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Resident Transfer Policy

Office of Accountability:	Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Postgraduate Medical Education
Approver:	Postgraduate Medical Education Council
Scope:	All Residents
Classification:	Residency Training

PREAMBLE

The current system of placement of medical graduates into residency programs has severely restricted the opportunity for transfer between residency programs. Significant challenges can arise given the wide and varied circumstances that lead to residency transfer requests. This document outlines the principles and procedures by which internal (to another residency program at the University of Alberta (U of A)) and external (to a residency program at another university) residency transfer requests from U of A residents will be addressed, the objective being to ensure that such requests are considered in an objective, fair, and equitable manner.

1. PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 This policy applies to resident transfers within the University of Alberta only.
- 1.2 All transfers are at the discretion and require the final approval of the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education (Associate Dean).
- 1.3 The Associate Dean shall act in consultation with the Director of Resident Transfers (Director).
- 1.4 It is recognized that resident transfers can have a significant impact on relatively small residency programs. The Associate Dean will make every effort to ensure that an appropriate balance of positions within small programs is maintained. This rebalancing process may involve a variety of actions (e.g. appeal to the Quotas Committee, looking for one to one trades within the transfer pool, addition or removal of Postgraduate Year One (PGY-1) positions in the subsequent CaRMS match, etc.). Program Directors shall have the opportunity to provide input to the Quotas Committee and the Associate Dean regarding rebalancing issues.

- 1.5 Inter-program transfer is not a mechanism to subvert the Canadian Resident Matching System (CaRMS) match. Residents will be expected to complete at least six months in their matched program before contacting the Director to discuss requesting a transfer.
- 1.6 All parties involved in the transfer process will make every effort to regard each case with the utmost confidentiality.
- 1.7 No resident shall be subject to recrimination for initiating a resident transfer request.
- 1.8 Should a concern or complaint arise that a transfer request involves any issue of intimidation or harassment, existing General Faculties Council (GFC) policies relating to intimidation and harassment shall be referenced by the Associate Dean for potential application and precedence.
- 1.9 The approval of a transfer request in no way guarantees a successful transfer.
- 1.10 Funds for post-graduate training will follow the resident.
- 1.11 Residents funded through the Alberta International Medical Graduate (AIMG) program will be eligible for transfer only to other postgraduate programs participating in the AIMG program at the University of Alberta.
- 1.12 Residents sponsored by agencies other than the Alberta Ministry of Health must work with their sponsoring agency to facilitate a transfer.
- 1.13 During and after the transfer process, every effort shall be made to ensure maximum credit for previous training as determined by the certifying Colleges' assessment of training. For Residents in Family Medicine, attempts will be made to ensure residents do not repeat rotations completed successfully in previous training and transfer credit will be determined by the Family Medicine Program after the resident has successfully completed 6 months of family medicine training. A letter will be written to the CFPC to recommend credit for past training, which may or may not include a shortened training program.
- 1.14 The Office of Postgraduate Medical Education will collect and compile data on resident transfers on an annual basis. The data will be reviewed annually by the PGME Council.

2. DIRECTOR OF RESIDENT TRANSFERS

- 2.1 The Director is advisory to the Associate Dean on matters relating to the transfer of residents between training programs.
- 2.2 The terms of the Director shall be four academic years with an option to renew for one additional term.
- 2.3 The Director shall:

- (a) serve as a key advisor for residents, program directors, and the Associate Dean in addressing transfer requests;
 - (b) be responsible for assisting and advising the resident, related Program Directors, and the Associate Dean with respect to adhering to the principles and procedures outlined in this document; and
 - (c) make every effort to ensure that transfer requests are addressed with fairness, expediency, and confidentiality.
- 2.4 The Director may consult with the Associate Dean at any time during the transfer request procedure.
- 2.5 The following shall govern the meeting with the Director:
- (a) The meeting should be confidential. The Director can choose to hear from individuals involved in the transfer request to provide information and to answer any questions that the Director may have.
 - (b) After the meeting(s), the recommendations and advice of the Director shall be sent to the resident, the Program Directors, and the Associate Dean. All discussions with the Director will be considered privileged information and the written records will be considered strictly confidential.
- 2.6 An annual report will be made to PGEC by the Director, usually at the end of each academic year to review the transfer requests in aggregate for the year.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 The initial step of a residency transfer request should be a meeting between the resident and the Director, to review both the request and the application of principles and procedures set out therein.

