



RCDC

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF DENTISTS
OF CANADA

Fellowship Examination Policy

Effective: September 2023

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Candidate Application

1. POLICY

01. The Fellowship Examination is offered in either of the official languages, English or French. The candidate's choice of examination language may not be changed after the application deadline.
02. The language of communication with the candidate will default to the official language selected for the examination unless they initiate the exchange in the other official language.
03. Special accommodation may be granted on an individual basis on the grounds of a disability, medical condition, or religious reasons.
04. The College will consider applications to challenge the Fellowship Examinations that are completed within the prescribed application window without penalty.
05. Incomplete applications to challenge the Fellowship Examinations will not be considered.
06. Applications completed after the prescribed application deadline may be refused. If considered, the application may be subject to late fees.
07. Following the approval of an application, admission to challenge the Fellowship Examination is considered valid only for the examination session for which it is granted.
08. Candidates whose results are unsuccessful may be eligible to re-sit the Fellowship Examination provided that they meet the application requirements of a future session.
09. Candidates are able to challenge the Fellowship Examination a maximum of five (5) times.
10. Previously completed dental specialty examinations will not result in an exemption from the Fellowship Examination.
11. Documents and deliberations associated with applications to challenge the Fellowship Examination are strictly confidential.

2. PROCEDURES

Completing an Application

01. Applications completed within the prescribed application window will be considered without penalty.
02. The application window for any session of the Fellowship Examination shall be determined by the Director of Assessments, Associate Examiner-in-Chief, and the Examiner-in-Chief.
03. Interested applicants must satisfy one of the eligibility conditions below:
 - i. having completed or being, at the time of taking the examination, in the final year of a dental specialty training program which, during the course of the candidate's enrollment, was accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or an accreditation body with which CDAC has a reciprocal accreditation agreement;
 - ii. having completed or being, at the time of taking the examination, enrolled in a Dental Specialty Assessment and Training Program (DSATP) for internationally trained dental specialists which, during the course of the candidate's enrollment in the DSATP, was a part of a specialty training program accredited by CDAC or an accreditation body with which CDAC has a reciprocal accreditation agreement, and having approval from the Program Director or the Dean, in the form of a letter, stating that the applicant is prepared academically to sit the examination.
04. To complete an application, interested individuals must submit:
 - i. An online application form;
 - ii. Payment for all applicable fees, and;
 - iii. Proof of eligibility.
05. Applicants may complete the online application form in the official language of their choice. The official language in which to challenge the examination may differ than the one selected to fill out the application form.
06. The examination language selected at the time of application cannot be modified after the closing of the application window.

07. Requests to modify any other information submitted at the time of application must be made in writing to the College.
08. Individuals completing an application within the prescribed window will be invoiced \$3,750, broken down as:
 - i. Application Processing Fee \$500 (required for all applications, not refundable);
 - ii. Examination Fee – \$3,250
09. All fees are in Canadian dollars and payable online
10. Applicants may consult their online profile to verify the status of their application, and to consult which application requirements have been received and which remain outstanding.

Credential Verification

11. College Staff will forward applications for the Registrar, or designate, to review within ten (10) business days of having notified the candidate that the application is complete.
12. The Registrar, or designate, will review complete applications and notify College Staff of his or her decision within ten (10) business days.
13. The Registrar, or designate, may issue one of the following credentialing decisions:
 - i. The application is approved;
 - ii. The application is refused, or;
 - iii. The application requires further review by the Credentials Committee.
14. College Staff will notify applicants of the status of their application within ten (10) business days of the decision of the Registrar or designate.
15. When required, the Registrar, or designate, will notify the Chair of the Credentials Committee of any applications requiring further review.
16. The Chair of the Credentials Committee shall convene the Credentials Committee and conduct any inquiries that he or she deems useful.
17. The Credentials Committee shall issue one of two decisions on the merits of an application within fifteen (15) business days. Either:
 - i. The application is approved, or;
 - ii. The application is refused.
18. When applicable, College Staff will notify applicants of the status of their application within five (5) business days of the decision of the Credentials Committee.
19. Applicants whose application has been approved will officially become candidates registered to challenge the next Fellowship Examination offering.

