RESIDENT TRANSFER POLICY

POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PREAMBLE

The current system of placement of medical graduates into residency programs and the recent health care system restructuring have made the conditions for transferring between residency programs much more restrictive than in the past. A significant problem continues to present itself as a wide and varied set of circumstances leads a resident or residency program to conclude that a transfer to another program is necessary. This document outlines the principles and procedures for residency transfer requests.

I. PRINCIPLES

1. Inter-program transfer is not a mechanism to subvert the CaRMS match.

2. All transfers ultimately require the approval of the PGME Associate Dean.

3. Residents and Program Directors must be assured that each transfer request will be managed in an objective, fair, and equitable manner according to the principles and procedures outlined in this document.

4. All parties involved in the transfer process will make every effort to regard each case with the utmost in confidentiality.

5. The occurrence of a transfer request in no way guarantees a successful transfer.

6. The initial step of a residency transfer request should be an honest dialogue between the resident and the Chair of the Standing Committee on Resident Transfer (SCRT). The SCRT Chair will be responsible for assisting and advising the resident, related program directors, and the PGME Associate Dean with respect to adhering to the principles and procedures outlined in this document. The SCRT Chair will also have other members of the SCRT available for confidential advice and discussion.

7. The acceptability of an incoming resident and the capability of a program to absorb an additional resident will be left to the discretion of the potential recipient residency program. It is expected that the potential recipient residency program will establish its own application, screening, or interview processes to deal with potential incoming residents. It is also
expected that the potential recipient program’s consideration of the transfer request will be thorough and fair.

8. It is recognized that resident transfers can have a significant impact on relatively small residency programs. The PGME Associate Dean will make every effort to ensure that an appropriate balance of positions within small programs be maintained in the long run. This rebalancing process may involve a variety of actions (e.g. appeal to the Quotas Committee, looking for one to one trades within the transfer pool, addition or removal of PGY-1 positions in the subsequent CaRMS match, etc.). Program directors shall have the opportunity to provide input to the Quotas Committee and the PGME Associate Dean regarding rebalancing issues.

9. Funds for post-graduate training will follow the resident.

10. The potential receiving program director shall not advocate on behalf of the resident who is applying to make the transfer.

11. During and after the transfer process, every effort shall be made to ensure maximal credit for previous training.

12. A transfer request will not be considered to be “official” except as defined in the following procedure. A transfer request gaining “official” status does not imply approval of the transfer.

13. It is recognized that some transfer requests may involve issues of intimidation and harassment. The Associate Dean shall determine whether the application of existing policies relating to intimidation and harassment will take precedence over the resident transfer policy.

14. No resident shall be subject to recrimination for initiating a resident transfer request.

15. This policy applies to resident transfers within the University of Alberta.

16. The Office of the PGME Associate Dean will collect and compile data on resident transfers on an annual basis. The data will be reviewed annually by the PGME Council.

II. PROCEDURE

1. The resident shall meet with the SCRT Chair and review the transfer request with specific reference to these principles and procedures. The SCRT Chair may consult with the PGME Associate Dean.
2. If the conclusion of the above discussions is to pursue a transfer, then the SCRT Chair will write to the program director(s) of the potential recipient residency program(s). This letter will be copied to the resident and the PGME Associate Dean.
3. The potential recipient Residency Program Committee(s) shall proceed with an appropriate process to determine the resident’s acceptability which will normally be completed within 30 days of the notification of the program director(s) of the transfer request by the resident. The potential recipient program director should consider the impact that the transfer may have on the recipient program.

4. Up to this point, all discussions shall be confidential. The potential donor program director will not be contacted by either the potential recipient residency program or the PGME Associate Dean without the clear consent of the resident.

5. The decision of the potential recipient residency program will be directly communicated by letter to both the resident and the PGME Associate Dean within 30 days (Section II.3, with copy to the SCRT Chair). If the program decides to offer admission, at this point the transfer request is considered to be “official”.

6. The PGME Associate Dean will contact the resident to seek agreement for informing the potential donor program director of the transfer request. The PGME Associate Dean will only then inform the potential donor program director. If the program decides to NOT offer admission, the resident may withdraw the transfer request, seek out a new potential recipient program, or seek the advice of the SCRT Chair.

