

## Policy on Access to Residents for Research Projects

### Preamble:

In order to conduct research on topics in postgraduate medical education, researchers sometimes seek to access postgraduate learners. In other cases, researchers seek to determine the specific opinions or view of postgraduate learners on a non-medical education topic.

In order to access postgraduate trainees, the PGME office is often approached and asked to collaborate. While the PGME Office and individual program do have access to the postgraduate trainees, there is some concern that the information sought and the volume of requests for study participation could pose an undue burden on postgraduate trainees and may represent a violation of their expectation of privacy.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all research projects that seek access to postgraduate trainees (all trainees registered with the PGME Office) through the central PGME Office. This includes research projects initiated both internally and externally to McMaster University. Programs may have their own specialty specific process for surveys being distributed to their own residents.

### Process:

1. Researcher(s) will submit to the PGME Office their proposal. The proposal should consist of an executive summary of the proposed project (1 – 2 pages). The outline must include the purpose, methods, expected outcomes and anticipated timelines. The names and affiliations of all members of the research team must also be provided.
2. Research Ethics Board (REB) approval must be included with the submission.
3. The submission will be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee who will advise the PGME Office and the PGE Committee.
4. The subcommittee will review the request keeping in mind the following guiding principles:

- Is there a benefit to the residents / clinical fellows who participate in the study?
- Is there a benefit to future residents / clinical fellows or students?
- The overall burden to residents, in terms of the number of surveys being distributed, the length of the survey etc.
- Is the information to be obtained from the study likely to be of use to the Faculty of Health Sciences or the University in program evaluation or future planning?
- The PGME Office will not provide resident email addresses to researchers.
- That the method of distribution and collection of information will protect the trainee's identity and privacy.

### **Membership of Subcommittee**

There will be broad representation on the subcommittee. Representation shall include the major programs such as Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, General Surgery, Pediatrics. Representation may be a Program Director or a faculty member. Resident representatives are necessary to provide Resident input and guidance.

April 1, 2015  
E-approved by PGEC  
Adapted from Dalhousie University