Late Applications

20. Applications completed after the closing of the application window may be refused. The Director of Assessments will notify College Staff whether a specialty is able to accommodate any additional candidates.
21. If an application can be accommodated in the specialty of choice, the applicant may proceed with a late application. If the application is approved, the applicant will officially become a candidate for the upcoming examination session.
22. If an application cannot be accommodated in the specialty of choice, the applicant may proceed with an application. However, if the application is approved, the applicant will only be added to the wait list.
23. A wait-listed applicant will join the pool of regular candidates when there is a withdrawal in his or her specialty.
24. In order to complete a late application, interested individuals may be subject to the application requirements and fee structure outlined in 1 – 04 to 09.
25. Late applications may be subject to late fees calculated on a base amount of \$575 to which \$115 are added for every week that elapses after the closing of the application window.
26. Late fees will continue to accrue until all of the requirements to complete an application are received, and are not refundable.

27. College Staff will forward applications for the Registrar, or designate, to review within ten (10) business days of having notified the candidate that the application is complete.
28. The Registrar, or designate, will review complete applications and notify College Staff of his or her decision within ten (10) business days.
29. The Registrar, or designate, may issue one of the following credentialing decisions:
 - i. The application is approved;
 - ii. The application is refused, or;
 - iii. The application requires further review by the Credentials Committee.
30. College Staff will notify applicants of the status of their application within ten (10) business days of the decision of the Registrar, or designate.
31. When required, the Registrar, or designate, will notify the Chair of the Credentials Committee of any applications requiring further review.
32. The Chair of the Credentials Committee shall convene the Credentials Committee and conduct any inquiries that he or she deems useful.
33. The Credentials Committee shall issue one of two decisions on the merits of an application within fifteen (15) business days. Either:
 - i. The application is approved, or;
 - ii. The application is refused.
34. When applicable, College Staff will notify applicants of the status of their application within five (5) business days of the decision of the Credentials Committee.

Withdrawals and Refunds

35. It is not possible to defer an application from one session of the Fellowship Examination to another. If a candidate is unable to challenge the examination during the session for which he or she applied, he or she must withdraw and re-apply during the appropriate application window for a future session.
36. Requests to withdraw from the Fellowship Examinations must be submitted in writing to the College.
37. Refunds are calculated in accordance with the date of receipt of the written request and the notice period in advance of the examination.
38. The Application Processing Fee and Late Fees are non-refundable.
39. Candidates are entitled to receive 100% of refundable fees when withdrawing prior to the closing of the application.
40. Candidates are entitled to receive 75% of refundable fees if withdrawing more than ninety (90) days from the date of the examination, but after the closing of the application window.
41. Candidates are entitled to receive 50% of refundable fees paid if withdrawing more than sixty (60) days, but ninety (90) days or less, from the date of the examination.
42. Candidates are entitled to receive 25% of refundable fees if withdrawing more than thirty (30) days, but sixty (60) days or less, from the date of the examination.
43. Candidates are not entitled to a refund when withdrawing less than thirty (30) days from the date of the examination.
44. Refunds are issued in Canadian funds.

Special Accommodation

3. POLICY

01. Candidates may petition to receive special accommodation at the Fellowship Examination on the grounds of a disability, medical condition, or for religious reasons.
02. The special accommodation policy is compliant with accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
03. Special accommodation will only be granted for the same session for which the candidate's application has been approved.

