



MEDICAL COUNCIL OF CANADA LE CONSEIL MÉDICAL DU CANADA

FAQ for Test Committees

BLUEPRINT PROJECT

The Blueprint Project, which began in 2011, consists of a substantial review of the content coverage 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.

While the new Blueprint will change committees' priorities for developing and reviewing new examination content, it is not expected to impact the way test committees operate or are structured.

● How were the MCC's current examinations evaluated against the new Blueprint?

The MCC's Qualifying Examination content was mapped to the new Blueprint and reclassified to match the Blueprint's dimensions. This exercise also identified gaps where new content is required.

● Which MCC examinations are affected? Which examinations require new content?

The new Blueprint affects only two MCC examinations: Qualifying Examinations Part I and Part II. The MCCEE and NAC examination are not affected at this time.

● Is the new Blueprint compatible with the CanMEDS role framework?

Yes. CanMEDS is a competency framework, whereas the new Blueprint is an assessment framework. The MCC's Council participated in a mapping exercise to evaluate the compatibility of the new Blueprint with the CanMEDS roles. The exercise found that both frameworks are very compatible.

● What are the test committees' priorities emerging from the Blueprint?

Following the results of the gap analysis, test committees will develop content focused on the following priority areas:

- Physician Activity: Communication
- Physician Activity: Professional Behaviours
- Dimension of Care: Health Promotion and Illness Prevention
- Dimension of Care: Psychosocial Aspects

New examination content will also take the following into account:

- Different emphasis on specific competencies between the Part I (entry into residency) and Part II (entry into independent practice)
- Various constraints, including complexity of presentation, patient age and gender, special populations, and patient setting

● **What support will test committees have to develop and review new examination content?**

The MCC is preparing to meet the increased need for new content development. The level of support provided to test committees will scale with this need. Changes being considered include additional meetings, additional committees, and additional staff support.

● **How will the new content be tested?**

The MCC has developed a testing strategy for new examination content. New content will be included in examinations prior to the launch of the new exams. Content is tested in the following ways:

- New questions are piloted within the MCCQE Part I but are not identified as such. Any questions that do not perform well are excluded from the scoring – this is true for all questions regardless of whether they are new.
- New clinical stations are included in the MCCQE Part II but are not identified to the candidate as pilot or test stations. The results on these stations do not count towards the candidate's score.

● **Will the guidelines for test development change?**

Not for now. The MCCQE Part I will continue to follow the existing question format, which blends multiple-choice and decision-making formats. Only the content's emphasis will change.

New elements, such as accompanying video and audio vignettes, may also be integrated into these existing question formats.

● **Will the method of scoring the examinations change?**

In 2018, the MCC plans to run a standard-setting exercise for each examination before scores are released to candidates. This will continue to ensure that fair pass/fail decisions are made based on the new expectations of the examination.

● **What other initiatives can test committees expect to emerge from the Blueprint Project in the future?**

While the MCC's current focus is on transitioning MCC Qualifying Examinations to the new Blueprint, a number of other exciting developments are likely to come to fruition over the next few years. Some of these include:

- Automated Item Generation of examination content
- Automated scoring
- Collaboration with medical organizations that offer complementary content and assessments
- Changes to examination administration, such as more frequent examination periods each year