

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY ASSESSMENT VERIFICATION PERIOD (AVP) POLICY

Approved by PGME Committee: June 12, 2024

Approved by JSC: June 14, 2024

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Preamble

The Assessment Verification Period (AVP) is a period of assessment that all International Medical Graduates (IMGs) must successfully complete prior to entering residency training in Ontario. An assessment period is a legislative requirement under O. Reg. 865/93, s. 11(4) of the Medicine Act, 1991.

An IMG is a candidate who graduated from a non-CACMs (Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools) medical school. LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) accreditation of Canadian medical schools ends on June 30, 2025. Graduates of LCME accredited medical schools after June 30, 2025, will be considered IMGs.

The AVP provides an opportunity for the Program Director to assess the candidate's knowledge, clinical skills, judgment, and communication skills, appropriate for supervised practice in the chosen discipline, and to ensure that the candidate displays an appropriately professional attitude.

The candidate may be assigned to several rotations during the assessment verification period.

The candidate may contact PARO or the Learner Experience Office for support at any stage during their AVP.

Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements for AVP supervision and assessment, and the Appeal process in the event of an unsatisfactory assessment or suspension.

Policy References

- [Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine \(COFM\) 2016 Assessment Verification Period \(AVP\) Policy](#)

Resources

- [PARO](#)
- [Learner Experience Office](#)

Supervision

The AVP assessment must take place within an appropriate supervised clinical activity appropriate to the specialty.

The certificate granted for the AVP states that the candidate may practice medicine *“under a level of supervision that is determined to be appropriate for the holder and the program of medical education and assessment, by a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario designated by the director of the program.”*

Residents completing an AVP are not authorized to write orders independently for a minimum of two weeks into the AVP; program directors are required to complete a form after two weeks from Medical Affairs which will authorize AVP candidates to write orders.

Assessment

Assessment of AVP candidates follows the [COFM AVP Policy](#).

Program Directors must ensure that candidates are evaluated and given written feedback on a regular basis during the AVP. Assessments and meetings should be well documented and should include an initial evaluation at the end of the 2nd week, a mid-rotation evaluation by the end of the 8th week, and a final evaluation at week 12.

If a candidate is successful, after the 12-week AVP the final assessment is completed by the Program Director on the AVP form and forwarded to the PGME Office for authorization. If a candidate is unsuccessful after the 12-week AVP, the PGME office will reach out to the program to determine if an extension period is required. If an extension period is required, a revised Letter of Appointment is issued to the resident and submitted to the CPSO.

Candidates who are successful in the AVP will continue in the postgraduate training program. The AVP period counts toward residency training.

Licensure Extension

- Application for a 6-week extension of the AVP can be made to the CPSO (without Registration Committee referral) to allow for adequate assessment of the candidate. A copy of the completed AVP report and a letter from the Program Director is required. The letter must outline the reasons for the extension and/or the remediation plan. The Postgraduate Dean must support the request to CPSO.
- An additional 6-week period can be requested. This must be approved by the CPSO Registration Committee. Efforts will be made to ensure there are little to no gaps in training as a result of obtaining registration through the CPSO.

Once the AVP is complete, the resident can continue in residency training with a valid Postgraduate Education certificate of registration.

Vacation

The AVP is a high stakes assessment over a short time frame. Vacation time during the AVP is discouraged and may require AVP extension. The AVP period is an important time, during which it is important for residents to be present as much as possible so that they may be successful during this assessment period. However, contractually, residents are entitled to request vacation and other leave provided in the PARO-OTH Collective Agreement during this period of time.

Possible Outcomes

- 1. Satisfactory**
The AVP candidate continues in the postgraduate training program with a valid Certificate of Registration authorizing postgraduate education.
- 2. Unsatisfactory**
A candidate with an unsatisfactory assessment has their appointment with the University terminated.
- 3. Withdrawal**
An AVP candidate may choose to withdraw from the AVP at any time. Withdrawal may have an impact on the terms of the Ministry of Health (MOH) Return of Service (ROS) Agreement. Candidates should consult the Program Officer at the MOH regarding their ROS obligations.
- 4. Other**
See information in the Policy regarding suspension/dismissal and appeals.