4. PROCEDURES

Submitting a Request for Special Accommodation

01. Candidates requiring special accommodation to challenge the Fellowship Examination must identify their requirements when completing the online application form.
02. College Staff will follow up with candidates who identify their accommodation needs at the time of application to assist with the submission of a special accommodation request form.
03. The completed special accommodation request form must be received by the College within sixty (60) days of the examination for which the individual is seeking special accommodation.
04. The type of supporting documentation may vary depending on the nature and extent of the accommodations requested.
05. Appropriate documentation that would support a candidate's request for accommodation could include a medical report, a detailed physician's note, or an official letter from the leader of a religious congregation.
06. Supporting documentation must be dated no more than twelve (12) months prior to the date of the examination.
07. College Staff will review requests for special accommodation, ensure their confidentiality, and discuss available options with the Director of Assessments, the Associate Examiner-in-Chief, and the Examiner-in-Chief, when required.
08. College Staff will notify the candidate in writing whether special accommodations will be granted and, if that is to be the case, list the ways in which the accommodations will be provided.
09. The candidate must signal in writing whether they agree to the accommodations offered, if any.
10. When required, the Director of Assessments, Associate Examiner-in-Chief, and the Examiner-in-Chief will ensure that examination teams, or a portion thereof, receive the adequate training in order to administer the examination(s) in accordance with the accommodations granted to the candidate.

Formal Reviews

5. POLICY

01. Formal Reviews of examinations are conducted only on the basis of alleged significant irregularities in the procedures of the administration of the examination, rather than on examination content.
02. Procedural irregularities of sufficient magnitude to materially affect a candidate's performance must be reported to Head Office immediately after the examination.
03. The Examiner-in-Chief and their designate(s) are authorized to act on the spot to correct a process irregularity whenever possible. Such intervention does not preclude a candidate from submitting a request for a Formal Review.
04. Incomplete requests for a Formal Review, or those completed after the prescribed deadlines shall not be considered or processed.
05. Documents and any deliberations associated with the Formal Review process are strictly confidential.
06. The decision of the Formal Review Panel at the Oral Hearing shall be final and binding. There shall be no proceedings for further review or appeal following this decision.

6. PROCEDURES

Publishing the Fellowship Examination Results

01. Candidates may view their results on their RCDC account within forty-five (45) days of the Examination; a Pass or Fail notice will be published.
02. Unsuccessful candidates will be provided with a letter identifying their areas of weakness signed by the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief.

Notification of an Alleged Irregularity During or Immediately After an Examination

03. A candidate shall bring any procedural irregularities that may materially affect their performance to the attention of their Examiners during an examination.
04. Following each examination, candidates will be asked to identify any procedural irregularities that may materially affect their performance in an Incident Report form sent by College Staff. Examiners will be asked to complete a similar document. Both parties must submit their completed forms to College Staff within prescribed timelines.
05. College Staff will ensure that the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief receives a full account of the alleged process irregularities following the administration of the Fellowship Examination.

Submitting a Written Formal Review Request

06. Candidates whose examination results were unsuccessful may request a formal review from the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief on the grounds of the procedural irregularities reported as part of 6 – 03 to 05.
07. The College must receive a complete request for a Formal Review within fifteen (15) calendar days of the communication of examination results.
08. A complete request for a Formal Review includes a written statement outlining the details and circumstances relating to the alleged process irregularities and a payment for the administrative fee of \$575.
09. Candidates wishing to petition for a Formal Review who did not report any procedural irregularities in the manner outlined in 6 – 03 to 05 must include in their written statement the extenuating circumstances, if any, that prevented them from doing so.
10. Completed requests shall be acknowledged in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt.

Review by the Examiner-in-Chief

11. College Staff shall submit completed requests for a Formal Review received within the prescribed timeframe to the Chair of the Appeals Committee within ten (10) business days.
12. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall convene the Appeals Committee to address the candidate's request and obtain the appropriate supporting documentation from Head Office.
13. The Chair shall submit completed requests for a Formal Review and the appropriate supporting documentation to the Examiner-in-Chief within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the completed request.
14. The Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall evaluate the request and conduct any inquiries that they may deem useful.
15. The Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall reply to the candidate in a non-binding written opinion letter within thirty (30) calendar days from receiving the supporting documentation from the Appeals Committee.
16. The letter of opinion shall confirm whether the alleged grounds for a Formal Review are founded and, if so, what remedy should be accorded, if any.
17. If the remedy offered by the Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief includes a make-up examination, the candidate will be notified of the date for its administration within thirty (30) calendar days of the communication of the letter of opinion.
18. The Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall forward their letter of opinion to the Chair of the Appeals Committee, who will in turn forward it to be communicated to the candidate.
19. The Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall notify the Chief Examiner in the candidate's specialty of the Formal Review and of the outcome of their review as part of Step 1.
20. Candidates who wish to have their request considered further may request a review by a Formal Review Panel.
21. Candidates are responsible for completing an application for a future session within the prescribed deadlines, even while their Formal Review is in progress. Doing so will ensure their registration to challenge the examination at the next opportunity in the event that the appeal is unsuccessful.

