



Document Type	Leave of Absence and Return to Training Policy
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Related Policies/Documents	Assessment, Promotion and Appeals Policy Waivers of Training Policy Accommodations for a Trainee with Disability Policy

1 Introduction

Queen's University supports and recognizes that a trainee's personal circumstances may require absences from work. In keeping with the University's values, leaves of absence are granted to assist in taking care of trainees' overall wellbeing, personal or family needs, and education. This policy covers various types of leaves, excluding vacation, professional leave or examination leave (see Appendix A).

2 Scope

This policy applies to all trainees registered with the Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) office, including those funded through external sponsorship or contracts.

3 Principles

The fundamental principles that guide the implementation of this policy are:

3.1 Professionalism: Professional conduct must be maintained in accordance with the standards of the training program, the university, licensing bodies and the medical profession at large, including during approved leaves.

3.2 Integrity: All mandatory and elective components of the program must be completed to ensure the integrity of the training program are maintained, regardless of any leaves taken.

3.3 Fairness: Individual consideration and each trainee's unique circumstance will be considered.

3.4 Accountability and Communication: This policy ensures accountability and communication to ensure proper handling of absence while still maintaining the integrity of the trainee's medical education.

4 Procedures

4.1 Requesting a Non-medical Leave

The trainee will:

4.1.1 Ensure they complete all mandatory and elective components of the program and must recognize that incomplete objectives of training may result in an extension of their training time. (See [Waivers of Training](#) and the [Assessment, Promotion and Appeal Policy](#)).



4.1.2 Submit a written request including the reason, start date and anticipated return date to the program/fellowship director (hereinafter referred to as “program director, or PD”, which includes both program and fellowship directors)

The PD (or delegate) will:

4.1.3 Complete the Leave of Absence Notification Form and submit it to PGME.

4.2 Requesting a Medical Leave

The trainee will:

4.2.1 Ensure they complete all mandatory and elective components of the program and must recognize that incomplete objectives of training may result in an extension of their training time. (See guidelines for Waivers of Training and the Assessment, Promotion and Appeal Policy for additional guidance).

4.2.2 Submit a written request which should include documentation from a regulated health professional for absences of four or more consecutive days, to the PD. The start and anticipated end date should be included in the written request. The medical diagnosis should not be stated in that letter. Consult the PGME Wellness Office or KHSC Occupational Health to determine what documentation is required to support a medical leave of absence.

4.2.3 Be required to submit documentation from a regulated health care provided if there is a pattern of days missed.

The PD (or delegate) will:

4.2.4 Complete the Leave of Absence Notification Form and submit it to PGME

The PGME office will:

4.2.5 Notify KHSC Occupational Health and/or the Wellness Office

Trainees may be contacted by the respective office below to request additional supporting documentation to substantiate the leave.

4.3 Failure to request a leave

The PD (or delegate) will:

4.3.1 After attempts to contact the trainee have been unsuccessful, consider any trainee absent without leave if a trainee fails to submit a written request for leave within 24 hours.

4.3.2 Notify the PGME office of the trainee’s status of “absent without leave.”

The PGME office will:

4.3.3 Notify KHSC and/or the trainees’ external sponsor if applicable, to ensure appropriate next steps are taken to contact the trainee and determine next steps within their training program.

5 Notification of Leaves

The PGME office will:

5.1 Notify the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the trainees’ employer and/or sponsor, and Queen’s Office of the University Registrar, of leaves greater than 7 days.

Trainees will:

5.2 Report leaves to the CPSO when applying or renewing licenses and acknowledge that failure to do so may result in investigations and/or disciplinary action which may delay license renewal.

6 Trainee activities while on leave

6.1 Trainees on leave are not permitted to participate in:

- Clinical work
- Clinical teaching
- Simulation training
- Academic or clinical research projects
- Program or PGME related activities

6.2 In exceptional circumstances and with approval from relevant parties (e.g. trainee's physician, occupational health, PGME Wellness Office) a trainee may participate in a virtual teaching session or a non-clinical educational event not exceeding one half day per week, while on leave.

7 Returning from a Leave

There are circumstances (e.g., prolonged absence, absence during a remediation or probation) where a trainee returning from a leave may need a reintegration period, a modified learning plan, or may require accommodations and/or a graduated return to work plan. Guidance on individual circumstance may be coordinated by the program, PGME, PGME Wellness Office, KHSC Occupational Health, and relevant regulated health care providers.

The trainee will:

- 7.1 Notify their program of their intention to return to work no less than four weeks before their return.
- 7.2 If returning from a medical leave, confirm clearance to return to work with the treating regulated health professional and provide appropriate supporting medical documentation, (e.g. functional abilities form, accommodations forms) as soon as possible to avoid delays with the return.

The Wellness Office will:

- 7.3 Provide advice and guidance to trainees regarding the documentation required, the involvement of KHSC Occupational Health or other partner institutions.
- 7.4 Support trainees and programs in the development of reintegration and accommodation plans.

The PD (or delegate) will:

- 7.5 Contact the trainee to confirm their intention to return to work on the identified date, ensuring the timing coordinates with the deadlines for submitting the return-to-work notification.
- 7.6 Submit the Return Notification Form to the PGME office one month prior to the trainees' return date.
- 7.7 If the program does not hear from the trainee 10 days business days before the return date, the PGME Office must be notified to consult on appropriate follow-up.

