

## **ENHANCED SKILLS PROGRAM IN OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE**

### **Program Description and practice narrative**

Occupational Medicine is a large component in the daily practice of Family Physicians. They may be consulted for the assessment of fitness for work matters, or for the work-relatedness of any condition. The frequency and type of such issues would depend on the geographic area where Family Physicians are practicing (e.g. close to major industry sites, or in rural areas). Besides, Family Physicians may be recruited into positions such as Corporate Medical Officers or consultants for Workers' Compensation Boards.

Nevertheless, Family Physicians do not always feel sufficiently trained to be comfortable in assisting their patients with work-related medical issues. There is also a number of specific ethical challenges (such as communicating with employers or insurance companies) that may provide potential medicolegal challenges.

There are several opportunities for Family Physicians to gain experience in Occupational Medicine. To date, Family Physicians are not eligible for the Occupational Medicine subspecialty residency program. However, physicians may have been trained in Occupational Health or Occupational Hygiene via a Masters' degree or a PhD. They may also have received some training outside of Canada.

A training opportunity offered at the University of Alberta is the Foundation Course in Occupational Medicine. This 2-year course (divided in Parts A and B) helps Family Physicians to get specific knowledge in Occupational Medicine through monthly tutorials, bi-annual workshops, and follow-up sessions. This program is compatible with workhours for physicians in practice. However, no practicums are offered.

The purpose of the Enhanced Skills program in Occupational Medicine is to offer a 6-month educational experience, largely focusing on real-world practice and practicums, for applicants who have demonstrated significant interest in the field.

The Enhanced Skills program in Occupational Medicine is a Category 2 program, which is a local, university-based, and domain-specific competencies program, under the Department of Family Medicine.

Trainees in the program are called Enhanced Skills Residents, or ES residents (PGY3 level) Upon completion of their training, ES residents are not eligible for a Certificate of Added Competencies (CAC) through the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC). CACs are only awarded for graduates of accredited Category 1 programs.

### **Eligibility criteria**

Eligible candidates must hold the CCFP (Certification in the College of Family Physicians) designation.

All other eligibility criteria are displayed on the CaRMs Enhanced Skills website (citizenship requirements): <https://www.carms.ca/match/family-medicine-enhanced-skills-match/eligibility-criteria/>

Applicants would ideally:

- have completed some training in Occupational Medicine (such as a Masters' degree in Occupational Health, the Foundation Course in Occupational Medicine parts A and B, an Occupational Medicine residency program in another country...), and/or
- be Associate, Certificant, or Fellow of the Canadian Board of Occupational Medicine (CBOM), and/or
- hold a position in the field of Occupational Medicine.

### **Application process**

The timelines for application are the same for all Occupational Medicine Post-Graduate Programs (Subspecialty residency, Fellowship, Enhanced Skills), and are **aligned on the timeline for the Occupational Medicine Residency Program**.

This information can be found here: <https://www.carms.ca/match/msm/faculties-program/msm-first-iteration-program-timelines/>

For information, a usual timeline for a start on September 1<sup>st</sup>, Year N,

- the application package is due by the end of July, Year N-1
- the file review is completed at the end of August, beginning of September, Year N-1
- interviews are offered in September, Year N-1
- notifications are sent to applicants, in November, Year N-1

Documents required for application to the program to be uploaded by the applicant include all of the following:

- a cover letter:
  - Expected length is about 500 words.
  - Should cover the motivation of the candidate for Occupational Medicine, interest with work-related issues, past experiences in the field, and all relevant experiences.
- evidence of CCFP designation
- a Curriculum Vitae including:
  - Medical education, training and practice
  - All degrees and qualifications
  - Scholarly activities
- Additional information (work, notable achievements, interests, language skills...)
- 3 reference letters; some of them would ideally come from an Occupational Medicine Specialist,
- a proof of English language proficiency meeting all of the requirements of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) and the Post-Graduate Medical Education office, unless exempt. Information about these requirements is available on the CPSA website.

The package should be sent in one single email to the Medical Education Program Coordinator for Occupational Medicine, who is responsible for assessing the completeness of the file.

The package is then forwarded to the members of the Residency Program subcommittee on recruitment. All members of this subcommittee sign a consent to keep confidential all of the information about applicants. Criteria for file selection are similar to those for the subspecialty residency program (available on CaRMS website) . The subcommittee communicates their assessment to the Program Director, who is ultimately responsible for establishing the list of applicants to interview.

