



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

Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship

January 2010

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM JUNE 2009 TO JANUARY 2010

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 Committee 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.

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 RCPSC. 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 RCPSC certification:

- The applicant has obtained a medical qualification acceptable to the RCPSC (refer to Section III of this guide).
- The applicant has trained in an accredited RCPSC/ACGME approved program (refer to Section IV of this guide) or for non-RCPSC accredited/non-ACGME approved training, the applicant has trained in a postgraduate medical education system deemed acceptable by the RCPSC (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

Credentials Unit/Alternative Assessment Team – Extension: 7740

Fax: (613) 730-3707

E-mail: credentials@royalcollege.ca

Website: www.royalcollege.ca

Please note: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the RCPSC 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
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
MCC EE	- Medical Council of Canada Evaluating Examination
MCC QE	- Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination
MD	- Doctor of Medicine
RCPSC	- 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC Certification Examination

All applicants must have their residency training assessed by the RCPSC to ensure that the specialty specific training requirements have been met in a program that is recognized and approved by the RCPSC. 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 RCPSC/ACGME approved programs should refer to Section VII “International Training (non-RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca.

1.4.6 Objectives of Training and Specialty Training Requirements

Each specialty and subspecialty recognized by the RCPSC 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 RCPSC recognized specialties and subspecialties are available on the RCPSC website at www.royalcollege.ca

1.4.7 RCPSC Certification Examinations

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

1.4.8 Reciprocity

The RCPSC 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 RCPSC.

1.4.9 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 RCPSC has no jurisdiction over appointment to or promotion in residency programs, or residents' salaries.

1.4.10 Ruling

A ruling is a decision on examination eligibility only. Once the applicant's residency training has been assessed, the RCPSC will make a "ruling" (decision) on examination eligibility. The RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 "RCPSC Rulings on Examination Eligibility".

1.4.11 Specialist Certification

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

1.5 List of Specialties and Subspecialties Recognized by the RCPSC

The RCPSC currently recognizes 61 specialties and subspecialties.

Examinations leading to RCPSC certification are conducted in the following specialties and subspecialties:

SPECIALTIES

Anatomical Pathology	Neurology
Anesthesiology	Neuropathology
Cardiac Surgery	Neurosurgery
Community Medicine	Nuclear Medicine
Dermatology	Obstetrics and Gynecology
Diagnostic Radiology	Occupational Medicine*
Emergency Medicine	Ophthalmology
General Pathology	Orthopedic Surgery
General Surgery	Otolaryngology
Hematological Pathology	Pediatrics
Internal Medicine	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Medical Biochemistry	Plastic Surgery
Medical Genetics	Psychiatry
Medical Microbiology	Radiation Oncology
	Urology

**Primary specialty examination until 2011*

SUBSPECIALTIES**Subspecialties with Examination**

prior RCPSC certification in specialty of:

Adolescent Medicine**

Pediatrics

Cardiology

Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Psychiatry

Clinical Immunology and Allergy

Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Clinical Pharmacology***

Anesthesiology / Emergency Medicine / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics / Psychiatry

Colorectal Surgery*

General Surgery

Critical Care Medicine

Anesthesiology / Cardiac Surgery / Emergency Medicine / General Surgery / Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Endocrinology and Metabolism

Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Forensic Pathology**

Anatomical Pathology / General Pathology

Forensic Psychiatry

Psychiatry

Gastroenterology

Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

General Surgical Oncology*

General Surgery

Geriatric Medicine
Internal Medicine

Geriatric Psychiatry
Psychiatry

Gynecologic Oncology*
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Hematology
Internal Medicine

Infectious Diseases
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Medical Oncology
Internal Medicine

Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
Pediatrics

Nephrology
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Occupational Medicine
Internal Medicine

Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Emergency Medicine / Pediatrics

Pediatric General Surgery
General Surgery

Pediatric Hematology/Oncology***
Pediatrics

Respirology
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Rheumatology
Internal Medicine / Pediatrics

Thoracic Surgery
Cardiac Surgery / General Surgery

Vascular Surgery
Cardiac Surgery / General Surgery

* *AWC conversions with first examination taking place in 2009*

** *New subspecialties with first examination taking place in 2009*

*** *Examinations occur every two years*

In addition, the Royal College accredits residency programs in the following subspecialties for which examinations are not offered:

Accreditation Without Certification Subspecialties

prior RCPSC certification in specialty of:

