

Supervisors and postgraduate medical learners are bound by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, Professional Responsibilities in Postgraduate Medical Education Policy.

<https://www.cpso.on.ca/Physicians/Policies-Guidance/Policies/Professional-Responsibilities-in-Postgraduate-Medi>

2.0 Principles

- 2.1 Faculty must exercise the dual responsibility of providing high quality, ethical patient care and excellent teaching.
- 2.2 Postgraduate medical learners and supervisors must know how to reach each other at all times while on duty. Postgraduate medical learners must attend a patient if requested by the supervising physician or another health professional. The supervising physician must be available at all times either on-site or by phone or pager and must attend a patient at the resident's request, once the resident has assessed the patient and determined that the supervisor's presence is required for optimal patient care and safety. In cases where a resident feels they have been assigned tasks outside of their competencies, they are to contact the most responsible physician assigned to the service immediately and report all occurrences of inappropriate supervision to their Program Director.
- 2.3 Safe and effective care of the patient takes priority over education needs¹
- 2.4 Clinical learning environments should promote an open and free exchange of ideas, questions, discussion and feedback between postgraduate medical learners and faculty to optimize patient care and learning.
- 2.5 Joint decision-making and exchange of information between most responsible physician, supervisor, and trainee provides an optimal educational experience.¹
- 2.6 Professionalism, which includes demonstration of compassion, service, altruism, and trustworthiness, is essential in all interactions in the training environment in order to provide the best quality care to patients.¹

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Faculty Responsibilities

Supervising physicians must:

- 3.1.1 Provide detailed information and immediately report safety concerns to the program and PGME Office, such as but not limited to: patient safety concerns, resident safety concerns and mistreatment related supervision concerns.
- 3.1.2 Understand and know where to find the goals, objectives and required competencies of the residency program.¹

- 3.1.3 Review and discuss goals and objectives with each resident at the beginning of each rotation and as needed thereafter (e.g. at the beginning of a call shift).
- 3.1.4 In accordance to the CPSO Policy on Professional Responsibilities in Postgraduate Medical Education there must be a clear delineation of the most responsible physician and clarity in decision-making. The supervisor must assess the resident's level of competence regularly, provide constructive feedback and, in discussion with the resident, provide graduated responsibility for patient care that is appropriate to the resident's level of expertise.
- 3.1.5 Inform patients and their families when postgraduate medical learners are involved in their care and making patients and families aware of the identity of the most responsible physician and their ultimate responsibility for care. Being responsive to requests of patients and residents to directly care for the patient.
- 3.1.6 Communicate the necessary information about a patient's condition to the resident.¹
- 3.1.7 Respond to pages or phone calls within a reasonable length of time defined within the specific discipline and clinical context/site.
- 3.1.8 Ensure any procedures performed by postgraduate medical learners are within their competence.¹
- 3.1.9 Directly supervise procedures if required for patient safety or if requested by the patient or resident.
- 3.1.10 Review and discuss patient cases with the resident to provide clinical bedside teaching drawing out educational aspects of individual clinical scenarios.
- 3.1.11 Mentor and support postgraduate medical learners as active members of multi-disciplinary teams.
- 3.1.12 Understand their professional and personal liabilities as physicians if patient care tasks are inappropriately delegated to postgraduate medical learners or without appropriate supervision.
- 3.1.13 Be aware that residents may not recognize their own limitations and may take on more responsibility than is appropriate. The supervising preceptor must be prepared to intervene to support a PGME learner and the patients whose care have been delegated to the resident.

3.2 Postgraduate medical learners' Responsibilities

Postgraduate medical learners must:

- 3.2.1 Inform each patient and/or family of their status as a resident and the names of the supervising physician and the most responsible physician.¹
- 3.2.2 Review and discuss goals and objectives with their supervising physician at the beginning of each rotation and as needed thereafter (e.g. at the beginning of a call shift).
- 3.2.3 Assess the patient thoroughly and initiate management appropriate to their level of expertise, before calling the supervisor.
- 3.2.4 Communicate the necessary information about a patient's condition to the supervising physician within a reasonable amount of time.¹
- 3.2.5 Ensure that they practice within their competence, are aware of their limitations and seek assistance appropriately.
- 3.2.6 Keep appropriate patient records at all times including documenting when they have called the supervising physician.
- 3.2.7 Communicate with the supervising physician **immediately** when:
 - A patient's condition deteriorates significantly¹
 - In any emergency situation when the patient is at risk
 - A procedure with potential significant risk to the patient is being considered
 - The patient or the patient's family expresses concerns²
- 3.2.8 Communicate with the supervising physician when:
 - A patient is to be admitted to hospital
 - A patient is to be discharged from hospital¹
 - The diagnosis or management of the patient is in doubt
 - An outpatient has been examined or treated

3.3 Residency Program Committee Responsibilities

- 3.3.1 Each program may establish additional program specific policies and guidelines for supervision of their postgraduate medical learners on-call **including steps for a resident to take if they are unable to reach the designated on-call physician. Programs are responsible to work within their NOSM Section communication**

pathway e.g. residency program committees to communicate program specific supervision requirements to teaching faculty.

- 3.3.2 Each program must establish clear guidelines **and communicate these to all teaching faculty** for providing postgraduate medical learners with graduated responsibility in outpatient, inpatient and community settings.
- 3.3.3 The Residency Program Director guided by the Residency Program Committee is responsible for working with PGME to monitor and evaluate adherence to this policy and for any program specific supervision policies. Programs are responsible to ensure program level policies reference the PGME Supervision Policy and understanding that if policies conflict, the PGMEC level policy applies in general principles and application.
- 3.3.4 In situations where additional communication to the faculty about supervision expectations is insufficient to resolve the concern, programs must take additional steps to ensure patient and resident safety. These may include discussion and action plan created at the RPC, discussion with the relevant Section Chair and/or Associate Dean PGME.
- 3.3.5 Each Program Director and program faculty have a responsibility to report to the Section Chair any egregious unsafe or unprofessional supervisory behaviour by faculty members for the consideration and remediation.

4.0 Related Documents

In support of this policy, the following [related policies/documents/companion/forms] are included:

- **CPSO Professional Responsibilities in Postgraduate Medical Education**
<https://www.cpso.on.ca/Physicians/Policies-Guidance/Policies/Professional-Responsibilities-in-Postgraduate-Medi>
- [Faculty Handbook Section 7: Clinical Sciences Division Professionalism and Code of Conduct Policy v.3.0](#)
- [Responding to Resident Concerns of Mistreatment Procedures](#)

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Version	Date	Authors/Comments
1.0	2013 11 18	Approved by NOSM Postgraduate Education Committee.
2.0	2018 07 24	Reformatted in new policy template.
3.0	2019 08 19	Change from PGE to PGME.
4.0	2021 05 13	PGMEC Policy Review and Update.

¹ [College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario: Professional Responsibilities in Postgraduate Medical Education Policy Statement #2-11](#)