Reapplication of Unsatisfactory/Withdrawn Candidates

1. A candidate in the PGY2 Advanced stream may request the Program Director for consideration at the PGY1 level. Re-Entry at this level is at the discretion of the Program Director and will require CPSO approval.
2. An unsatisfactory AVP is not counted towards residency training, therefore a candidate who has not completed an AVP (PGY1 or PGY2 level) may apply to the first iteration of CaRMS.
3. Restriction on the re-application of failures:
 - i. Cannot apply to the same specialty at the same level of entry. Candidates may apply to a lower level of entry in the same specialty, if applicable (see (a) above).
 - ii. May apply to a different specialty.

In addition, the following policies apply to AVP candidates:

Professional Conduct

AVP candidates are expected to adhere to the standards of ethical behaviour for the medical profession and their professional activities are expected to be characterized by honesty, integrity, conscientiousness, and reliability. Behaviour which violates these principles, and which affects the performance of professional activities is viewed as a demonstration of lack of suitability to be a physician.

Assessment of behavioural and ethical performance will be related to the following educational objectives:

- The AVP candidate must display adequate skill at communicating and interacting appropriately with patients, families, colleagues, and allied health care professionals.
- AVP candidates should demonstrate:
 - professionalism
 - respect, empathy and compassion for patients and their families;
 - concern for the needs of the patients and their families to understand the nature of the illness and the goals and possible complications of investigations and treatment;
 - awareness of the effects that differences in cultural and social background have on the maintenance of health and the development of, and reaction to, illness;
 - respect for the patient as an informed participant in decisions regarding their care, wherever possible;
 - an understanding of the appropriate requirements for involvement of patients and their families in research;
 - respect for, and ability to work harmoniously with other allied health care personnel and medical colleagues;
 - a willingness to teach others in their own specialty, as well as other allied health care professionals;
 - recognition of the importance of self-assessment and of lifelong learning for the maintenance of competent performance.

AVP candidates are also required to comply with the professional standards mandated by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (e.g. [Charter on Medical/Dental Professionalism](#); [Four Pillars of Professionalism](#); Policy and Guidelines for Interactions between Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Industry), as well as those issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and the Canadian Medical Association.

An AVP candidate's professional conduct is evaluated during the AVP. In addition, any serious breaches of professional conduct will be reported immediately to the Program Director and Associate Dean Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) and may result in suspension and/or termination of a candidate's appointment with the University prior to the end of the assessment verification period.

Breaches of Professional Conduct or Patient Care/Safety Concerns

Serious allegations of unprofessional conduct against an AVP candidate and/or conduct that gives rise to concerns about patient care or safety must be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean PGME. The candidate may be suspended from clinical duties during the investigation of the allegations (see "Suspension").

Suspension

1. The Associate Dean PGME, or in their absence or unavailability the Program Director, may suspend a candidate at any time if there are concerns about patient care or safety or there are allegations of unprofessional conduct (see "Professional Conduct" above). A suspension by the Program Director in these circumstances must subsequently be confirmed by the Associate Dean PGME.
2. The Associate Dean PGME or Program Director will notify the candidate in writing that they are suspended or removed from specific clinical duties pending an investigation. At the request of the candidate, the Associate Dean PGME or Program Director will meet with the candidate within 7 days of issuance of the notice to review the reasons for the decision and allow the candidate to respond. The candidate may be accompanied by a colleague or other support person. The Associate Dean PGME or Program Director will then decide if the suspension or removal from specific clinical duties should continue pending completion of the investigation and will inform the candidate in writing of the decision.
3. The PGME Office will advise hospital administration and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and Touchstone Institute of any suspension.

Appeals

AVP candidates may choose to appeal an unsatisfactory final assessment or suspension based on process issues only.

