 - Supervisors must be practicing at the same site in the same city in which the training is taking place.
 - Supervisors must be certified by the Royal College.
 - Supervisors must be in practice in the same specialty or subspecialty, as appropriate, as the candidate.
 - Supervisors must be experienced in, or willing to learn about, the education and assessment of practicing physicians.
 - Supervisors must be able to provide constructive and honest feedback to the physician and the Royal College.
 - Supervisors must possess a strong sense of professional responsibility and commitment to the training of the physician and to their future patients.
 - Supervisors must be active in the Maintenance of Certification Program.
 - Supervisors must be willing to comply with all terms of the Royal College agreement.

5.10.4 Responsibilities of a Supervisor

- Supervisors must verify that patient care provided by the physician meets the expectations of the highest standard of care mandated by the Royal College.
- Supervisors must be able to provide direct and immediate feedback to the physician.
- Supervisors must report immediately to the Royal College as well as their Medical Regulatory Authority, any and all demonstrations of unsafe or dangerous practices by the physician.
- Supervisors must report immediately to the Royal College any and all apparent breaches by the physician of his or her obligations to the Royal College.
- Supervisors should be aware of real or perceived biases in the relationship with the physician in training. Supervisors should not be an immediate family member nor hold a close personal relationship or business relationship with the physician, or be on the Royal College examination board.

- Supervisors must provide an attestation and report with confidence that the physician is ready for the exams, is ready for unsupervised practice and has completed all components in the agreed-upon training plan with the Royal College.
- Supervisors must be willing to report on the physician's performance at least every 2 months.

5.10.5 Guidelines for an acceptable training plan

Direct observation of patient encounter at facility

Clinical Supervision/Assessment

- Observation in clinic visits
- Observation of leading healthcare teams
- Case discussions of patients seen
- Review of medical charts
- Review of adverse cases
- Chart stimulated recall
- Review of clinic patients
- Random cases deemed worthy of discussion should be discussed.
- Operating Room assessment (if applicable). A supervisor will scrub in with the candidate to observe the candidate's surgical skills in the operating room.

Oral examination and case discussions

There should be discussions of cases deemed difficult or worthy of discussion, in person with one of the supervisors throughout the month. These discussions should take place in the oral examination style.

Study plan

The supervisor and candidate should create a reading plan focused on core materials that will prepare the candidate to write the exams.

Educational program

It is highly recommended that the candidate include participation in the following activities as part of the training program:

- academic half days and academic rounds
- formal exam preparatory courses
- grand rounds
- Royal College Maintenance of Certification Program

OSCE Practice Sessions

A suggested part of this training program is for the candidate to join in the OSCE practice sessions given to the senior residents of the relevant specialty, or a similar activity.

Final Assessment

The final assessment will be done by all of the supervisors/mentors. The final attestation or assessment form will be completed by one supervisor and signed off after the team members all agree.

Periodic Updates

A log of educational encounters and activities will be kept and will be made available for verification at any time. The College may make periodic contact with the supervisor by phone or mail as it finds necessary. An update of activities will be provided to the College every two months along with feedback on how the candidate is progressing.

5.11 Deferral of examination eligibility

5.11.1 In the event that the candidate misses an examination due to a serious accident, illness or other impediment the Royal College will consider deferral of examination eligibility for one year. In practice, this will provide the candidate with one additional year of eligibility.

Note: Deferrals will only be granted in exceptional situations. Deferrals will generally not be granted for missed flights and other travel delays, minor illness, lack of preparedness or scheduling conflicts.

5.11.2 Candidates who know in advance of the examination that it will be missed should contact the Royal College to request a deferral as early as possible.

5.11.3 Candidates who miss an examination unexpectedly must submit a request for deferral within five business days of the missed examination date.

5.11.4 All requests for deferral must include the following documentation:

1. A written request for deferral and a detailed description of the circumstances leading to the request, signed by the candidate;
2. In the case of serious accident or illness, an original letter, on office letterhead, from the candidate's qualified treating professional identifying and confirming the accident or illness, together with verification that the accident or illness was serious enough to warrant missing the examination; and,
3. In the case of any other impediment, appropriate documentation, from a source with direct involvement or knowledge of the circumstances in question.

Note: The Royal College may request additional information and/or confirmation, as it considers necessary on a case by case basis.

- 5.11.5 The final decision regarding a request for deferral lies with the Associate Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.

SECTION VI – ROYAL COLLEGE EXAMINATIONS**General Information**

In the context of a candidate preparing for the Royal College examination, the Royal College does not provide or endorse any preparatory courses, syllabi or reading lists. The candidate should seek the advice of the program director for examination preparation.

