

THE COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
OF CANADA



LE COLLÈGE DES  
MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE  
DU CANADA



# Candidate Guide to the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine

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How to cite this document:

College of Family Physicians of Canada. *Candidate Guide to the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine*. Mississauga, ON: College of Family Physicians of Canada; 2022.

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## Preface

This is a guide for individuals planning to qualify for and then sit the College of Family Physicians of Canada™ (CFPC) Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine.

Applicants who meet the requirements to become qualified candidates and then pass this exam will be granted a Certificate of Added Competence (CAC) in Emergency Medicine. They may then use the special designation (EM), to appear as CCFP (EM), with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities pertaining thereto as long as they maintain their status as a CFPC member and ongoing Mainpro+® requirements. All new CCFP (EM) members will be honoured at Convocation.

The examination is designed to test a candidate's knowledge and problem-solving skills in emergency medicine. In awarding any CAC, the College sets a standard of practice that reflects added competence.

Those who qualify for the examination as residency eligible candidates will have an opportunity to discuss and practice various components of the exam in their training programs. Those who qualify as practice eligible candidates are invited to approach the nearest university program of family medicine/emergency medicine to determine if examination practice opportunities exist. Please refer to the individual university websites for current contact information.

## Candidate Code of Conduct and Statement of Non-Disclosure

All individuals registering for the examination must agree to the Candidate Code of Conduct and the Statement of Non-Disclosure. It is replicated here for your information:

As a candidate taking a CFPC administered examination, I understand any action taken by me, which compromises the proper administration and conduct of the Examination, is considered unprofessional behaviour and a breach of this Candidate Code of Conduct and Statement of Non-Disclosure (the Code). Such actions might include, but are not limited to:

- Giving or attempting to give, or receiving or attempting to receive, examination content information from other candidates (such as talking or passing notes) or from any other source (such as using an electronic device or written material) before, during, or after the examination,
- Observing or attempting to observe the answers of, or showing or attempting to show answers to, another candidate before, during, or after the examination,
- Copying or attempting to copy, or removing or attempting to remove, examination materials from the examination site whether they are shared or not,
- Divulging or attempting to divulge to anyone the nature or content of any question or answer on the examination,
- Disrespectful, aggressive, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate behaviour a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or humiliating before, during, or after the examination,

- Verbal or written derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets made toward the CFPC, its employees, examination staff, examination volunteers, or other candidates before, during, or after the examination.

I understand the CFPC's Board of Examination and Certification will take appropriate measures to deal with violations of this Code including, but not limited to, possible: forfeiture of examination fees, refusal of entrance to the examination, early termination of an examination, expulsion of the offender, invalidation of test results and the designation of Denied Standing with a possible prohibition of participation in future examinations. Notification of the specifics of a breach of the Code may also be given to medical regulatory authorities and/or any other entity responsible for medical education, training, and credential verification.

In recognition of the duty of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and of myself to the public to ensure that only physicians who fully and fairly pass the certification examinations be granted certification by the College of Family Physicians of Canada, I hereby attest that I will not perform any action that might compromise the proper conduct of the examination and I will abide by the Candidate Code of Conduct and Statement of Non-Disclosure as printed above.

I am a candidate for an examination administered by the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and I have read and am in agreement with the above statements.

## Examination Description

### Examination components

The Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine is comprised of two components: a written examination and an interactive structured oral examination.

The written component is comprised of short answer management problems (SAMPs). The structured oral component is comprised of questions posed to you by an examiner.

To be successful on the overall examination, candidates must demonstrate a passing performance on both the written and oral components. Candidates will be involved in testing over a period of two separate sessions held on different days, one for the written component and one for the oral component.

A list of priority topics and key features used to determine the cases and questions for the assessment of added competence in emergency medicine is available on the CFPC website under Priority Topics at <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/education-professional-development/examinations-and-certification/examination-of-added-competence-in-emergency-medic/preparing-for-the-examination-of-added-competence#priority-topics>.

Please also see the additional resources Overview, Home Study, Structured Orals, and SAMPs at [https://www.cfpc.ca/Preparing\\_for\\_the\\_EM\\_Examination/](https://www.cfpc.ca/Preparing_for_the_EM_Examination/).

## The written examination

The written examination is comprised of SAMPs designed to measure a candidate's knowledge and problem-solving skills in the context of a clinical situation.

The SAMP component is delivered on computers and may be taken remotely from home or in various Prometric (the vendor we work with to deliver the written component of the examination) testing sites across Canada. Once applications are approved, candidates are directed to a Prometric website where they can select the time and location of their testing appointment. Each testing appointment is seven-and-a-half (7.5) hours in duration—this includes two 3-hour testing windows and a one-hour break, plus time to review the non-disclosure agreement, take a tutorial on the delivery software, and complete an end-of-examination survey. Plan for approximately eight hours to complete your test.

