

## POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

### POLICY ON RESIDENCY LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND TRAINING WAIVERS

#### LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. The training requirements of residency programs set out specific time requirements. While these requirements are generally completed in sequence, it is recognized that a resident may need to interrupt training for a number of reasons. A leave of absence is an approved interruption of training for any reason and includes:

- Pregnancy and Parental leave
- Medical/Sick Leave
- Personal Emergency Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Educational Leave
- Others at the discretion of the Residency Program Director and the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME).

*Note: The PAIRO-CAHO Agreement entitles Residents to two types of professional leaves – educational leaves for up to 7 working days per annum and leaves for the purpose of taking certification examinations. This Policy is not applicable to those leaves.*

2. The Residency Program Director must approve all leaves of absence. Leaves of absence of greater than one week in duration must be reported to the PGME Office and approved by the Associate Dean PGME. The reporting of a leave is normally the responsibility of the Program Director.

3. Salary continuation during a leave of absence is determined by the PAIRO – CAHO Agreement.

4. It is understood that for those residents who maintain a current level of appointment in a residency program that a resident:

- a) will return to a residency program following a leave of absence; and
- b) is still registered with the program, notwithstanding his/her inactivity, and therefore s/he is still expected to maintain a standard of conduct in keeping with the standards of the residency program, the University and the medical profession at large.

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

### 5. Educational Leaves

A resident may request an unpaid education leave on the basis that the time away from the residency program is relevant to his/her current program. This must have the support of the resident's Program Director and the approval of the Associate Dean PGME. The maximum educational leave period is usually one year. Leaves beyond one year will be assessed by the Residency Training Committee, Program Director, and the Associate Dean PGME.

### 6. Compassionate Leaves

A resident may request an unpaid leave because of a personal situation or career uncertainty. These leaves will be considered on an individual basis by the Program Director in consultation with the Associate Dean PGME. The maximum compassionate leave period is normally six months.

### 7. Medical Leaves

To maintain a residency appointment with the University, the resident or his/her delegate must provide a report to the Associate Dean PGME on the resident's status every three months.

### 8. Salary Classification

- a) Residents who have taken a leave of absence of more than one four week block during the training year will proceed to the next PGY level only at the discretion of the Program Director.
- b) Factors to be considered in promotion to the next level will include the resident's full completion of the goals and objectives of the training year as measured by ITERs, and all other evaluation tools such as in-training exams, case logs, and completion of academic projects.
- c) Program Directors may also decide to re-appoint residents to the next PGY level at the beginning of an academic session to allow them to stay with their cohort, and require them to make up the leave in their final year of training.

9. Where possible, it is the resident's professional responsibility to ensure that the appropriate people are notified of the leave of absence.

### Returning to Training

10. It is anticipated that the required training time missed or rotations missed will be made up with equivalent time in the residency on the resident's return to the program. Normally all residents will be required to complete all mandatory and elective components of the program.

11. While residents normally will return to the program at the same level as when the leave was taken, the Program Director, in discussion with the returning resident, shall determine:

- the training level to which the resident will return following the leave; and
- the necessary educational experiences required for the resident to complete the residency requirements and goals and objectives of the training program.

If a modified program is required, it must be submitted to and approved by the appropriate Residency Training Committee/Sub-committee and the Associate Dean PGME.

12. Residents returning after medical leave must provide a written medical certificate from his/her treating physician indicating the resident's 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 his/her residency program.

#### **WAIVER OF TRAINING AFTER A LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

1. Normally all residents will be required to complete the full duration of the residency program after a leave of absence. However, the Associate Dean PGME on the recommendation of the resident's Program Director, may grant a waiver of training time following an approved leave of absence in accordance with the policies of the Royal college of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) and provided that the resident meets the criteria set out below.

2. Waiver of training shall not be granted in any other circumstances.

3. A decision to waive training after an approved leave of absence will only be made in the final year of training and it cannot be granted after the resident has taken the certification examinations.

