

Criteria for Royal College Categories of Discipline Recognition

| | FUNDAMENTALS PROGRAM | SPECIALTY | SUBSPECIALTY | AREA OF FOCUSED COMPETENCE (DIPLOMA) PROGRAM | SPECIALIST INTEREST GROUP FOR MEDICAL ACTIVITY |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| DEFINITION | A fundamentals program is a primary core curriculum of fundamental competencies in a domain of medicine, and is the common training for several related disciplines to build upon. It is a post-MD discipline intended to prepare a physician for further advanced training and, in contrast to a primary specialty, does not normally prepare for practice or lead to certification in itself. | A specialty is an area of medicine with a broad-based body of knowledge that is relevant in both community and tertiary settings and is a foundation for additional competencies (such as subspecialties) | A subspecialty is an area of medicine with a more focused or advanced scope that builds upon the broad-based body of knowledge defined in a parent specialty. | An area of focused competence is a highly focused discipline of specialty medicine that addresses a legitimate societal need, but does not meet the criteria for a specialty, fundamentals program, or subspecialty. Typically, AFC (diploma) programs represent either a) <i>supplemental</i> competencies that enhance the practice of physicians in an existing discipline, or b) a <i>highly specific and narrow</i> scope of practice that does not meet the criteria of a subspecialty. | A special interest group for medical activity (SIGMA) is an emerging area of interest in specialty medicine or community of practice that addresses a legitimate societal need without a widespread role in healthcare. SIGMAs serve to provide a forum individuals with a common area of interest to come together to discuss the evolution of their discipline. This category is not considered a formally recognized discipline of the Royal College. |

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| CRITERION 1 – EVIDENCE OF NEED | EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR CORE COMPETENCIES ACROSS A FAMILY OF DISCIPLINES | EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR SPECIALISTS/SUBSPECIALISTS | | EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR PHYSICIANS WITH ADVANCED SKILLS OR A NARROW SCOPE OF PRACTICE | EVIDENCE OF NEED FOR A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE THAT WOULD BENEFIT PATIENT CARE AND THE PROFESSION |
| Criterion 1 DESCRIPTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ core competencies are applicable across multiple practice settings (tertiary, community, etc) as a base for further training ▪ well-defined and recognized educational need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ multiple applicable practice settings (tertiary, community, etc) to serve large populations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ focused practice profile to serve specific populations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ defined scope of practice and serving specific populations or narrow range of conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ emerging or proposed societal health need ▪ Royal College is positioned to facilitate addressing this need (would not be better served by a national specialty society (NSS) or non-governmental organization) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ positive contribution towards improving medical care and health outcomes | | | | |

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| CRITERION 2 – DEFINED SCOPE | BROAD BASED, APPLICABLE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE | | IN-DEPTH, APPLICABLE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND SCOPE OF PRIMARY SPECIALTY OR SPECIALTIES | | EMERGING BODY OF KNOWLEDGE BEYOND SCOPE OF EXISTING DISCIPLINES |
| Criterion 2 DESCRIPTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ medical knowledge and skills characterized by breadth, and relating to a family of disciplines ▪ unique broad constellation of core competencies ▪ knowledge base is dynamically founded on evidence and ongoing research ▪ typically requires 1 to 3 years to be acquired | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ distinct medical knowledge and skills characterized by breadth ▪ unique broad constellation of competencies ▪ knowledge base is dynamically founded on evidence and ongoing research ▪ typically requires 4 to 5 years to be acquired ▪ recognition nationally and in other jurisdictions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ distinct medical knowledge and skills characterized by depth and specificity ▪ unique advanced constellation of competencies ▪ knowledge base is dynamically founded on evidence and ongoing research ▪ typically requires 12 to 24 months to be acquired ▪ recognition nationally and in other jurisdictions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ distinct supplementary medical knowledge and skills characterized by depth and high specificity ▪ unique advanced constellation of competencies beyond those typically needed to practice ▪ knowledge base is dynamically founded on evidence and ongoing research ▪ typically requires 12 to 24 months to be acquired | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ very focused scope and context ▪ an emerging aspect of healthcare |

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| CRITERION 3 – RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER TYPES OF DISCIPLINES | FOUNDATION FOR ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES | BASIS FOR ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES | IDENTIFIABLE CONTENT/COMPETENCIES BUILDING ON FOUNDATIONAL AND PRIMARY SPECIALTY TRAINING | NOT A FOUNDATION FOR ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES | NOT A FOUNDATION FOR ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES |
| Criterion 3 DESCRIPTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provides the core fundamentals of a field of medicine (knowledge, skills, attitudes) ▪ preparation for further specialty training, not for practice ▪ is always designed to be foundational to learning of additional competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provides the fundamentals of a field of medicine (knowledge, skills, attitudes) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unique and specialized body of knowledge and competencies that build upon training and experience acquired in primary or foundational specialty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ supplementary competencies ▪ builds upon primary specialties, foundation programs, or subspecialties ▪ typically does not replace practice in an existing discipline, but provides an opportunity to acquire competencies to enhance an existing practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |

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| CRITERION 4 – IMPACT ON EXISTING SPECIALTY SYSTEM | RECOGNITION OF DISCIPLINE MUST NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT HEALTH CARE OR ANY OTHER FIELD OF MEDICINE AND RELATED DISCIPLINES | | | ADDITION OF AFC (DIPLOMA) PROGRAM MUST NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT EXISTING AND RELATED DISCIPLINES | ADDITION OF SIGMA MUST NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT ESTABLISHED NSS OR OTHER GROUPS |
| Criterion 4 DESCRIPTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ recognition of field of medicine will enhance and strengthen the ability to provide effective care and not lead to significant fragmentation of patient care ▪ creation of new field of medicine must not threaten the long-term viability of specialty practices ▪ field of medicine must not reduce the quality of core resident training and should provide an appropriate breadth of exposure | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a proposed AFC (diploma) discipline that includes competencies which overlap with those in the Objectives of Training of an existing discipline or disciplines MUST obtain the explicit written support of the Specialty Committee(s) in that discipline or disciplines ▪ recognition of field of medicine will enhance and strengthen the ability to provide effective care and not lead to significant fragmentation of patient care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ not served by an existing organization, such as a national specialty society (NSS) |

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| CRITERION 5 – INFRASTRUCTURE & SUSTAINABILITY | ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUSTAIN THE DISCIPLINE | | | | N/A |
| Criterion 5 DESCRIPTOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sufficient number and geographic spread of physicians to devote significant proportion of time to provide sustainable base for practice and education in the proposed discipline | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one site capable of mounting a training program in Canada identifiable group of experts with capacity to provide a high quality educational experience sufficient ingredients exist for appropriate program infrastructure existence of professional organization(s) capable of advancing the field | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a |