

Policy

Subject:	Fellowship of the Faculty of Science for medical and dental Fellows by scientific achievement
Approval Date:	July 2017, March 2022
Review Date:	March 2026
Review By:	Faculty of Science Committee
Number:	1/2017

Overview

1. Fellowship of the Faculty of Science may be granted to medical and dental Fellows of the RCPA who are eligible to apply under the By-laws pertaining to the Faculty of Science RCPA and who submit evidence of scientific achievement equivalent to the standards required for Fellowship of the Faculty of Science by examination.
2. Evidence should follow the recommended format (see below) and indicate that the candidate has achieved an equivalent level of scientific knowledge and expertise to a scientific Fellow within the major discipline nominated. Evidence should be presented according to the three sets of standards normally required for Fellowship by examination.
3. A sponsor, who should be a Fellow of the College or Fellow of the Faculty of Science RCPA, must support candidates wishing to submit their evidence for informal review and full formal application. Candidates are strongly advised to obtain advice on the suitability of their evidence from their sponsor. Potential sponsors who have doubts about the quality of an application are encouraged to seek the advice of the Faculty of Science Principal Examiner of the nominated discipline.
4. Sponsors are requested at the formal application stage to provide commentary on the scientific achievement of the candidate in the chosen discipline, to indicate the standard of the work and to identify the candidate's contribution to the field. When documents which have multiple contributors are submitted for the innovation, development and leadership standards, sponsors are required to verify and comment on the relative contribution made by the candidate to item. Although such estimates are often difficult, they are essential for the assessors' evaluations.

The Application Process:

1. There is a two-stage process in applying for Fellowship of the Faculty of Science by this pathway. Before submitting a formal application potential candidates must complete an informal review application form, together with any required fee and forward their CV and a list of documents to be presented as evidence of achievement, formatted as for a formal application (see below), for assessment by the Faculty of Science Principal Examiner of the nominated discipline.

Document lists that are not formatted according to the guidelines will not be considered.

The name and contact details for the sponsor they have consulted must also be provided but the sponsor is not required to submit a formal report. Although the College is unable to state whether a formal application will be successful, advice can be given as to whether or not the proposed application is likely to meet the College's minimum requirements.

2. Candidates are requested at this initial application to indicate the major discipline within which they seek Fellowship. The disciplines are as follows:
 - Anatomical Pathology
 - Chemical Pathology
 - Forensic Science
 - Genetic Pathology
 - Haematology
 - Immunopathology
 - Microbiology

3. Candidates may submit a formal application within 12 months of receiving the outcome to proceed from the informal review. Candidates then provide a brief summary of their evidence and contribution to pathology in addition to the following:
 - the documented evidence list
 - two copies of all publications and other applicable documents on separate CD-ROMs or USB
 - the sponsor's commentary; and
 - payment of the fee

Evidence must be presented in accordance with the three sets of standards normally required for fellowship by examination as follows:

Research standards

Research standards will be fulfilled by a relevant doctoral degree completed within the past five years. The topic of the research degree does not necessarily have to be in the same discipline as the applicant's primary fellowship, but must be relevant to the scientific foundations or practice of pathology and/or its clinical application.

If the degree was completed more than five years previously, the applicant must present evidence of continuing professional development and further work to demonstrate that they have remained up to date and continued to contribute to their field of research.

Alternatively, applicants who have not completed a doctoral research degree may submit a series of published works relating to a specific theme together with a document of approximately two pages describing how the research contributes to knowledge in this field. A collection of unrelated publications will not be accepted. Normally a minimum of five peer-reviewed published items, where the candidate is the primary author or substantial contributor, will be expected.

Clinical standards

Clinical standards will be fulfilled by attaining an RCPA fellowship in any medical or dental discipline within the previous five years.

If the program was completed more than five years previously, the applicant must present evidence of continuing professional development to demonstrate that they have remained up to date in the discipline in which they are seeking fellowship.

Innovation, development and leadership standards

These standards will be fulfilled by the presentation of evidence of activities in at least three categories as follows:

- A relevant certificate, diploma or other qualification attained from a recognised academic institution

- Active participation in a relevant short course or workshop (two days minimum) in leadership, management, quality assurance or informatics conducted by the RCPA or other approved organisation such as NATA, IANZ or a professional scientific organisation.
 - Participation for at least one year in a board or committee of the RCPA or other professional, scientific or academic organisation
 - A leading contribution to an innovative project in diagnostic pathology, quality assurance or technological development
 - A leading role in the development and/or delivery of an educational program for pathologists, scientists and/or other health professionals or students
 - Participation for at least one year as a supervisor, co-supervisor or mentor of an RCPA trainee or research degree candidate
 - Other equivalent leadership activities or contributions as deemed acceptable by the assessors
4. On receipt of a formal application, the application form and evidence list (not the documents or publications themselves) are sent to the Faculty of Science Principal Examiner in the chosen discipline. If the CV and evidence list are so clearly outstanding, fast track may be recommended with a direct proposal to the Board of Education and Assessment that the candidate be recommended to the Board of Directors for Fellowship. The fast track application will not be sent to two assessors; the Principal Examiner will make a recommendation to the Chief Examiner. The applicant will then be asked to submit a sponsor's commentary, the formal application form, the list of documented evidence, certified copies of qualifications and the fee payable for formal application. Full text theses, publications and other large documents will not be required. Once these documents have been received, an application for Fellowship may be sent to the applicant.
 5. Most applications will be sent to two assessors from the appropriate Panel of Examiners in the nominated discipline. The assessors will determine any requirements for further assessment, which will normally include an oral examination covering topics in research and/or innovation, development and leadership as deemed appropriate by the assessors on the basis of the application. If both assessors agree on their recommendation, this is reported by the Faculty of Science Principal Examiner to the Board of Education and Assessment via the Chief Examiner of the Faculty of Science. If there is disagreement between the initial two assessors, the evidence will be sent to a third assessor. The results are then presented for discussion to the Faculty of Science Principal Examiner in the discipline, and once agreement is reached a recommendation forwarded to the Board of Education and Assessment via the Chief Examiner of the Faculty of Science and a determination will be sent to the applicant.
 6. When all requirements for assessment have been met by the applicant, an application is accepted by the Board of Education and Assessment, the recommendation of Fellowship is submitted for approval by the Board of Directors.
 7. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.