4. A resident may be granted a waiver of training after a leave of absence if:

a) he or she has met all specialty training requirements of the RCPSC/CFPC and all of the program's educational requirements and the Program Director is satisfied that the resident will have achieved the required level of competence by the end date of the training; and

b) the Program Director and the Associate Dean PGME consider that there are exceptional circumstances that would justify shortening the time requirements for the residency program.

5. Programs may recommend a waiver of training up to the maximum allowable times permitted by the RCPSC and CFPC. (See **Appendix A.**) The length of training time waived shall not exceed leave time taken by the resident.

6. Every program must make available to residents information on the educational requirements referred to in 4(a) above.

7. A resident who has undergone remedial training or probation during his or her residency program is not normally eligible for a waiver of training after a leave of absence. However, the Associate Dean PGME may decide to grant a waiver if, in addition to satisfying the criteria set out in section 4 above, the resident demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Associate Dean PGME that it would be manifestly unfair not to grant the requested waiver.

#### 8. Process for requesting a waiver of training:

a) At the beginning of the final year of training a resident may make a request, in writing, to the Program Director.

b) The Program Director will review the request once the Resident has completed approximately 4 to 6 months of training in his/her final year.

c) If the Program Director approves the waiver request, she or he will complete the requisite application form and forward it to the Associate Dean PGME. The Program Director should include the following information:

i) resident's name, program, level, and dates of the leaves taken during the program and the recommended revised end date.

ii) that the resident has successfully completed all specialty training requirements of the RCPSC/CFPC and also all of the program's educational requirements and the resident will have achieved the required level of competency by the end date of the training.

iii) a detailed description of the circumstances surrounding the request and why the waiver is being supported.

d) The Associate Dean PGME will review the request and if approved, write a letter of support to the Credentials committee of the Royal College or the College of Family Physicians. Notification will be made prior to submission of the FITER.

#### 9. Reporting:

a) The Postgraduate Medical Education Office will notify the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) of all interruptions in training greater than one week, as reported by the Program Director.

b) 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 as a result of investigation and/or disciplinary action.

#### **PGME Forms:**

##### **PGME Notice of Leave of Absence:**

<http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/medicine/postgraduate/docs/Forms/LeaveofAbsence.pdf>

##### **PGME Waiver of Training Application:**

<http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/medicine/postgraduate/forms/files/Forms/WaiverofTraining.pdf>

**Related Documents:**

In addition to this Policy, there are a number of other documents that govern leaves and waivers of training.

- **PAIRO-CAHO Collective Agreement.** The PAIRO – CAHO agreement outlines the employment relationship between residents and the Ontario teaching hospitals. This agreement establishes entitlements relating to pregnancy and parental leaves, sick leave, and professional leave. This agreement can be obtained at <http://www.pairo.org/>.
- **Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM)** [\*Leaves From Ontario Postgraduate Residency Programs, May 17, 2007\*](#). The COFM Policy provides direction on a number of issues including return to the program after training and granting of unpaid leaves.
- **Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)** and the College des medecins du Quebec (CMQ) Joint Policy on Waiver of Training after a Leave of Absence from Residency (section 4.3.2). This policy can be obtained at [http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/common/documents/credentials/policy\\_procedures\\_e.pdf](http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/common/documents/credentials/policy_procedures_e.pdf)
- **The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)** requirements relating to Leaves of Absence and Waivers can be obtained at <http://www.cfpc.ca/LeavesAbsenceWaivers/>.

## APPENDIX A

### **A. Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, *Policies and Procedures for Certification and Fellowship*, March 2011, section 4.3.2**

#### **4.3.2 Waiver of Training after a Leave of Absence from Residency:**

#### **A Joint Policy of The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ)**

##### **Accommodation**

The policy detailed in this Section 4.3.2 is subject to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) commitment to accommodate residents with personal characteristics enumerated under applicable human rights legislation, as provided in Sections 4.3 and 6.9 of this guide.

##### **Policy on Granting a Leave of Absence**

The Royal College and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) expect that all residents must have achieved the goals and objectives of the training program and be competent to commence independent practice by the completion of their training program. It is understood by the Royal College and the CMQ that residents may require leaves of absence from training. The circumstances that would qualify residents for leaves of absence are determined by the university. It is anticipated that any time lost during a leave will be made up upon the resident's return.