Document Review by a Formal Review Panel

22. The candidate, or their agent, must submit the request to proceed to a document review by a Formal Review Panel in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the communication of the Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief's letter of opinion.
23. The written request explaining in detail the facts and circumstances relating to the alleged process irregularities must be accompanied by a payment of \$1,150 for the administrative fees of the Formal Review Panel.
24. The written request for a review by a Formal Review Panel must outline and explain in detail the facts and circumstances relating to the alleged process irregularity and why the remedy or explanation offered by the Examiner-in-Chief or Associate Examiner-in-Chief are insufficient.
25. The request shall be acknowledged in writing and forwarded to the Chair of the Appeals Committee within five (5) business days.
26. The Chair shall notify the Examiner-in-Chief and Associate Examiner-in-Chief of the request to proceed to Step 2, and formally convene the Appeals Committee to address the candidate's request to proceed with a document review by a Formal Review Panel within ten (10) business days of receiving the completed request.
27. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the request to proceed with a document review by a Formal Review Panel, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall appoint a Formal Review Panel consisting of three (3) Fellows in good standing who are not Examiners in the candidate's specialty, faculty members in the candidate's specialty training program, or certified in the candidate's specialty.

28. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will ensure that the members of the Formal Review Panel have no other conflicts of interest with the candidate, or with any individual identified by the candidate in their request.
29. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will designate one of the Formal Review Panel members to serve as Chair.
30. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall provide the Chair of the Formal Review Panel with procedural instructions, the templates for panel deliverables, and the materials relevant to the review, such as:
 - i. The original written request for a Formal Review provided by the candidate.
 - ii. The Examiner-in-Chief's or Associate Examiner-in-Chief's letter of opinion.
 - iii. All available and relevant documents and information pertaining to the examination in question.
 - iv. Documentation the candidate wishes to submit to the Formal Review Panel.
31. The Formal Review Panel shall set a date for its consideration of that documentation under conditions of strict confidentiality and conclude its deliberations within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the supporting documentation.
32. As part of its deliberations, the Formal Review Panel must address the following:
 - i. Whether the Examiner-in-Chief's or Associate Examiner-in-Chief's letter of opinion addressed the alleged process irregularities presented in the candidate's original Formal Review request.
 - ii. Whether the remedy offered in the Examiner-in-Chief's or Associate Examiner-in-Chief's letter of opinion was appropriate, if any.
 - iii. Any new supporting documentation that may have been brought to the panel's attention.
33. Following its review of the matter, the Chair of the Formal Review Panel shall deliver its decision in writing to the Chair of the Appeals Committee by completing the templates provided for:
 - i. The Report to the Chair of the Appeals Committee; and,
 - ii. The Letter to the Candidate.
34. The available decision options are as follows:
 - i. No process irregularity has occurred.
 - ii. There was a process irregularity, but not of such magnitude that it could affect materially the candidate's performance or results.
 - iii. There was a process irregularity of sufficient magnitude to affect materially the candidate's performance or results.
 - iv. A repeat examination is allowed at the next examination session of the specialty.
 - v. A repeat examination is allowed at a special session held for one or several candidates, if such an examination is deemed feasible.
35. In cases in which a repeat examination is granted:
 - i. The examination subjected to review is to be treated as null and void.
 - ii. The Formal Review Panel shall immediately waive the associated examination and application fees.
 - iii. A repeat examination will include all portions of the original exam that was reviewed.
 - iv. The candidate will be notified of the date of its administration within thirty (30) calendar days of the communication of the panel's decision.
36. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall notify the Examiner-in-Chief and Associate Examiner-in-Chief of the outcome of the panel deliberations, and inform Head Office of the panel's decision that is to be communicated to the candidate.
37. The Formal Review Panel may recommend modified examination formats or submission requirements, subject to approval and implementation by the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief.

