



## **Policies for Certification for Competence by Design Disciplines**

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**April 2017**

**The Royal College reserves the right to change these regulations  
at any time.**

<b>Policy :</b>	Policies for Certification for Competence by Design Disciplines
<b>Date approved:</b>	
<b>Section:</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	Competency By Design
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<b>Approved by:</b>	Credentials Committee

**OBJECTIVE**

Certification in a specialty or subspecialty will be granted upon the satisfactory completion of all credentials, training, examination requirements, Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs), milestones, competencies and other in training requirements. Royal College certification confirms that specialist physicians and surgeons have met the Royal College standards and competency training requirements.

**POLICY**

This policy is intended for residents completing a Royal College accredited training program in Canada, under a Competence by Design model seeking Royal College Certification in an approved discipline.

Royal College Certification is granted upon successful documentation of achievement of all discipline specific EPAs, milestones, competencies and other training requirements and success at the Royal College examination.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Competence**

Competence is the array of abilities across multiple domains or aspects of physician performance. Competence is both conditional on, and constrained by, each physician’s practice context, is dynamic and continually changes over time.

**Competence by Design (CBD)**

Competence by Design (CBD) is the Royal College’s multi-year transformational change initiative aimed at implementing a CBME approach to residency training and specialty practice in Canada, which focuses on outcomes that are based on a framework of competence.

**Competence Committee**

A Competence Committee (CC) is responsible for assessing the progress of trainees in achieving the specialty-specific requirements of a program. These requirements are established for each stage of training, based on design of Competence by Design (CBD).

**Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA)**

EPAs are “units of professional practice”, that are built of tasks and abilities. Once sufficient competence is achieved, these tasks are “entrusted to the unsupervised execution by a trainee”. EPAs can be completed independently and are to be observed and measured (in both process and outcomes) for use in entrustment decisions (ten Cate, 2013).

- Typically, each EPA integrates multiple milestones
- EPAs are used for assessment

### **Milestone**

A milestone is the expected ability of a health care professional at a stage of expertise. CanMEDS milestones illustrate the expected progression of competence from novice to mastery associated with each enabling CanMEDS competency. Each milestone is an observable marker of a person's ability along a developmental continuum. In the context of CBD, milestones are used for planning, teaching and assessment.

- Milestones are used for planning and teaching
- EPAs are made up of milestones

### **Mainport ePortfolio (resident prototype)**

The ePortfolio provides evidence of a physician's development and maintenance of competence from residency until retirement. It tracks the learner's progress as he or she meets milestones and develops competencies, and it identifies assessment strategies to evaluate the performance of Royal College Entrustable Professional Activities (RC EPAs).

### **Work Based Assessment**

Work Based Assessment focuses on having frontline clinical observers document authentic observations in the workplace on a regular basis

### **Royal College Entrustable Professional Activity (RC EPA)**

"RC EPA" is used to distinguish the Royal College's unique utilization of the concept of an EPA. RC EPAs refer to the tasks of a discipline that may be delegated to a trainee once competence in that task has been demonstrated. An RC EPA is linked to a specific stage of the competence continuum and integrates multiple CanMEDS milestones from various CanMEDS Roles relevant to that stage. As resident's progress through the stages, the RC EPAs become progressively more complex reflecting the resident's achievement of more complex milestones. Royal College EPAs allow for authentic, work-based assessment that is targeted at the daily tasks of physicians. Within CBD, RC EPAs are used for overall assessment. Teachers can observe (directly or indirectly) and assess these activities in the workplace.

### **Stages**

In the Competence by Design (CBD) model, residency has four stages:

- Transition to Discipline (orientation and assessment)
- Foundations of Discipline
- Core of Discipline
- Transition to Practice

### **Training Experiences**

A training experience replaces the 'rotation' in the traditional residency education model. Training experiences include both mandatory and recommended training activities, which support a resident's acquisition of competence. These activities can include, for example: clinical care such as inpatient care, ambulatory clinics, performing technical procedures; or extra-clinical activities (e.g. simulation exercises, scholarly projects, journal clubs, etc.).

