



PGME – WELLNESS POLICY

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STATEMENT:

This policy reflects the University of Ottawa (uOttawa), Faculty of Medicine's commitment to a safe, positive, and healthy learning environment for all Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) trainees by creating, promoting, and sustaining a culture of wellness and resilience within the environment.

The Faculty Wellness Program (FWP) at the Faculty of Medicine offers and supports wellness-related programs that assist PGME trainees in optimizing their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The FWP also assists clinical department programs to develop and sustain a positive learning environment to optimize learning, morale, and attainment of career goals.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

This policy applies to all trainees (residents and fellows) in PGME at uOttawa. Faculty involved in the education of PGME trainees are also supported under this policy to provide the appropriate structure for safety and wellness.

FACULTY WELLNESS PROGRAM

The FWP promotes and supports a culture of physician health and wellness to sustain a solid foundation in professionalism and patient care. A distinct part of the FWP mandate includes providing PGME trainees with a safe and confidential venue to seek out resources that protect and enhance their health and well-being.

Here, PGME trainees can discuss concerns about personal, academic, or work-related matters freely. No members of the FWP team, including the Assistant Dean FWP and the Director of Learner Wellness, play a role in the evaluation of the trainee. Therefore, discussions about concerns remain at arm's length from Program Director, or other faculty who are involved in the evaluation of the trainee.

Wellness Support

The FWP team provides support in the following areas:

- Educational sessions (i.e.: workshops, training, facilitated discussions) on wellness topics shaped to suit the needs of groups, programs, or departments
- Individual counselling
- Accommodations
- Resident wellness needs (individual or group) for PDs
- Support for development and implementation of wellness topics within a program's curriculum
- Referrals to health care providers, counsellors, coaches, and the Ontario Medical Association Physician Health Program
- Administration of the Resident Wellness Committee
- Administration of the Resident Peer to Peer Support Program

FWP Team:

- 1 Assistant Dean, Faculty Wellness Program
- 1 Director of Learner Wellness, Faculty Wellness Program
- 2 Clinical counselors
- 1 Program Manager
- 1 Program Officer

Counselors of the FWP team belong to a professional order and are bound by a strict code of ethics. This includes adherence to rules of confidentiality and conflict of interest. They offer short counselling term (typically 8-12 sessions) to PGME trainees and can accommodate daytime or evening appointments (Monday to Friday) for one-on-one wellness support. Additionally, counselors facilitate support groups and workshops designed to enhance resident resilience and well-being. Counselling services are offered either in person or virtually via a secure platform.

The FWP works with PGME programs and trainees to support peer-led wellness initiatives to further strengthen trainee well-being and enhance the environment of their respective programs.

The Faculty Wellness Program can be contacted by calling 613-562-5800 extension 8507 or by emailing wellness@uottawa.ca

Confidentiality

Information is collected and stored in accordance with the University of Ottawa's [Policy 90 – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy](#)

- Client electronic files are confidential and kept securely – according to PHIPA rules. Files are kept for a period of 10 years after which time they are deleted.
- Files are password-protected.
- Client information can only be released with their written consent.
- Access to confidential clinical notes of our client files is restricted to the clinical counsellor(s).
- Confidential administrative documents are managed by authorized FWP personnel only.
- The secure file transfer software Liquid files is used for the secure transfer of private and confidential information.

Conflict of interest

In cases where a FWP physician must provide medical care to a trainee, and where there is also an academic relationship, the trainee is advised that they have the right to ensure that the FWP physician recuses him/herself from all subsequent trainee evaluations. The trainee is encouraged to request a change in supervisor or teaching site when this conflict exists. Alternatively, the trainee can still be taught by this FWP physician, as long as there is an explicit understanding that they do not partake in the trainee's evaluation process.

Resident Wellness Advisory Committee:

The Resident Wellness Committee (RWC) acts as an advisor in providing strategic direction to the PGME office and the FWP in areas of wellness supports.

The RWC will assist in identifying, goals, and implementation strategies to encourage healthy behaviours in the learning environment. The RWC will promote the development of physician health awareness and expertise within PGME programs, while advocating for policy changes aimed at bettering resident physician wellness.

[University of Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine, Resident Wellness Committee term of reference](#)

ACCOMMODATION POLICY

The uOttawa Faculty of Medicine, PGME program is committed to ensuring that appropriate accommodations are provided for PGME trainees with disabilities where possible. The purpose is to create barrier-free learning environments by providing supports and services in accordance with Human Rights obligations and aligned with the uOttawa principles for accommodations.

Accommodation is a shared responsibility. It is most effectively provided when those involved approach the process with fairness, sensitivity, respect for confidentiality and co-operation. This requires the exchange of relevant information between the appropriate parties, and a constructive discussion about the appropriate accommodation in the circumstances. Accommodations support diversity in the workplace and learning environment. They create a fair and level training environment for all trainees to thrive in.

A PGME Accommodation Policy outlines the process for accommodations including the role for an Accommodation Planning Committee (PGME APC) which is formed when necessary to develop, monitor and revise accommodation planning for UOttawa PGME trainees.