3.2 *Internal Transfers*

3.2.1 If an internal transfer is subsequently pursued, the Director shall write to the Program Director(s) of the potential recipient residency program. This letter will be copied to the resident and the Associate Dean.

3.2.2 The acceptability of an incoming resident and the capability of a program to absorb an additional resident will be left to the discretion of the potential recipient residency program. It is expected that the potential recipient residency program will establish its own application, screening, or interview processes to deal with transfer requests from potential incoming residents. It is also expected that the potential recipient program's consideration of the transfer request will be thorough and fair.

- 3.2.3 The potential recipient Residency Training Committee shall normally determine the resident's acceptability within 21 days of the notification to the Program Director of the transfer request.
- 3.2.4 Up to this point, all discussions shall be confidential. The potential donor Program Director is not to be contacted by either the potential recipient residency program or the Associate Dean without the written consent of the resident.
- 3.2.5 The decision of the potential recipient residency program shall be directly communicated in writing to both the resident and the Associate Dean within 21 days, with a copy to the Director:
- (a) If the program decides to offer admission, at this point the transfer request is considered to be "official". A transfer request gaining "official" status does not imply approval of the transfer by the Associate Dean.
 - (b) If the program decides NOT to offer admission, the resident may withdraw the transfer request, seek out a new potential recipient program, or seek the advice of the Director.
- 3.2.6 In order for a transfer to occur on July 1, the transfer request must be made official by March 31 of the same year. In order for a transfer to occur on January 1, the transfer request must be made official by September 30 of the previous year. Therefore, residents will have two opportunities a year to seek an official transfer request. Transfers will normally occur only at these times.
- It is suggested that residents make their transfer requests at least a month prior to official deadline to allow for review/interview process to take place.
- 3.2.7 Once a transfer request is official, the Associate Dean will contact the resident to seek agreement that the potential donor Program Director be informed of the transfer request. The Associate Dean will only thereafter notify the potential donor Program Director, in writing, of the transfer request.
- 3.2.8 The potential receiving Program Director shall not advocate on behalf of the resident who is applying to make the transfer.
- 3.2.9 The donor Program Director will notify the Associate Dean, in writing, of the decision to release, or not to release, the resident within 14 days of a notification having been given of the official transfer request.
- 3.2.10 If the decision of the donor Program Director is to release the resident:
- (a) The Associate Dean shall notify the resident in writing of the decision of the donor Program Director and provide his/her approval of the transfer.
 - (b) If the Associate Dean does not approve the transfer request, he/she shall notify the resident in writing.

- 3.2.11 If the decision of the donor Program Director is not to release the resident: The Associate Dean shall advocate on behalf of the resident to the donor Program Director, and notify the resident in writing of the final decision of the Program Director.
- 3.2.12 The final determination of the Associate Dean may be appealed by the resident in writing to the Dean within 21 days of receipt of that determination.
- 3.2.13 Once the Associate Dean has made a final determination approving a transfer, the resident shall, within 7 days, notify the Associate Dean in writing of agreement to proceed with the transfer.

3.3 ***External (from U of A to another institution) Transfers***

- 3.3.1 If an external transfer is subsequently pursued, the Director shall write to the Associate Dean, who will communicate with the Associated Dean of the University of the intended recipient program regarding feasibility. The resident needs to consult and adhere to the National Transfer Guidelines.

3.4 ***External (to U of A from another institution) Transfers***

- 3.4.1 Requests are usually received by the Associate Dean from the Associate Dean of the donor institution.
- 3.4.2 Associate Dean will determine if funding is available to consider the request.
- 3.4.3 If funding is available, the request is then forwarded to the Director who will manage the transfer request with the potential recipient program as detailed above. Usually, requests can only be considered after the second iteration of the CARMS match. The resident needs to consult and adhere to the National Transfer Guidelines.

3.5 ***Transfers Involving Externally Sponsored Residents***

- 3.5.1 Externally (non Ministry of Health) sponsored residents may pursue an internal transfer with the prior approval of the sponsor.
- 3.5.1 Externally sponsored residents may not pursue external transfer through this mechanism and must work through their sponsor for any request for external transfer.