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Competence Committee**

With Competence by Design (CBD), we introduce the important concept of a Competence Committee. The Competence Committee makes decisions and recommendations to the Resident Program Committee (RPC) and Program Director using highly integrative data from multiple EPA and milestone observations, as well as feedback from clinical practice. A Competence Committee allows for an informed group decision-making process where patterns of performance can be collated to reveal a broad picture of a resident's progression toward competence

### **Units of the Office of Specialty Education**

The Credentials Unit of the Office of Specialty Education is responsible for the assessment of trainees for examination eligibility and Royal College Certification.

### **Clinical Supervisor**

The clinical supervisor oversees the trainee for a specific milestone or milestones. He or she approves the documented evidence for the milestones that he/she supervised.

### **Postgraduate Dean**

The Postgraduate Dean attests that the trainee has acquired all the competencies.

### **Program Director**

The Program Director guides learning, meets with learners regularly, assigns EPAs to observers and reviews/monitors a learners progress using technology. The Program Director attests that the trainee has acquired all the competencies.

### **Observer**

The observer supports learning, contributes to the narrative and reviews evidence.

### **Contact Information**

For further information, to request an application for assessment of training for examination eligibility, or to obtain Discipline Competencies and Training Experiences, please contact the Office of Specialty Education at:

### **The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada**

Office of Specialty Education - Credentials Unit  
774 Echo Drive  
Ottawa, ON  
K1S 5N8  
Canada

Telephone: (613) 730-8191  
Toll Free: 1 (800) 668-3740  
Extension: 7750  
Fax: (613) 730-3707  
E-mail: [credentials@royalcollege.ca](mailto:credentials@royalcollege.ca)  
Website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca)

## **SECTION I – GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Royal College *Policies for Certification for Competence by Design disciplines* outlines the requirements leading to eligibility for certification by the Royal College for disciplines that have converted to Competence by Design. Disciplines that have not converted to Competence by Design will be guided by the *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship (January 2016 edition)*.

The Royal College credentialing process verifies that a physician has met all the requirements necessary for Royal College certification.

### **1.2 Stages of Training – (Competence Continuum)**

The CBD Competence Continuum is a series of integrated stages which begin upon entry into a discipline specific residency training program. Residents will transition through the stages of training upon attestation by the Program Director, and Postgraduate Dean, in consultation with the Competence Committee and Residency Program Committee.

- *Transition to discipline*  
This stage emphasizes the orientation and assessment of new trainees arriving from different medical schools and programs.
- *Foundations of discipline*  
This stage covers broad based competencies that every trainee must acquire before moving on to more advanced discipline specific competencies.
- *Core of discipline*  
This stage covers the core competencies that make up the majority of the discipline
- *Royal College examination*  
Residents will appear for the written and/or applied component of the Royal College examination during the core of discipline stage and the transition to practice stage
- *Transition to practice*  
In this stage the senior trainee should demonstrate readiness to make the transition to independent practice.

### **1.3 Royal College Eligibility for Certification**

The following represents the basic requirements for achieving Royal College certification:

- The applicant has obtained a medical qualification acceptable to the Royal College, and has registered with the Royal College at the start of training.
- The applicant has trained in an accredited Royal College residency program
- The applicant has demonstrated competence in the required discipline specific milestones, as demonstrated through achievement of the Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) described by the discipline.

- The applicant has successfully completed all examination requirements.
- Competence in the discipline has been attested to by a Program Director and Postgraduate Dean, in consultation with a Competence Committee and Residency Program Committee (RPC), or another approved supervision structure

**Note:** Success at the Royal College examination does not confer Certification.

## SECTION II – APPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING

### 2.1 Applications for Assessment of Training (Credentialing)

All applicants for examinations and certification must be assessed by the Royal College. The 'Application for Assessment of Canadian Residency Training' is available by download (PDF format) on the Royal College website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca).

**Please note that the submission of a Royal College 'Application for Assessment of Canadian Residency Training' does not guarantee that the Royal College will recognize the applicant's postgraduate medical education.**

#### 2.1.1 Eligibility Criteria

A Royal College 'Application for Assessment of Canadian Residency Training' should only be completed by those who can document that they are a current resident or graduate of a specialty or subspecialty residency program accredited by the Royal College.

