

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

POLICY ON RESIDENCY LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Reviewed: May 25, 2022

Approved by PGME Committee: June 8, 2022

Approved by ECSC: September 9, 2022

Date of Next Scheduled Review: Spring 2025

Preamble

It is recognized that residents may require an interruption of training for personal or professional reasons. This policy provides the processes and procedures for residents, residency programs and the Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) office for requests and granting of leaves of absence.

This policy applies to all residents registered with PGME. Area of Focused Competence (AFC) trainees and clinical and research fellows should contact their program or fellowship director with respect to departmental policies and procedures.

Internationally Sponsored Residents (ISRs) are given the equivalent opportunities, rights and privileges afforded to their Canadian counterparts as provided for in the Collective Agreement between the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO) and the Ontario Teaching Hospitals (OTH) with respect to all non-monetary matters. ISRs are afforded the same access to leaves of absence as outlined in this policy, but in respect to payment during such leaves, the resident must first consult with their sponsoring agency, as the terms set out in this policy related to paid and unpaid leaves do not apply to ISRs.

Policy and Resource References

- [General Standards of Accreditation for Institutions with Residency Programs](#) (Requirement 4.1.3.4)
- [PARO OTH Collective Agreement](#)
- [Leaves from Ontario Postgraduate Residency Programs](#) (Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine)
- [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship](#)
- [College of Family Physicians of Canada Eligibility and Application](#)
- [PGME Leaves Form](#)
- [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Competence by Design Technical Guide 6: Leaves](#)

Definition

A leave of absence is an approved interruption of training for any reason. For the purpose of this policy, 'leaves' do not include vacation, professional leave (the PARO Collective Agreement entitles residents for a professional leave of up to 7 working days per year) or leaves for the purpose of taking certification examinations that residents are entitled to as per the PARO Collective Agreement.

Principles

1. Residents on leave must maintain a current training appointment with Schulich Medicine.

The resident on leave:

- i. Is expected to maintain a standard of conduct in keeping with the standards of the residency program, Schulich Medicine, and the medical profession at large.
- ii. Residents on leave must verify and approve a Letter of Appointment (LOA), pay any registration fees, and complete all other registration requirements to maintain a residency training appointment with the PGME office.

Failure to meet these two obligations may result in the withdrawal of a resident's appointment in the program.

2. The residency program director considers all interruptions of training and approves requests for leave. It is the resident's professional responsibility to ensure that the program director and program administrator are notified regarding their request for leave prior to the start of the leave. In urgent circumstances, it is recognized that this may not be possible; the resident must notify the faculty supervisor or chief resident to ensure that clinical responsibilities are reassigned as required.

- i. Following notification of a resident's leave, the program director must notify the Competence Committee (CC) of the upcoming leave. In this case, the resident / competence committee must document the resident's progress and training to date, including but not limited to:

- i. Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) and milestones achieved (if in a competency-based program)
- ii. Required training experiences completed and rotations completed
- iii. Evidence of achievements documented in other program assessments
- iv. Length of training completed

3. Leaves of absence greater than one week in duration must be reported to the PGME Office by the program and approved by the Associate Dean PGME. The [leave form](#) must be accompanied by supporting documentation relevant to the leave.
4. The PGME office will notify the relevant parties (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)), and the paymaster of interruptions of training greater than one week, as reported to the program director. Effective July 1, 2022, PARO will be notified of leaves greater than 30 days (see [PARO Attachment 22](#)). Residents must be aware of their

professional obligations to report leaves to the CPSO when applying for or renewing licenses. Failure to disclose leaves from the training program may result in delays in license renewal.

5. Prior to returning from leave, the previously documented resident training must be reviewed by the Competence Committee.
6. Salary and benefits continuation during a leave of absence is determined by the PARO-OTH Collective Agreement.

Types of Leaves

- Sick Days/Medical Leave (paid)
- Bereavement Leave (paid)
- Personal or Compassionate Leave (unpaid)
- Educational Leave (unpaid)
- Pregnancy and Parental Leave (paid)

Further information for types of leaves is found in the Summary of Leaves Document.

Salary Classification

Residents will normally advance to the next salary level of training at the successful completion of 12 months of training. Residents who have taken a leave of absence of more than four weeks during the training year will proceed to the next salary level at the discretion of the program director and/or Competence Committee. In exercising this discretion, the program director/Competence Committee will consider the resident's academic record in the program.

Return to Training

It is anticipated that the required training experiences missed will be made up with equivalent experiences in the residency on the resident's return to the program. Prior to returning from a leave, the Competence Committee must:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the resident's training taken prior to the leave.
- Map the resident's achievements and completed training experiences to the current stages of training in the program's curriculum plan.
- Consider whether a reassessment of the resident's skills through practical or simulation exercises is needed and, if so, include the assessment results in its recommendation.
- Make a recommendation to the residency program committee (RPC) regarding the stage of training the resident will enter upon return from leave.
- Provide recommendations for adjustments to the resident's individual learning plan

Considering the recommendation of the Competence Committee, the RPC will make a final decision regarding the resident's stage of training upon returning from a leave, including

which stage progressions, EPAs, required training experiences (RTEs) and program-based assessments are considered achieved in the program's current curriculum.

The decision and the rationale should be captured in a short summary and uploaded into the resident's electronic portfolio and documented in the residency program committee meeting minutes.

This decision and rationale regarding stage of training and record of achievements should be clearly understood by the resident before they resume training. The program director should also discuss the revised individual learning plan with the resident.

In order to ensure accurate reporting of a resident's status, the same decision must be reported to the PMGE office. Should the decision impact a resident's training and pay level, the PGME office will notify the appropriate stakeholders (i.e., CPSO, paymaster).

Article 21.5 of the PARO OTH Collective Agreement indicates that, "A resident returning from maternity leave, or extended absence due to illness or injury, will advance to the next PGY level as if the resident had not been on leave, unless the resident's Competence Committee determines that the resident requires further training at his or her earlier PGY level." In cases where the leave is:

- Less than thirty days or one block in length: the RPC shall determine the amount of training experiences that will be required (if any) based on recommendation from the Competence Committee
- One to 6 blocks: review needed for required training experiences, the RPC shall determine the amount of training experiences that will be required (Individual Learning Plan may be recommended) based on recommendation from the Competence Committee
- Greater than 6 blocks: if returning from sick leave or LTD, medical certification from treatment team is required to return to training (which may include accommodations, if any); a return-to-work plan will be required. For all other leaves (e.g., maternity leave/parental leave), the RPC shall determine the amount of training experiences that will be required (Individual Learning Plan may be recommended) based on recommendation from the Competence Committee
- Programs must communicate progression changes to the PGME office within one week following a ratification by the RPC. An email confirmation to the Registration Coordinator at PGME office will suffice.

A resident returning after medical leave, a leave longer than six months, or a Long-Term Disability leave, must provide a written medical certificate from their treating physician indicating their capability and fitness to return to the program. The program director or the Associate Dean PGME may also require an additional independent medical opinion to ensure the resident's capability to resume the residency program. In addition to providing a medical certificate, the resident must coordinate with their home program and the Learner Experience Office on their return-to-work plan. The PGME office can provide guidance on this process.

Residents returning from an extended absence (for example of six months or longer) may require a return-to-work accommodation to transition back to residency training.

Appendices

- **Appendix A:** Leaves Process
- **Appendix B:** Summary of Leaves