

March 3, 2021

**Memo to:**

- Postgraduate family medicine program directors
- Emergency medicine program directors
- The Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec

**Subject: Ending access to English translations during French short-answer management problem (SAMP) exam component effective 2022**

Dear colleagues,

After careful consideration, the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)'s Board of Examinations and Certification has decided to stop providing the option of accessing an English version of each SAMP to individuals who are taking their SAMP examination in French. Thus, starting with the spring 2022 Certification Examination in Family Medicine and the 2022 Examination of Added Competence in Emergency Medicine, all candidates will be able to access the examination only in the language they chose during their registration.

We believe this decision is in the best interests of all candidates taking CFPC examinations. In making this decision, the Board of Examinations and Certification considered the following points:

- The CFPC employs a rigorous and robust translation process (as outlined below).
- Accessing translated questions creates an inequitable testing environment where some candidates have a different examination-taking experience (e.g., some look at two languages, most look only at one; those who access translations and those who don't use their examination time differently).
- Individuals have complained about wasting time flipping between the two languages.
- Language toggling is not a feature of the examination delivery platform we now use.

**How the CFPC ensures the quality of the translation of examination content**

We follow a five-step process before the exam is delivered:

**Step 1:** After a rigorous process of question development, the content is translated by an experienced, certified medical translator.

**Step 2:** The translated content is reviewed by the CFPC translation team to ensure that it correctly reflects the English version.

**Step 3:** The translated content then goes through a second, independent review by a French-speaking bilingual physician who has been involved in the development of the cases, is familiar with the context of the questions, and employs the French medical terminology that French-speaking physicians in Canada use in their everyday practices.

**Step 4:** Once the French-speaking physicians are satisfied with the translation, the content is then reviewed for a third time by the CFPC translation team to correct any typographical or grammatical errors.

**Step 5:** The translated examination content is then reviewed one final time after it has been transferred into the software that delivers the examination. This step is done to ensure accurate presentation on the day of the examination.

#### **Post-exam quality assurance process**

Written comments produced by candidates during and after the examination are analyzed to detect potential issues or concerns arising from the wording of questions.

All French examination answers are scored by French-speaking physicians who are also able to identify potential quality issues with questions.

As with the English questions during the marking process, any French questions that raise concerns about quality are reviewed individually and decisions are made as to whether those questions will be excluded from the examination. If a question is excluded because of performance concerns in one language, it is automatically excluded from the examination in the other language.

Psychometric analyses ensure that the questions included in examinations meet the expected performance standards. Specific attention is paid to any question where an inconsistency is identified between English- and French-speaking candidates' performance metrics or scoring patterns.

If an identified error or flaw in a question in either language is determined to have potentially affected candidates' performance, that question is removed from the examination content and the above-mentioned psychometrical analyses are redone.

#### **Quality improvement process**

To identify areas for improvement, the CFPC's family medicine and emergency medicine exam committees review their respective examination feedback from four main sources:

- Examination results and the results of post-examination analyses
- The report and recommendations from the examination coordinators post-administration of both components of the examination noting any incidents or problems that occurred
- Written feedback from candidates
- Written feedback from examiners

All candidate comments regarding translation are shared with the CFPC's translation team. The CFPC participates on a joint committee with representatives from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Medical Council of Canada, the Collège des médecins du Québec, the Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec, Laval University, the University of Montreal, and the University of Calgary to try to develop standardized medical terminology lexicons.

Sincerely,

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Chair, Board of Examinations and Certification