

April 6, 2015

Dear Colleague,

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the relationship between Certificates of Added Competence (CACs) and the existing College designation in Emergency Medicine (CCFP (EM)), for both current holders of the CCFP (EM) designation, and for those who may seek to acquire the right to use it in the future by successfully challenging the EM examination, either from practice or from residency training.

The main message for those with the CCFP (EM) is that you do not have to change anything at this time. There is no obligation to apply for a CAC in Emergency Medicine. You may continue to use the CCFP (EM) designation for as long as you wish, as long as you continue to meet the maintenance of competence (MOC) requirements established by the College.

The MOC requirements for the CCFP (EM) will be updated in the future to reflect some specific maintenance requirements in EM itself, and to provide a more structured approach to the planning and reporting of your continuing professional development (CPD) activities. These changes will come into effect at the end of your current Mainpro cycle or as you start your new cycle. The impact of these changes on your CCFP (EM) designation status may not be evident for up to five or more years. Further detail on this will be provided at a later date. It bears repeating that you will be subject to the new MOC requirements regardless of whether or not you apply for a CAC. They are based on the CCFP (EM) designation regardless of how it was achieved. No one will lose the right to use the CCFP (EM) designation unless they have not met the MOC requirements over a complete cycle, and have not successfully remediated the situation.

It is also important to note that nothing will change related to the routes available for obtaining the CCFP (EM) designation in the first place. The only access will be through the EM examination, as it now exists, and the two eligibility routes will remain the same - from accredited resident training programs, or from practice - under the same conditions. The only difference will be that, starting with the September 2016 EM examination, successful candidates will receive a Certificate of Added Competence instead of the Certificate of Special Competence that is currently given. There will be no other route to getting a CAC for Emergency Medicine. Other domains of care with CACs include options for leader or previous residency routes that will be temporarily available. Further information about this follows below.

The following are some of the common questions received to date about CACs. We are pleased to share the responses to help keep all CCFP (EM)s informed.

1. **Any current CCFP (EM) may obtain a CAC, if they wish to do so.** This is entirely optional. You may obtain a new certificate by following a simple application procedure and paying a nominal fee. The advantages of obtaining a CAC are mainly symbolic, but may be important for many. The exact application procedure is described on the CAC web site ([www.cfpc.ca/cac](http://www.cfpc.ca/cac)). There is no requirement

to be actively practicing in an emergency department in order to obtain a CAC if you are a CCFP (EM) in good standing.

**What are some reasons for obtaining a CAC?**

- a) Starting in 2016, all future CCFP (EM) s will receive a CAC, and “CAC” will be the only term used in all communications for official purposes, such as academic qualifications or credentials. Current CCFP (EM) s may wish to have the same qualification as their future colleagues.
- b) CAC will be the only official term used for the recognition of successful achievement of the added competencies of all domains recognized by the CFPC, either from residency or from practice. Individuals may wish to have the same qualification as their colleagues with added competence in other domains of care in family medicine.
- c) CACs will have the date of the new award as well as the date of the original award (Certificate of Special Competence) to maintain historical accuracy.
- d) Those who wish to continue to use the CCFP (EM) designation over time will be subject to the modified CPD requirements, even if they have not obtained a CAC.

2. **What steps should be followed by experienced CCFP physicians providing emergency care, without a CCFP (EM), who wish to obtain the designation in the future?** The EM examination and the practice eligibility route to the examination have been established and used for over 30 years. The practice eligibility route is used by more than fifty family physicians each year to access the examination. Therefore, any practicing CCFP family physician may sit the EM examination to obtain a CAC. If successful, they will gain the right to use the CCFP (EM) designation. No alternative route has been established.
3. **What steps should be followed by experienced CFPC Members (MCFP) working in EM, who wish to obtain the designation in the future?** The window of eligibility for the EM examination for non-CCFP physicians closed many years ago. These physicians must obtain the CCFP status first, in order to be eligible for the EM examination. There are two options: (1) through the regular Family Medicine Certification examinations, or (2) through the Alternative Route to Certification (ARC) program, which is a non-examination route to certification for experienced physicians. For both options, full-time EM practice qualifies as a family medicine practice, so eligibility is generally not a problem.
4. **How will awards of CACs be made in 2015, 2016, and beyond?** Those successful on the EM examination in 2015 will be offered the existing Certificate of Special Competence, but we will likely also offer the choice of receiving a CAC. In either case the recipients will have gained the right to use the CCFP (EM) designation, with no distinction between the two certificates. Success on the 2016 EM examination will lead only to a CAC as evidence of success and the right to use the CCFP (EM) designation.

- Residents currently in training, or in future training, will receive direct information about CAC awards. They will not need to apply separately for a CAC, as all information will be included in the registration process for the EM examination.

**5. What will the CPD requirements be for all holders of CACs?**

- a. The future CPD requirements for all family physicians who wish to use a designation of added competence, such as CCFP (EM), will include the development of a multi-year learning plan. Each plan will include some CPD focused on the domain of added competence, as well as annual or appropriate reporting on outcomes. The system will be flexible, respecting the needs of our members and the special conditions to which they may be subjected (e.g., those who have more than one domain of added competence as well as busy comprehensive practices, rural practitioners, limited CPD availability, etc.). We are confident that all will be able to meet their specific requirements in a reasonable and practical fashion. The Development and Practice Support Department is preparing a detailed guide to these changes and related implementation, and will be able to provide individual advice and responses to questions before the applications open up.
- b. There will be a small annual fee to cover the extra administrative costs of this augmented CPD.
- c. CACs in all domains of care will be subject to equivalent specific CPD requirements and conditions, and to the same fees.

**6. What if I am working less, or not at all, in the emergency department?** As mentioned above, there is no requirement to be actively practicing in an emergency department, when you obtain your CAC or while maintaining your right to use the designation. You must just maintain the appropriate competencies. Many of the competencies required in EM can be maintained in many other care settings. Many different CPD activities are applicable to maintaining competencies in several domains of care, including EM. Each physician will continue to determine their own CPD needs and activities for each domain of care and related competencies. It should not be difficult to maintain the right to use the CCFP (EM) designation by maintaining competencies in this domain of care.

**7. What if I am close to retirement?** As mentioned above, maintaining the required competencies to keep the CCFP (EM) designation does not require any minimal practice profile in emergency departments. It is fully compatible with decreasing or variable work load. Since the modified rules will come into effect at the end of each individual's current Mainpro cycle, and then be implemented over the following cycle, most members will have at least five years, and up to nine years, before full compliance with the specific EM requirements for MOC could become a major issue. This should be plenty of time to adapt and choose whether you wish to maintain your EM competencies into your retirement.



We believe that the information above and on the CFPC website will help to answer most of your questions about the relationship between the existing CCFP (EM) designation and the new CACs, and how the transition to the new nomenclature and requirements will occur over the next few years. If you have further questions, or if you have related comments, we would be happy to hear from you at [cac@cfpc.ca](mailto:cac@cfpc.ca).

We look forward to helping you in whatever way is necessary for your individual needs through this period of transition.

Yours sincerely,

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