



## **Terms of Reference**

**Nov 2025**

### **Background**

The Section of Medical Students (SOMS) represents a specific community of members within the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), made up of medical students interested in a career in family medicine. As future family physicians, these students are welcomed into the CFPC early in their professional journey.

The SOMS is led by the SOMS Council, which shapes and advances the section's priorities, goals, and activities. The Council also creates working groups to connect students, support them in preparing for a career in family medicine, and increase interest in the specialty of family medicine across Canada. The SOMS Council was first established in 2006.

### **Purpose**

The mandate of the SOMS Council is to represent the voice of medical students interested in family medicine at the national level and to:

- Foster strategic collaboration with Family Medicine Interest Groups (FMIGs) across Canada
- Work with the CFPC in promoting interest in family medicine
- Support peer mentorship by offering students leadership opportunities, access to role models, and tools for meaningful engagement.

### **Responsibilities**

The SOMS Council will:

- Elevate the student voice at the national level by sharing the perspectives of medical students with an interest in a career in family medicine
- Encourage engagement and participation of medical students in SOMS initiatives
- Promote interest in family medicine as a career among medical students through the development and dissemination of targeted initiatives

- Foster strategic connections with FMIGs across Canada to promote collaboration, share best practices, and facilitate coordinated efforts
- Support and promote peer mentorship and student leadership development opportunities

### **Accountability**

The SOMS Council is a standing committee of the CFPC. They are accountable to, and report directly to, the Family Medicine Specialty Committee (FMSC).

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The SOMS Council will meet at least three times annually. Additional meetings may be convened at the discretion of the co-chairs.

### **Committee Membership**

The SOMS Council is comprised of:

#### **Voting members**

- Two co-chairs
- Six council members (second through fourth year medical students)
- Two to four members-at-large (minimum two first-year medical students)

#### **Observers (non-voting)**

- Resident observer (appointed by the Section of Residents Council)
- Faculty observer (appointed by the Canadian Undergraduate Family Medicine Education Director's group)
- Canadian Federation of Medical Students Observer
- La Fédération médicale étudiante du Québec Observer

Co-chairs are selected from a pool of applicants based on demonstrated leadership experience, commitment to student engagement in family medicine, and other relevant attributes, including collaboration skills, initiative, and communication strengths. Final selection is made by the CFPC's Education Department in consultation with outgoing co-chairs (when applicable).

Council members share responsibilities and representation on internal CFPC committees and with external partner organizations. The co-chairs are the SOMS Council representatives on the Education Section Chairs Roundtable, which also includes the chair of the Section of Residents, the chair of the Section of Teachers, as well as representatives from other relevant groups as required.

Council members and members-at-large will be recruited from all Canadian medical schools. These positions are cross-functional, allowing members to contribute to the work of the Council in a flexible manner.

Observers are appointed by their respective organizations and invited to attend Council meetings in a non-voting capacity.

The Council will also consult with relevant committees and interest groups on key issues, and convene working groups as needed.

Members are selected with consideration for diversity of experience, region, language, and medical school year, to ensure a Council that reflects the Canadian medical student population interested in family medicine. Relevant skill sets will be considered during member selection to align with the Council's mandate.

### **Non-voting CFPC staff members**

- Director, Education
- Manager, Education
- Education Project Management Lead, Education

### **Term of Office**

The terms for co-chairs and Council members are two years, renewable once. The term for a member-at-large is one year, renewable for up to three terms. However, those students who join the Council in their final year of medical school may have a shortened term. Restricted terms do not apply to observers.

Terms may be adjusted to ensure continuity within the Council. Membership composition will be reviewed annually for suitability and responsiveness to the Council's mandate.

### **Resources and Budget**

Financial support for the SOMS Council and its activities is supplied by the CFPC and may fluctuate annually, depending on the CFPC's budget and the anticipated needs of the Council.

### **Voting Process**

The voting process for the SOMS Council will comply with the [Bourinot's Rules of Order](#) as outlined in the CFPC bylaws. Every motion (occurring in person or virtually) will be decided by a majority vote, assuming - in order to conduct business - more than half of the voting members are present. In case of an equality of votes, the chair of the meeting will be entitled to a second or tie-breaking vote. If a vote is requested by email, all voting members

of the council must accept the motion. If this cannot be met, the motion must be deferred to a majority vote in person or virtually.

### **Terms of Reference Review**

The Terms of Reference shall be reviewed up to every three years, at the discretion of the co-chairs.