

# International Fellowship Requirements

Revised and effective October 2000



**American College of Surgeons**

Founded by  
Surgeons of the United States and Canada, 1913

These Fellowship requirements apply to surgeons from countries other than the United States, its possessions, and Canada.

The American College of Surgeons admits to its Fellowship only those surgeons whose professional activity is devoted to surgical practice and who agree without compromise to practice by the professional and ethical standards of the College.

The standards of practice established and demanded by the American College of Surgeons are contained in the Fellowship Pledge and the Statements on Principles. All Fellows of the College and applicants for Fellowship are expected to adhere to these standards.

Surgeons voluntarily submit applications for Fellowship. In so doing, they are inviting an evaluation of their practice by their peers.

In evaluating the eligibility of applicants for Fellowship, the College investigates each applicant's surgical practice. Applicants for Fellowship are required to provide to the appointed committees of the College all information deemed necessary for the review and evaluation of their surgical practice.

## FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Surgeons practicing in countries other than the United States, its possessions, and Canada are eligible to apply for Fellowship in the American College of Surgeons.

The College has designated July 1 of each year as the final date for acceptance of these applications. The completed applications (new or continuing) must be on file in the Fellowship Department in Chicago by this date. Only completed applications from surgeons who fulfill the following requirements will be considered for entry into Fellowship in October of the following year.

1. Ability to speak and/or write in the English language. The application form must be completed and all correspondence conducted in English.
2. Graduation from a medical school acceptable to the American College of Surgeons
3. Certification by an American Surgical Specialty Board which is a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties and which is appropriate to the applicant's specialty practice, or an appropriate specialty certification by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or documentation of the completion of a minimum of five years of formal postdoctoral surgical education.
4. One year in an approved surgical training program in the United States or Canada is considered desirable, but is not mandatory.
5. A full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in the country and in the state or province where they are in practice.
6. Five years of uninterrupted surgical practice in one location, intended as permanent, after the completion of all formal training, is required.

7. If a surgeon moves to another country, an additional five years of practice are required. The required additional practice time must be completed by July 1 if the application is to be considered for the following year.
8. A current appointment on the surgical staff of the applicant's primary hospital with no reportable action pending that could adversely affect staff privileges at that or any other health care facility.
9. A current surgical practice that establishes the applicant as a specialist in surgery. All applicants are expected to be physicians who have primary independent responsibility for the surgical treatment of patients.
10. Ethical fitness as well as professional standing as determined by an appropriate College credentials committee. This determination is based upon information obtained from Fellows who were consulted as references and from other sources.
11. Professional proficiency as determined by certification by an appropriate national surgical board, fellowship in certain of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons, and certificates of completion of higher training in surgery. Depending upon the applicant's education, training, and practice location, this requirement may vary.

The Fellowship Liaison Committee determines whether the requirements for Fellowship are satisfied and may, at its discretion, defer any application until such requirements are met.

The Board of Regents makes the final decision regarding the applicant's eligibility for Fellowship.

The Board of Regents may, at any time, modify the requirements for Fellowship.

## PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR FELLOWSHIP

All properly submitted and accepted applications for Fellowship are evaluated on a one-year cycle. The closing date for receiving completed applications is July 1 of each year.

1. Surgeons who fulfill all of the requirements may submit an application for Fellowship.
2. Fellows of the College may request that the Fellowship application process be initiated for any surgeon who, in their opinion, qualifies for Fellowship.
3. A completed formal application is required from each applicant. In addition to providing information regarding their surgical training and practice, applicants are requested to:
  - a. Sign a statement agreeing to abide by the Bylaws, rules, and regulations of the College and the Fellowship Pledge. (The Fellowship Pledge appears on Page 9.)
  - b. Sign an authorization for hospitals, medical organizations, and others to release information deemed by the College to be material to its evaluation of the applicant.
  - c. Furnish as references the names of five Fellows of the College who know the applicant and who can provide an evaluation. Ideally, these references will practice surgery in the same geographic area as the applicant. **The applicant is to obtain from these Fellows verbal assurance of their willingness to serve as references.**
4. Each named reference will be asked by the College to complete and return a questionnaire relating to the applicant's qualifications as a surgeon, as well as the applicant's professional and ethical standing in the community.