Take the time to review the exam-day tutorial presented at the beginning of the examination. The time allowed for the tutorial is separate from the time allotted to answering questions. Skipping or rushing through the tutorial will not give you more time to answer questions. Not familiarizing yourself with the software could result in user error(s) that cannot be undone.

Sample SAMPs are posted on the College's website in the Certification Examination in Family Medicine section, at <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/education-professional-development/examinations-and-certification/certification-examination-in-family-medicine/preparing-for-the-certification-examination-in-fam#sampls>. Use this information to familiarize yourself with the emergency medicine SAMP examination format and the scoring approach.

In addition to the sample SAMPs, the website provides a list of helpful resources including what to expect on exam day and a SAMP software tutorial and video demonstration designed to familiarize you with the testing platform (taken either in a designated test centre or remotely in a location of your choosing) that you will use on exam day.

## The oral examination

The structured oral component of the examination includes four 12-minute exam stations. Candidates will be assessed by four different examiners on four different topics. The four oral exam stations will be delivered virtually using a hybrid virtual model.

The hybrid virtual model we have elected to use means that both candidates and examiners must travel to one of several large urban hotels in select major cities across Canada.

Adhering to appropriate social distancing and public health rules, each candidate and each examiner will go through an on-site registration process and then be taken to their individual hotel rooms where the exam will take place virtually.

These examinations are designed to duplicate, as much as possible, actual cases seen in the emergency department. Emergency physicians are trained to serve as sources of information about each case. The physician examiner scores the candidate according to pre-defined criteria and assesses the candidate's management of each case.

These examinations will assess candidates' diagnostic approach, use and interpretation of data, and ability to reach an appropriate diagnosis and institute an appropriate, timely treatment plan.

To help candidates prepare for the oral examination, the Committee on Examinations – Emergency Medicine has provided detailed instructions on what to expect and how to proceed during a structured oral examination. Please refer to the CFPC website, at <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/education-professional-development/examinations-and-certification/examination-of-added-competence-in-emergency-medic/preparing-for-the-examination-of-added-competence#so>, for details.

## General Information

### Personal belongings

**No personal items are permitted in an SAMP test centre examination room.** You will be directed to place all your personal belongings—such as keys, papers, wallets, cell phones, watches, coats, etc.—in a designated area during the examination. While every effort will be made to store them safely, the CFPC is not responsible for your belongings. Please bring as few as possible.

No personal items will be permitted next to your examination station if you are taking the SAMP exam remotely via ProProctor. A 360-degree room scan will be performed by the security agent when you sign in before you are passed on to the exam proctor. You will be observed during your examination time and inappropriate activity (talking to others in the room, using your phone) will be addressed and logged.

Please note, you are **not permitted** to wear watches or electronic bracelets of any kind (i.e., digital, analogue, or smartwatches) on exam day. Time remaining on your exam will be clearly indicated on your computer screen during the SAMPs. There is a clock on all computer examination interfaces; time remaining on your exam is clearly indicated on your computer screen during both the SAMP and the structured oral components.

### Required items

On both testing days, you are required to bring a government issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license or passport).

### Travel

Information about the examination site(s) and the days of your oral and written examinations will be provided approximately four to six weeks prior to the examination.

It is your responsibility to arrange for travel to and from the examination centre. Candidates are encouraged to schedule travel arrangements that allow for unforeseen delays. The Board of Examinations and Certification (BEC) will not accept responsibility for candidates arriving late.

Do not schedule departure travel should prior to 8:00 p.m. on the day of your scheduled structured oral exam.

## Health, wellness, and nutrition

If you feel your performance will be adversely affected due to health or personal reasons, you should not sit the examination. Please inform the CFPC or the exam centre coordinator immediately.

Food is not to be consumed during actual testing time in the examination. Water in a transparent glass is allowed. Candidates with special dietary requirements may make arrangements with the College prior to the examination. If approved by the College, the food must be packaged in a clear container.

Candidates who require any type of modification to the testing environment (e.g., private space to express breastmilk, additional break time, access to medications or devices, etc.) must make prior arrangements to ensure exam sites are able to meet these needs or that security proctors for those taking the examination remotely are informed.

## Emergencies

In the event of an emergency on the day of the examination, please leave a message for CFPC staff at 1-800-387-6197, extension 405 or 206. We recommend you enter this number into your phone's contact list as CFPC before the actual exam day.

