



*Colleges & Chapters*  
*(Specialty Development)*



*Summary of the History and Development of Chapters  
and Colleges in the Academy of Medicine,  
Singapore*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Academy of Medicine was inaugurated on 19 July 1957 as the Academy of Physicians and Surgeons. It was renamed as Academy of Medicine in December 1958. It started with 34 members.

At the turn of the millennium, it has grown to encompass 35 specialties with 2200 Fellows. Its main role has always been in specialist training and professional development. But it has become apparent that the Council found it increasingly difficult to manage the huge family of specialists. The idea of the formation of specialist Colleges was then conceived. The formation of Colleges would:

- (1) Stimulate and allow for the enhanced role of various specialties in training, examination and continuing professional development (CPD).
- (2) It will free the Academy Council to focus more on policies, professionalism issues, principles and co-ordination of specialists in the country and work closely with other partners in healthcare.
- (3) It will allow for more autonomy to the specialists in their Colleges and their sub-specialties (whether in the Chapters or faculties etc).
- (4) Encourage specialties to grow adequately, and gain a higher standing, locally and internationally.
- (5) Will enable the College to work closely with specialist societies and collaborate more effectively.

The then Master of the Academy of Medicine, Prof K Satku, initiated the first important milestone meeting in late 2002 to discuss the proposal towards the formation of Colleges.

Several important discussions and intensive study were carried out and the strategic moves were formulated at subsequent Council meetings.

The formation of Colleges was supported by the Chapter committees and it was agreed that with the formation of Colleges, the Academy will continue to:

- (1) Develop and maintain necessary requirements and standards for training across all specialties.
- (2) Represent all specialties in Singapore when dealing with the Singapore Medical Council, Singapore Dental Council, Ministry of Health, National University of Singapore, Singapore Medical Association, Singapore Dental Association, College of Family Physicians, Singapore, public, etc.
- (3) Act as a parent body to handle all policy, legal and administrative issues.
- (4) Develop and coordinate non-specialty specific, general CPD activities (e.g., programmes on professionalism for continuing professional development of our Fellows).
- (5) Explore and develop programmes with Colleges to develop a good maintenance of certification programmes through Continuing Professional Development/Continuing Medical Education activities.

It is hoped with the formation of Colleges and Chapters within the Colleges, the Fellows of the Colleges can now take a more active role in the training and continuing education of specialties and especially in the areas of Basic Specialist Training, Advanced Specialist Training, Examination, etc.

The College with its “autonomy” can work more proactively with the specialist societies and other professional organisations.

Time frame for the establishment of the set up of Colleges was worked out. Through the hard work, co-operation between the Chapter Chairmen and Council members and the Chapters Committees, the Academy was able to realise its dream, and the 6 Colleges were established and approved. This was officially announced at the Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine in August 2004, and the Colleges were incorporated as companies within the Academy.

The formation of Colleges is a major step forward. But as with any new strategic move, there will be teething problems. Financial cost-sharing, representations, etc. will surface. We need to work this out. But as long as there is a common mission and vision, an undivided faith to improve the role of Academy and the Colleges with the education and training of new specialists, the problems are not insurmountable. Our role is to ensure the quality of training and education of our specialists, and the maintenance of professionalism, and also to ensure the best is given to our patients, gain the public trust that standards are maintained. At the end of the day, we hope to have a good healthcare system for our country so that we may add years to life and life to the years added.