## **EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

The evaluation of an applicant for Fellowship is based on information relating to the applicant's surgical judgment and experience, professional competence, ethical conduct, and professional standing in the local community. Such information is obtained from appointed College committees, references named by the applicant, and others.

1. In some areas a Committee on Applicants interviews each applicant and reports to the Fellowship Department its findings regarding the applicant's eligibility for Fellowship.
2. The credentials committees of the College appraise information and recommendations from all sources relating to Fellowship applications and make recommendations to the Board of Regents. The Fellowship Liaison Committee evaluates unusual practice situations to determine if the requirements for Fellowship have been met and recommends an action to the Board of Regents.
3. After review and evaluation of all information, the Board of Regents makes one of three decisions:
  - a. Approved for Fellowship – In order to attain Fellowship, each applicant must receive the approval of three-fourths of the Board of Regents.
  - b. Postponed (for one or two years) – an applicant's postponement is not considered as a denial of application. It is designed to give the applicant an opportunity to acquire further knowledge or additional experience or to develop professionally. It also provides the College with an additional period for observation, investigation, and

further evaluation of the applicant's eligibility for Fellowship.

c. Denial of Application

(1) Following a denial of application, the applicant may submit a new application after a waiting period of three years.

(2) Applicants who have received a denial of application may request an appeal. To initiate an appeal, the applicant must submit a written request to the Executive Director. Appeals are heard under the direction of the Board of Regents.

(3) The Board of Regents may reverse a denial of application at its discretion. However, the final decision of the Board of Regents, following an appeal, is binding.

4. No action is taken when an application is determined by the College's Fellowship Department to be incomplete. Incomplete applications are deferred for consideration to the following year.

5. Successful applicants (Initiates) are admitted into Fellowship during the Convocation Ceremony at the College's Clinical Congress in October of each year. Fellowship is conferred by the President of the College.

a. Initiates are notified by letter of their acceptance prior to August 1.

b. Between the date of the acceptance notification letter and the Convocation, Initiates must notify the Fellowship Department of any changes in their

location, practice association, type of practice or hospital privileges since such changes may affect their admission into Fellowship.

6. The College provides information concerning the status of an application for Fellowship only to the applicant or those individuals involved in the College's evaluation of the application.

## **FEES**

1. Application Fee

This fee must accompany every application for Fellowship. The fee covers a portion of the cost of reviewing and processing the application and is not refundable. No application will be processed without the fee.

2. Initiate Fee

A statement requesting payment of the Initiate fee is sent to the applicants who are notified of their Initiate status. Unless this fee is received at the College by September 1 of the appropriate year, Fellowship will not be conferred. This fee covers a portion of the costs incurred by the College in processing applications and the process of initiation.

3. Annual Dues

Upon the recommendation of the Board of Governors, the Board of Regents determines the amount of annual dues.

## **Fellowship Pledge**

*Recognizing that the American College of Surgeons seeks to exemplify and develop the highest traditions of our ancient profession, I hereby pledge myself, as a condition of Fellowship in the College, to live in strict accordance with its principles and regulations.*

*I pledge myself to pursue the practice of surgery with honesty and to place the welfare and rights of my patient above all else. I promise to deal with each patient as I would wish to be dealt with if I were in the patient's position, and I will set my fees commensurate with the services rendered. I will take no part in any arrangement, such as fee splitting or itinerant surgery, which induces referral or treatment for reason other than the patient's best welfare.*

*Upon my honor I declare that I will advance my knowledge and skills, will respect my colleagues, and will seek their counsel when in doubt about my own abilities. In turn, I will willingly help my colleagues when requested.*

*Finally, I solemnly pledge myself to cooperate in advancing and extending the art and science of surgery by my Fellowship in the American College of Surgeons.*