



<b>Policy Name:</b>	<b>GME Eligibility and Selection Criteria</b>		
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Graduate Medical Education Committee	<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 1, 2024
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Office of Graduate Medical Education	<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:gmeadmin@vcuhealth.org">gmeadmin@vcuhealth.org</a>

**1. Policy Statement:**

The Virginia Commonwealth University Health System is committed to ensuring a fair application process to its graduate medical education programs. This policy provides a set of criteria to inform each program’s approach to determining the eligibility and selection of its applicants.

**2. Who Should Read This Policy**

Residency and Fellowship Program Directors, Program Coordinators, trainees and prospective trainees.

**3. Scope**

This policy applies to all VCU Health System sponsored graduate medical education programs.

**4. Definitions**

**LCME:** Liaison Committee on Medical Education

**AOA:** American Osteopathic Association

**ECFMG:** Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates

**CODA:** Commission on Dental Accreditation

**NBOME/COMLEX:** National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners

**USMLE:** United States Medical Licensing Exam

**5. The Policy**

The VCU Health System is a participating member of the National Resident Matching Program, Dental National Matching Service, and other advanced residency matching programs. Residents selected through these matching programs, outside these matching programs, or selected for specialties that do not conduct matching programs, will meet the eligibility and selection criteria outlined below.

**A. Criteria:** Applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for a training position at VCU Health System:

1. Medical or Dental Degree Requirements (Applicant must be one of the following):
  - a. Eligible to be a Graduate/Graduate of a medical school in the United States (US) or Canada accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).
  - b. Eligible to be a Graduate/Graduate of a college of osteopathic medicine in the US accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (AOACOCA).
  - c. Eligible to be a Graduate/Graduate of a medical school outside the US or Canada approved for listing by the World Health Organization or equivalent accrediting body and

All policies are subject to amendment. Please refer to the Virginia Commonwealth Graduate Medical Education policies on the New Innovations website for the official, most recent version.

- i. Possessing a currently valid certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) prior to appointment; or
    - ii. Holding a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in a United States licensing jurisdiction in which the ACGME-accredited program is located.
  - d. Eligible to be a Graduate/Graduate of a US or Canadian dental school approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).
- 2. Minimum criteria for the specialty
  - a. Applicants for each training program must meet minimum eligibility requirements as established by the ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education), AOA, ABMS, CODA or other accrediting bodies for the specialty to which they are applying.
  - b. Applicants should be board eligible upon program completion; however, in certain circumstances applicants who will not meet board eligibility criteria may be considered on a case-by-case basis with approval by the DIO (this only applies to specialties with board certification).
- 3. Certifying Examinations (for medical residents).
  - a. All applicants for a residency program at the PGY1 level must have passed Step 1 and taken Step 2 CK of the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE) or passed Level 1 and taken Level 2 the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME/COMLEX).
  - b. Prior to their first day of employment, all trainees must have passed Steps 1 and 2 CK of the USMLE or Level 1 and Level 2 of the NBOME/COMLEX.
  - c. All applicants for a residency program at the PGY3 level or higher must have passed Steps 1, 2 CK, and 3 of the USMLE or Level 1, 2 and 3 of the NBOME/COMLEX.
  - d. For applicants who have taken licensing exams in the past, VCU Health System also accepts passing scores on FLEX, NBDE, NBME, NBOME/COMLEX or the FMGEMS.
- 4. Letters of Reference
  - a. All applicants must have three letters of reference from physicians or dentists (as applicable) who have personal knowledge of the applicant's clinical abilities and personal characteristics.
- 5. Recent Patient Care Experience
  - a. All applicants must be within 4 years of graduation from medical or dental school or direct patient care activity (either as an independent practitioner or as a trainee).
- 6. Language skills
  - a. All applicants must have sufficient written and spoken English language skills required for safe and effective patient care, and effective participation in training and educational activities.
- 7. Visa Requirements (if applicable)
  - a. J1 Visas are preferred for graduate medical education positions at the VCU Health System.
  - b. The VCU Health System will sponsor individuals for an H-1B or other visas that allow for graduate medical education training. See procedure #7 below.
  - c. Dental residents can complete their training on a TN visa, H-1B visa, or under the F1 practical training allowance (maximum one year).
- 8. Employability Requirements
  - a. Applicants must have one of the following:
    - i. US citizenship.
    - ii. Valid US permanent resident card (green card).
    - iii. Valid passport, valid 1-94 card and J-1 visa sponsorship from the ECFMG or another approved visa.
    - iv. Valid employment authorization document (EAD).