## Late arrival policy

### SAMPs

If you are writing in a test centre, plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the scheduled appointment to allow time for check-in procedures. For example, if your scheduled appointment time is 8:00 a.m., you should arrive at the testing centre by 7:30 a.m.

You will be checked in on a first-come, first-served basis. Your actual examination start time may vary slightly depending on the amount of time it takes to check you in.

If you arrive at the testing centre more than 30 minutes **after** your scheduled appointment, you will not be allowed to write the exam and you will forfeit your exam fee. For example, if your scheduled appointment time is 8:00 a.m. and you arrive at the testing centre at 8:31 a.m. or later, you will not be allowed to write and you will forfeit your exam fee.

If you are writing the exam using the remote proctoring option, please log into your exam at least 15 minutes prior to the start of your exam. If you log in past your examination start time, you may not be allowed to write and could forfeit your exam fee.

### Oral exam

If you arrive at the examination site after the start of your first scheduled oral exam, you might be accommodated at the discretion of the local examination coordinator **only** if the schedule allows. In the event that the centre is unable to accommodate you, the attendance will be



recorded as a “no show” and will not count as an exam attempt. Fees will not be refunded to candidates who are denied entry due to late arrival.

### Process errors

If, during the course of the examination, an exam candidate feels that a process irregularity (i.e., something untoward happens in the examination delivery) has occurred, it should immediately be brought to the attention of the local examination coordinator. This allows the coordinator to either institute some immediate course of action to correct the process error or to provide a written report to the BEC at the earliest possible opportunity.

Immediate attention to a process irregularity will usually result in a complete and satisfactory resolution. It does not preclude a further request for review on the part of the candidate(s) concerned and may serve as additional support for the alleged process irregularity in the case.

### Cancellation policy

A refund for a portion of the examination fee will depend on the date of receipt of a written, signed withdrawal/refund request.

- Candidates who withdraw from the examination more than 60 days before the examination date will be subject to a penalty of \$500.
- Candidates who withdraw from 30 to 60 days before the examination date will be subject to a penalty of one-half (50 per cent) of the examination fee.
- There is no refund for candidates who withdraw within 30 days of the examination date.

Candidates must withdraw and re-apply if they wish to take the examination at a later date. Fees paid for a previous attempt are not transferable to a later session. Please send your cancellation request to [ccfpexam@cfpc.ca](mailto:ccfpexam@cfpc.ca).

## Marking the Examinations

Marking is completed by experienced certified CCFP (EM) physicians and conducted anonymously—the markers never see candidate names. The BEC then reviews all the analyses of the examination data, the subsequent results, and recommends who should be certified. Each candidate’s results are first posted in the secure Members section of the CFPC website; each candidate can access their results via their secure CFPC portal. Candidates are notified by email as soon as the results are available online so they can log in to see the outcome.

Result letters are then sent by mail to all candidates within two to three weeks of being posted in their CFPC member portal.

**Results will not be given by phone or fax for reasons of confidentiality.**

The College’s Committee on Examinations – Emergency Medicine standardizes the correct answers to the SAMPs and the expected performance on the structured oral examination. Clear criteria are defined for both examiners and markers against which candidate performance is

compared. Candidates are also expected to demonstrate a level of performance consistent with their peers to be awarded Certification.

The Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine is a terminal assessment instrument that examines a broad spectrum of content. A candidate must be successful on both components of the examination at the same sitting in order to be successful on the entire examination. Candidates will be informed whether they have passed or failed the examination as a whole. The result profile will also indicate a breakdown of whether or not they had a passing score on each of the structured oral and written components of the examination. If a candidate is unsuccessful on the examination, a detailed Candidate Feedback Report is issued approximately six to eight weeks after the CFPC has released the results.

### **Notifying Residency Program Directors**

It is CFPC policy to allow emergency medicine program directors access to a summary of the results for each of their residents sitting the examination. This information is valuable to help assess the accuracy of their own in-training evaluation process, as well as to indicate whether or not there may be specific strengths or weaknesses in their training program. Additionally, it allows residency programs to support those who are unsuccessful on the examination. If, for any reason, a candidate does not wish to have their exam results released to the program director they must send a written request to the CFPC office within one week of completing the examination. If notice from the candidate is not received by this time, exam results will be forwarded to the program director as part of the CFPC's usual policy and process.

### **Confirmation of Completion of Training**

A Certificate of Added Competence (CAC) in Emergency Medicine for residency eligible candidates requires success on the examination as well as documentation of successful completion of training. The CFPC will contact the training programs to request a certificate of completion of training for all residents. Following the candidate's success on the examination, and the successful completion of the training program, the candidate will be registered as a member of the CFPC with the CCFP (EM) designation.