#### 2.1.2 Application Documentation

- Applicants are responsible to register with the Royal College.
- Applicants are responsible to ensure correct contact details at all times.
- Evidence of completion of all elements of the discipline specific EPAs, milestones, competencies and other training requirements within their portfolio and verified by the appropriate authorities of all credentials
- All documents and information obtained by the Royal College during the course of an assessment of training will remain confidential. Applicants are requested to provide 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](http://www.royalcollege.ca) for an explanation of how personal information is managed.

#### 2.1.3 Assessment Fees

- Assessment fees are non-refundable and must accompany an application for assessment of Canadian residency training. To obtain an assessment fee schedule please refer to the Royal College website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca).
- The assessment fees cover the cost of assessment services for as long as the applicant is continuously enrolled as a resident in an accredited Royal College 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.
- Assessment fees are reviewed annually by the Royal College and are subject to change.
  - *Additional fees* will be charged for the assessment of training for the examinations in a second or subsequent discipline.

#### **2.1.4 Application Deadlines**

- To find out the discipline specific deadline dates by which the completed assessment of Canadian residency training form must be received by the Royal College Credentials Unit, please refer to the Royal College website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca)
- All applications for assessment of Canadian residency 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.

#### **2.1.5 Penalty Fees**

- Applications received 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.

### **2.2 Privacy Policy**

Under the Royal College General Privacy Statement, individuals have the right to access information stored in their personal files. To access your personal information, forward a written request to the Royal College Credentials Unit at [credentials@royalcollege.ca](mailto:credentials@royalcollege.ca). For more information, please refer to the General Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca)

The Royal College requires a candidate's written consent whenever personal information is collected and/or disclosed to appropriate parties. For more information, please refer to the Privacy Statement on the Royal College website: [www.royalcollege.ca](http://www.royalcollege.ca) or contact the Credentials Unit at [credentials@royalcollege.ca](mailto:credentials@royalcollege.ca)

### **2.3 Assessment of Medical Qualification**

#### **2.3.1 Medical Qualification Acceptable to the Royal College**

##### **a) Definition**

- 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.
- The Royal College defines the term "medicine" to include surgery and obstetrics, but does not include chiropractic, homeopathy, osteopathy, podiatry, stomatology, or veterinary science.
- 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.

##### **b) Eligibility**

- The Royal College recognizes qualifications from medical schools that grant the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) and:
  - Are accredited by the CACMS or the LCME, or



- Are recognized by the WHO listing of programs through FAIMER at <https://imed.faimer.org/>.
- **ONLY** DO's recognized by the American Osteopathic Association are acceptable
- 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:
  - The MCCEE
  - The MCCQE, Parts I and II, or
  - The United States Medical Licensing Examination, Parts I, II and III.

## **SECTION III: POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**

### **3.1 Residency Education**

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

- The applicant is registered with the Royal College
- The applicant is registered with the office of postgraduate medical education of a medical school in Canada,
- The applicant is admitted to and enrolled in an accredited Royal College residency program, the content of which is defined, supervised and assessed by the residency Program Director and the Residency Program Committee, informed by a Competence Committee, and
- The applicant's postgraduate clinical training is in a discipline, recognized by the Royal College.

#### **3.1.1 Residency Training Requirements**

The standards for residency training are outlined in the discipline specific Competencies, Training Experiences and in the Work Based Assessment portfolio of EPAs. Progress in training is observed by clinical supervisors, and reviewed by the program's Competence Committee which makes recommendations to the Program Director about the achievement of EPAs, milestones, competencies and other training requirements.

EPAs and milestones 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, 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. Following leave, trainees must be reassessed on their performance on their most recent stages of training which allows the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean to determine if any adjustments to the training program are required.

By the end of training, the resident must have demonstrated the discipline specific EPAs, milestones, competencies and other training requirements and progress through the Transition to Practice stage of training.

#### **3.1.2 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.

**a) Part-time Residency Training**

- (i) The program director and postgraduate dean must approve the resident's part-time 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.

**b) Policy on granting a waiver of training:**

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. 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 competencies, as assessed by achieved EPAs.

**c) Transferability of EPAs between Universities**

Required EPAs are the same for any discipline regardless of the university.

If a resident transfers to another university for training it is the responsibility of the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean of the leaving institution to identify to the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean of the accepting institution which EPAs and milestones have been achieved to date. It is the responsibility of the accepting Program Director and Postgraduate Dean to approve the achievement of any EPAs and milestones with respect to the EPAs that have been achieved.