

Waiver of Training Following a Leave of Absence

Policy Sponsor:	Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Postgraduate Medical Education
Scope:	All Postgraduate Trainees. All non-Dalhousie Trainees registered for electives; and University and Postgraduate Training Program Leadership
Approved	PGME Committee – March 2, 2023

Purpose

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) expect all residents to successfully complete all aspects of their training program, including the length of training. Leaves of absence (LOA) are encountered during residency training (due to illness, parental leave, personal reasons, etc.) and result in a change in the end date of training equal to the amount of time for the LOA. The required training time missed will ordinarily be made up by the resident with equivalent time upon return to training. In some circumstances, a reduction in training time (waiver of training) may be permitted upon approval from the Residency Program Committee (RPC) and the Associate Dean, PGME. Each program will determine whether to permit waivers of training and the criteria the RPC will use to grant such requests.

This policy applies to residents who have had their training extended due to a leave of absence. Changes of length of training related to remediation (eg. due to a FELP or remediation process) are not covered in this policy but should be designed as part of the remediation.

Guidelines

1. A reduction of training time can be considered only in the final year of training for Royal College (RC) programs, and the last 6 months for Family Medicine programs. RPCs need to be able to evaluate each resident's competency before considering such requests.
2. The maximum time to be considered for reduction is set out by the RCPSC (for specialty residents) and the CFPC (for Family Medicine residents) for non-CBD Royal College Programs and Family Medicine:

RCPSC and CFPC Maximum Allowable Times for Waivers

Length of Program	Maximum allowable Waive Time
One year program	No waiver allowed
Less than one year for remediation or enhanced skills	No waiver allowed
2-year program (excluding Family Medicine)	Up to 6 weeks
2-year program (Family Medicine)	Up to 4-weeks
3-year program	Up to 6-weeks
4-year program	Up to 3 months
5-year program	Up to 3 months
6-year program	Up to 3 months

In Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, where residents are undertaking three years of training with an Internal Medicine/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 2-3 years of training under the subspecialty Program Director.

The process for these programs is as follows:

- 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.
- 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 PGY3 for a maximum duration of 6 weeks.

3. A reduction in training time should be based on resident’s performance and competency. The resident’s ITERs/ITARs and other evaluations must reflect that all competencies set out by the credentialing authority (Royal College or College of Family Physicians) have been met. Each program allowing such waivers will define how such competency is demonstrated.

4. The request for a reduction of training time should come from the resident in writing to the RPC prior to the start of their final year of training for a resident in a RCPSC program or prior to the final six months of a CFPC program, or as soon as possible if the leave happens during these periods. Granting a waiver is not automatic, and the RPC will make a recommendation to the Associate Dean, PGME and will be communicated by the PGME Office to the respective national body (RCPSC or College of Family Physicians of Canada). A decision not to grant a waiver of training cannot be appealed.

5. For Royal College CBD Programs, following a leave of absence for a resident, the program may consider granting a waiver of training at any time during the resident’s training. Following the LOA for a CBD resident, the competence committee (CC) shall review the resident with the following options:

- The CC may determine that, despite the LOA, the resident is meeting all milestones and competencies, and no change will be made to the end date of training. This waiver of training does not need to wait until the last 12 months of the program.
- The CC may determine that this LOA has impacted the resident progress or there is insufficient information to make a decision on an immediate waiver of training for this LOA. The end date of training will be adjusted with the PGME office by the length of the LOA. The resident may re-apply for a waiver of training in the final year of residency should they demonstrate significant accelerated progress in their subsequent training, in a process outlined in (4) above.

In general, the maximal waiver time guidelines above are considered to apply to residents in Royal College CBD programs in most circumstances, unless there are significant extenuating circumstances as determined by the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean, in which case longer periods of waiver may be considered in cases where the trainee is clearly meeting all required competencies for the program despite the time missed.