

## DFCM Postgraduate Research Elective Guideline

### Background/Purpose

The CanMEDS-FM role of Scholar indicates that family physicians should “demonstrate a lifelong commitment to excellence in practice through: continuous learning and teaching others; gathering, combining, and evaluating evidence; and contributing to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.” The Postgraduate Family Medicine curriculum at the University of Toronto also states that one of the Entrustable Professional Activities in Family Medicine is to “Demonstrate an awareness of the need to become a lifelong learner” for which one of the enabling competencies includes development of basic skills in research and scholarly inquiry. For this reason, there is value in supporting our residents who want to expand their skills in research and scholarly inquiry. In recent years, requests for research electives to foster this skill set have been increasing within our program.

However, with the current 24-month family medicine residency training in Canada, which is the shortest program internationally for family practice residents to develop their clinical competencies, time is limited. Moreover, with the required duty hour restrictions and other necessary protected time, it is also extremely important to ensure that our residents get adequate protected clinical experience to build their clinical competencies and in turn, be able to practice comprehensive family medicine safely.

The purpose of this guideline is to provide residents and site directors direction regarding the appropriate parameters for granting a research elective to residents that will ensure that residents are able to meet the clinical competencies of the family medicine program while still providing opportunities for excellent residents to pursue scholarly interests.

### Requirements

1. Any resident pursuing a research elective **must** be in good standing and be achieving their other clinical competencies on an appropriate trajectory as indicated by their field notes, FM-MAP scores, ITERS and relevant 6 month progress reviews.
2. All residents who wish to schedule a research elective **must** have the elective approved a **minimum of 8 weeks prior to the elective**. You must allow a minimum of 2 weeks for review of your proposal. Requests submitted less than 10 weeks (8 + 2 weeks) in advance of the elective will **not** be considered.
3. Requests for research electives must be submitted to and approved by the Resident Academic Project team (where applicable) and the Site Postgraduate Program Director.
4. Research electives are meant to allow residents protected time to work on research projects that go beyond the requirements of the resident academic project. If the request for the research elective involves Resident Academic Project (RAP) related work, it should be towards a significantly expanded resident academic project with clear deliverables as outlined below and there needs to be a clear justification for why protected weekday time is required (i.e. if the data analysis can only be done in a location that is open Monday-Friday).
5. All research electives must have an identified DFCM supervisor. If residents wish, their project may also involve a faculty investigator outside of the DFCM (i.e. public health or other fields related to family practice); however, a DFCM co-supervisor is necessary.
6. All research electives must have the following:

- a. Clear learning objectives and deliverables, related to CanMEDS-FM roles. The learning objectives and deliverables must be as specific as possible (i.e. saying that you need protected time to have meetings with people to build relationships is not specific enough; you need to outline exactly who you will be meeting with and what the anticipated objectives/outputs of the meetings are).
- b. A schedule to clearly show the resident's time during the elective and justify the percentage of protected time being requested.

The above items (6a, 6b) must be developed with input from the resident's proposed elective supervisor prior to submitting the research elective request for approval.

7. When requesting a research elective, residents must submit items 6a & 6b above to the Resident Academic Project team (where applicable) and the Site Postgraduate Program Director. Residents submitting a research elective request should also copy their elective supervisor on the email to the Resident Academic Project team (where applicable) and the Site Postgraduate Program Director.
8. Research electives cannot occur during the first 6 months of their PGY-1 year or in the two months prior to the CCFP exam.
9. Research electives will be approved for a maximum of 4weeks.
10. Once research electives are approved, residents need to provide their supervisors with the elective evaluation form, learning objectives, deliverables and their proposed schedule at least 1 week in advance of the start of their elective.
11. A report on the status of the deliverables (i.e. a research report, draft paper for publication or other progress and results summary) should be submitted to the site director at the close of the elective.