

Leave of Absence Procedures

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES – SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

Background

Queen's University supports and recognizes that a resident's personal circumstances may require absences from work for short periods of time. In keeping with the University's values, leaves of absence are granted to assist in taking care of residents' overall well-being, family needs, and education.

This procedure is not intended to supersede the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO) and the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) contract, but rather serves to assist the Postgraduate Medical Education Office and Program Directors in their interpretation and application of the agreement.

"Leaves" for the purposes of this procedure, do not include vacation, professional leave or examination leave time. See PARO-CAHO contract for vacation, professional and educational leave time allocations.

A leave of absence is defined as an approved interruption of training for any reason and includes:

- Pregnancy and Parental Leave
- Medical/Sick Leave
- Personal Emergency Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Bereavement Leave
- Educational Leave
- Others at the discretion of the Residency Program Director and the Associate Dean, PGME.

Principles

A resident will remain registered with the Postgraduate Medical Education Office, notwithstanding his / her inactivity and is expected to maintain a standard of conduct in keeping with the standards of the residency program, the University and the medical profession at large.

Residents regardless of their academic stream (e.g., traditional time based or CBME curricula) are required to complete all mandatory/elective components of the program and, a leave greater than one-week per academic year, is likely to result in an extension of training time. See Guidelines for Waivers of Training and the Assessment, Promotion and Appeal Policy for additional guidance).

A Resident who is absent and has not contacted the Program Director to arrange time off or a leave of absence will be considered absent without leave. Programs

must immediately report Residents who are absent without leave to the PGME Office who will notify Kingston Health Sciences Centre to ensure appropriate next steps, including payroll adjustments, are taken.

Notification of Leaves to the CPSO

The Postgraduate Medical Education Office will notify the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) of all interruptions in training greater than one week, as reported by the Program. Residents must be aware of their professional obligations to report leaves to the CPSO when applying for or renewing licenses. Failure to disclose leaves from the training program may result in delays in license renewal as a result of investigation and/or disciplinary action.

In keeping with existing PARO, University and Hospital policies:

Salary and Benefits continuation during a leave of absence is determined by the PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement.

Pregnancy/Parental Leave

Entitlements to pregnancy and parental leave are addressed in Section 15 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement.

Medical/Sick Leave

Entitlements to sick leave benefits are addressed in Section 14 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death in a resident's immediate Family, the resident is normally entitled to a leave of absence of up to three consecutive working days within the period of seven consecutive days of the date of death of the immediate family member. An additional two days of leave may be granted by the Program Director for travel outside of the country, making funeral arrangements or settling estate matters. This procedure should be interpreted with proper sensitivity.

Immediate Family is defined as spouse, common-law spouse, same-sex partner, child, sibling, parent, mother/father-in-law, sister/brother-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, grandparent and grandchild. Similar consideration may also be given to foster child, foster parent, ward or other individual close to the resident. Residents will also be granted one day off with pay in the event of the death of an aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew.

If, while on scheduled vacation, **there is a death** of a resident's immediate family, and if, upon request, the resident can provide **suitable** verification of the event, bereavement leave may be substituted for vacation.

Compassionate Leave

In the event of important or unusual circumstances (e.g., a sudden or serious illness in the resident's household, or a medical or dental appointment of an emergency or specialized nature, or other such infrequent circumstances), a

resident may be absent from work for short periods of time.

A resident may be absent for a maximum of one week or less with pay in each academic year without academic penalty. An absence of longer than one week may require an extension of the residency program by the number of additional days missed, not including the initial one-week absence.

Unpaid Leaves:

Leave of Absence

A resident may request an unpaid leave of absence at any time. This must be approved by the Program Director, who may also wish to refer the request to the Residency Program Committee (RPC) or Family Medicine Postgraduate Education Committee (PGEC) depending on the length of the requested leave and the reasons therefore. An unpaid leave of absence may be granted until the end of the appointment or for six (6) months, whichever occurs first. A continued unpaid leave of absence beyond six months, must be discussed with the Program Director and Associate Dean keeping in mind the policies of the respective certifying College for timelines to complete residency training.

Educational Leaves

A resident may request an educational leave on the basis that the time away from the residency program is relevant to their current program. This must have the support of the resident's Program Director, and the approval of the Postgraduate Dean or designate.