38. The Formal Review Panel may, at its discretion, waive the \$1,150 administrative fee, and order, when justified, that other expenses incurred by the candidate as part of the Formal Review (e.g.: travel and accommodation) be paid by the College.
39. The Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall notify the Chief Examiner in the candidate's specialty of the Document Review by a Formal Review Panel and of the outcome of Step 2.
40. If the candidate, or their agent, is not satisfied with the decision of the Formal Review Panel, he or she may request a reconsideration of the matter at their expense by way of an oral hearing before the Formal Review Panel, or such other review panel as may be appointed if it is impossible or impractical to reconstitute the original Formal Review Panel.
41. Candidates are responsible for completing an application for a future session within the prescribed deadlines, even while their Formal Review is in progress. Doing so will ensure their registration to challenge the examination at the next opportunity in the event that the appeal is unsuccessful.

Oral Hearing by a Formal Review Panel

42. The candidate, or their agent, must submit a written request for reconsideration by way of an oral hearing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the communication of the Formal Review Panel's decision.
43. The written request for an oral hearing must be accompanied by an administrative fee in the amount of \$1,725.
44. The candidate must outline the reasons for requesting an oral hearing and the basis upon which they dispute the decision of the Formal Review Panel.
45. Head Office shall notify the Chair of the Appeals Committee of the candidate's request to proceed to an oral hearing within five (5) business days.
46. Except under exceptional circumstances, no additional information will be considered if it was not previously provided to the Formal Review Panel if it could have been provided prior to the initial consideration of the matter.
47. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall formally convene the Appeals Committee to discuss the candidate's request within ten (10) business days of receiving it.
48. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall notify the Formal Review Panel of the candidate's request within ten (10) business days of receiving it so that it may set a date, time, and place for the oral hearing.
49. The Formal Review Panel shall set a date, time, and place for an oral hearing and notify the Chair of the Appeals Committee within ten (10) calendar days. The date for the hearing must fall within forty-five (45) calendar days of the receipt of the request to proceed with an oral hearing.
50. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will notify Head Office of the date, time, and place for the oral hearing so that the candidate may be informed.
51. The oral hearing can be held in-person or via video teleconference (i.e. Zoom) at the discretion of the Chair of the Appeals Committee.
52. The candidate may attend such an oral hearing, with or without counsel or another personal representative, and shall be entitled to make oral submissions at the hearing, and/or have oral submissions made on behalf of his/her person by his/her counsel or personal representative in attendance.
53. If the candidate wishes to attend the oral hearing with counsel, they must advise Head Office at least fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the oral hearing regardless of whether the hearing is held in-person or via video teleconference.
54. The College may have its counsel present at the oral hearing.
55. The oral hearing shall be conducted in a manner that the Formal Review Panel Chair considers appropriate.
56. The Formal Review Panel will not be bound by the rules of law concerning evidence applicable to judicial proceedings.

