

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY INCLUDING DISASTERS OR EXTREME EMERGENT SITUATIONS

The University of Connecticut is committed to preserving the educational experiences of its residents/fellows during times of extraordinary circumstances. Extraordinary circumstances include but are not limited to abrupt hospital closures, disasters, extreme emergent situations or a catastrophic loss of funding.

Definition of a Disaster

A disaster is defined as an event or set of events causing a need for significant alteration to the residency/fellowship experience of one or more residency/fellowship programs.

Example: Hurricane Katrina

Definition of Extreme Emergent Situation

A local event (such as a hospital declared disaster for an epidemic) that affects resident/fellow education or the work environment but does not rise to the level of a disaster as defined above.

Declaration of an Extraordinary Circumstance

1. The University of Connecticut DIO will immediately notify the ACGME of the an extraordinary circumstance at the University of Connecticut or one of its major affiliated hospitals if the extraordinary circumstance causes or has the potential to cause a serious, extended disruption to resident/fellow assignments, educational infrastructure or clinical operations that may affect the program's or institution's ability to conduct education in substantial compliance with the ACGME Institutional, Common and specialty-specific Program Requirements.
2. When warranted, the ACGME Chief Executive Officer will invoke the ACGME Extraordinary Circumstance Policy. A notice of such will be posted on the ACGME website with information relating to the ACGME response to the extraordinary circumstance.

Defined Responsibilities Following the Declaration of an Extraordinary Circumstance

Responsibilities of the University of Connecticut Designated Institutional Official (DIO):

1. The DIO will immediately convene the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) and other institutional leadership in order to ascertain the status and operating capabilities of all University of Connecticut training programs.
2. Within ten days after the declaration of an extraordinary circumstance , the DIO will contact the ACGME to discuss timelines that the ACGME will establish for the University of Connecticut programs to:
 - a) submit program reconfigurations to the ACGME and
 - b) inform each program's residents/fellows of any decisions to reconstitute the program and/or transfer the resident/fellow either temporarily or permanently to another training program.

The due dates for submission of said plans shall be no later than 30 days after the invocation of the Extraordinary Circumstances policy unless otherwise approved by the ACGME.

3. The University of Connecticut DIO will contact by phone or by email the Institutional Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information regarding the extraordinary circumstance.

Residents/Fellows Policies and Procedures Manual

4. The DIO along with residency and fellowship Program Directors will monitor the status of all training programs with regards to their ability to fulfill their educational mission both during the time of an extraordinary circumstance and during the recovery phase.

Responsibilities of the Program Directors:

1. Immediately verify the health and safety of all residents/fellows in their training program and relay this information to the DIO.
2. Program Directors must ensure that all ACGME Institutional, Common and specialty-specific Program Requirements are adhered to when assigning clinical duties of residents/fellows during an extraordinary circumstance, particularly during a disaster or EES.
 - a) Residents/fellows are physicians and are expected to perform according to society's expectations of physicians in emergency situations such as disasters/local extreme emergent situations. However, residents/fellows are in training and their performance in these situations should not exceed expectations for their scope of competence as judged by their Program Director or supervisors.
 - b) Decision about whether a program's residents/fellows should be involved in a disaster/local extreme emergent situations will be based on several factors:
 - i) The policy of the hospital and who responds to a local disaster.
 - ii) The nature of the clinical work the resident/fellow is expected to deliver and the type of supervision required (residents/fellows should never work beyond their scope of training and PG level).
 - iii) Resident/Fellow safety.
 - iv) Reasonable expectations for the duration of the emergency.
3. Assess the status of their training program with regards to its ability to fulfill its educational mission. Insofar as a program cannot provide an adequate educational experience for each of its residents/fellows, Program Directors must:
 - a) Assist trainees in arranging temporary transfers to other programs/institutions until such time as the University of Connecticut and its major affiliates/training hospitals are able to again provide an adequate educational experience or
 - b) Assist residents/fellows in obtaining permanent transfers to other programs/institutions, as needed, in order to continue and complete their training.
 - c) If a temporary or permanent transfer to another program/institution is necessary and if more than one program/institution is available, the Program Director will consider the educational needs and preferences of each resident/fellow and make their best efforts to find an appropriate training site.
 - d) Programs must make keep vs. transfer decisions expeditiously so as to maximize the likelihood that each resident/fellow will finish their training in a timely fashion.
 - e) At the outset of a temporary resident/fellow transfer, the program must inform each transferred resident/fellow of the minimum duration and the estimated actual duration of his/her temporary transfer, and continue to keep each resident/fellow informed of such durations. If and when a program decides that a temporary transfer will continue to and/or through the end of a residency year, it must so inform each such transferred resident/fellow. Transferred residents/fellows will be allowed to return to their original training program at The University of Connecticut as soon as the educational and work environments are deemed appropriate by the DIO and the Program Director in consultation with the ACGME. Alternatively, a transferred resident/fellow may choose to stay at the transferred institution for a reasonable length of time in order to maintain a continuum of their education.

Residents/Fellows Policies and Procedures Manual

- f) Program directors will make their best efforts to ensure that each transferred resident/fellow receives a quality educational experience at their new training site. The program director will regularly confer with the residents/fellows and program director(s) at the sites to ensure that educational needs are being met.
4. The Program Director will contact by phone or email the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests.

Responsibilities of the Residents/Fellows:

1. Residents/fellows must contact their program director as soon as possible to verify their safety, current/anticipated location, and any changes to their contact information.
2. Residents/Fellows must contact by phone or by email the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.
3. All transferred residents/fellows should refer to instructions on the ACGME Web Accreditation System to change resident/fellow email information.
4. It is critical that residents/fellows keep open channels of communication by phone or email during an extraordinary circumstance and particularly during an extreme emergency or disaster in order to get current and updated information.
5. In order to ensure that all residents/fellows have access to funds in the event of an extraordinary circumstance, all residents/fellows will be strongly encouraged to elect to receive their paycheck through direct deposit.

Salary and Benefits for Residents/Fellows following the Declaration of Extraordinary Circumstances:

The Sponsoring Institution will make every effort to ensure that there is no interruption in the salary and benefits provided to a resident/fellow once an extraordinary circumstance has been declared.

Reviewed 3/15, 5/17