



GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE POLICY NO. 33

A. SUBJECT: Graduate Medical Education Trainees' International Experiences

B. EFFECTIVE DATE: July 21, 2021 (R)

C. REASONS FOR POLICY:

This policy intends to promote the safety of GME Trainees who are traveling abroad for a clinical or research experience outside the United States. This policy also complements [the University of Virginia policy on Prov-010 Student International Travel](#).

D. DEFINITIONS

International Experience: A clinical or research experience outside the United States regardless of the length of the experience

Travel Registry: A confidential and secure database for maintaining key travel information about GME Trainees traveling for University-related purposes. The travel registry is the official and authoritative source of traveler information that forms the basis for the University's emergency response protocols and communications strategy when responding to an emergency or critical incident abroad.

Travel Advisories: The U.S. Department of State's Consular Safety and Security Messaging system, which employs four levels of advice for every country. A Travel Advisory may also be issued for a particular region of a country. While the overall advisory for a country may be at lower risk, a region or regions within the country may be assessed as "High Risk."

University Travel Restrictions: A restriction on student or GME Trainee travel for university-related purposes issued by the International Studies Office (ISO) under the direction of the Risk Management Committee for Education Abroad and the vice provost for global affairs and published on the ISO website. A University Travel Restriction may limit student or GME Trainee travel to a region or prohibit student or GME Trainee travel to the region.

E. POLICY STATEMENTS:

1. Procedures

- A) **Application and Approval:** GME Trainees wishing to participate in international experiences must apply through the Education Subcommittee of the GMEC. Each application will be reviewed by the GME Subcommittee on Education and presented

before the full GMEC for approval based on its educational merit. Approval is granted by the majority vote of the GMEC. Applications for international experience must be submitted at least 60 days prior to travel to ensure proper review and approval.

- B) **Frequency and Duration of International Experience:** GME trainees may apply for up to one month away elective(s) per academic year as long as being away for international experiences does not interfere with accreditation or board certification requirements. For international travel for other educational or research activities, the one month, or 30 total days limit applies. Exceptions must be approved in advance by the GMEC.
- C) **Stipend and Benefits during International Experience:** The University of Virginia Medical Center will extend trainees' stipend and benefits, including liability insurance for the GMEC approved international travel up to 30 days per year per trainee. The University of Virginia Medical Center will not provide travel, living expenses, or travel immunizations or medications for international electives. University of Virginia departments or programs may provide trainees with travel and living expenses at their discretion.
- D) **Requirements for International Experience by the University:** GME Trainees seeking to participate in international experience must adhere to relevant portions of **University of Virginia Policy PROV-010. GME Trainees must:**
- enter their travel information in the University's Travel Registry;
 - purchase a policy with the University's designated health and emergency assistance insurance provider;
 - affirm that they have read, understand, and agree to the University's Conditions of Participation and Acceptance of Risk for international travel;
 - enroll in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) if a U.S. citizen; and
 - ***petition for an exemption when*** traveling to or through nations or regions which
 - have a Level 3 or Level 4 Travel Advisory issued by the U.S. Department of State Travel,
 - have a Level 3 Travel Health Notification issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC),
 - are a U.S. Dept. of Treasury Sanctioned Country, or
 - are subject to a travel restriction issued by the University.
- E) **Petition for an Exemption to Travel:** GME Trainees wishing to participate in international experiences in countries or regions of the world identified in the section 1- D) will be subjected to a two-step process. The GMEC must first review and approve the elective for its educational merit. Subsequently, the GME Trainee must then petition for an exemption following the process in University of Virginia Policy PROV-010. In order for travel to be approved by the university's Provost Office, the GME Trainee must prove that their research, clinical or educational experience cannot be completed anywhere else in the world and must have the written approval of the faculty advisor and Department Chair.

- F) **Emergency Travel Assistance Insurance:** GME Trainees traveling abroad for an international experience must purchase emergency travel assistance insurance from the University's designated health and emergency assistance insurance provider. This ensures that the GME Trainee has adequate evacuation and emergency medical coverage and streamlines the process for communication and evacuation if needed in the event of emergency.
- G) **International Conferences:** GME Trainees traveling outside the United States to attend educational conference(s) do not need to obtain GMEC approval. However, they must obtain the program director's approval, register through the University's Travel Registry, and notify the GME Office using Away Rotation Form B. GME Trainees wishing to attend international conferences in countries or regions of the world identified in the section 1- D) will be subjected to a two-step process outlined in the section 1-E).
- H) **Recurring International Experiences:** For multiple trips to the same location, or multiple trainees traveling to the same location, approval by the GMEC is required every three years or in the event of significant changes at the approved site. It is the program's responsibility to notify the GME Office each time a GME trainee travels to an approved site using GME Away Rotation Form B.
- I) **Trainees on J1-Visa:** After GMEC approval and at least 30 days prior to the international experience start date, GME Trainees with J1-Visa sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) must contact the Director of GME Office to complete and upload ECFMG Notification of Off-Site Rotation form.

2. Program Director Responsibilities

- A) The program director or their designee must oversee and ensure the quality of clinical or research education and adequate supervision in all international sites.
- B) The program director or their designee must approve the GME Trainee's application for international experiences and ensure compliance with the institutional policies and the accreditation and/or certification board requirements.
- C) The program director must obtain an adequate evaluation of the GME Trainee's clinical or research experience from the identified supervisor(s).
- D) The program director must obtain an evaluation of the international experience from the GME Trainee.
- E) The program director or DIO can revoke approval for international experiences at any point in any of the following cases.
- When there is inadequate supervision for the trainee at the international elective rotation sites;
 - When it is determined that a GME Trainee's international experiences negatively impact their ability to fulfill their clinical duties and patient care; or

- When it is determined that a GME Trainee’s international experiences negatively impact the learning and working environment for other trainees in their home program; or
- In the event that the GME Trainee is deemed unfit for duty; or
- When the program director or the program’s Clinical Competency Committee issued a Letter of Deficiency to a GME Trainee: or
- When the GME Trainee is suspended from their training program activities or clinical activities; or
- When the GME Trainee is found to be non-compliant with the Medical Center and GME policies and regulations including, but not limited to, the mandatory compliance training courses, and Health System Policy OCH-002 : Occupational Health Screening and Maintenance requirements; or
- When the international electives results in Clinical and Educational Work Hours violation.

3. GMEC Oversight

The GMEC approval of international rotations will be based on the educational merit of the rotation, a named supervisor of the rotation, and approval by the Trainee’s Program Director.

At the advice of the ISO, the DIO, the Chair of GMEC, or their designee reserves the right to suspend any international electives where the site has been deemed unsafe or inadequate to provide quality education and supervision for GME Trainees.

F. RELATED POLICIES

University of Virginia [PROV-10: Student International Travel](#)

Reviewed by the GMEC Policy Subcommittee-October 11, 2016

GMEC reviewed/revise: February 15, 2017

GMEC Policy Subcommittee reviewed/revise: April 11, 2017

GMEC reviewed/approved: April 19, 2017

GME Policy Subcommittee reviewed/revise: October 10, 2017

GMEC reviewed/approved: November 15, 2017

GMEC reviewed/tailed: February 21, 2018

GMEC Policy Subcommittee reviewed/revise: May 8, 2018

GMEC reviewed/approved: May 16, 2018

GMEC Policy Subcommittee reviewed/revise: July 13, 2021

GMEC Reviewed/Approved: July 21, 2021