



Policies and Procedures

Subject: Elective Process for Dalhousie Family Medicine Residents	
Created: Dec 2010	Revised: March 2011; Oct 2016; Oct 2019, Dec 2020, June 2024
Reviewed and approved by the Residency Program Committee: June 2024	Next review date: June 2027

The purpose of elective time is to:

- Satisfy unmet program objectives and required competencies.
- Meet program objectives not easily achievable at the home site.
- Enable residents to explore a horizontal experience during their Core Family Medicine experiences (see below for specific requirements).
- Enable residents who have selected large resident projects to spend up to two weeks of structured time to achieve specific milestones in their projects (see below for specific requirements).

Elective experiences must:

- Be based on defined learning objectives identified by the resident and approved by the Site Director.
- Be supervised by a physician with a faculty appointment.
- Be the equivalent to a full-time work week.
- Provide daily feedback with the use of field notes and provide an ITAR completed by the supervising physician at the end of the experience.

Under normal circumstances not more than four (4) weeks should be taken outside the Maritime Provinces. Exceptions for extending this time beyond four (4) weeks include the following:

1. Extenuating Circumstances (see the Extenuating Circumstances Policy)
2. Training in areas that are not available at Dalhousie (e.g. Global Health electives)

A request must be submitted in writing for your Site Director to bring to the Residency Program Committee Executive (RPCE) for approval if you would like to do more than four (4) weeks outside of the Maritime Provinces because of special circumstances.

Site Director or designate to address elective plans at periodic review meetings.

The Elective Request form on One45 must be completed and submitted to your Site Administrator *at least* three months prior to your elective.



Checklist for Electives

1. Name and location of clinical learning experience (CLE) (including university affiliation if relevant).
2. Supervisor's name and complete mailing address.
3. Objectives developed.
4. Appropriate licensure arranged (this is the responsibility of the resident).
5. Elective confirmed with supervisor by the Site Director or Site Administrator by email.
6. All letters required by the elective site sent to the Site Director or Site Administrator.

Elective experiences are generally expected to be a minimum of two weeks in duration, in order to ensure sufficient exposure to the clinical competencies expected from the experience, and to ensure the ability of the faculty to adequately evaluate the resident. However, some experiences might be sufficient with one-week exposures. For this reason, **a limited number of one-week electives** may be completed by a resident, with approval by the Site Director.

Research Electives:

There will be opportunity for select residents to take a one (1) or two (2) week research elective to assist in the development and completion of a **residency research project as per the resident project guide.**

The following guidelines must be adhered to for the elective to be approved:

- A research elective supervisor must be secured for supervision for the duration of the elective. This supervisor should be the supervisor for the residency research project.
- The following must be submitted electronically via e-mail to the Site Director at least three (3) months in advance of the intended commencement of the elective for approval:
 - Written curriculum detailing the scheduled activities and time required for the activities and signed by the research elective supervisor for the research elective.
 - A copy of the residency research project outlining the background, objective and methodology of the project approved and signed by the research elective supervisor. The resident research project must be substantial enough (in terms of workload and time requirement) as judged by the supervisor for the residency research project as well as the Site Director to warrant elective time to aid in its completion and development. A clinical component to the research elective may be required.
 - This information must be brought to RPCE for final approval of the research elective.
- Weekly progress meetings must occur with the resident undertaking the elective and the research elective supervisor.
- The following must be submitted electronically to the Site Director upon completion of the elective:
 - A report on the achievements related to the research project during the period of the elective and be signed by the research elective supervisor.



An evaluation for resident performance by the research elective supervisor and an evaluation of the research elective by the resident will be completed at the end of the elective clinical learning experience.

Like other clinical learning experiences, if resident performance on this elective was not satisfactory, remediation may be required.

Horizontal Electives (for block-based sites):

- PGY2 family medicine residents, who are in good standing in their program and who have the approval of their family medicine preceptor, may arrange a horizontal elective during Core Family Medicine time.
- One to two weeks will be added to the beginning or to the end of the Core Family Medicine clinical learning experience to compensate for the elective time.
- These electives will be approved by the Site Director only if it is administratively possible to schedule and to extend the Family Medicine Core clinical learning experience.
- Any requests to integrate an elective over 2 weeks, need to be made in writing to the site director for approval.
- The resident is responsible for contacting a supervisor for the horizontal elective, and for ensuring that the timing of the time away is acceptable to both the Core Family Medicine preceptor and to the horizontal elective supervisor.
- The choice of horizontal elective must be discussed with the family medicine supervisor and the Site Director and be approved as being suitable for family medicine additional skills training.
- The family medicine resident will receive an assessment at the conclusion of their elective time or daily evaluations if that is satisfactory with the Site Director. This assessment must be placed on the resident's file.

Examples of such elective experiences might include: fracture clinic, breastfeeding clinic, family planning clinic, HIV clinic, homeless program, nursing home rounds, etc.

Leadership Electives:

Leadership electives of up to 4 weeks, either block-based or with an equivalent amount of time extended longitudinally, may be considered for approval. These electives incorporate experiences that would be beyond those normally experienced in a Family Medicine residency training program. In addition to these experiences, these electives include:

- Completion of identified leadership e-modules
- Resident presentation to peers regarding their elective experience

Requests for such electives are to be submitted by the resident to the appropriate Site Director at least 3 months in advance and include the following:

- Comprehensive description of resident involvement in leadership activities including time requirements; and
- Name and contact information for the Elective Supervisor who will meet with the resident

throughout the rotation and complete the final ITAR via One45.

Requests will be brought forward by the Site Director to the Residency Program Committee Executive for approval.

Should resident performance on this elective not be satisfactory, remediation may be required.

Global Health Electives:

See the Request for Global Health (International) Elective Policy.

Clinical Humanities Electives:

A Clinical Humanities elective is a unique experience where a resident pairs their clinical learning with an arts or humanities component. The medical humanities enhance observation skills, critical thinking and creativity. It can also help in the preservation of empathy and compassion.

Clinical Humanities electives of up to 4 weeks, either block-based or with an equivalent amount of time extended longitudinally, may be considered for approval.

For more information, see the [Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine: Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education: Medical Humanities.](#)

Requests for such electives are to be submitted by the resident to the appropriate Site Director at least 3 months in advance and include the following:

- Comprehensive description of resident involvement in medical humanities including time requirements; and
- Name and contact information for the Elective Supervisor who will meet with the resident throughout the rotation and complete the final ITAR via One45.

Requests will be brought forward by the Site Director to the Residency Program Committee Executive for approval.

Should resident performance on this elective not be satisfactory, remediation may be required.