Developmental Pediatrics
Pediatrics

Gynecologic Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility
Obstetrics & Gynecology

Neuroradiology
Diagnostic Radiology

Pediatric Radiology
Diagnostic Radiology

Transfusion Medicine

*Internal Medicine + Hematology or Pediatrics + Pediatric
Hematology/oncology or Hematological Pathology or
Anesthesiology or General Pathology*

Special Programs

Clinician Investigator Program

Palliative Medicine

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 RCPSC, must be assessed by the RCPSC. 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 RCPSC Credentials Unit (see contact information in Section I) or by download (PDF format) on the RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca. The specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements are also available on the RCPSC website.

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

2.1 Eligibility Criteria

An RCPSC '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 graduate of a medical school accredited by the CACMS or LCME in Canada or the LCME in the United States or,
- 2.1.2** a resident currently or previously enrolled in a specialty or subspecialty residency program accredited by the RCPSC or approved by the ACGME in the United States or,
- 2.1.3** a medical graduate who is practicing in Canada with a licence for independent practice or,
- 2.1.4** a medical graduate to whom a Canadian medical school has offered a faculty appointment or a residency position or,
- 2.1.5** a medical graduate to whom a medical position is offered and/or is under the sponsorship of a provincial regulatory authority.
- 2.1.6** Medical graduates who are seeking recognition of any training in a postgraduate medical education system outside of an accredited RCPSC/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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC during the course of an assessment of training become the property of the RCPSC 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 RCPSC General Privacy Statement. Please refer to the Privacy Statement on the RCPSC

website: www.royalcollege.ca for an explanation of how personal information is managed.

- 2.2.5** Under the RCPSC 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 RCPSC Privacy Coordinator 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 RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca for more information.
- 2.2.6** The RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC '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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 2.4.2** The assessment fee for RCPSC/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 RCPSC/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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC Credentials Unit, please refer to the RCPSC 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 of \$500 in Canadian funds, 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 of \$1,000 in Canadian funds, with no guarantee that the application can be processed in time for the next examination session.

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

The RCPSC 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 RCPSC**Definition**

- 3.1.1** The RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 must have succeeded at **one** of the following screening examinations in order to have their medical qualifications recognized by the RCPSC:
- (i) the MCC EE,
 - (ii) the MCC QE, Parts I and II, or
 - (iii) 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 RCPSC 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 the RCPSC receives information pertaining to revocation of a medical license, a criminal conviction and/or other relevant offence(s) while assessing the credentials of an applicant to the RCPSC certification examinations, the Credentials Committee will investigate the information (including submissions from applicant) and may prohibit access to the RCPSC examinations on the basis of the candidate's unsatisfactory moral, ethical and professional standing.

3.3 Satisfactory Completion of Postgraduate Medical Education

Eligibility for the examinations leading to RCPSC 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 RCPSC.

SECTION IV – POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**PART A – RESIDENCY EDUCATION****4.1 Residency Education****4.1.1 Definition**

The RCPSC Credentials Committee classifies postgraduate clinical trainees in accredited RCPSC/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 RCPSC/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 RCPSC.

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 RCPSC. 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 RCPSC.
- 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 RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca.
- 4.2.3** Applicants for RCPSC 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 RCPSC Credentials Committee 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 RCPSC 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 Committee 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 RCPSC Credentials Committee will consider, through a confidential process, all attempts to achieve a reasonable accommodation for a resident who is seeking permission to take a modified residency training program, with the intent of seeking admission to the RCPSC certification examinations. The RCPSC will permit modified residency training programs for residents where such modifications are necessary to prevent discrimination against residents with personal characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the RCPSC. Undue hardship as used throughout includes, amongst other things, any compromise to the validity, reliability and/or integrity of the RCPSC certification and examination process and outcome. Any requests for modified training must be accompanied with supporting documentation from the applicant's program director.

