

Strategies to promote the credential

Instructions for AFC Committees

Guide a discussion within your committee to explore the best approach to promoting the Areas of Focused Competence (AFC) credential within your specific community of practice. Consider the following optional strategies that are being suggested by Royal College AFC Committees.¹ to improve the value and visibility of your discipline and the credential.

1. Collaborating with a National Specialty Society (NSS)

- Work with the NSS representative on the AFC Committee to identify the best strategies for the NSS and the discipline. For example:
 - Submit content for publication in newsletters;
 - Invite applicants for new accredited programs or the practice route via the NSS membership list;
 - Suggest content for the NSS website, or a link to the Royal College website;
 - Provide a presentation about the AFC at an annual conference or general meeting; and
 - Meet with the NSS' education committee, executive or similar group to identify opportunities to promote the discipline.

2. Collaborating with Specialty Committees

- Use links to parent or entry route disciplines (specialties and subspecialties). For example:
 - Encourage the Specialty Committee chair from a parent or entry route discipline to attend AFC Committee meetings.
 - Discuss with the specialty committee chair the value of including the AFC discipline on the agenda to provide an update on the discipline, the credential, or the work of the committee.

TIP

- Specialty Committee chairs are ex-officio members of AFC Committees, and AFC Committee chairs are ex-officio members of Specialty Committees.
 - Your AFC Committee administrator can provide the name and email address for any Specialty Committee chair.
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¹ AFC Committee is an umbrella term to described working groups, committees, and subcommittees.

- Forward to Specialty Committee chairs any memorandum or information about AFCs from the Royal College, whether as information, or to be forwarded to the committee, or included in the next meeting package.
- Outreach to residents in parent or entry route disciplines to advise of educational and career opportunities in accredited AFC training programs.
- Work with residency program directors, encouraging them to apply for the credential via the practice route and promote the credential among their residents.

TIP

- Residency program directors are also members of Specialty Committees.
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3. Making use of discipline-specific standards

- Requirement 3.2.1 in the AFC Standards of Accreditation (AFC-SA)² can be tailored to include specific qualifications and requirements for AFC directors and teaching faculty, including experience in the discipline and/ or the credential. For examples, see [Acute Care Point of Care Ultrasonography \(POCUS\)](#) or [Addiction Medicine](#).
- During standards development, keep potential applicants (PGME offices, fellowship directors, other faculty) informed about the expected dissemination date so as not to delay the submission of applications for accreditation.

4. Educating the community through employment practices and opportunities

- Suggest that the credential be included in job advertisements.
- Work with hiring committees to highlight the credential as an available qualification and its link to the discipline's national standards.
- Encourage AFC directors and teaching faculty to apply for the credential via the practice route.

5. Recruiting applicants for the practice route

- When a discipline's practice route opens, a tailored PER-AFC applicant recruitment letter is provided. Forward the letter to colleagues or borrow some key messages when sending a personalized invitation to apply for the credential.
- Strategically recruit applicants who are leaders or "pioneers" in the discipline.
- Encourage all members of the AFC Committee to apply for the credential.
- Targeted outreach to AFC directors, program directors, and colleagues in the communities of practice, inviting them to apply for the credential.

TIP

- Need a customized copy of the PER-AFC applicant recruitment letter? Email diplomas@royalcollege.ca and we'll provide one.
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² Requirement 3.2.1 in the AFC-SA: *Teachers appropriately implement the curriculum, supervise, and assess trainees, contribute to the program, and role model effective practice.*

- Host a virtual workshop for applicants, providing an overview of the application and assessment process, highlighting key markers that assessors will be considering.

6. Exploring other channels of communications

- Submit articles for publication in academic journals.
- If you would like to explore the possibility of collaborating with the Royal College on an academic article about the discipline's standards, contact the [Research Unit](#) or discuss with your [committee administrator](#). For examples, see articles published about [Cytopathology](#), [Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation and Cellular Therapy](#), [Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology](#), and [Adult Interventional Cardiology](#) (forthcoming).
- Use social media to create and foster community, or tap into existing virtual communities, i.e., discipline-specific hashtags, dedicated YouTube channel, Facebook group/page
- Publish and maintain a website. For examples, see the websites for the [Clinician Educator](#) accredited training program at McMaster University or [Cytopathology](#).

7. Engaging new Diplomates

- The Royal College Directory lists the physicians who have had their credential recognized by becoming a Diplomate. There may be opportunities to engage these Diplomates in the work of the AFC Committee, either as nominees to fill a vacancy on the committee or as an external assessor for the practice route (if required for the discipline).

Questions?

Please contact the AFC program manager, [Linda Rumleski](#), if you would like:

- more information about any of the above strategies or to be connected with the chair of an AFC Committee using these strategies;
- to share the strategies your AFC Committee is considering or using – they will be included in the next version of this document;
- assistance preparing for a presentation or any promotional activities, including updated Royal College AFC Program statistics included in the customizable presentation deck; or
- to inquire about the availability of a Royal College representative to promote the credential at an event.