57. The candidate may be given information pertaining to the documentation review, at the discretion of the panel.
58. The Formal Review Panel may redact any information pertaining to the examination that, in its opinion, may undermine the integrity of the examination process if disclosed.
59. The Formal Review Panel shall issue its decision in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days of the oral hearing. The decision, along with any recommendation, shall be forwarded to the Chair of the Appeals Committee by completing the templates provided for:
 - i. The Report to the Chair of the Appeals Committee; and,
 - ii. The Letter to the Candidate.
60. The decision options of the Formal Review Panel following an oral hearing are as follows:
 - i. No process irregularity occurred.
 - ii. A process irregularity did occur, but not of sufficient magnitude to have materially affected the candidate's performance or results.
 - iii. A process irregularity of sufficient magnitude to have materially affected the candidate's performance or results did occur, and warrants that the results of the original examination be overturned.
 - iv. A process irregularity of sufficient magnitude to have materially affected the candidate's performance or results did occur, and warrants the administration of a repeat examination at a special session.
61. In cases in which a repeat examination is granted:
 - i. The Formal Review Panel may consult the Examiner-in-Chief in order to determine the sections of the original examination that the candidate should re-sit at a special session.
 - ii. The section(s) of the original examination that must be re-administered will be treated as null and void.
 - iii. The Formal Review Panel shall waive any associated examination and application fees.
 - iv. The candidate will be notified of the date of its administration within thirty (30) calendar days of the communication of the panel's decision.
62. The review panel may, at its discretion, waive the \$1,725 administrative fee or any portion thereof and/or, in exceptional circumstances, order the College to pay the reasonable candidate expenses in relation to the oral hearing, including travel and accommodations.
63. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall notify the Examiner-in-Chief of the outcome of the oral hearing and inform Head Office of the panel's decision that is to be communicated to the candidate.
64. The Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall notify the Chief Examiner in the candidate's specialty of the Oral Hearing by a Formal Review Panel and of the outcome of Step 3.

Conflict Declarations

7. POLICY

01. Candidates and Examiners must declare conflicts with each other ahead of the Fellowship Examination.
02. A declaration of conflicts is required when either an Examiner or a candidate believes the oral examination process will be influenced by one another.
03. The following are conflict situations that must be avoided:
 - i. The Examiner is an instructor or program director in the dental speciality training program in which the candidate is enrolled.
 - ii. The Examiner taught the candidate in a dental speciality training program in which the candidate was previously enrolled.
 - iii. The Examiner works with the candidate in clinical practice, in an educational setting, or on a committee.
 - iv. The Examiner is a family friend or relative or participates/participated with candidate in an extracurricular capacity.
 - v. The candidate has applied to work for or with the Examiner and where lines of communication have been opened and a potential position discussed in that examiner's practice.
04. The following situations should be reviewed with each party but in many circumstances are not problematic:
 - i. The Examiner has previously examined the candidate.
 - ii. The Examiner was an instructor in an undergraduate dental program in which the candidate was enrolled.
 - iii. The Examiner works at the dental school where the candidate is enrolled/works, but there is no direct contact between the two.
05. Every conflict declaration will be reviewed by the Director of Assessments or a designate and at times by the Associate Examiner-in-Chief or Examiner-in-Chief.
06. While conflicts between candidates and Examiners should be avoided, there may be unforeseen or extenuating circumstances where conflicts cannot be avoided.

8. PROCEDURES

Examiner Conflict Declarations

01. Chief Examiners will submit the names of potential Examiners to the Director of Assessments or a designate, who will then provide them to the Examiner-in-Chief and Associate Examiner-in-Chief.
02. The Director of Assessments or a designate will inform Examiners when they are able to log into the conflict declaration system to declare conflicts with both the names and images of candidates in their specialty.

Candidate Conflict Declarations

03. The Director of Assessments or a designate will inform College Staff when the conflict declaration system is ready for candidates.
04. College Staff will then reach out to candidates to inform them that they are able to log into the conflict declaration system to declare conflicts with the names and images of Examiners for their specialty.

Conflict Declarations Review

01. Once all conflict declarations have been submitted, they will be reviewed individually by the Director of Assessments or a designate. In cases where a decision on a conflict declaration is unclear, the Director of Assessments or their designate will forward it to the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief.
02. In the event that a candidate conflict declaration has been rejected during the review, College Staff will inform the candidates affected and provide them the opportunity to clarify the nature of the conflicts. These clarifications will be presented to the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief for a final decision.
03. In the event that an Examiner conflict declaration has been rejected by the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief, the Director of Assessments or a designate will inform the Examiner affected and provide them the opportunity to clarify the nature of the conflicts. These clarifications will be presented to the Associate Examiner-in-Chief and/or Examiner-in-Chief for a final decision.

