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Committee: CCMG Examinations Committee

Document: Terms of Reference (ToR)

Dates: ToR previously approved - December 13, 2022

Revised by Committee - May 3, 2024

Approved by Board of Directors – July 2025

Brief Description

The Examinations Committee is responsible for all aspects of development, production, administration and evaluation of the certifying examination process, which currently includes the General and the Written Specialty examinations, as well as the OSLEs (Objective Structured Laboratory Examinations). Certification examinations are currently offered for Clinical and Laboratory Biochemical Genetics, Genetic and Genomic Diagnostics (GGD), Cytogenetics[†] and Molecular Genetics[†]. The committee is separated into five subcommittee areas: the General Examination Subcommittee responsible for all aspects of the General Examination, and four Specialty Examination Subcommittees responsible for all aspects of the Specialty Written and OSLE components for each subspecialty. Committee members may be expected to undertake formal training in examination skills and participate in examination improvement projects.

The Committee (through the Chairs) will also liaise with the Royal College Medical Genetics and Genomics Program that administers separate written and applied examinations that are used to evaluate the CCMG's Clinical Genetics candidates.

[†]Offered only for the 2024 and 2026 examination cycles. After 2026, only the GGD examination will be offered.

Mandate

1. To regularly generate, review and update the General Examination bank of questions (by the General Examination Subcommittee).
2. To develop (e.g., write / revise specialty written and OSLE questions, develop an answer key) and prepare all specialty examinations for each of the laboratory as well as Clinical Biochemical Genetics subspecialties in accordance with approved CCMG training guidelines and supporting documentation (e.g., exam blueprints; by the Specialty Examination Subcommittees).
3. To contribute (as required) to setting minimum acceptable performance levels, as overseen by the Exam Advisory Committee.
4. To administer the certification examinations to credentialed Laboratory as well as Clinical Biochemical Genetics candidates.
5. To mark questions and stations without bias according to validated answer keys and minimal competency cut-scores.
6. To determine each individual candidate's overall pass/fail status for each of the examinations.
7. To communicate examination results (via the Chairs).
8. In the case of a failing candidate, to provide constructive feedback on the candidate's identified weaknesses based on the failed exam(s).
9. To liaise with the Examination Advisory Committee via the Chairs who sit as *ad hoc* members of

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that committee.

10. To provide an annual written report on Committee activities to the CCMG, written by the Chairs.

11. To provide a biannual (i.e., exam-cycle) technical report to the CCMG Board of Directors, written by the Chairs.

Committee Composition and Selection

The Committee will consist of:

2 Chairs to oversee each of the two examination areas – the General Examination Chair and the Specialty Examination Chair

- 4 Subspecialty Leads representing each of the Specialty Examination Subcommittees during the examination cycle. For 2024, this includes Biochemical Genetics (Clinical and Laboratory), Cytogenetics, GGD and Molecular Genetics. The General Examination subcommittee does not require a designated Subspecialty Lead.
- Subcommittee members (see below)
- A board representative

The Subcommittees will consist of:

- General Examination – 6 to 8 members with representation from each subspecialty (i.e., Clinical Genetics, Clinical Biochemical Genetics, Laboratory Biochemical Genetics, as well as GGD or Cytogenetics and Molecular Genetics); preferably 1 to 2 members will also be bilingual (spoken and written) in both official languages.
- Biochemical Genetics Subspecialty – 6 members who are certified in Biochemical Genetics, with equal representation from both the laboratory and clinical subspecialties (whenever possible), and with ideally at least one member who is bilingual.
- GGD Subspecialty – 4 to 6 members who are dual-certified in Cytogenetics and Molecular Genetics, or have their GGD certification, with ideally at least one member who is bilingual. Where possible, individuals who are actively practicing in both areas (Cytogenetics and Molecular Genetics) will be selected; if not possible, then a balance between individuals practicing in Cytogenetics and Molecular Genetics will be sought.
- Cytogenetics Subspecialty – 4 to 6 members who are certified in Cytogenetics with ideally at least one member who is bilingual.
- Molecular Specialty – 4 to 6 members who are certified in Molecular Genetics with ideally at least one member who is bilingual.

Additionally:

- An examination site organizer (i.e., local CCMG individual) to assist the Committee in organizing the examinations during the current examination cycle.
- A registry of potential *ad hoc* examiners with previous experience/training in examinations will be kept in the Management Office and may be called upon to assist when there are conflicts, language requirements or a high number of examinees in a given examination cycle.
- Any external committee representatives are to be arranged between the corresponding committee chairs.

★ During years in which examinations for Cytogenetics, Molecular Genetics and GGD are offered (i.e., 2024, and potentially 2026), the three subspecialty subcommittees will work together to share examination materials, wherever possible, to develop three separate specialty examinations (as required). After 2026, only the GGD Specialty will be offered.

Tenure

- Each regular member will be on the Committee for 6 years (i.e., 3 examination cycles); however,

consideration may be given to extending a member's term to ensure a given subcommittee has enough experienced members to perform their duties for the upcoming examination cycle.

- After 2 examination cycles, a member may serve as a Subspecialty Lead for their subcommittee. This individual is normally nominated by the existing subspecialty lead in consultation with the one of the Chairs. Subspecialty Leads may serve an additional 2 examination cycles on the subcommittee (to a maximum of 10 years total).
- A Chair may serve an additional 3 cycles beyond their prior role on a subcommittee (to a maximum of 12 years total). This individual will be selected from among the Subspecialty Leads (whenever possible), or an experienced regular member. A Chair may serve as a Past-Chair for one additional examination cycle to help transition an incoming Chair.
- Turnover of Examinations Committee members occurs on June 30th following the completion of the examination cycle, while a call for new Examination Committee member volunteers occurs the February / March prior to this date (with a deadline set for communicating the number of required volunteers by March 15th).

The CCMG committee Terms of Reference are to be reviewed every 2 years in a non-exam year.