6.1 Surgical Foundations Examination

6.1.1 In the surgical specialties of Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Plastic Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery, candidates must successfully complete the Surgical Foundations examination to attain eligibility for any examination in the relevant surgical specialty.

6.1.2 The Surgical Foundations examination is held annually in the spring and examination dates are set on a yearly basis. A ruling for the Surgical Foundations examination is valid for three years as noted under section 5.3. For more information about the registration deadline, examination dates, sites and format for the Surgical Foundations examination, please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.

6.2 Examinations in Accreditation without Certification (AWC) disciplines that convert to subspecialty with examination

6.2.1 All graduates of Royal College accredited AWC programs that convert to subspecialty with examination are eligible to take the certification examinations starting with the first set of examinations offered. Eligibility to the certification examinations is contingent upon the applicant's successful completion of an approved primary entry specialty residency for the discipline (e.g. Maternal Fetal Medicine applicants must have completed an accredited or approved Royal College residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology).

6.2.2 All graduates of ACGME or other approved programs in disciplines that convert from an AWC to a subspecialty with examination are eligible to take the certification examinations if the program was approved subsequent to the recognition of the subspecialty as an Accreditation Without Certification program by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

6.2.3 Eligibility for all of these applicants is contingent upon fulfilling all the requirements outlined in the "Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship" and the Specialty Training Requirements of the subspecialty, as with all other disciplines.

6.2.4 If a graduate of an AWC program that has converted to certification with examination chooses to challenge the certifying examinations and fails, the physician maintains their AWC status with the Royal College.

6.3 Examination Registration

6.3.1 Residents who intend to register for the examination leading to Royal College certification must have:

- (i) applied for assessment of credentials/training, and
- (ii) received from the Royal College an official ruling letter confirming their eligibility for the examination.

- 6.3.2** Registration forms for the examination are sent, on request, only to those who have been ruled eligible for the examination in their specialty or subspecialty.
- 6.3.3** Residents who have applied for assessment of credentials/training and who are ruled eligible for the next examination session will receive information about the examination with their official ruling letter. More specific information on rulings is outlined in Section V "Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility" of this guide.
- 6.4 Deadline for Examination Registration**
- 6.4.1** The registration deadlines for each respective specialty and subspecialty are available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca
- 6.4.2** The "registration deadline" is the last day for receipt by the Royal College of the registration form for the examination leading to Royal College certification.
- 6.5 Examination Dates**
- 6.5.1** Examination dates are subject to change without notice. Please refer to the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca to obtain the official examination dates.
- 6.6 Examination Sites**
- 6.6.1** Examinations, including the Principles of Surgery examination, **may** be held in various centres across Canada. Candidates will be notified of the site(s) where the examination(s) will occur when candidates receive the Royal College examination form.
- 6.7 Examination Format**
- 6.7.1** The Royal College examination incorporates combined written and oral components that may include one or more short answer written papers and/or multiple choice questions, oral, clinical, practical or other examination components.
- 6.7.2** Information about the examination format of each specialty and subspecialty is available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 6.7.3** Candidates are notified as soon as possible of changes in the examination format or timing approved by the Royal College Evaluation Committee.
- 6.8 End of Training Dates Relative to Examination Dates**
- 6.8.1** Applicants who are expected to complete full residency training by February 28 may appear at the final examinations of the previous fall. Applicants who will complete full residency training by December 31 may appear at the spring final examinations of that year.
- 6.8.2** Changes to these deadlines may only be made in exceptional circumstances, such as the accommodation of a resident under Section 4.3 or 6.9 of this guide, and only with the prior consent of the Royal College Credentials Unit, the program director and the postgraduate dean.
- 6.8.3** If a resident's training is off cycle and/or changes universities in the final year of training, the program director may not be able to attest to

confirmation of completion of training before the examination registration deadline. In such a case, examination eligibility will be deferred to the following year.

6.9 Candidates requiring Special Accommodations,

6.9.1 The Royal College will attempt to accommodate candidates with specific requirements for the examination provided that the validity of the examination is maintained and the accommodation does not cause undue hardship or unreasonable expense for the Royal College.

6.9.2 Requests for examination accommodation must be submitted to the Royal College at the time of application for the examination. Requests must include the following documentation:

- a description of the candidate's accommodation and its severity;
- a description of the candidate's functional limitations as a result of the accommodation
- any previously provided similar accommodations by their university or other medical education programs;
- supporting documentation from a qualified treating professional appropriate for evaluating the accommodation, including:
 - confirmation of the candidate's accommodation, its severity, and the candidates' functional limitations; and,
 - specific recommendations for testing accommodations.

