

Original Approval Date: March 1, 2021
 Effective Date: March 2, 2021
 Most Recent Editorial Date: October 24, 2023
 Approximate Review Date: March 2025

Parent Policy: PGME Leave of Absence Policy

PGME Leave of Absence Procedure

Office of Accountability:	Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry (FoMD)
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME)
Approver:	Postgraduate Medical Education Committee
Classification:	Governance and Administration
Scope:	Residency Programs

Overview

During residency training, residents may need to take leave of absence of variable duration from the program. The types and specifics of the different types of leaves are detailed in the Resident Physician Agreement.

Purpose

This document provides guidance and specific procedures relating to managing leaves of absence in postgraduate medical education at the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta.

GUIDELINE

1. PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a. The timeline for request submission of planned leaves are specified in the relevant Articles of the Resident Physician Agreement.
 - i. Leaves typically cannot be requested retroactively.
 - ii. Medical (sick) leaves that are less than one (1) week in duration do not typically need to be submitted to the PGME office, unless they require extension beyond one week.
 - iii. Maternity leaves must be submitted a minimum of three (3) months prior to the leave start date.
- b. Planned leave must be submitted in writing with the needed signatures (of the resident and the program director) to the PGME office using the standard Request for Leave of Absence (LOA) Form that can be accessed on the PGME website.
- c. Notification of Alberta Health Services (AHS) will be handled by the PGME Office.

2. PROCEDURE FOR RETURN FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a. If the resident's return date is different from the planned date of return indicated on the leave application, the resident must contact the Program Director at least two (2) weeks before the

planned date of return or the revised date of return (whichever is earlier) to minimize impact on scheduling and to maintain safe patient care.

- b. In the event of a revised date of return, the program may not be able to schedule clinical placement for the resident on the exact revised date of return.
- c. Consecutive or cumulative leaves of absence greater than four (4) weeks will automatically extend training by the corresponding amount of time per appointment year. If a resident wishes to request a waiver of this extension, they must abide by the PGME Waiver of Training Policy and Procedure.
 - i. In the scenario where a leave longer than four (4) weeks in duration begins in one appointment year and continues into the next appointment year, the training will be automatically extended by the corresponding amount of time.

3. PROCEDURE FOR THE EXTENSION OF A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a. Leave of absence extension is permitted, as detailed in the relevant Articles of the Resident Physician Agreement, subject to approval by the Associate Dean, PGME.
- b. The resident must contact the Program Director at least two (2) weeks before the original planned date of return to request an extension of the leave.
- c. A new LOA Form must be submitted for leave extension.
- d. The type of leave of absence, and associated benefits and remuneration, will be changed if the maximum allowed duration of the originally requested type of leave has been reached.

4. PROLONGED LEAVE OF ABSENCE (> 12 MONTHS)

- a. Maintenance of a residency position during extended absences are detailed in the relevant Article of the Resident Physician Agreement.
- b. It is expected that the program will contact residents who are on leave at least once per year to confirm their current status.
- c. A residency position may be terminated in any of the following scenarios:
 - i. Conditions listed in the relevant Article of the Resident Physician Agreement
 - ii. If the resident has been away for twelve (12) months, and eligibility for CPSA registration for supervised practice is lost
 - iii. Conditions for a practicum intervention are not met within eight (8) months
 - iv. If the resident has been away for twenty-four (24) months and there is no confirmed return date
 - v. A criminal conviction has occurred requiring incarceration

5. PROCEDURE OF RETURN AFTER A PROLONGED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a. A prolonged leave of absence has been defined for this document as greater than twelve (12) months regardless of the type of leave.
- b. Prior to returning to the training program in a regular capacity, the program should conduct an assessment of the resident to determine their current level of competence and to facilitate graduated (if needed) return to training.
 - i. The assessment should be at the discretion of the Program Director, and has written terms to specify duration, training experiences, and assessment methods.
 1. The duration of the assessment should not exceed eight (8) weeks under usual circumstances.

- e. A resident who is absent without reasonable cause for leave will not be entitled to receive salary and benefits during their unapproved absence.
- f. A resident who is absent without leave is in breach of their professional obligations and may be required to undergo a Professionalism Minor or Major Learning Plan(s)/Remediation(s) at the discretion of the residency Program Director in consultation with the Associate Dean, PGME.
- g. Notification of Alberta Health Services (AHS) will be handled by the PGME Office.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions are listed in the sequence they occur in the document (i.e. not alphabetical).

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.	
Resident Physician Agreement	Often referred to as the PARA agreement, it is the agreement between the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, the health authority Alberta Health Services, and the Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta. It describes the terms and conditions applicable to Resident Physicians related to provision of health care services within a learning environment.
Professional Association of Resident Physicians of Alberta (PARA)	PARA is the provincial housestaff organization of Alberta which represents resident physicians.