



MEDICAL COUNCIL OF CANADA LE CONSEIL MÉDICAL DU CANADA

FAQ for Faculties & Educators

BLUEPRINT PROJECT

The Blueprint Project, which began in 2011, consists of a substantial review of the content covered on MCC examinations. Its purpose is to evaluate how well the MCC's examinations reflect the reality of medical practice and the health-care needs of society today.

The resulting Blueprint is a matrix of foundational core competencies to be used to assess the readiness of medical graduates to enter residency and to enter independent practice.

Canada's faculties of medicine and medical regulatory authorities have played a key role in the development and validation of the new Blueprint. The new Blueprint was approved in September 2014 and the MCC is now transitioning MCC Qualifying Examinations Parts I and II to this new framework. In addition, the MCC will continue to work closely with Canada's medical faculties, certification colleges, and regulatory authorities to ensure that the entire community is aligned with the new Blueprint.

● How was the new Blueprint developed? How were the dimensions for candidate assessment created?

The new Blueprint was developed based on evidence gathered through substantial, nation-wide research that encompassed:

- A national survey of health-care practitioners and the public to identify the relative importance of physician knowledge, skills, and behaviours at two key points: upon entry into residency; and, upon entry into independent practice
- A report on the prevalent health conditions affecting Canadians and the health-care environment today
- A report on supervisors' expectations vs. first-year residents' perceptions of level of supervision for entrustable professional activities (EPAs)
- A report on current issues in the assessment of physicians

A Blueprint was created by a pan-Canadian group of subject matter experts using this research and evidence to inform their development efforts.

For complete details and for the Blueprint itself, please see the MCC report: [Qualifying Examinations Blueprint and Content Specifications, September 2014.](#)

● Will the new Blueprint change MCC examination objectives?

There will be no significant changes to examination objectives. The emphasis on what skills and knowledge are tested will change. For example, in the past, the MCC's Qualifying Examination Part I focused on the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic care and was blueprinted based on disciplines such as medicine, surgery, pediatrics, and so on. Part II focused on acute care and communication. Moving forward, there will be additional emphasis placed on the practitioner's skills around health promotion/illness prevention and psychosocial aspects of care.

● What implications do these changes have on curriculum design?

While the new Blueprint does not introduce any new dimensions that are not already taught in medical schools in Canada, it does change the emphasis, or weighting, of those dimensions on the MCCQE Part I and Part II. Faculties will need to consider whether their curricula require a similar shift in emphasis.

For example, the dimension of health promotion/illness prevention comprise approximately 5% of the content weighting on the present Part I examination; this dimension will comprise up to 20% of the content on the new examination.

● How do we know the new examination content will be of high quality?

The MCC will continue to apply its existing standards and guidelines to the development of new examination content. Furthermore, the MCC has developed a piloting strategy for new examination content.

● Which candidates will be affected by the new examinations?

The new MCCQE Part I based on the Blueprint will launch in spring 2018 while the new MCCQE Part II will launch in fall 2018.

Note that only the MCC Qualifying Examinations Part I (entry into residency) and Part II (entry into independent practice) will be updated to reflect the new Blueprint.

● Will the examinations become more difficult?

Examination content is being updated to reflect an evolving emphasis on particular competencies and dimensions in the new Blueprint. This activity is not meant to alter the level of difficulty of the examinations, but rather to ensure that the examinations adequately assess the knowledge, skills and behaviours required at two key points in a physician's early career, namely:

- Entry into residency (Qualifying Examination Part I)
- Entry into independent practice (Qualifying Examination Part II)

The MCC will provide support for candidates by publishing examination preparation resources and other material designed to offer in-depth information on the upcoming changes to the examinations.

● How can candidates prepare for the new examinations?

In spring of 2018, the MCC will publish a variety of examination preparation tools for the MCCQE Part I and Part II. These tools will update and enhance the existing examination preparation resources that are currently available online for each of the Qualifying Examinations.

These will include:

- Test specifications outlining the weightings for the different Blueprint dimensions on the examinations are now published on the [Blueprint project web page](#).
- New revisions have been made to the [MCC's Objectives](#) linked to the new Blueprint.
- A presentation providing a comprehensive overview of the new Blueprint
- New sample items and updates to existing sample items
- Updates to other online resources align to the new Blueprint

● **Will the examination format change?**

The MCC Qualifying Examinations will continue to use the same content formats that are currently in place, namely:

- Multiple-choice items (MCCQE Part I)
- Clinical decision making questions (write-in answers and/or long menus of choices) (MCCQE Part I)
- Objective Structured Clinical Examination stations (MCCQE Part II)

● **Will the scoring standards change?**

The same general family of methods that is used to determine the current pass/fail standards will be applied to the examinations based on the new Blueprint.

● **Will all competencies outlined in the Blueprint be tested by the MCC?**

No; MCC examinations in and of themselves cannot fully meet the examination specifications defined in the new Blueprint. For example, certain dimensions like communication and professional behaviours must be sampled extensively, and the ability to do so is limited in a point-in-time assessment.

● **Will faculties be required to submit evidence of skills acquisition before a candidate can receive the Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada?**

The MCC is working towards collaborations with faculties of medicine and other assessment stakeholders to ensure that dimensions not suited to be fully assessed in point-in-time examinations are covered through other means.

There is an expectation that, in the future, other sources and ancillary data will be necessary to address the full set of competencies identified in the new Blueprint. At this time, however, the MCC is focused on updating Part I and Part II Qualifying Examinations.

● **Will we be able to compare candidates' performance between those who take examinations prior to 2018 and those who take the new examinations?**

Yes. This will be in line with how the MCC currently compares performance as a result of equating the examination across forms and administrations.