Candidate Misconduct

9. POLICY

01. Candidates are required to maintain the confidentiality of the examination content and information that they encounter at any point during the examination process. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from the examination process and/or legal action by The Royal College of Dentists of Canada.
02. Unless otherwise instructed by The Royal College of Dentists of Canada, candidates are not permitted to use or have in their possession electronic, recording and/or communication devices from the time of registration until the time they sign-out at the end of the examination day.
03. Candidates cannot communicate directly with the Examiner-in-Chief, Associate Examiner-in-Chief, Chief Examiners, Examiners, and/or Members of the Board of Directors about their examination or examination content. All communication must go through Head Office of the College.
04. Candidates who are caught engaging in alleged misconduct or violating any of the rules or regulations during the administration of the examination will be immediately disqualified from the examination process.
05. Candidates who are found to have engaged in alleged misconduct or violated any of the rules or regulations following the administration of the examination will be immediately disqualified from the examination process.
06. Candidates who are found to have engaged in alleged misconduct during their examination after becoming Fellows will be subject to the processes prescribed in the Bylaws.
07. The decision of the Formal Review Panel is final and binding. There shall be no proceedings for further appeals following this decision.

10. PROCEDURES

Misconduct during the Examination

01. In the event that an Examiner or Examination personnel observe that a candidate is committing misconduct or cheating during the examination, the Examiner or Examination personnel may immediately stop the examination.
02. The candidate will be informed by the Examiner or Examination personnel on the reasons for the conclusion of their examination.
03. Within twenty-four (24) hours of the alleged incident, the candidate will be informed by the Examiner-in-Chief or designate of the avenues at their disposition for appealing this decision. The candidate will also be informed that they will not be permitted to sit the remaining examination sessions (if applicable). The candidate will sign an agreement confirming that this step was taken.
04. The Examiner or Examination personnel who initially observed the alleged misconduct and the Examiner-in-Chief or designate will complete a comprehensive incident report and submit it to the Director of Assessments or designate.

Misconduct following the Examination

By a candidate

05. If any irregularities are noted following the administration of the examination, the Examiner-in-Chief or designate will launch an investigation.
06. The Examiner-in-Chief or designate will review the evidence of alleged misconduct or irregularity and make a decision.
07. The Examiner-in-Chief or designate is able to make one of the following determinations:
 - i. Dismiss the allegation.
 - ii. Fail the candidate(s) involved and prohibit the candidate(s) from sitting any future administration for a predetermined period of time.

- iii. Fail the candidate(s) involved and prohibit the candidate(s) from sitting any future administration of the examination.
08. Should the Examiner-in-Chief or designate determine that misconduct occurred, the candidate(s) in question will receive written notice of the outcomes of the investigation within five (5) business days of that decision. This notice will include information about the decision and the procedure for appeal.
09. The results of the candidate(s) will remain null until the appeal process is completed and a decision is final, or if the deadline for a candidate to launch an appeal has passed.

By a Fellow

10. Should a candidate be found to have engaged in misconduct at any point during or after their examination after becoming a Fellow, they will be subject to Bylaw 9.5 Discipline of Members.

Candidate Appeal

11. A candidate who has been found to have committed misconduct or cheated can appeal the decision by the Examiner-in-Chief or designate by filing a written appeal to Head Office within twenty (20) calendar days of the notice being shared with them.
12. An appeal must clearly state the specific relief being requested, and detail any documentation and evidence which supports this claim.
13. Head Office will acknowledge receipt of this appeal in writing and forward it to the Director of Assessments within five (5) business days.