4.3.1 Fractional (Part-time) Residency Training

Fractional residency training must be approved by the RCPSC Credentials Committee. Consideration will only be given to applications who meet **all** of the following conditions:

- (i) the RCPSC Credentials Committee approval must be obtained **in advance** of the fractional component of residency training,
- (ii) the reason for the fractional residency training (e.g. family responsibilities) is approved by the program director and postgraduate dean, and the RCPSC Credentials Committee. Ordinarily, fractional residency training will not be approved to accommodate gainful employment,

- (iii) the RCPSC Credentials Committee will review, on a case-by-case basis, the maximum number of fractional years allowable to complete residency training,
- (iv) within any block of residency training, the fractional commitment must equal at least 50 percent of that of a full-time resident,
- (v) the program director must provide a syllabus for the applicant's entire residency program, including both fractional and full-time components, and
- (vi) the program director must certify that the supervision and assessment of the fractional 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: A Joint Policy of The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ)

Accommodation

The policy detailed in this Section 4.3.2 is subject to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) 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 and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) expect 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 RCPSC and the CMQ 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 anticipated 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 RCPSC and the CMQ. 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.

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 assumptions 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.

RCPSC and CMQ Maximum Allowable Times for Waivers:

It is the responsibility of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) to set maximum allowable times for waivers of training that would maintain eligibility for certification.

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 RCPSC Evaluation Committee for their recommendations regarding evaluation methods and assessment of residents with special needs, conditions or disabilities.

Procedures

- (v) The RCPSC Credentials Committee must be notified **in advance** of any modified residency training.
- (vi) Where applicable, the RCPSC 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 RCPSC Credentials Committee.
- (viii) The modified residency program must be approved by the program director, the appropriate Specialty Committee(s) and the RCPSC Credentials Committee.
- (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 RCPSC Credentials Committee, 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC Credentials Committee, 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 Postgraduate Clinical Training

4.7.1 The RCPSC Credentials Committee **may** recognize other postgraduate clinical trainees in accredited RCPSC/ACGME approved programs if they demonstrate that they meet **all** of the following criteria:

- (i) the content of the postgraduate clinical training is the same as that of a RCPSC 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 Ordinarily, other postgraduate clinical training will **only be** accepted if the applicant:

- (i) has training that requires an additional year in order to meet RCPSC requirements, or
- (ii) has lost eligibility and requires further training.

4.7.3 Ordinarily, credit **will not** be given for postgraduate clinical training for time spent in preceptorship practice or 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 – RCPSC 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 RCPSC certification.

5.1 Issuing a RCPSC Ruling Letter

- 5.1.1** When the preliminary assessment of training for eligibility to access the RCPSC certification examination has been completed, the RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 provide a Comprehensive Competency Report (CCR) completed by a supervisor.
- 5.1.3** Applicants who have **not met** the residency training requirements of the RCPSC will be required to take further residency training in a program that is recognized and approved by the RCPSC if they wish to be eligible for the examinations leading to RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC.

5.3.2 A ruling is valid for:

- 3 years for certification examinations administered yearly
- 5 years for certification examinations administered every second year (currently only Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and Clinical Pharmacology)

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 Director of Education of the RCPSC.

- 5.4.2** The request for a 'review' of a ruling will be considered by the appropriate RCPSC 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. Applicants must follow this procedure:

- (i) the applicant must notify the Director of Education of the RCPSC 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 of \$500 in Canadian funds,
- (iii) the applicant will be notified in writing by the RCPSC 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 RCPSC credentialing body. The RCPSC may amend the original ruling or reconfirm it with reasons given.

5.6 Appeal of a Decision on a RCPSC Ruling Policy

5.6.1 The 'appeal of a decision' on a RCPSC ruling will be conducted by a panel of three (3) members of the RCPSC Education Committee designated by the Director of Education of the RCPSC.

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 Director of Education of the RCPSC will appoint appeal panel members from outside of the RCPSC Education Committee.

5.6.3 Appeals of a RCPSC 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 RCPSC ruling. In determining whether the decision on a RCPSC ruling conformed with RCPSC policies and procedures, the appeal panel will consider all the information that was available to the RCPSC in reaching its decision, including the applicant's statement of misapplication of policy.

5.6.4 The appeal panel may amend or reconfirm the RCPSC ruling.

5.6.5 There is no provision for further appeal to the RCPSC 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 RCPSC ruling must notify the Director of Education of the RCPSC 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.

5.7 Withdrawal of Examination Eligibility

5.7.1 The RCPSC retains the authority to withdraw acceptance of an applicant's credentials or withdraw permission to access the

examinations leading to RCPSC certification on the recommendation of an Examination Board, the RCPSC Credentials Committee, or the applicant's program director.