Note: The Royal College may request additional information, as it considers necessary, on a case by case basis.

6.9.3 In the event that the need for an examination accommodation arises after the application for examination is submitted, the candidate must inform the Manager of Credentials, The McLaughlin Centre for Evaluation, and submit the documentation described in section 6.9.2, as soon as possible. It may not be possible to arrange examination accommodations requested too close to the examination date.

6.9.4 The final decision regarding an accommodation request lies with the Associate Director of Assessment, Office of Specialty Education or a delegate.

6.9.5 Prior to taking the Royal College examination, the candidate and the Royal College must confirm special arrangements in writing.

6.10 Language of Examinations

6.10.1 The Royal College examinations are offered in both English and French.

6.10.2 Candidates must indicate at the time of registration for the examinations whether they wish to be examined in the English or French language.

6.10.3 Candidates whose first language is not English or French should ensure that they have reasonable fluency, written and oral, in either English or French.

6.11 Decisions of Royal College Examination Boards

6.11.1 The Royal College Examination Boards are empowered by the Royal College Evaluation Committee and by the Council of the Royal College to make final decisions on the examinations of all candidates, following procedures approved by the Royal College Evaluation Committee and Council of the Royal College.

SECTION VII – INTERNATIONAL TRAINING (NON-ROYAL COLLEGE ACCREDITED/NON-ACGME APPROVED)

General Information

By resolution of Council, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) has discontinued the process of assessing Postgraduate Medical Education systems (PGME) for International Medical Graduate (IMG) applicants seeking Royal College Certification.

Therefore, the Royal College will not process any application for credit for training in International PGME Systems not listed on the Royal College website at www.royalcollege.ca.

The requirements stated below are in addition to all other policies and procedures outlined in this guide. Non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved trained applicants must fulfil all other requirements as stated in Sections II, III, IV, V, and VI of this guide, in addition to meeting the prerequisites stated in this section.

Residency training from non-Royal College accredited/non-ACGME approved systems listed on the website does not confer eligibility to the Royal College examinations. The Royal College must conduct an in-depth evaluation of training in order to determine an applicant's eligibility to the Royal College examinations.

7.1 Individual In-Depth Assessment of Training for acceptable systems

7.1.1 Criteria for Individual In-Depth Assessment of Training

- (i) The applicant's training must satisfy all of the Royal College postgraduate medical education requirements in the specialty as detailed in the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements available on the Royal College website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- (ii) The applicant must meet **all** other requirements for examination eligibility as outlined in Sections II, III, IV and V of this guide.

7.1.2 Procedures for In-depth Assessment

- (i) Applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable assessment fee. For assessment fees please consult the website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- (ii) Once the in-depth assessment of training has been completed, applicants will receive a "ruling letter" on examination eligibility and/or conditions to be met to attain eligibility. More specific information on rulings is outlined in Section V of this guide 'Royal College Rulings on Examination Eligibility'.

SECTION VIII – APPLICATION FOR RECOGNITION OF AN AREA OF FOCUSED COMPETENCE (DIPLOMA)

General Information

An area of focused competence (diploma) program is a highly specialized discipline of specialty medicine that addresses a legitimate societal need, but does not meet the Royal College criteria for a specialty, foundation program, or subspecialty. Normally, AFCs (diplomas) represent either a) *supplemental* competencies that enhance the practice of physicians in an existing discipline, or b) a *highly specific and narrow* scope of practice that does not meet the criteria of a subspecialty. In both scenarios, AFCs (diplomas) do not prepare a physician for practice, but rather recognize areas of supplemental or advanced training.

8.1 Eligibility Criteria

8.1.1 Applicants must have medical degree qualifications acceptable to the Royal College to enter an Area of Focused Competence program (diploma). The Royal College recognizes qualifications from medical schools that grant the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) and:

- (i) are accredited by the CACMS or the LCME, or
- (ii) are recognized by the WHO listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
- (iii) **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable.

8.1.2 Applicants with qualifications from medical schools in countries other than Canada and the United States of America may be required to provide the Royal College with information concerning the curriculum of their undergraduate medical experience.

8.2 Entry criteria for individual AFC programs

There are 4 types of eligibility, based on the entry criteria of individual programs as outlined by the specialty committee in the Competency Training Requirements (CTR):

- (i) Primary specialty prerequisite (link to list of Royal College specialties);
- (ii) Subspecialty prerequisite (link to list of Royal College subspecialties);
- (iii) Conjoint programs with the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) (entry limited to those with Royal College or CFPC certification);
- (iv) Non-clinical programs such as clinician educator, medical administration, or patient safety (entry limited to those with the "MD" designation).