Review by the Appeals Committee

14. The Director of Assessments will notify the Chair of the Appeals Committee of the appeal request within ten (10) business days of receipt.
15. The Chair will notify the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief of the appeal request, and formally convene the Appeals Committee to address the candidate's request within ten (10) business days of receiving the completed request from the Director of Assessments.
16. Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the request to proceed with an appeal, the Chair of the Appeals Committee shall appoint a Formal Review Panel consisting of three Fellows in good standing who are not Examiners in the candidate's specialty, faculty members in the candidate's specialty training program, or certified in the candidate's specialty.
17. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will ensure that the members of the Formal Review panel have no other conflicts of interest with the candidate, or with any individual identified by the candidate in his or her request.
18. The Chair of the Appeals Committee will designate one of the Formal Review panel members to serve as Chair.
19. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall provide the Chair of the Formal Review panel with procedural instructions, the templates for Panel deliverables, and the materials relevant to the review, such as
 - i. Any and all incident reports of the alleged misconduct.
 - ii. The outcomes of the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief's investigation.
 - iii. All available and relevant documents and information pertaining to the examination in question.
 - iv. Supporting document or evidence the candidate submitted along with their appeals request.
20. The Formal Review Panel shall set a date for its consideration of this documentation under conditions of strict confidentiality and conclude its deliberations within thirty (30) calendar days from the receipt of the request for review by a Formal Review panel.
21. Following its review of the matter, the Chair of the Formal Review Panel shall deliver its decision in writing to the Chair of the Appeals Committee by completing the templates provided for:

- i. The Report to the Chair of the Appeals Committee; and,
 - ii. The Letter to the Candidate.
22. The available decision options are as follows:
 - i. Confirmation that there was misconduct by the candidate and the outcomes identified by the Examiner-in-Chief or designate are appropriate.
 - ii. Confirmation that there was misconduct by the candidate and the outcomes identified by the Examiner-in-Chief or designate must be revised. This may include pursuing legal action by the College.
 - iii. There was no misconduct by the candidate and a repeat examination is allowed either at the next examination session for the specialty or at a special session, if deemed feasible.
 - iv. There was no misconduct by the candidate and the initial examination results stand.
23. In cases in which a repeat examination is granted:
 - i. The examination subjected to review is to be treated as null and void.
 - ii. The Formal Review Panel shall immediately waive the associated examination and application fees.
 - iii. A repeat examination will include all portions of the original exam that was reviewed.
 - iv. The candidate will be notified of the date of its administration within thirty (30) calendar days of the communication of the Panel's decision.
24. The Chair of the Appeals Committee shall notify the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief of the outcome of the Panel deliberations and inform the Director of Assessments of the panel's decision that is to be communicated to the candidate.
25. The Formal Review Panel may recommend modified examination formats or submission requirements, subject to approval and implementation by the Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief.
26. The Examiner-in-Chief and/or Associate Examiner-in-Chief shall notify the Chief Examiner in the candidate's specialty of the outcome of the appeals process.
27. Candidates are responsible for completing an application for a future examination session within the prescribed deadlines, even while their appeal is in progress. Doing so will ensure their registration to challenge the examination at the next opportunity in the event that the appeal is unsuccessful.



Definitions

“Cheating” means the sharing, copying, publishing or providing to anyone examination questions or answers by any means, including in person, by telephone, electronically or digitally. Cheating also includes giving a summary or recollection of a question to someone else by any means.

“Disqualification from the examination process” means any of the following: expulsion from the examination administration; withholding, voiding or invalidation of examination results; revoking of candidate application.

“Electronic, recording and/or communication devices” means a cell phone, pager, smartphone, camera, laptop, USB or memory stick, smartwatch and any other digital device.

“Examination personnel” means any staff or volunteer of The Royal College of Dentists of Canada that is involved in the examination process.

“Irregularities” means a situation in which there could be a question about the validity of examination results in accurately reflecting the ability and skills of a candidate. These are a result of cheating and/or misconduct.

“Misconduct” means any of the following: cheating; obtaining access to unauthorized examination content; taking an examination for someone else; utilizing electronic, recording and/or communication devices to receive or share examination content; using unauthorized items during the examination.

“Process irregularity” means any procedural unfairness affecting one or several candidates.