

November 12, 2020

Dear colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a profound impact on all of us both professionally and personally. Thank you for your input, patience and understanding as we adapt our delivery of the 2021 exams to best serve our candidates as they navigate these unprecedented times.

Please share this communication with your 2021 candidates

Since registration for the spring 2021 exams has not yet closed, we don't have complete contact information for all candidates yet, so we are sharing the following 2021 exam information with you, as a valued exam stakeholder. We encourage you to share with your 2021 candidates.

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has listened to the feedback received from 2020 exams candidates and the postgraduate medical education community, and is introducing updates to its plans for the 2021 certification examinations while continuing to ensure a safe, flexible and reliable delivery.

What we heard and observed

- Technology: Most candidates are familiar with computer-based exams but opted to write in-person, paper-based exams as our online platform was new, and there was less comfort with remote-proctoring without "hands-on" staff support/back-up for technology issues.
- Success rate: For those who opted to write the exam online, there was a 100% success rate for onboarding all online exams. The assigned invigilator immediately addressed any issues that did arise.
- Results: Paper-based exams at 29 different locations had a significant impact on the tabulation of results for candidates.
- Safety: While we followed, and even exceeded Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines, candidates were looking for even more rigorous safety measures.

These key learnings were taken into account in our plans to maximize safety and enhance the exam experience for the 2021 candidates.

WHAT: All written and applied exams will be delivered online

- Written exams, both multiple-choice and short-answer formats, will be online.
- No paper-based exams in 2021.
- Applied/oral exams will be delivered virtually.

WHERE: In individual hotel rooms at 17 exam centres across Canada OR remotely online

Candidates will be able to take their exams at their registered exam centre and will be assigned to an individual hotel room for both written and applied exams. This will allow flexibility in delivery as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, while providing onsite hardware and software support to ensure successful completion of the exam online.

In terms of contingency planning, if candidates cannot travel to one of our centres or are concerned about COVID-19 transmission, they can choose to take their exam online with remote proctoring/invigilation.

A mandatory survey will be sent to candidates on Dec. 15, 2020, which must be completed by **Jan. 4, 2021** indicating the **city and time zone** of where they plan to write their exam, and if they will write at a Royal College **exam centre** or at **home**.

WHEN: Our 2021 exam dates

- 2021 [spring](#) and [fall](#) exam dates and times.
- Confirmation of written appointment will be sent via email two months before exam date.
- Confirmation of applied exams will be provided in the candidates' appointment letter approximately one month before exam date.
- Deadline to register:
 - **Dec. 4, 2020** for spring 2021 exams
 - **May 15, 2021** for fall 2021 exams

HOW: An online platform

- Using a laptop, candidates will log into [Fry-IT's](#) Practique, an online exam platform, to take their written exams.
- Onsite invigilators will be on hand at exam centres to provide support for technological issues (hardware and software).
- For the applied component, the candidate and examiners will interact on a virtual platform. More details to come in the next few months.
- As paper-based exams will be eliminated, it will reduce the need to ship and scan paper exams and electronically send them to examiners.

Special accommodations

If a candidate requires an accommodation to write an exam, please contact examaccommodation@royalcollege.ca by December 4 for spring exams or May 15 for fall exams.

For candidates outside of Canada

Candidates outside of Canada who wish to write their exam online must get an approved accommodation, as noted above. Please be aware that technical support will be limited for those writing outside of Canada.

Questions?

For all exam inquiries, please contact us at exams2021@royalcollege.ca.

Sincerely,

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