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## **Academic Review Board Terms of Reference, Process and Procedures**

<b>Office of Accountability:</b>	<b>Faculty of Medicine &amp; Dentistry</b>
<b>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</b>	<b>Postgraduate Medical Education</b>
<b>Approver:</b>	<b>Postgraduate Medical Education Council</b>
<b>Scope:</b>	<b>All Residents</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Residency Training</b>

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### **1. Introduction**

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry has established Academic Standings regulations approved by Faculty Council and by General Faculties Council as presented in the University Calendar. The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry has delegated to the respective Residency Program Committees the responsibility for applying the Academic Standing regulations in the review of residents. The Postgraduate Medical Education Council has created an Academic Review Board (ARB) to provide additional resources and support for Program Directors and residents in managing residents in academic difficulty.

### **2. Scope**

The document applies to all residents.

### 3. Definitions

- “Academic Standing” means any matter covered in a Faculty’s academic standing regulations as approved by GFC, its Executive or the GFC Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and as published in the Calendar. Academic standing comprises such matters as continuation in a program, promotion, graduation, and the requirement for a student to withdraw. Unless stated otherwise, changes to academic standing regulations affect new students, continuing students, and students readmitted to a program or Faculty. Students should refer annually to the Calendar for the academic standing regulations governing their degree programs.” (University Calendar, Section 23.6)
- “ARB” is the Academic Review Board. The body responsible for reviewing cases of residents in academic difficulty, as needed.
- “Assistant Dean” means Assistant Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.
- “Associate Dean” means Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, the senior faculty officer responsible for the overall conduct and supervision of postgraduate medical education in the Faculty. The Associate Dean reports to the Vice-Dean, Education.
- “Chair” means the Chair of the Academic Review Board or Vice-Chair.
- “Board” means the Academic Review Board.
- “CFPC” is the College of Family Physicians of Canada. The body is responsible for program accreditation, resident credentials and resident certification for Family Medicine education programs.
- “CPSA” is the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), the body responsible for self-regulation of the practice of medicine in Alberta.
- “Dean” means the Dean (or delegate) of the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.
- “Faculty” means the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry whose decision is being appealed and includes any person or body who has exercised, is exercising, or will exercise any power of the Faculty with respect to final grades and Academic Standing (“faculty” used in the lower case means full-time academic staff).
- “GFC” means the University of Alberta’s General Faculties Council.
- “ITER” refers to in-training evaluation report.

- “PME” means Postgraduate Medical Education.
- “PME Council” is the Postgraduate Medical Education Council, the authority through which Postgraduate Medical Education Programs operate in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.
- “Program” means an accredited Residency Training program in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry.
- “Program Director” is appointed by the RCPSC or CFPC as the University faculty member most responsible for the overall conduct of the residency program in a given discipline and responsible to the Head of the Division and Department and to the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education. As necessary, the Program Director may delegate responsibility for resident activities.
- “RCPSC” means the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the body responsible for program accreditation, resident credentials, and resident certification for specialty medicine and surgery education programs.
- “Resident” means a post-M.D. trainee registered in an approved postgraduate training program whose training for that contract term is credited towards certification by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (RCPSC) or the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC).
- “Rotation” means the period of time a resident is assigned to a clinical or research service, for which there are specifically defined learning objectives. These periods of time may be in the form of block rotations, normally not shorter than 1 block and not longer than 6 blocks. Blocks are defined as four-week periods of time. The PME academic year is composed of thirteen blocks. Alternatively, a resident may be involved in a different curriculum model incorporating horizontal clinical or research experiences into a longer clinical experience.
- “RPC” means the Residency Program Committee (also known as Residency Training Committee (RTC)), which oversees the planning for the residency program and overall operation of the program to ensure that all requirements as defined by the national certifying colleges are met; this includes recruitment of residents, evaluation of residents, on-going evaluations of the program including individual clinical supervisors.
- “University” means the University of Alberta
- “Vice Dean” means the Vice Dean, Education, the senior faculty officer responsible for all facets of education in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry. The Vice-Dean, Education

acts under delegated from the Dean to oversee, the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry student appeals.

- “Working Day” is defined as a day on which University administrative offices are open. The day preceding the Christmas holiday period shall not be considered a Working Day.

#### **4. Terms of Reference of the ARB**

A resident in academic difficulty is identified by either a “Borderline” or “Unsatisfactory” assessment, or other criteria as specified by the individual Program. The process in dealing with a borderline or unsatisfactory assessment for residency programs in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta is detailed in the *Remediation Guidelines for Time Based Programs or Family Medicine or the Assessment Guidelines for CBME Programs*. The Program Director, in consultation with the RPC will determine the most appropriate course of action which may include: remediation, minor or major learning plan, monitoring, or a review by ARB or possible requirement to withdraw.

An ARB review of the remediation, learning or monitoring plan **must** be initiated when the resident disagrees with the specifics of the plan. An ARB review may be requested by the PME office when further review is deemed necessary. The ARB reviews the submitted plan and documentation (relevant assessment information, etc.), and finalizes the plan.

