



Policy on Emergency Medicine Residency Training Requirements

BACKGROUND

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) has adopted a policy regarding training requirements, absences from a residency training program, and breaks in training as they relate to the Board's eligibility criteria for initial certification.

POLICY

It is the policy of ABEM that to apply for certification in Emergency Medicine (EM), physicians must have successfully completed an EM residency program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), or the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine (ACEM). ACGME-International (ACGME-I)-accredited residency training cannot be used to fulfill the residency training requirements for certification. All of the aforementioned eligibility criteria cannot be appealed.

The ACGME accredits EM residency programs of 36 and 48 months in length. The physician must successfully complete all months of training for which the EM residency program is accredited to fulfill the Board's eligibility criteria.

Residents must successfully complete at least 46 weeks of training in each residency level. An extension of training will be required for time away from training that exceeds six weeks and does not fulfill the requirements of the Policy on Parental, Caregiver, and Medical Leave. Leave time cannot be accrued from year to year. If a residency program has a policy in effect for leave time that is less than six weeks, the program may operate under its own policy.

Interruptions in training may not exceed 36 months at any one time in order for the earlier training to be considered toward fulfilling the ABEM's eligibility criteria.

ABEM also recognizes training that has been successfully completed in combined training programs that have been approved by ABEM and another American Board of Medical Specialties Member Board. See the appropriate combined training program guidelines for more information.

If a four-year EM residency program transitions to a three-year, ACGME-accredited, EM residency program during the period of initial ACGME accreditation, two basic principles apply depending on the resident's level of training at the time of ACGME initial accreditation:

1. A resident must successfully complete at least four years in the same program, or
2. A resident must successfully complete at least 24 months under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format

Residents enrolled in programs that transition from a four-year format to an ACGME-accredited, three-year format during the period of initial ACGME accreditation must complete training according to the following requirements:

1. If the physician is in the fourth year of training on the program's initial ACGME accreditation effective date, he or she must complete the current level of training (four years of total training).

2. If the physician is in the third year of training on the program's initial ACGME accreditation effective date, he or she must complete training at that level under the new ACGME-accredited three-year format, and must also complete at least 12 additional months of training under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format in the same program (at least four years of total training).
3. If the physician is in the second year of training on the program's initial ACGME accreditation effective date, he or she must complete training at that level under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format, and must also complete at least 24 additional months of training under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format (at least four years of total training).
4. If the physician is in the first year of training on the program's initial ACGME accreditation effective date, he or she must complete training at that level under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format, and must also complete at least 24 additional months of training under the new ACGME-accredited, three-year format (at least three years of total training).

The principles no longer apply once an EM residency program has received continued ACGME-accreditation (after successful completion of both the initial ACGME accreditation cycle period and a second RRC site visit by the ACGME Residency Review Committee).

In every training scenario, the program director must ensure that the resident has met all of the training requirements of the program. The program director may require training in addition to the minimum amounts specified by ABEM.

PROCEDURES

Physicians who successfully complete an ACGME-, RCPSC-, or ACEM-accredited EM residency training program may submit an initial certification application during any annual application cycle as long as the physician is board eligible. See the Policy on Board Eligibility for details. The Board independently verifies with the residency director(s) that the physician successfully completed the training necessary to fulfill the Board's eligibility criteria. These criteria cannot be appealed.

EXCEPTION

Interruptions in residency training that exceed 36 months due to military deployment under extraordinary circumstances can be reviewed for possible approval on a case-by-case basis.

Exceptions for residents applying for or awarded a Stimulating Access to Research in Residency (StARR) grant can be reviewed for possible approval. Requests for exceptions must be submitted before the resident begins his or her research.

Physicians who began their EM training prior to July 1, 1987, must have successfully completed a minimum of 36 months of post-medical school training, at least 24 months of which were under the control of an ACGME-accredited Emergency Medicine residency program at the postgraduate year (PGY) 2 level and above.

Last reviewed February 2024