

THE COLLEGE OF
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Candidate Guide to the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine

Table of Contents

Preface.....	2
Candidate Code of Conduct.....	3
Non-Disclosure Statement.....	3
Examination Description	4
Examination Components.....	4
The Written Examination.....	4
The Oral Examination –.....	5
General Information	6
Personal Belongings.....	6
Travel	6
Health, Wellness and Nutrition.....	6
Emergencies	7
Late Arrival Policy.....	7
Process Errors.....	7
Cancellation Policy.....	8
The Marking of the Examination.....	9
Notifying Residency Program Directors	9
Confirmation of Completion of Training.....	9

Preface

This is a guide for all candidates planning to sit the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine of The College of Family Physicians of Canada. It provides background information to assist in the preparation for the examination.

When meeting all requirements, examination candidates who challenge and pass this exam will be granted a Certificate of Added Competence in Family Medicine Emergency Medicine and may 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. It sets a standard of added competence, and not all candidates will necessarily succeed. In certification, the College recognizes the achievement of a standard of practice that should reflect 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 your own programs. For those candidates who are qualifying as practice eligible candidates, you are invited to approach the nearest university program of family medicine/emergency medicine to arrange some examination practice experience. Please refer to the individual university websites for current contact information.

Candidate Code of Conduct

Any action that might compromise the proper conduct of the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine of the College of Family Physicians of Canada is considered unprofessional behaviour and is in breach of the Candidate Code of Conduct. Such actions might include:

- Giving or attempting to give to, or receiving or attempting to receive information from other candidates (talking or passing notes) or from any other source (i.e., using an electronic device or written material) during the examination,
- Observing or attempting to observe the answers of, or showing or attempting to show answers to, another candidate,
- Copying or attempting to copy or removing, or attempting to remove examination materials from the examination site, or
- Divulging or attempting to divulge to anyone the nature or content of any question or answer on the Examination of Special Competence in Emergency Medicine.
- Demonstrating behaviour that is disruptive, aggressive or that threatens the safety of staff or other candidates.

Any candidate found to have violated the Candidate Code of Conduct will face penalties to be determined by the CFPC Board of Examinations and Certification. Consequences of unprofessional behaviour may include forfeiture of examination fees, invalidation of examination results, suspension or disqualification from future examinations and being reported to the medical regulatory authorities.

Non-Disclosure Statement

The circulation of examination content among candidates potentially jeopardises the CFPC's ability to provide a reliable and valid instrument. All candidates will be required to sign the following non-disclosure statement at the time of application for the examination and again at the start of each component of the examination.

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 examinations be presented with the Certificate of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine of 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 of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine and I will abide by the Candidate Code of Conduct as printed above.

I understand that failure to comply with this attestation may result in penalties to be determined by the Board of Examinations and Certification which may include: forfeiture of my examination fees, invalidation of my examination results, disqualification from future examinations of The College of Family Physicians of Canada and being reported to the medical regulatory authorities.

I am a candidate for the Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine of 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 oral examination. The written component includes short answer management problems (SAMPs).

The oral component includes structured oral interviews. The content to be assessed for each sitting of the examination is distributed between the two components. In order 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 days.

A list of priority topics and key features for the assessment of added competence in emergency medicine can be found on the CFPC website: [cfpc.ca/priority topics in EM](https://www.cfpc.ca/priority-topics-in-em)

Please also see [https://www.cfpc.ca/Preparing for the EM Examination/](https://www.cfpc.ca/Preparing-for-the-EM-Examination/) for additional resources

The Written Examination

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

The SAMP component will be delivered on computers and will be held in Prometric testing sites in various locations. Once the applications have been approved, candidates will be directed to a website where they will select the time and location for their testing appointment. Each testing appointment is 7.5 hours in length; this includes, in addition to two 3-hour testing windows and a 1-hour break, time to review the non-disclosure agreement, take a tutorial on the delivery software and to complete a satisfaction survey. Plan to spend approximately 8 hours at the testing site.

Take the time to review the tutorial at the beginning of the examination. The time dedicated to 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 and cannot be undone.

Sample SAMPs are posted on the College's website to familiarize you with the examination format and the scoring approach. [cfpc.ca/EMSAMPs](https://www.cfpc.ca/EMSAMPs)

In addition to the sample SAMPs, the website provides a list of helpful resources: What to expect on exam day, SAMP Software tutorial and video demonstration designed to familiarize you with the testing platform that you will use on exam day.

