DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY Postgraduate Medical Education	*Policy Sponsor:* Faculty of Medicine	*Approval Date:* *January 8, 2026*
	Responsible Unit: Postgraduate Medical Education	*Amendments:* *September 10, 2026*

Residency Program Transfer Guidelines

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for residents requesting a transfer between postgraduate medical education programs, either internally within Dalhousie University or externally to another Canadian institution.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all residents enrolled in Dalhousie University postgraduate medical education programs who seek:

- Internal Transfers: From one Dalhousie program to another.
- External Transfers: From a Dalhousie program to a program at another Canadian medical school.

3. Definitions

- Resident: A physician enrolled in a postgraduate medical education program.
- Internal Transfer: Movement from one Dalhousie PGME program to another.
- External Transfer: Movement from a Dalhousie PGME program to a program at another institution.
- AFMC Guidelines: National transfer guidelines established by the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada.

4. Policy Statement

Dalhousie University's PGME Office supports fair and transparent processes for residency program transfers, in alignment with AFMC National Transfer Guidelines. Transfers are subject to program capacity, resource availability, and compliance with institutional and national standards.

5. Principles

- Residents must have a valid reason for requesting a transfer.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process.

- No program is obligated to accept a resident who does not meet its admission criteria or where resources are insufficient.
- Funding for postgraduate training at Dalhousie University remains within the institution.
- Negative impacts on programs should be minimized.

6. Procedures

6.1 Internal Transfers (From One Program to Another Program within Dalhousie University)

Principles:

- Residents must first meet with the Associate Dean of PGME before beginning the process of requesting a transfer.
- Residents must have a valid and substantive reason for switching programs. This process can only take place after a minimum of six months of exposure in the primary training program.
- Physician resource needs will be considered before allowing any transfer.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible.
- No program will be required to accept a postgraduate trainee who does not meet the program's admission criteria or for whom adequate training resources are not available.
- Funds for postgraduate training will follow the resident.
- Negative impacts on programs resulting from transfers should be minimized. This may require compensatory transfers of entry positions in subsequent years.
- The donor program is not obligated to release the resident for *3 months* after notice of a resident's acceptance into a new program, unless otherwise agreed upon by both programs.

Mechanism of Transfer:

1. All residents will be notified of the availability of this policy at orientation as well as the proper procedures for carrying it out.
2. Residents must first meet with the Associate Dean of PGME to discuss the transfer request for mentoring and advice.
3. If deemed appropriate and feasible based on available funding, then the appropriate Program Director is notified regarding the request to transfer into their program to consider feasibility based on program capacity.
4. A formal application process will then be undertaken, at which point the resident's current program director will be notified to make available the resident file and provide an endorsement letter. The potential recipient Residency Program Committee(s) shall proceed with an appropriate process to determine the resident's acceptability, which will normally be completed within 30 days of notification. The application must include:
    - A Consent for PGME Release of Data for Internal Transfers form (Appendix A)
    - A curriculum vitae (CV)
    - A brief statement outlining the Resident's request and reason for transfer
        - All in-training assessments/evaluations

- A summary of the Resident's training record (including leaves, formal remediation outcomes, and any investigations/appeals in progress).
- A reference letter from the current Program Director may be required based on the receiving programs' requirements.

5. Applicants through this procedure will have to meet the selection criteria that the program normally sets out. There is no obligation to accept the resident.
6. The PGME Office will then be notified of the program decision.

6.2 External Transfers (From a Program at Dalhousie University to a Program at a Different Institution)

Principles:

In addition to the AFMC National Transfer Guidelines, the following principles are followed for residents engaging in the national transfer process:

- Residents must first meet with the Director of the PGME Office before beginning the external transfer request process.
- A Consent for PGME Release of Data for External Transfers form (Appendix B) must be submitted to the PGME Director before March 1st of the academic year preceding the academic year for which the resident is seeking a transfer (i.e. If a resident is seeking a transfer for the academic year beginning July 1, 2026, the consent form must be received by March 1, 2026). The accompanying documents listed on this form will only be required if the resident's file is requested by a potential receiving university.
- Program availability at other universities cannot be obtained until an official request and Consent for PGME Release of Data for External Transfers form is received.
- The national transfer period opens annually on March 31st and closes in September. Compassionate reasons are sometimes considered outside of the transfer period. Residents seeking a compassionate transfer to a different university must meet with the Associate Dean of PGME.
- Throughout the process, confidentiality is maintained and the PGME Office will not contact a resident's Program Director until transfer consideration begins with a different university. However, a resident may inform their Program Director of their intentions whenever felt appropriate to do so.

Mechanism of Transfer:

- All residents will be notified of the availability of this policy at orientation as well as the proper procedures for carrying it out.
- Residents must first meet with the Director of the PGME Office to discuss the transfer request and process.
- If deemed appropriate for participation in the national transfer process, the Director of the PGME Office will request that the resident complete a Consent for PGME Release of Data for

External Transfers form (see Appendix B). Upon receipt of the form, the Director will enter the resident's request on the national transfer form. See the AFMC Postgraduate Medical Education National Transfer Guidelines for more information on the national process.

- If a transfer to the receiving university is possible, the Director will be contacted by their counterpart at the receiving university.
- A formal application process will then be undertaken, at which point the resident's current program director will be notified to make available the resident file. The application package to the receiving university must include:
    - A curriculum vitae (CV)
    - A brief statement outlining the Resident's request and reason for transfer
    - All in-training assessments/evaluations
    - A summary of the Resident's training record (including leaves, formal remediation outcomes, and any investigations/appeals in progress).
    - Summary from the PGME Office regarding remediation and outcomes. If ongoing investigations/appeals are in progress, the PGME Office will notify the receiving school.
- Schools may ask for additional documents throughout the transfer process to complete an application and/or to confirm eligibility.
- Applicants through this procedure will have to meet the selection criteria that the receiving program normally sets out. There is no obligation to accept the resident.
- The PGME Office will then be notified of the program decision.

6.3 Required Documentation Once Accepted (for Internal and External Transfers):

1. A resident seeking a transfer must provide to their current program the following two letters; **(1)** letter requesting release from the program and the date of release; **(2)** a copy of the letter of offer from their new training program, with the official start date noted.
2. The current program must provide a written letter of release for their trainee with the finalized end date agreed to by all parties.
3. Dalhousie's PGME Office requires *4 weeks* to process a transfer from the final date that copies of all required documentation regarding the transfer have been received.

7. Responsibilities

- Resident: Review AFMC and Dalhousie guidelines, initiate process, provide required documentation.
- PGME Office: Ensure compliance, maintain confidentiality, process transfer.
- Program Directors: Review applications, provide endorsements, facilitate transition.

8. References

- AFMC National Transfer Guidelines
- Dalhousie PGME Policies and Procedures