

COM GME Internal Medicine Program Policy

Policy 2.200 Internal Medicine
Section Resident Support/Conditions for Appointment
Subject Leave for Residents
Policy Requirements ACGME Institutional: 1.12.e; 2.6.c; 4.2.b.2; 4.3.a.9.; 4.3.a.10; 4.8 ACGME Common: 6.14 ACGME Internal Medicine: 6.14 COM GMEC: 2.200 UAMS Administrative Policies: 4.1.08, 4.6.11, and 8.4.04
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Purpose: To outline the program's processes for the various types of leave.

Policy: The COM Internal Medicine program policy will outline the formal written policies and procedures for leave. This policy will outline the impact of leave on board eligibility. This policy will ensure that all ACGME requirements and applicable laws related to leave are met. This policy will outline the responsibilities of the program director related to leave and the responsibilities of the resident related to leave.

Process:

All resident leave is tracked by the Program Manager. All resident leave is entered into New Innovations monthly. Resident leave is requested and approved depending on the type of leave as outlined below.

ABIM Leave Policy in Regard to Board Eligibility:

- Residents may take up to 35 days off per academic year for vacation, illness, and family-related leave, with a cumulative maximum of 105 days over a three-year residency.
- Absences beyond 35 days per year require extended training, unless managed by the Deficits in Required Training Time policy.
- Leave beyond 140 days requires an extension of training regardless of PD verification of clinical competency.
- Vacation policies may vary by institution but must ensure completion of training requirements.

ACGME Medical, Parental or Caregiver Leave Policy:

- Per ACGME requirements, starting with their first day of employment, every resident and fellow in an ACGME-accredited residency program is entitled to six-weeks approved medical, parental, or caregiver paid leave at any one time during their residency or fellowship program.
- Medical, parental or caregiver leave may be requested in blocks or specific increments to total six weeks.
- During this leave period, trainees will be paid 100% of their salary.
- Health and disability insurance benefits for residents/fellows and their eligible dependents will continue.
- Medical, parental or caregiver leave must be approved by Program Director, DIO, and Assistant Dean for Housestaff prior to the start of this leave.
- If any of the resident's annual allotted paid time off (i.e., vacation or sick leave) is available at the time of the medical, parental or caregiver leave request, then this paid time off will be applied to and run concurrent to any approved leave.
- If paid time off (i.e., vacation or sick leave) has not been used in the academic year prior to this one-time medical, parental or caregiver leave, then the resident/fellow will be provided with a minimum of one week of paid time off reserved for use outside of the first six weeks of the first approved, medical, parental, or caregiver leave.

This medical, parental and caregiver leave is only available through the process outlined below. Unused weeks of medical, parental or caregiver leave are not considered part of a bank of vacation days to be used later. Some or all portions of medical, parental or caregiver leave may fall under the FMLA.

Residents/fellows must follow UAMS and COM GME policies as related to FMLA.

1. The trainee will inform their Program Director in writing to request the use of their one-time approved paid six-week medical, parental or caregiver leave. Though the trainee may share the details of their request with their Program Director, they are only required to disclose the category of their leave (medical, parental, or caregiver). Trainee should outline plan for use of medical, parental or caregiver leave to include proposed dates of leave.
2. The program will complete the online UAMS COM GME Medical, Parental and Caregiver Leave Request Form. The trainee will complete the online Resident Acknowledgement of Use of Medical, Parental and Caregiver Leave. Both documents must be submitted to the Assistant Dean for Housestaff Affairs for review.
3. The Housestaff Office will provide written communication to program regarding approval of request and next steps.
4. Trainee must comply with all processes to include submission of FMLA paperwork and communication with Housestaff Office on a regular basis.
5. The Program Director must meet with the trainee, review their planned leave dates, and review potential impact on the trainee's ability to graduate on time and/or take certifying exams as outlined above. The Program Director will review clinical assignments the trainee will be required to make up, if any, as described above. All discussions will be documented by the Program Director and placed in the trainee's personnel file.

6. Program must ensure that leave is accurately logged in the residency management software.
7. At least one week before the end of an approved leave, the trainee must email their Program Director to confirm their return-to-work date and must additionally communicate with 6 Assistant Dean for Housestaff as required to ensure their process is properly completed. The Program Director will confirm the trainee's return to work with the Assistant Dean for Housestaff on their first day back in writing.

Educational and Professional Leave:

- Residents receive 5 days of educational leave annually for exams or conferences. Additional needs must utilize vacation days.
- When requesting educational and professional leave, residents should notify the chief residents, program manager, and program director in writing 30 days in advance (or 6 weeks for VA rotations). The resident is responsible for arranging duty coverage.
- Job or further educational training interview days may not be counted as professional or educational leave. Professional or educational leave may be used to take primary or subspecialty boards. USMLE exams may be taken using professional or educational leave.
- Special exceptions for more than 5 days per year will be considered by the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) under this policy. Those exceptions include but are not limited to: advanced recognition, 4 exceptional research or academic performance. Exceptions should be requested in advance of the registration deadline/leave date.