Applicants are notified of their interview by the Medical Education Program Coordinator. Interviewers comprise members of the residency program subcommittee on recruitment, and the ES chief resident in Occupational Medicine (or the subspecialty chief resident). Criteria for the interview are similar to those for the subspecialty residency program (available on CaRMS website). Interviewers submit their assessment to the program director, who is ultimately responsible for establishing the list of candidates.

The Medical Education Program Coordinator is responsible for getting in touch with the successful candidates, in the order of the rank list, according to the number of spots allocated for Enhanced Skills in Occupational Medicine.

Applicants have no more than 15 days to confirm in writing that they accept or decline the offer. The MEPC continues to contact the applicants until all spots are filled.

Once the applicant has formally accepted the position, the MEPC and the applicant coordinate with the Post-Graduate Medical Education office to secure the letter of offer.

### **Program curriculum**

The program lasts for 6 months (6 blocks of 4 weeks each) and has a dominance of practical training. The organization of the curriculum is subject to approval by the Program Director, including the selection of rotation sites and the order of rotations.

The description of each rotating site is available on the residency program website, or by contacting the Medical Education Program Coordinator. This document includes the practical details (location, phone number, name of the supervisor...). There is a separate list of learning objectives for ES residents.

To maximize the availability of rotating site supervisors, the ES residency program is scheduled from September to February.

### ***Block 1: Workers Compensation Board of Alberta.***

This block offers an overview of the activity of a Workers' Compensation Board, the claim processing and appeals process, the adjudication process. ES residents will be able to better handle WCB matters in their practice upon completion of this block.

### ***Block 2: Occupational Hygiene and Ergonomics***

This block will allow the ES residents to have an outreach in these two main fields connected to Occupational Medicine, with two sub-rotations of two weeks each with two providers (e.g. Pinchin Ltd. For Occupational Hygiene, and EWI Ergonomics for Ergonomics).

**Block 3: Legislation in Occupational Health**

This block will be completed at the Ministry of Labour, under the supervision of the Medical Director, Occupational Health and Safety. This will allow the ES resident to understand the regulations in the field of Occupational Medicine and health, including the management of notifiable occupational diseases.

**Block 4: Industry placement**

This block will allow the resident to have a rotation in one of the main industry sites, having an Occupational Medicine physician, or a Corporate Medical Officer (such as Imperial Oil, Suncor...) ES residents will better understand the work of an occupational physician in the industry.

**Block 5: Occupational Health in Healthcare**

This block is dedicated to the specificities of Occupational Medicine in the healthcare system. The resident can have a rotation either with Alberta Health Services – Workplace Health and Safety, or with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta – Physician Monitoring Health Program.

**Block 6: Selective**

This block offers room for the ES resident for their own preferences. They may wish to have a second block in the industry, a rotation in Toxicology or in Environmental Medicine. The ES resident can review the list of rotating sites available on the Occupational Medicine Residency website and submit their wishes to the Program Director early in their training. The selective block must be in the field of Occupational Medicine, with a dedicated supervisor, with the approval of the Program Director.

The Medical Education Program Coordinator is responsible for the organization of the schedule. The preferences of the ES resident will be taken into account, but may not necessarily be satisfied, depending on other scheduling constraints.

**Assessment**

Each rotation must include the completion of an In-Training Evaluation Report (ITER). Progression of the ES residents is reviewed at the competence committee. Remediation and assessment policies are similar to any other residents.

**Other educational activities**

The Medical Education Program Coordinator sends a schedule to the resident and the supervisor, in advance, for each rotation, to secure the time for participation to educational activities.

- ES residents must participate to the national Occupational Medicine Academic Half days (on Friday Mornings) Participation is done remotely. The subspecialty chief resident will communicate the links necessary for the ES resident to access to the resources.
- ES residents are encouraged to participate in Occupational Medicine conferences and activities that could happen during their training, with the approval of the Program Director, and taking into account the short duration of their training.

- depending on the availability of senior physicians, ES residents may be able to participate to the Occupational and Environmental Medicine clinics, on Wednesday afternoons and Friday afternoons, at the Kaye Edmonton Clinic. The subspecialty chief resident is responsible for the schedule of the clinic,

**Enhanced Skills Chief Resident:**

Enhanced Skills residents designate a Chief Resident, who is sitting at the Occupational Medicine Residency Program Committee meetings. If there is more than one ES resident, ES residents organize themselves and designate the ES resident sitting at the RPC meeting, to the program director. The ES chief resident is responsible for representing all ES residents at the RPC meeting, and they present their report at each RPC meeting.

**Other policies**

For all other topics not mentioned in this document, the Occupational Medicine Residency Program policies are applicable (including the Health and Safety policy).

**Reviewed by the Occupational Medicine Residency Program Committee, on December 9, 2021**