

Area of Focused Competence (AFC) Subcommittee

Terms of Reference

Please note that this document only applies to those areas of focused competence (AFCs) that are encompassed under an existing specialty committee, including AFC-diplomas with single or multiple entry routes. For AFCs not encompassed under one specialty committee, please see the *AFC Committee Terms of Reference*.

Role:

AFC subcommittees are established for every AFC recognized by the Royal College that is encompassed by a parent specialty committee; AFCs encompassed by one parent specialty may have a single or multiple entry routes. The role of an AFC subcommittee is to advise the Royal College on discipline specific content issues (e.g., standards, credentials, assessment and accreditation).

As per the *Specialty Committees Terms of Reference*, specialty committees are established for every specialty and subspecialty recognized by the Royal College. The role of a specialty committee is to advise on specialty-specific content issues and if appropriate, oversee an AFC subcommittee. The parent specialty committee is responsible for advising on matters relating to AFC recognition and status, discipline-specific document development and revision, membership, credentialing and providing feedback on AFC accreditation.

AFC SUBCOMMITTEES:

- advise the parent specialty committee on matters including review of diploma status, and review of applications for recognition of a new discipline;
- advise the parent specialty committee on matters relating to the assessment of individual credentials;
- advise the Royal College on matters including the basic accreditation requirements, applications for accreditation of new programs, assessment of pre-survey questionnaires and recommendation of accreditation status;
- advise the Credentials Committee on matters of the portfolio, assessment of individual credentials, and oversight of the assessor pool;
- advise other committees of the Royal College such as the Executive Committee, regional advisory committees and the Biomedical Ethics Committee on matters relevant to the discipline;

- revise discipline specific documents as needed, and report to the parent specialty committee on the status of discipline specific document development and revision (including the Competency Training Requirements, Portfolio, and Standards of Accreditation); and
- liaise with the national specialty society (NSS) on educational issues and collaborate to ensure the sustained health of the discipline.

Generally, AFC subcommittee members should possess the following key competencies:

- Royal College Fellow or Diplomate in good standing
- Diploma or clinical and educational expertise relevant to the specific AFC.

The usual term of office is one two-year term, renewable twice (maximum of six years).

Responsibility and Authority:

AFC subcommittees are monitored by the Committee on Specialties (COS) and ultimately report to the Committee on Specialty Education on matters related to the AFC.

The AFC subcommittee also reports to the parent specialty committee on the activities of the subcommittee and must ensure adequate support for membership, development and maintenance of discipline specific documents, and accreditation of programs.

The AFC subcommittee chair will report on the activities of the subcommittee and bring forward subcommittee decisions on discipline recognition, membership, standards document development and revision, accreditation, and credentialing for review, consultation and/or approval by the parent specialty committee.

Composition:

The AFC subcommittee will be comprised of voting and non-voting members.

Voting members consist of up to nine members:

- the chair;
- chair-elect and/or vice-chair(s); and
- five members-at-large which should reflect Canada's geographical regions as specified in the Royal College bylaw (Bylaw No. 20, Article 11.1.2).

In disciplines where there is a related stream (e.g., pediatric), the subcommittee must also include at least one representative with relevant knowledge and expertise from the related stream. The practice of including one member in full-time community practice is also strongly encouraged, if appropriate.

Voting members are permitted to hold more than one position on the subcommittee, for example the vice-chair can also be a member-at-large or a member-at-large can also be a representative from a related stream.

Non-voting members consist of:

- the chair of a parent specialty or subspecialty or other related disciplines;
- AFC directors;
- observers representing an NSS, a professors' association, or any outside organization; and
- additional regional representation (if required).

It is recognized that some AFC subcommittees may experience difficulties in adhering to the above membership composition due to a limited number of eligible nominees (i.e. Royal College Fellows in good standing). In these circumstances, some flexibility is permitted as follows:

Non-Fellow members may be appointed to voting member roles until there is a mechanism for those individuals to become credentialed through the practice eligibility route for areas of focused competence (PER-AFC). Non-Fellow members will have up to one membership cycle (two years) from the date the PER-AFC is launched to achieve the AFC designation through the PER-AFC. Should a non-Fellow member not achieve the designation within two years, they will be asked to step down from the AFC committee.

AFC directors have a direct responsibility to their institution, program and trainees which may create a real, potential or perceived conflict with the performance of the responsibilities of a voting member on the AFC subcommittee. Therefore, to avoid perceived or potential conflicts of interest, program directors should not be voting members.

It is recognized however that the size of AFC disciplines may limit the selection of individuals who may be involved in AFC subcommittee activities. AFC directors who are granted an exception to also serve as voting members must declare any perceived or potential conflict of interest, and the AFC subcommittee must have a process to manage those conflicts.

Voting Guidelines:

Half of the subcommittee's voting members, including the chair, shall constitute a quorum.

Meetings:

The AFC subcommittee is encouraged to meet once annually. Face-to-face meetings will not be supported by the Royal College. The Royal College will provide support for virtual meetings.

Committee Work Product

All work product of the committee will be owned by the Royal College. “Work product” in this context means intellectual property produced or contributed to by the committee or any committee member(s) in the course of performing the committee’s mandate for the Royal College. Specific projects may be exempted from this requirement by written agreement between the project contributors and the Royal College.

Code of Conduct and Confidentiality

Appointment to a Royal College committee carries significant responsibilities, and all committee members are expected to adhere to the Volunteer Code of Conduct. In addition, committee members are required to maintain absolute discretion and not divulge, re-produce, or release any confidential information except when authorized by the Royal College. Meeting materials are only to be used for the purpose of committee business.