##### **Policy on Granting a Waiver of Training:**

The postgraduate office may allow a waiver of training following a leave of absence, in accordance with university policy and within the maximum time for a waiver determined by the Royal College and the CMQ. A decision to grant a waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of the program but cannot be granted after the resident has taken the certification examinations.

Each university will develop its own policy on whether or not it is willing to grant a waiver of training for time taken as a leave of absence; however, in the case where waivers of training are acceptable to the university, they must be within the acceptable times listed below. In addition, regardless of any waived blocks of training, the decision to grant a waiver of training must be based on the assumptions that the resident will have achieved the required level of competence by the end of the final year of training.

A waiver of training can only be granted by the Postgraduate Dean on the recommendation of the resident's Program Director.

##### **Royal College and CMQ Maximum Allowable Times for Waivers:**

It is the responsibility of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) to set maximum allowable times for waivers of training that would maintain eligibility for certification.

The following are the maximum allowable times for waivers:

1. One year program – no waiver allowed
2. Less than one year for remediation or enhanced skills – no waiver allowed
3. Two year program – six weeks
4. Three year program – six weeks
5. Four year program – three months
6. Five year program – three months

7. Six year program – three months

8. In Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, where residents are undertaking three years of training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director, a maximum of six weeks may be waived for these three years of training. Subsequently, a maximum of six weeks of training may be waived in the following 2 years of training under the subspecialty Program Director. The process for these programs is as follows:

- i. Three years of training completed with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director followed by 2 or 3 years of subspecialty training with a different program director are treated separately for the purpose of the waiver of training.
- ii. A waiver must be recommended by the Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean on the Core in-Training Evaluation Report (CITER). A decision to grant a waiver is made in the PGY3 for a maximum duration of 6 weeks.
- iii. In the subspecialty years, a decision to grant a waiver is recommended in the final year by the Subspecialty Program Director and approved by the Postgraduate Dean. A maximum 6 week waiver of training can only be taken in the final year of training.
- iv. If the resident undertakes three years of Internal Medicine or Pediatrics training with an Internal Medicine or Pediatrics Program Director at one university and switches to another university for subspecialty training, it is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Dean at the corresponding institution to approve the waiver of training. For example, if a resident does pediatric training at the University of Toronto and switches to pediatric nephrology at McGill, the Postgraduate Dean from Toronto would approve the six week waiver in pediatrics and the Postgraduate Dean from McGill would approve the six week waiver in pediatric nephrology.

## **B. The College of Family Physicians of Canada, Application and Requirements for Residency Eligibility, Leaves of Absence and Waivers**

### **Leaves of Absence and Waivers**

#### **A. Leaves of Absence**

Residents in family medicine must successfully complete 24 months of training. Normally these 24 months would be completed in sequence. The postgraduate dean, on recommendation of the postgraduate director of the Department of Family Medicine, may grant interruptions which require a leave of absence from the training programs. It is expected that the resident will make up time lost or rotations missed with equivalent extra time in residency upon his or her return to the program.

#### **B. Waivers of Training**

A leave may still result in a waiver of training requirements, but only in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances will be determined by the postgraduate director of the Department of Family Medicine with the approval of the postgraduate dean. The Board of Examiners of the College of Family Physicians of Canada must be notified that a waiver of training was granted under these circumstances, if the

candidate wishes to maintain their residency eligibility for certification. Such notification must be provided prior to the submission of completion of training for each individual.

To be eligible for the certification examination in family medicine and for being granted Certification in The College of Family Physicians (CCFP), the maximum length of a waiver of training for residents in family medicine residency training programs will be four weeks.

Family medicine residents registered in enhanced skills programs of one year or less in duration **must** complete the entire duration of training to be eligible for CFPC examinations leading to certificates of special competence and/or attestations of completion of training.

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Approvals:	PGME Committee	February 10, 2012
	Executive Committee Schulich Council	March 30, 2012

This policy supersedes any previous Postgraduate Medical Education policies on resident leave of absence and training waivers.