The PGME Office will:

- 7.8 Send a revised letter of appointment to the trainee.
- 7.9 Notify CPSO, KHSC and Queen's Office of the University Registrar, and/or any other relevant parties of the return date.
- 7.10 Contact the trainee by phone, email and/or registered letter if the program has not heard from the

trainee within ten business days of the expected return date.

8 Returning from a Leave of Absence and Training Level and Classification

It is anticipated that the required training missed will be made up with the equivalent time and/or competencies required upon the Trainee's return to the program. Normally, trainees will return to the program at the same level as when the leave was taken (see section 7.0 of the Assessment, Promotion and Appeals Policy). The PD, in discussion with the returning trainee, will determine:

8.1. The appropriate residency level to which the resident will return following the leave – which will normally be the same level as at the time of leave; and

8.2 The necessary educational experiences required for the Trainee to complete the program requirements and goals and objectives of the training program.

Trainees may apply to the program for a Waiver of Training in the last year of their program. See policies on [Waivers of Training](#) and the [Assessment, Promotion and Appeals Policy](#).

9 Contacts

KHSC Contacts

Payroll services and benefits: residents@kingstonhsc.ca

Occupational Health, Wellness and Safety questions/notifications can be directed to:

khsccoccupationalhealthsafety@kingstonhsc.ca

PGME Contacts

Postgraduate Medical Education Office: pgme@queensu.ca

The Wellness Office: postgradwellness@queensu.ca

10 Appendix A

Types of Leaves

1. Paid Leaves

The following leaves are paid leaves based on a combination of benefits, employment insurance, contractual obligations specific to the type of funding for the training position, and, dependent on the type and length of the leave.

Pregnancy/Parental Leave

- 1.1. For KHSC Employees, pregnancy and parental leave entitlements are addressed in Section 15 of the PARO-OTH agreement.
- 1.2. For alternate funded trainees, entitlements will be addressed in your sponsorship or contractual agreement.

Medical/Sick Leave

- 1.3. For KHSC employees, entitlements to sick leave benefits are addressed in Section 14 of the PARO-OTH Agreement.
- 1.4. For alternate funded trainees, entitlements to sick leave benefits are addressed in sponsorship or contractual agreements.

Bereavement Leave

- 1.5 In the event of a death in a trainee's immediate family, the trainee is normally entitled to a paid 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/Fellowship 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 (includes both married and unmarried couples, of the same or opposite genders), parent, stepparent, foster parent, child, step-child, foster child, grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse, spouse of the employee's child, sibling or step-sibling of the employee. Trainees will be granted one day off with pay in the event of the death of another individual who is close to the trainee. This should be interpreted with proper sensitivity to the situation.

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

Compassionate Leave

- 1.6 In the event of important or unusual circumstances (e.g., a sudden or serious illness in the trainee's household, or a medical or dental emergency, or other such infrequent circumstances), a trainee may be absent from work with pay for short periods of time.
- 1.7 For bereavement and compassionate leave a trainee may be absent for a combined maximum of one week (7 days) or less with pay in each academic year without academic penalty. In the event an extended absence results in the trainees' inability to meet the training requirements, the trainee may be required to complete an extension of training. Each trainee will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Administrative Leave

- 1.8 Administrative leave with pay may be initiated by the Associate Dean, PGME, when a trainee is well enough to attend work (not on a medical leave), but a program factor precludes them from training (e.g., seeking an appropriate preceptor for exceptional circumstances, or pending the outcome of an external assessment or investigation procedure).

2. Unpaid Leaves

A trainee may request an unpaid leave of absence at any time. This must be approved by the program/fellowship director (here-in referred to as PD), who may also wish to refer the request to the Residency Program Committee (RPC) or equivalent, depending on the length of the requested leave and the reasons. An unpaid leave of absence may be granted until the end of the appointment or for six (6) months, whichever occurs first. An unpaid leave of absence beyond six months must be discussed with the PD and Associate Dean, PGME keeping in mind the policies of the respective certifying college for timelines to complete the training program and any contractual or sponsorship agreements.

Each request for unpaid leave will be reviewed based upon a fair, reasonable, and equitable standard which recognizes such leave as an earned privilege, but not as an established right. The PD is responsible for approving the length of the unpaid leave. PGME staff and hospital human resources staff may be consulted in unique cases.

Educational Leaves

- 2.1 A trainee may request an educational leave provided that the time away from the training program is relevant to their program. The trainee must garner the support of their PD, the Associate Dean, PGME or designate, or the appropriate external sponsor if applicable.
- 2.2 The maximum unpaid educational leave period is one year. Leaves beyond one year will be assessed by the PD and the Associate Dean, PGME or designate.

3. EI Caregiving Benefits and Leave – (does not apply to internationally sponsored trainees).

The federal government provides Employment Insurance (EI) caregiving benefits if you must be away from work to care for or support a critically ill or injured person or someone needing end-of-life care. Visit the Government of Canada website for more information. This will result in an unpaid leave of absence from the program although EI benefits may be accessed. You must contact KHSC to review eligibility and the process to access this leave.