1. A candidate may appeal the following decisions to the Schulich Postgraduate Medical Education Appeal Committee ("the Committee"):
 - a) an unsatisfactory assessment at the end of the assessment verification period resulting in termination of a candidate's appointment with the University;
 - b) a decision by the Associate Dean PGME to terminate a candidate's appointment with the University because he or she has engaged in unprofessional conduct and/or has jeopardized patient care or safety.
2. A candidate may appeal on the following grounds:
 - a) for an appeal under section 1(a), that there was a significant error in the assessment verification process that could reasonably be seen to cast doubt on the correctness of the final assessment;
 - b) for an appeal under section 1(b), that the Associate Dean PGME did not take into consideration relevant information or that the decision cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean PGME.
3. An appeal must be submitted to the PGME Office within two weeks of the issuance of the decision and include the following:
 - a) a copy of relevant evaluations (if applicable)
 - b) a copy of the decision
 - c) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
 - d) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.

4. The PGME Office will forward copies of the appeal documentation to the respondent (Program Director and/or Associate Dean PGME) who shall file a concise written reply with relevant documentation within two weeks of the filing of the appeal. A copy of the reply shall be provided to the candidate.
5. Where circumstances warrant, the deadlines for filing an appeal or response may be extended at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.
6. The PGME Office shall forward the documentation provided by the candidate and respondent to the Committee.
7. The Committee shall determine its own procedures for hearing an appeal and the Chair of the Committee may make such rules and orders as he or she deems necessary and proper to ensure a fair and expeditious proceeding. The candidate shall be informed of the procedures that will be followed. The Committee shall proceed fairly in its disposition of the appeal, ensuring that both the candidate and the respondent are aware of the evidence to be considered.
8. The Committee shall provide the parties to the appeal with an opportunity to meet with the Committee and bring witnesses. Both parties and their witnesses may be cross-examined by the other party and both parties may be represented by legal counsel.
9. The Committee shall issue a written decision with reasons and may:
 - a) deny the appeal;
 - b) grant the appeal of the assessment (section 1(a)) if it is persuaded that there was a significant error in the assessment verification period process that could reasonably be seen to cast doubt on the correctness of the final assessment and allow the candidate to repeat the AVP process or part of the process (subject to any required CPSO approval) and may provide recommendations to the program on the conduct of the process;
 - c) grant the appeal of the Associate Dean PGME's decision (section 1(b)) if it is persuaded that the Associate Dean PGME did not take into consideration relevant information when making the decision and remit the matter to the Associate Dean PGME for reconsideration; or
 - d) grant the appeal if it is persuaded that the Associate Dean PGME's decision (section 1(b)) cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean PGME and reinstate the candidate.
10. A decision to deny the appeal may be appealed to the Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, on the grounds that there was a significant procedural error by the Schulich Postgraduate Medical Education Appeal Committee that was prejudicial to the candidate and casts doubt on the fairness of those proceedings. The Dean may delegate his or her authority to hear and decide the appeal to another individual or individuals or to a committee. References to "Dean" in this part mean "Dean or delegate".
11. An appeal must be submitted to the Dean's Office, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, within two weeks of the issuance of the Committee's decision and include the following:
 - a) a copy of the Committee's decision;
 - b) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
 - c) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.
12. The Dean's Office shall forward copies of the candidate's appeal documentation to the respondent (Program Director or Associate Dean PGME) who shall file a concise written reply with relevant documentation within two weeks of the filing of the appeal. A copy of the reply shall be provided to the candidate.
13. Where circumstances warrant, the deadlines for filing an appeal or response may be extended at the discretion of the Dean.

14. The Dean shall base his or her decision solely on the written material filed by the parties. The Dean shall issue a written decision with reason and may:
 - a) deny the appeal; or
 - b) grant the appeal and send the matter back to the Committee with specific directions for rehearing all or part of the appeal or make such other order as he or she deems appropriate.
- 15. The Dean's decision is final and there is no further right of appeal at the University.**