The maximum unpaid educational leave period is usually one year. Leaves beyond one year will be assessed by the Program Director, and the Postgraduate Dean or designate. Refer to the PARO/CAHO Collective Agreement for details.

Returning from a Leave

Salary Classification

Residents will normally advance to the next pay level at the successful completion of 12 months of residency training. Residents who have taken a leave or leaves equal to or greater than one week as a single or cumulative occurrence during the training year, will proceed to the next level only at the discretion of the Program Director.

Factors to be considered in promotion to the next level will include the resident's full completion of the goals and objectives/EPAs, as measured by their assessments and all other assessment tools such as in-training exams, case logs, and completion of academic projects.

Reintegration/Modified Learning Plan/Accommodations

Residents returning to training after a prolonged absence may need to return to an earlier level of training, a reintegration period, a modified educational plan, or may require further accommodation/graduated return to training. Guidance on each

individual's circumstance will be coordinated by the Postgraduate Wellness Office, KHSC Occupational Health, the PGME Office and the Program in consultation with the resident.

Procedure

Each request for a leave must be decided upon by the Program Director or designate based on a fair, reasonable and equitable standard which recognizes such leave as an earned privilege, but not as an established right. The Program Director is responsible for approving the length of the leave and PGME staff as well as hospital human resources staff are available to offer advice in unique cases.

Step 1

The resident contacts the Program Director with a written request for a leave. The request must include the purpose of the leave, the start date and duration of the leave.

Medical Leaves PGME, Program and KHSC Requirements

For absences of three (3) or less days: A resident may be absent for reasons of illness for a maximum of three days without being required to produce a doctor's note. There may be specific reasonable circumstances when the Program will request a doctor's note irrespective of consecutive days missed (i.e., if there has been a pattern of days missed over a period of time).

For absences of four (4) or more days: A Resident is required to apply for Short Term Disability (STD) benefits. The Resident will normally be required to submit an Attending Physician's Statement (APS). If away from training for four (4) or more days, the resident should contact Occupational Health to determine if the APS is required. The APS form is available from Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness (OHSW) at KHSC and will contain details of a medical prognosis and an active treatment plan in order to be eligible for any sick benefits during the absence. This form only goes to OHSW at KHSC.

Contact: khscooccupationalhealthsafety@kingstonhsc.ca

The trainee must also submit a physician's note to the program that states that they need to be off work and anticipated start and end date of the leave. There should be no personal health information included in that note.

Any medical documentation provided to substantiate an absence must be dated during the absence itself to be considered for sick benefits. The sick note must also be shared by the Program with the PGME Office.

Pregnancy and Parental Leaves

Residents should contact KHSC People Services as early as possible to discuss benefits during the pregnancy and parental leave. Contact: residents@kingstonhsc.ca

Step 2

A. Program Director sends a letter to the Registration Coordinator, PGME Office if the leave is longer than one week, approving the resident's leave. Letter must include type of leave, start date and expected return date. If the leave is a medical leave, a copy of the doctor's note should also be submitted with the letter.

**If an emergency leave, the Program Director may submit the notification to the PGME office without having received a request in writing from the resident.*

B. The PGME office communicates the details of the leave to Kingston Health Sciences Centre (People Services, Occupational Health) and to the CPSO.

Returning from a Leave

Step 1

As soon as possible, and, ideally, no less than one month in advance, the resident must contact the Program Director and confirm their return-to-work date.

Returning from Medical Leave

If the resident was on medical leave, they must contact OHSW, before any return to work can be contemplated, in order to confirm they are cleared to return to work. The return-to-work date may be impacted by the individual's review with OHSW. This must be completed before the Program Director advises the PGME office of the confirmed return to work date. The PGME office will need a copy of the doctor's note confirming the return-to-work date. The note should not include specific health information, only that the resident is fit to return to training and the date of return. Contact:

khscoccupationalhealthsafety@kingstonhsc.ca

If the program has not heard from the resident within thirty (30) days of the planned expected return date, the Associate Dean may attempt to contact the Resident either by phone, email or registered letter where possible.

Step 2

The Program Director sends a letter to the Registration Coordinator, confirming the resident's return to work date.

Step 3

The Registration Coordinator will inform Kingston Health Sciences Centre (People Services and Occupational Health) and the CPSO of the official return to work date.