## 9. Exceptions

- a. A physician who has completed a residency program that was not accredited by ACGME, AOA, RCPSC, CFPC, or ACGME-I (with Advanced Specialty Accreditation) may enter an ACGME-accredited residency program in the same specialty at the PGY-1 level and, at the discretion of the program director of the ACGME-accredited program and with approval by the GMEC, may be advanced to the PGY-2 level based on ACGME Milestones evaluations at the ACGME accredited program. This provision applies only to entry into residency in those specialties for which an initial clinical year is not required for entry.
- b. An ACGME-accredited training program may accept an exceptionally qualified international graduate applicant, when permissible by the accrediting organization, who does not satisfy the eligibility requirements listed in A.1, 2 and 3, but who does meet the following additional qualifications and conditions:
  - i. Evaluation by the program director and residency selection committee of the applicant's suitability to enter the program, based on prior training and review of the summative evaluations of this training
  - ii. Review and approval of the applicant's exceptional qualifications by the GMEC
  - iii. Verification of Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification
  - iv. Applicants accepted by this exception must have an assessment of their performance by the Clinical Competency Committee within 12 weeks of matriculation.

## 10. Resident Transfer

- a. Written verification of the previous educational experiences with an evaluation of the resident's performance in the general competencies (including procedure logs) must be received by the accepting VCUHS (Virginia Commonwealth University Health System) program prior to acceptance for individuals transferring from a residency program at another institution or for residents transferring from one program to another within our institution.

## 11. Documentation of post-graduate pre-requisite training

- a. All prerequisite post-graduate clinical education required for initial entry or transfer into ACGME-accredited residency programs must be completed in ACGME-accredited residency programs, AOA approved residency programs, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)-accredited or College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)-accredited residency programs located in Canada, or in residency programs with ACGME International (ACGME-I) Advanced Specialty Accreditation.
  - i. Residency programs must receive verification of each resident's level of competency in the required clinical field using ACGME, Can MEDS, or ACGME-I Milestones evaluations from the prior training program upon matriculation.

## 12. Other Required documents

- a. Applicants must submit
  - i. All required documents for ERAS (Electronic Residency Application Service) or other applicable application service.
  - ii. If outside a matching system, or if a match does not apply, the following documents must be submitted prior to selection.
    1. VCU Health System Resident Application
    2. Satisfactory personal/professional letters of reference (3) noted above
    3. Dean's letter sent from school for recent graduates (within 4 years of graduation)

4. Official Medical school/Dental school transcript (photocopy is not sufficient)
5. Scores from licensing examinations
6. Signed release of information
7. Acknowledgement of pre-employment drug screening
8. Acknowledgement of fingerprint/background checks

13. Nondiscrimination

The VCU Health System complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws. Programs must not discriminate on the basis of gender, gender identity, age, religion, race, color, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by state and federal law. Additionally, every program shall establish a system of recruitment, evaluation, and ranking (selection) of applicants that minimizes the risk for bias.

**B. Procedures**

1. Each residency-training program must have a written policy on resident eligibility and selection that is consistent with their accrediting organization's requirements and VCUHS GME policy.
  - a. Programs may establish additional criteria for trainee selection beyond that required by this policy.
  - b. Written standards and criteria, appropriate to the specialty, should guide resident selection.
2. Applicant selection must be based on an individual's capabilities, academic qualifications, accomplishments, communication skills, professionalism, and personal qualities such as motivation and integrity.
3. For each program, the selection of trainees should be the responsibility of a diverse committee of the faculty which has had the opportunity to review application materials, rate residents against selection standards, and agree as a group on those trainees to be selected, either through the match or otherwise.
  - a. Such decisions should ordinarily not be those of an individual program director.
  - b. The committee may include current residents if desired.
4. VCU Health System residents and fellows will be allowed to transfer (prior to successful completion of a program) to another program within the institution once during their training. This request should be made by the program director wishing to accept the transferring resident/fellow.
5. The program director for each training program is responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy.
6. Petitions for exceptions to this policy must be submitted in writing by the program director to the DIO.
  - a. The petition should include the rationale for the exception request and substantiation that the requested exception will enhance the educational quality of the program.
  - b. The Director of Graduate Medical Education/DIO will respond to the petition within 10 workdays of receipt.
  - c. If denied, the program director may appeal this decision by submitting a written request to the chair of the GME Committee to have the decision reviewed at the next regularly scheduled meeting of that body, or via electronic mail in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting.
  - d. The Program Director and the DIO/Director of Graduate Medical Education should be present at the meeting to present relevant information regarding the appeal and to answer pertinent questions.

- e. The GME Committee will then make a final decision regarding the applicant by majority vote of those members present.
7. Requests to sponsor a trainee for a visa other than a J1 requires pre-approval by the DIO and the agreement of the department to cover all associated costs. Programs should not rank individuals that will be pursuing an H1b or O visa until the DIO has approved the request.
8. Enrollment of non-eligible residents may result in the withdrawal of accreditation of the involved program.

Reviewed and approved, GMEC, December 11, 2001

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Revised, GMEC, June 9, 2009

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