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## Section A: Introduction

### A1: Purpose

The Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) office at McMaster facilitates Requests for Time Off (RTO) for postgraduate Learners who are entitled to take time off (e.g. vacation, professional leave, etc.) as stipulated in the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO) and the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario (CAHO) PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines related to time off requests and to summarize the RTO process for McMaster Learners. The PGME office will ensure access to an efficient RTO workflow that is timely, equitable and transparent for all Learners. The PGME office is available to respond to questions regarding the RTO process, the PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement and potential disputes. [Refer to the PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement for exact wording and further details.](#)

### A2: Scope

This policy applies to all postgraduate residents who are registered with the PGME office as residents at McMaster University.

Although the policy refers to residents, the RTO process is also applicable to registered fellows who are following a Royal College training program stream. Externally funded residents and fellows must also adhere to and follow sponsoring agency contracts.

## Section B: General Principles

1. Residents must have access to fair, equitable and timely consideration for time off.
2. Programs must adhere to the [PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement](#) when considering requests for time off.
3. Programs and/or hospitals shall not institute “blanket” policies that restrict the amount of time off during a given learning experience. The program/hospital department has the right to delay timing of a request where necessary to ensure professional and patient care responsibilities are met.
4. Program Directors/delegates shall discuss concerns with the resident if extended time off requests (during a learning experience) may potentially affect the achievement of required competencies and/or effective assessments.

5. Time off requests outlined in this document are subject to the RTO approval process (based on the program's workflow).

## **B1: Vacation**

1. Vacation entitlement is four (4) weeks for all residents per annum.
2. Vacation time must be taken in the academic year; July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> for many residents, off-cycle residents may have a different academic year as outlined in their Letter of Appointment.
3. Residents may request their vacation to be taken in one (1) continuous period, in one or more segments of at least one (1) week in duration, or in segments of less than one week.
4. Vacation cannot be carried forward from one appointment year to the next, except when a resident has been on pregnancy or parental leave.
  - a. Residents who take pregnancy and parental leave (birth mothers) accumulate vacation for the entire length of their leave, up to 52 weeks.
  - b. Residents who take parental leave (e.g. fathers, adoptive parents) accumulate vacation for up to 37 weeks.
  - c. If a resident has been on pregnancy or parental leave, any unused vacation prior to going on leave, and accrued while on leave, can be carried over into the new appointment year and taken immediately after the leave expires, or at a later date if agreed to between the resident and the program.
5. A resident does not lose their vacation entitlement as a result of being ill or injured.
6. Requests for vacation must be submitted via the RTO system at least four (4) weeks before the proposed start of the vacation. Requests received prior to March 1<sup>st</sup> will be prioritized over those submitted after this date.
7. Residents taking a certification examination in the Spring shall have until one month prior to the date of the examination to make a request for one week of their vacation entitlement.
8. All vacation requests must be confirmed, or alternate times agreed to within two weeks of submission. If the program cannot grant the vacation request, a written explanation will be provided to the resident.
9. Residents in part-time training are entitled to the same number of vacation days. Salary and benefits will be prorated proportionate to the percentage of time at work.

## **B2: Recognized Holidays**

1. Residents are entitled to the following recognized statutory holidays:
  - a. *New Year's Day, Family Day, Easter Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, August Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, one (1) floating holiday.*
2. Residents are entitled to at least five (5) consecutive days off during a twelve (12) day period that encompasses Christmas Day, New Year's Day and two (2) full weekends. These five (5) days off are to account for the three (3) statutory holidays (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day), and two (2) weekend days. Please note, no lieu day shall be given for a resident who works Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day.
3. If a resident is scheduled to work on a recognized holiday, they are entitled to a paid day off in lieu of the holiday. The lieu day must be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by the resident and the program within ninety (90) days of the holiday worked. The resident must arrange the lieu day with the Program directly.
4. Except in cases of religious accommodation, there is no entitlement to non-statutory holidays (e.g. Remembrance Day; Easter Monday) not included in the PARO-CAHO Collective Agreement. Hospitals recognize non-statutory holidays and therefore many clinical activities are cancelled (e.g. outpatient clinics, etc.). As such, the decision of time off for non-statutory holidays is left up to the discretion of the individual programs, depending on the assigned clinical duties of the resident.

## **B3: Professional Leaves**

1. Residents are entitled to 7 Professional Leave (PL) days each year. The resident may take these days at any time provided patient and professional responsibilities have been met.
2. Each resident is entitled to paid leave for the purpose of taking any Canadian or American professional certification examination; for example, Royal College, LMCC, ECFMG, and CFPC examinations. This leave shall include the exam date(s) and reasonable travelling time to and from the site of the examination. This leave shall be in addition to other vacation days or leaves.
3. Subject to operational requirements and at the request of a resident, a resident will not be scheduled for call duties for a period up to fourteen days prior to a CFPC or RCPSC certification exam.
4. Subject to operational requirements and at the request of a resident, a resident will be granted up to seven consecutive days off during one of the four weeks preceding a CFPC or RCPSC certification exam. These can be taken prior to either the written or oral components of the certification exam.

It is up to the discretion of the Program Director if these days can be divided over the two components of the exam, at the request of the resident.

#### **B4: Religious Observances**

1. Programs must arrange and accommodate religious holidays for the needs of residents who observe religious holy days outside of those days already considered statutory holidays.
2. Leave requests for religious holidays are to be negotiated between the resident and the Program Director on a case-by-case basis.

### **Section C: Request for Time Off (RTO) Process**

#### **C1: Request for Time Off (RTO)**

1. Residents must log into system and submit an RTO for each vacation day or vacation period.
2. The latest a request can be submitted is 4 weeks prior to the intended start date of the vacation.
3. Based on the day(s) selected by the resident, the request will follow the approval workflow process of the program (of the rotation in which the day(s) fall) for consideration and decision.
4. The resident will be notified through the RTO system if the request is approved or denied within two weeks of submission. If a request is denied, the program will provide the resident with an alternate date(s), within the same two weeks of submission, if their original request cannot be approved.
5. If time off is requested for one continuous period (i.e. a one-month block) the request should be made well in advance (ideally before rotation schedules are created) for the program to consider the request.
6. Once time off is approved, it may only be changed through discussion between the program and resident, and with approval from the resident.

## C2: Request for Time Off (RTO) - WORKFLOW

