

Waivers of Training

Contributors

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Introduction & Background

Current Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) training requirements specify time parameters and a predefined sequence of training. A Waiver of Training allows a resident to achieve the training requirements despite a reduction in the time parameters and/or alteration in the predefined sequence. Typically, waivers of training are requested under the circumstances of a leave of absence such as sick leave, maternity or paternity leave. Following return to training, the resident may apply for a waiver to abbreviate any remaining months of training and, depending on university/program policies, may be permitted to complete training requirements in a shortened duration of time. Satisfactory performance, as determined by the program director, is a prerequisite to consider a waiver of training.

Most current policies reference, or, are in accordance with, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) policies regarding the maximum amount of time that may be waived. If a university determines it will grant a waiver of training for an approved leave of absence, the permitted waiver must be based on the assumption that a resident will have achieved the necessary level of competence by the time they have completed their final year of training. Waivers of training are not currently applied to residents who demonstrate excellence in training or who may otherwise qualify for accelerated training.

Process/Procedure/Methods

The CBD Policy Working Group followed pre-defined steps to collect information on the current policies related to waivers of training and to establish recommendations and considerations for the transition to CBME training practices. For a detailed description of the CBD Policy Working Group processes and procedures, please refer to the Methods section on page [X] within the Introduction.

Data Extraction

The data extraction team reviewed policies from all English speaking PGME offices in Canada, looking at policies relevant to Waivers of Training. In addition to policies from PGME institutions, policies from the CFPC and RCPSC were also examined to compare maximum waiver and program duration. Quebec faculties were not included due to language barriers.

The template headings used to extract data from the policies are:

- Institution name and policy
- PGME Offices and individual programs
- Policy process steps outlined

Key terms and definitions

Key terms	Other terms currently in use	Definition
Time-based Criteria	Blocks PGY Year(s) Core and Subspecialty Year(s) Final Year of Training Final Six Months	Criteria referring to time based requirements for training, used to determine whether a Waiver of Training may be granted
Performance Assessment Criteria	Satisfactory/borderline, unsatisfactory, incomplete, failed rotations, inconsistent attendance, changes to training, tangible contribution to department, minimum level of competence	Performance-based criteria, used to determine whether a Waiver of Training may be granted
Professionalism Criteria	Academic/ Educational requirements Professional Behavioural Ethical	Criteria related to professional performance used to determine whether a Waiver of Training may be granted

Considerations for Post-Graduate Education Faculties

Themes were identified through the analysis of existing PGME policies. These themes were considered in the context of the change to CBME and the resulting considerations and recommendations are provided to support future policy adaptation work at individual faculties.

Waiver of Training for Fulfillment of Standards Requirements

Rationale for Change

The current need for the option of a waiver of training is based on the requirement for the completion of time-based rotations, in order to fulfill discipline-specific standards requirements. It also requires that a leave of some type has been taken during residency and does not specifically recognise excellence. In CBME, the exit from training is based on demonstrated achievement, rather than time spent in training. The demonstration of competence will be the criteria for certification and completion of training, and will apply to all residents regardless of whether a leave has been taken. As such, time-based waivers may not be needed in a competency based medical education environment.

Considerations and Recommendations

In considering the adaptations necessary to adjust these policies, the review of Royal College and CFPC policies pertaining to waivers of training may serve as a useful guide for faculties. The proposed Royal College policy will not indicate the circumstances that would qualify residents for leaves of absence; these circumstances would be determined by the university and/or the local collective agreement. Furthermore, the Royal College policy will state that following a leave, the Program Director and Postgraduate Dean should review the trainee's status with regard to stage of training to determine if any adjustments to the training program are required.

It is therefore suggested that faculties review their existing policies to reflect that a leave of absence may not impact the total duration of training if the necessary competencies have been achieved. Faculties may also consider whether to require a minimum duration of training.

Additional Considerations for PGME: Accelerated Training

In light of CBME and the shift away from time-based training practices, faculties may consider developing policies that address the possibility of accelerated training. In the process of developing these types of policies, thought should be given towards determining if there is a minimum duration of training that must be completed, and if there are explicit service or organizational requirements that will be challenged in the event that training is shortened for some residents. Consideration could be given to separating the issues of competence and contracts within existing policy. Competence, as defined by achievement of all required EPAs, may be achieved before a resident satisfactorily completes his or her contract to provide service, but the latter may still need to be honoured.

Considerations for Other Stakeholders

The move away from defined minimum time based requirements for training may have implications for Ministries of Health, hospitals and regulatory authorities. Considerations should be given to the effects of accelerated training on service delivery. In addition, relevant to regulatory authorities, consideration should be given to the criteria for granting of licensure. (*Link to Pathway to Licensure paper here)

Final Thoughts

During the period of gradual transition to CBME, there will continue to be a need for a policy addressing leaves of absence from training and associated waivers of training. However, once competency based training is fully established across all residency programs, this policy may become irrelevant as graduation and certification decisions will be based on achievement of competency, rather than time spent in training.