

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA, FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Policy on Postgraduate Trainees Undertaking International Electives

INTRODUCTION

The benefits to postgraduate medical trainees participating in international clinical electives are recognized by the faculty and the medical literature. However, these electives pose potential risks for the trainee and the receiving community and institution, therefore proper preparation, oversight and follow up are required.

For international electives trainees are required to carry out special preparation, particularly important for those planning to work in low resource settings.

Note: Trainees are responsible for the application and cost of any passport, visa, insurance, health related and other requirements, as appropriate.

PURPOSE

This policy will outline the requirements for application and successful completion of international elective to receive faculty support and recognition for these activities.

OFFICE RESPONSIBLE

The International and Global Health Office (IGHO), Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) office and the trainee's specialty or subspecialty program jointly approve these electives. Trainees are required to comply with instructions from the PGME Office and the IGHO, as well as their respective Programs/Program Directors.

In addition to this policy, trainees must abide by the University of Ottawa's policy 128 'International Travel Safety Policy'.

Section 1: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Trainees must have permission from their Program Directors to participate in an international elective.
2. International electives should be a minimum of four weeks in duration.
3. The residency program must grant the trainee academic credit toward their program
4. Trainee requires an international supervisor who must be a practicing physician or researcher (for research electives). The trainee must provide contact information for their supervisor
5. Trainee is in good academic standing, and where applicable, trainee's work visa and sponsor permit the undertaking of international training

Section 2: APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for international electives should be submitted to the trainee's respective program a minimum of four months prior to their placement start date. This will allow the trainee to properly prepare for the elective and allow enough time for required immunizations, visas, passports, and pre- departure training. Once the trainee's program approves the dates and confirms the trainee is

in good academic standing the application is sent to the IGHO for processing trainee to complete “Application Form to request approval for an International Elective” and “Release of Liability Form” available on the IGHO website.

2.1 The international elective will be pre-approved by the IGHO if the following requirements are met:

- a) The Program Director provides a letter of support signed by both the program director and the site supervisor

NOTE: Trainees must not be supervised by an immediate, extended, or in-law family member.

- b) The destination region for the elective does not carry a warning of “Avoid non-essential travel” and/or “Avoid all Travel” on the Global Affairs Canada Travel Advice and Advisories webpage.
 - Trainee should read the profile of the country and the region within the country that they are traveling to on the Reports & Warnings website (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories> and <https://voyage.gc.ca/voyager/avertissements>).
 - Trainee to provide appropriate educational objectives, approved by their Program Director.
 - Trainee to provide all required information requested on the application. Incomplete applications may lead to delays or refusal.

NOTE: Once the elective has been approved, it is possible to revoke this decision and cancel due to changes in conditions in the country, loss of in-country supervisor, OR arising academic or professional concerns on the part of the trainee.

Section 3: PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Trainee must complete pre-departure training as directed by the IGHO.

3.2 Trainees must complete the “Travel Risk Awareness- Security” course in the Digital Learning platform provided by International SOS.

3.3 Trainees must register their trip with the University of Ottawa’s central travel registry: <https://uottawa.moveonca.com/form/61b72d807daad20139143ca3/eng#>

3.4 Trainees must register their trip with the Canadian Government’s travel registry: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration>

3.5 Trainee may be required to take part in post-elective debriefing sessions, as appropriate. The IGHO and Faculty Affairs Wellness are available to trainees wishing to debrief about their experience.

3.6 Upon completion of the elective, the trainee is required to provide a mobility report. This document is to be forwarded to the IGHO.

3.7 A formal evaluation of the trainee is required at the end of the elective as per the policy for the Evaluation and Assessment of Postgraduate Trainees. <https://med.uottawa.ca/postgraduate/governance/policies>

Section 4: DURATION AND REMUNERATION

4.1 International Electives are, ideally, expected to be a minimum of four weeks in length (a rotation). Although there are no routine funds available for elective activities, trainees are encouraged to

contact their program to check for available funding.

Section 5: MEDICAL-LEGAL COVERAGE DURING ELECTIVE

5.1 Trainees are required to contact CMPA to confirm their coverage and to inform CMPA of their planned activities.

CMPA website: <https://www.cmpa-acpm.ca/en/membership/protection-for-members/principles-of-assistance/potential-gap-in-liability-protection-when-teaching-or-learning-outside-canada>

In cases where CMPA coverage doesn't apply, the University's Commercial General Liability insurance policy, which includes malpractice, would apply as long as:

1. The trainee is registered as a uOttawa trainee during the time of the "work"/placement in question
2. The university has a written placement agreement which covers the trainee's work prior to the start of the placement, and
3. The trainee receives academic credit (approved by the University) for the time in question when the event causing the loss occurs.

Section 6: ALIGNMENT WITH THE POSTGRADUATE TRAINEE SAFETY POLICY

6.1 Trainees and Program Directors should note that all the conditions outlined in the Postgraduate Trainee Safety Policy (<https://med.uottawa.ca/postgraduate/governance/policies>) may not be realistically possible to adhere to during an international elective. All steps will be taken to minimize risk for trainees and their host communities.

Section 7: SUMMARY

Trainees must:

1. have their application approved PRIOR to undertaking the international elective. Application must be approved by the Program Director, IGHO and Postgraduate Medical Education Office.
2. complete pre-departure training, as directed by the IGHO.
3. submit the mobility report to the IGHO.
4. complete post-elective debriefing, as directed by the IGHO.
5. complete the evaluation In-Training Evaluation Report (ITER).
6. submit or ensure submittal of evaluation form by supervisor to the Program Director.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in 1 year after adoption and every 3 years subsequently.

Committee

Postgraduate Medical Education Committee (PGEC)
Faculty Council
Executive Committee of the Senate

Approval

October 25, 2023
November 7, 2023
December 5, 2023