- 5.7.2** The RCPSC may require that the applicant satisfy specific requirements as a condition of accessing the examination leading to RCPSC certification.
 - 5.7.3** If a candidate performs poorly on an RCPSC examination, the RCPSC may require the candidate to undergo additional training before regaining eligibility to repeat the examination leading to RCPSC 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 RCPSC certification has expired after three (3) years through failure on the examinations or through failure to appear at the examinations, will be required to satisfactorily complete an additional twelve (12) months of training to regain eligibility.
 - 5.8.2** Application for the renewal of eligibility must be made by the deadline in the year before that in which the candidate hopes to be examined.
 - 5.8.3** The RCPSC Credentials Committee may refuse to renew eligibility, and require the satisfactory completion of additional training at a senior level of responsibility.
 - 5.8.4** A renewal of eligibility is valid only for the next examination session and cannot be deferred.

SECTION VI – RCPSC EXAMINATIONS**General Information**

In the context of a candidate preparing for the RCPSC examination, the RCPSC 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 Principles of Surgery Examination

- 6.1.1** In the surgical specialties of Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Otolaryngology, Plastic Surgery, and Urology, candidates must successfully complete the Principles of Surgery examination to attain eligibility for any examination in the relevant surgical specialty.
- 6.1.2** Success at the Principles of Surgery examination is valid permanently.
- 6.1.3** The Principles of Surgery examination is held annually in the spring and examination dates are set on a yearly basis. For more information about the registration deadline, examination dates, sites and format for the Principles of Surgery examination, please refer to the RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC.

6.3 Examination Registration

- 6.3.1** Residents who intend to register for the examination leading to RCPSC certification must have:
 - (i) applied for assessment of credentials/training, and
 - (ii) received from the RCPSC an official ruling letter confirming their eligibility for the examination.
- 6.3.1** 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.

6.3.2 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 "RCPSC 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 RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca

6.4.2 The "registration deadline" is the last day for receipt by the RCPSC of the registration form for the examination leading to RCPSC certification.

6.5 Examination Dates

Examination dates are subject to change without notice. Please refer to the RCPSC website: www.royalcollege.ca to obtain the official examination dates.

6.6 Examination Sites

Examinations, including the Principles of Surgery examination, **may** be held in various centers across Canada. Candidates will be notified of the site(s) where the examination(s) will occur when candidates receive the RCPSC examination form.

6.7 Examination Format

6.7.1 The RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC 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 RCPSC Credentials Committee, the program director and the postgraduate dean.

6.9 Candidates with Special Needs, Conditions or Disabilities

6.9.1 The RCPSC will accommodate candidates with special needs, conditions or disabilities, or other personal characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, except where such accommodation would impose undue hardship on the RCPSC. Applicants with special needs, conditions or disabilities or other characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, that require particular consideration at the RCPSC examinations must

notify the Director of Education of the RCPSC with their application for preliminary assessment of training or as soon as possible after their application is made.

- 6.9.2** Candidates with special needs, conditions or disabilities or other characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, are responsible for ensuring that the Director of Education of the RCPSC receives appropriate documentation supporting the request for accommodation in sufficient detail to allow the RCPSC to assess the request for accommodation and make suitable arrangements. More specific information on candidates with special needs, conditions or disabilities, or other characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, is outlined in Section IV Postgraduate Medical Education – Part A, 4.3 “Modifications to Residency Training” of this guide.
- 6.10 Language of Examinations**
- 6.10.1** The RCPSC 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 RCPSC Examination Boards**
- The RCPSC Examination Boards are empowered by the RCPSC Evaluation Committee and by the Council of the RCPSC to make final decisions on the examinations of all candidates, following procedures approved by the RCPSC Evaluation Committee and Council of the RCPSC

SECTION VII – INTERNATIONAL TRAINING (NON-RCPSC ACCREDITED/NON-ACGME APPROVED)**General Information**

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

Therefore, the RCPSC will not process any application for credit for training in International PGME Systems not listed on the RCPSC website at <http://rcpsc.medical.org>.

The requirements stated below are in addition to all other policies and procedures outlined in this guide. Non-RCPSC 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-RCPSC accredited/non-ACGME approved systems listed on the website does not confer eligibility to the Royal College examinations. The RCPSC 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 RCPSC postgraduate medical education requirements in the specialty as detailed in the specialty specific objectives of training and specialty training requirements available on the RCPSC website: <http://rcpsc.medical.org>.
- (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 of \$2,000.
- (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 'RCPSC Rulings on Examination Eligibility' of this guide.