[Postgraduate Medical Education \(PGME\) Policy and Procedures for Accommodation of Postgraduate trainees with Disabilities](#)

[PGME Accommodation Planning Committee \(APC\) terms of reference](#)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PGME TRAINEES AND PROGRAMS

PGME trainee responsibilities

- Work towards an appropriate work-life balance
- Understand own limitations relating to fatigue, stress, emotional or physical difficulties and other issues with self-care on capacity to work and train.
- Understand hazards of alcohol or chemical dependency on personal health and capacity to work and train.
- Be aware of colleagues who may be having difficulty and respond as able and necessary. Recognize and inform the PD or other faculty regarding individual or broader wellness issues in the learning environment
- Be familiar with the available [Wellness supports and resources](#)

- Be aware of PGME policies and processes that support wellness, including those related to Accommodation, Professionalism and Intimidation and Harassment
- Access and utilize appropriate available resources to seek care – including (but not exclusive to) health/psychological counselling, FWP resources, primary care physician
- Communicate safety issues in the learning environment to the Program Director in a timely manner. Appropriate safety concerns may include (but not exclusive to) after hours work, fatigue risk management, exposure to hazardous materials/infectious agents/ionizing radiation, safe disclosure of patient safety, violence in the workplace, etc.
- Communicate incidents of intimidation or harassment in the learning environment to the Program Director, other Faculty, or submit the Faculty of Medicine professionalism [reporting tool](#) in a timely manner
- Identify own requirement for accommodation when appropriate, as consistent with PGME Accommodation Policy

Training program responsibility

- Physical and emotional health concerns of all trainees are prioritized, recognized and addressed
- Establish a culture of wellness support and health promotion within the program and in the learning environment
- Ensure there is a strategy for fatigue risk management within the program
- Maintain zero tolerance of intimidation and harassment within the program and the learning environment
- Ensure trainees are familiar with and have access to the policies, reporting mechanisms and supports required for incidences where there is a breach of safety or professionalism
- Maintain confidentiality and discretion for all trainees
- Enable multiple points of entry for trainees to discuss wellness/safety issues
- Enable a non-judgmental program and learning environment
- Enable access to wellness/safety support through resources within the structure of the following organizations: uOttawa Faculty of Medicine, Hospital (occupational health), resident regulating bodies (e.g., PARO, RDocs), community and regional bodies (e.g., OMA, primary care physician)
- Provide career advice/counselling and support transitions where needed to ensure appropriate development of future training or practice opportunities

FATIGUE RISK MANAGEMENT (FRM)

PGME trainees have a professional responsibility to appear for duty appropriately rested and must manage their time before, during and after clinical assignments to prevent excessive fatigue. Trainees are responsible for assessing and recognizing the signs of impairment including that which is due to illness and/or fatigue in themselves. Trainees experiencing such impairment are to notify their Program Director or designate.

PGME and programs offer educational resources and information on fatigue prevention, mitigation and recognition strategies for trainees and healthcare providers. FRM curriculum and safety policies should be incorporated in all programs. Established pathways to identify and proactively prevent fatigue related incidents should be included in the program's process of quality assurance in the learning environment.

Within that shared responsibility, trainees have a key role in managing and reporting their own fatigue to their supervisors, peers and to the healthcare team. To support this, medical education leaders are accountable for ensuring practices are in place that enable and protect every trainee's ability to fulfill their role in the management of fatigue risk

A module on Fatigue Risk Management is available to trainees on Brightspace.

COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

All members of the University community have a right to a learning and workplace environment that is respectful, safe, healthy and free from harassment and discrimination pursuant to the University of Ottawa [Policy 67a – Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination](#).

PGME trainees are encouraged to submit reports of incidents of mistreatment via the Professionalism Office [reporting tool](#), or privately and confidentially to the Vice Dean PGME, or Assistant Dean, PGME. Incidents of sexual harassment and or sexual violence are deferred and managed by the uOttawa Human Rights Office (HRO) as per [Policy 67 Sexual Harassment](#) and [Policy 67b Prevention of Sexual Violence](#).

All levels of learners (Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Graduate, TMM, Post Doc Fellow, Clinical Fellow), and Faculty Members have a duty to adhere to the uOttawa Faculty of Medicine’s Policy on Professionalism in all clinical, academic and research settings. This includes all interactions whether in person, in writing or by electronic means (for example, email, social media, internet).

The University of Ottawa and the Faculty of Medicine reaffirms its ongoing commitment to providing, promoting, and maintaining a professional and respectful working and learning environment.

Our goal is to create and sustain a culture of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging for all members of the Faculty of Medicine community. All Faculty members have the right to work in an environment that is free from mistreatment and/or exclusion on the basis of any protected grounds as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Act (e.g. age, perceived race, ethnoreligious affiliation, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, marital/family status). Principles of equity, diversity and inclusion must be adhered to in order to respect the rights, dignity and full participation of all PGME trainees, staff and faculty within the Faculty of Medicine.

Committee

Approval Date

Postgraduate Medical Education Committee
Faculty Council

November 30, 2022
January 10, 2023

Executive Committee of the Senate

November 7, 2023