The Oral Examination –

The structured oral examination is comprised of one 25-minute triple case and two 12-minute cases.

These examinations are designed to duplicate, insofar 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 your diagnostic approach, use and interpretation of data, and your ability to reach an appropriate diagnosis and institute an appropriate, timely treatment plan.

To help you prepare for the oral examination, the committee on examinations has provided detailed instructions about what to expect and how to proceed during a structured oral examination. Please refer to the CFPC website for more details.

[cfpc.ca/EM Exam Structured Orals](http://cfpc.ca/EM_Exam_Structured_Orals)

General Information

Personal Belongings

No personal items will be permitted in the 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 of them as possible.

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. Clocks will be provided in every oral examination room.

Must Bring Items:

Both testing days:

- government issued photo identification (e.g., driver's license or passport)

Travel

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

It is the candidate's 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 will not accept responsibility for candidates arriving late.

Departure travel should not be scheduled prior to 8:00 pm on the day of your scheduled Oral exam.

When making travel arrangements, candidates are welcome to use the CFPC's corporate travel provider, www.visiontravel.ca

Health, Wellness and Nutrition

If an exam candidate feels their performance will be adversely affected due to health or personal reasons, they should not sit the examination. Please inform the CFPC or the exam centre coordinator immediately.

As a courtesy to other candidates and examiners, candidates are asked to please refrain from wearing perfume, aftershave, or any other scented products during the examination.

Food should not be consumed during the examination. However, 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 plastic bag.

Candidates who require any type of modification to the testing environment (i.e., 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.

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 ext. 405 or ext. 206.

Late Arrival Policy

SAMPs

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 am, you should arrive at the testing center at 7:30 am.)

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

If you arrive at the testing center more than 30 minutes later than your scheduled appointment, you will not be allowed to test and you will forfeit your exam fee. (For example, if your scheduled appointment time is 8:00 am, and you arrive at the testing center at 8:31 or later, you will not be allowed to test and you will forfeit your exam fee.)

Oral Exam

Candidates who arrive at the examination site after the start of their first scheduled oral may be accommodated at the discretion of the local examination coordinator ONLY if the schedule allows. In the event that the center is unable to accommodate the candidate, 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 has occurred, it should be brought immediately 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 Board of Examinations and Certification 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 60 days or more prior to the date of the examination will be subject to a penalty of \$500.
- Candidates who withdraw within 30 to 60 days prior to the date of the examination will be subject to a penalty of one-half (50%) of the examination fee.
- There is no refund for candidates who withdraw within 30 days of the examination.

Candidates must withdraw and re-apply should they wish to take the examination at a later date. Fees paid for a previous attempt are not transferable to a later session.

To cancel an exam, send an email to ccfpexam@cfpc.ca . The email should include your full name and CFPC member ID number as well as the exam you are withdrawing from.

Cancellation fees will be applied.

The Marking of the Examination

Approximately eight weeks after the examination, the results from all parts of the exam are available for analysis. The Board of Examinations and Certification reviews all the results and recommends who should be certificated. Number identifies candidates to the Board of Examinations and Certification only so that marking is completely anonymous. Results are usually forwarded by mail to all candidates within two weeks of this meeting. Results are also posted in the secure “MEMBERS” section of the CFPC website. Candidates will be notified by e-mail as soon as the results are available online. Candidates are encouraged to register their username and password to access the MEMBERS section in advance.

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 short-answer management problem and the expected performance on the oral examination. Clear criteria are defined for both examiners and markers against which candidate performance will be compared. Candidates will also be expected to demonstrate a level of performance consistent with their peers in order 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 every component of the examination in order to be successful on the entire examination. Candidates will be informed of whether they have passed or failed the examination as a whole. The result profile will also indicate whether or not they had a passing score on each of the oral and written components of the examination.

Notifying Residency Program Directors

It is the policy of the CFPC 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 please send a written request to this office within one week of completion of the examination. If notice has not been received from the candidate 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 Family Medicine 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.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada
2630 Skymark Ave
Mississauga ON L4W 5A4
905-629-0900
Fax: 905-629-0893
ISBN 1-896014-98-4