An ARB review may be requested by the Program Director when a resident has not successfully completed a remediation, learning plan or monitoring, or if the Program Director/RPC needs advice or input beyond that offered by the PME office. The ARB reviews the previous remediation, learning and/or monitoring plan and assessment, and will recommend the most appropriate course of action, which may include: repeat remediation/learning plan, monitoring or possible requirement to withdraw.

An ARB review is **mandatory** in the case of a requirement to withdraw. The Board will review the entire academic record of the resident, and make a recommendation to the Program Director who shall make the final decision regarding the requirement to withdraw. ARB review can be waived if the resident agrees with the program’s decision to withdraw or decides to voluntarily withdraw.

A resident whose assessment is being reviewed by the Board **must** be given the opportunity to make a written submission to the Board through the Associate Dean. Timelines for submissions are detailed in Section 7 of this document.

Suspension for the interest of public health, interest and/or safety is covered separately in the Practicum Intervention Policy, and is outside the jurisdiction of the ARB.

#### **5. Composition of the ARB**

The Postgraduate Medical Education Council shall establish an Academic Review Board, which is a standing sub-committee of the Postgraduate Medical Education Council. The ARB is comprised of the members as set out below:

- (a) A Chair, who is appointed by the Associate Dean for a two (2) year term, renewable once.
- (b) A Vice-Chair, who is elected from among the ARB faculty members for a two (2) year term, renewable once.
- (c) *ex officio*: Assistant or Associate Dean.
- (d) Eight (8) PME Council staff, four (4) of which are previous or current PME Council staff members elected by PME Council for a two (2) year term, renewable once. For continuity of membership, members may be asked to extend the renewed term by one (1) year).
- (e) Four (4) volunteer resident members for a one (1) year term, renewable once.

6. **Constitution of the ARB Review Panel for Case Review**

- (a) The ARB members constituted to review a case (the Panel) shall consist of the Chair or Vice-Chair, three (3) other faculty members, and two (2) resident members.
- (b) Quorum for the Panel shall be the Chair (or Vice-Chair), two (2) faculty members and one (1) resident member.
- (c) Resident members must declare any potential conflict of interest with any case presented to the Panel Chair. Resident members are active members of the Board, but will be substituted with an alternate resident member by the Chair or Vice Chair in the following circumstances:
  - i. If the resident whose case is being considered is from the same program;
  - ii. At the request of the resident whose case is being considered;
  - iii. If his/her own case is being considered; and/or
  - iv. Any conflict of interest
- (d) Staff members must declare any potential conflict of interest with any case presented to the Panel Chair. The staff members will be substituted with an alternate staff member by the Panel Chair in the following circumstances:
  - i. If the resident whose case is being considered is from the same program;
  - ii. At the request of the resident whose case is being considered;
  - iii. If he/she has personal knowledge of the case being considered; and/or
  - iv. Any conflict of interest
- (e) The Panel Chair, on review of the case file, may invite witnesses to submit written attestations for the presentation of information concerning each case.

## **7. Timelines of ARB Review**

Once an ARB review is deemed necessary (e.g. the resident disagrees with the remediation, learning or monitoring plan, at the request of the PME Office or the Program Director, or when the Program Director is requiring the resident to withdraw from the Program), submissions from the resident or the Program Director to the ARB should be completed, normally, within fifteen (15) working days.

Submitted documentation must include the remediation, learning or monitoring plan using the standard template, the relevant assessments and other supporting documents. In the case of requirement to withdraw, all academic records of the resident must be submitted. The Chair or Vice Chair, on review of the case file, may request further information or documentation from the Program Director or other parties. Document submission including written submission from the resident and the Program Director must be received, normally, no later than five (5) Working Days before the review panel meeting. Case review by the ARB will proceed even if no written submission is received from the resident.

All submissions to the ARB are to be provided c/o the Office of Postgraduate Medical Education.

The ARB Chair will determine the timing of the panel review. The Chair or Vice Chair will notify the Program Director and resident of the review date and panel composition in writing at least ten (10) Working Days before the meeting. After receipt of the panel composition, the Program Director or resident will have five (5) Working Days to request that the Chair or panel member not serve on the panel. Challenges may only be made on the grounds that the Chair or panel member may have a bias, and must include a written explanation to support the challenge. The Chair shall consider and rule upon the challenge. The Chair's decision is final and binding.

Upon completion of review, on behalf of the panel, the Chair will prepare a review summary and recommendations. This document will be provided to the Associate Dean within five (5) working days.

Case review and recommendation by the panel is considered final. At the discretion of the panel chair, the case review can be forwarded to the entire ARB for further deliberation and final recommendation. Timing for review by the entire ARB will be at discretion of ARB Chair, either at a regularly scheduled meeting or at an additional meeting to allow for timely review.

## **8. Powers of the Hearing Panel**

The ARB shall determine the specifics of a remediation, learning or monitoring plan in cases where the resident agrees that remediation/learning plan or monitoring is necessary, but does not agree with the terms and conditions of the plan. The ARB's decision is final and binding on the Program Director and the resident.

The ARB acts in an advisory capacity in cases where the Program Director or the PME office requests that the ARB make recommendations on possible outcomes following an unsuccessful remediation or monitoring plan; or on a requirement to withdraw; however, the final decision rests with the Program Director.

Adapted with permissions from Board of Examination documents, University of Toronto.