7. In order for a transfer to occur on July 1, the transfer request must be made official by March 31 of the same year. In order for a transfer to occur on January 1, the transfer request must be made official by September 30 of the previous year. Therefore, residents will have two opportunities a year to make an official transfer request. Transfers will normally occur only at these times.

8. The donor program director will notify the PGME Associate Dean of the decision to release, or not to release, the resident within 14 days of notification (Section II-6). The Associate Dean will so notify the resident. The resident will then notify the Associate Dean of acceptance of the offer of transfer within 7 days.

9. The PGME Associate Dean and/or the SCRT Chair reserve the right to refer the case at hand to the entire Standing Committee on Resident Transfer (SCRT) at any time for advice and recommendation.

10. At any point, after the transfer request has become official a resident or a program director may request a formal hearing by the SCRT. Such a hearing request will be directed to the PGME Associate Dean. The PGME Associate Dean will require that the SCRT meet to hear the resident or program director within 21 days of receipt of the request.

11. Final approval of any transfer rests with the PGME Associate Dean.
12. A resident transfer may or may not require the approval of the PGME funding authority. If the PGME funding authority does not approve of the financial adjustments required by the transfer or if the resident, program directors, and PGME Associate Dean are not able to secure alternative funding, then the transfer will be denied.

III. SCRT APPEALS PROCEDURE

1. The SCRT appeals procedure will be an independent process and deal strictly with issues stemming from the resident transfer process. The SCRT appeals procedure is separate from the PGME Academic Appeals Policy.

2. The SCRT shall collectively review every written request for appeal at an *in camera* preliminary appeal session. The SCRT Chair must conduct this session within 21 days of receipt of the written request for appeal. The SCRT shall decide by discussion and vote whether the request should initiate a formal appeal hearing. This decision is binding. If the SCRT decides to accept the request and proceed with a formal appeal hearing, then the Chair will be responsible for establishing the procedures for the hearing and making rulings on matters of procedure that may arise. The rulings are binding. Rulings may include membership of the hearing committee and the use of alternate members. If the SCRT decides to reject the request for a formal appeal hearing, then the SCRT Chair will inform the appellant of the decision. This decision is binding.

3. All proceedings of the formal appeal hearing shall be held *in camera*. The SCRT shall have the right to call any or all of the individuals involved in the transfer request it deems necessary to provide information and to answer any questions that the committee may have. Only the hearing committee will have the right of determining the witness list. Each witness will be admitted to the hearing one at a time. The appellant and each witness will be allowed to make a brief closing statement. Once the committee has heard from all individuals it has called, the committee members shall meet *in camera* to deliberate and come to a decision to either deny or uphold the appeal. If the committee decides to uphold the appeal, the committee shall prescribe remedial actions to be taken.

4. The decision of the SCRT will be sent to the resident, the program directors, and the PGME Associate Dean at the conclusion of the appeals process. All discussion at the level of the SCRT will be considered privileged information and the written record of the committee’s proceedings will be considered strictly confidential and accessible exclusively by the committee members only for the duration of the appeals process. The decisions of the SCRT will be considered final and cannot be appealed.
STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESIDENT TRANSFER (SCRT)

1. The SCRT is advisory to the PGME Associate Dean on matters relating to transfer of residents between training programs.

2. The membership of the SCRT will consist of the following:

   A. Chair (A faculty member selected by the Housestaff Well-Being Committee and approved by the PGME Council and the Professional Association of Residents of Alberta (PARA). This faculty member will NOT be a residency program director.)
   B. Two faculty members (These members are selected by the PGME Council. These members will NOT be residency program directors.)
   C. Two resident members (These members are selected by PARA.)

3. The Chair of the SCRT will serve as a key advisor and mediator for residents, program directors, and the PGME Associate Dean in dealing with issues of transfer requests. This official will make every effort to ensure that transfer requests are dealt with fairness, expediency, and confidentiality. The SCRT Chair’s term will last two academic years with an option of renewing the position for one additional term. Other members of the SCRT shall serve for a term lasting one academic year with the option of renewal for one additional term.

4. The quorum for the committee shall be the chair, one faculty member, and one resident member. Alternate faculty members will be selected by the PGME Associate Dean. Alternate resident members will be selected by PARA.