Vacation Leave:

- Each resident is allocated 21 days of vacation per year (three 7-day weeks/three 5-business day weeks).
- Vacation scheduling and changes require written notice to the chief residents well in advance.
- Residents may not take leave while on essential services (Wards, ICU, Float) or Gen Med Consults.
- Vacation leave may not be borrowed from future credits.
- Residents/fellows do not receive payment for unused vacation leave at the completion of the program.
- In addition, residents are also allotted five (5) additional vacation days to use at their discretion. These 5 additional days cover the entirety of the Internal Medicine Residency training (3 years) and are not given every academic year. These days must be approved in writing by the PD.

Sick and Extended Sick Leave:

- Up to 12 days of paid sick leave is available per year, not carrying over or paid out at year-end.
- Extended sick leave and its conditions require Program Director approval and written requests.
- Any day that the resident/fellow is on the schedule to work will be charged as sick leave if the resident/fellow is unable to work due to illness.
- To access sick leave a resident/fellow must notify the Program Director or the Chief on call.

International Travel:

- Travel plans must be submitted in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts and potential need for make-up time.

Special Provisions for Pregnancy:

- Early notification to the Program Director and Program Manager is required, with potential leave adjustments based on medical advice.
- FMLA paperwork is necessary for any paid or unpaid leave.

Medical, Parental or Caregiver Leave:

- At least six weeks of paid leave is provided for qualifying medical or caregiving reasons, with the institution ensuring full salary for the initial six weeks.

Bereavement Leave:

- Up to three days of bereavement leave is granted, with extensions requiring approval and sick days used to cover this leave.

Fellowship and Job Interviews:

- Residents should schedule interviews during vacation or elective rotations and must notify if interviews occur during assigned duties.

Family and Medical Leave Act Policy

- The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (“FMLA”) requires certain employers to allow eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave (paid and/or unpaid) to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, to recuperate from their own serious illness, to care for certain seriously ill family members, and to care for service members injured in the line of duty, or qualifying exigency. An eligible employee is one who has at least 12 months of employment with the State of Arkansas and has worked at least 1,250 actual work hours during the previous 12-month period. Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. UAMS Administrative Guide Policy 4.6.11 outlines the policy and procedures for use of FMLA. Residents/fellows must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable.

Jury Duty Policy

- Leave may be granted for residents/fellows that are required to participate in local, state or federal jury duty. Trainees will be required to provide documentation of participation in jury duty to program leadership prior to release from work. Residents/fellows will not be required to use vacation or sick leave for jury duty.

Holiday Leave Policy

- Residents/fellows do not receive paid time off for holidays as identified under the official UAMS Employee Holiday Calendar. Residents may receive holidays as paid time off only if trainee’s scheduled assignment (clinic) is closed or if vacation is utilized.

Leave of Absence (non FMLA qualified and non ACGME Caregiver Leave) Policy

- Leave of Absence is the paid or unpaid absence from the educational activities of the residency/fellowship program when no sick or vacation leave exists to cover the absence and it is leave other than FMLA-qualified leave. The Program Director has the sole authority to grant a leave of absence for a resident/fellow. Prior to making a final decision regarding the request for leave of absence, the Program Director must contact the Assistant Dean for Housestaff Affairs to discuss the accounting of sick leave, vacation time, restrictions about family medical leave, financial compensation (stipends and benefits), and the record keeping requirements.

Military Leave Policy

- Military leave is the absence from a residency/fellowship program to fulfill obligations of the National Guard or any of the Uniformed Services of the United States as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4303. The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act does not apply to residents/fellows enrolled in the Graduate Medical Education (GME) program. Residents/fellows who are members of the National Guard or any of the Uniformed Services of the United States may be called to duty in such uniformed service. The resident/fellow shall notify the Program Director in writing upon learning that he/she has been called to duty in a uniformed service. Prior to leaving the program for active duty, the resident/fellow and Program Director shall discuss the tentative plans for the trainee's return to the program including the level of re-entry. Within the abilities of the program to accommodate the trainee's re-entry in the program, the duration of absence from the program and the trainee's activities during the absence, the program will make every effort to ensure that the resident/fellow re-enters the program at the level commensurate with his/her abilities.

Impact of Leave on Resident/Fellow Training Time:

Leave may impact a trainee's ability to graduate on time or impact board eligibility in the following ways:

- a. If a trainee is not in good standing in their residency or fellowship and is not meeting ACGME milestones, Program Directors and Clinical Competency Committees may require additional time in program to meet milestones required for successful graduation.
- b. The State of Arkansas requires 12 full months of PGY-1 for US Graduates and 36 full months (PGY-1, PGY-2, and PGY-3) of training for international graduates to receive an unrestricted license. Longer leave could impact Arkansas licensure and require additional months of training to receive an unrestricted license.
- c. The trainee's accrediting board will have clear guidelines on how many weeks of training are required to qualify for their board-certifying examination. If leave exceeds time or educational limits required by a particular board, it may impact the ability to take board examinations or become board certified and could require additional months of training to take certifying exams and become board certified. The impact of an extended leave of absence upon the criteria for satisfactory completion of the program and upon a resident's/fellow's eligibility to participate in examinations by the relevant certifying board(s) must be discussed and documented by the Program Director with the trainee before the trainee's leave begins.
- d. Trainees must meet all program requirements for successful completion of training program.

For more information refer to [UAMS COM GME Policy 2.200](#)

Resources:

UAMS COM GME Policy 2.200