

Program Letters of Agreement

Wisconsin Northern & Central GME Consortium (WiNC)

Initial GMEC Approval:	06-09-2020
Last GMEC Review Date:	04-20-2023

Scope

This policy pertains to all WiNC-sponsored residency/fellowship programs. The term resident/residency is used synonymously with fellow/fellowship unless otherwise specified. (GMEC approved 10/20/2022)

Purpose

To outline a process for developing, signing, reviewing, retaining, and renewing Program Letters of Agreement (PLA), ensuring compliance with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

Guidelines

Requirements

1. As outlined by the ACGME, a Program Letter of Agreement is required between the Program and each participating site that provides training for a required resident assignment. The Program Letter of Agreement should:
 - a. Identify the faculty who will assume both educational and supervisory responsibilities for residents;
 - b. Specify their responsibilities for teaching, supervision, and formal evaluation of residents;
 - c. Specify the duration and content of the educational experience; and
 - d. State the policies and procedures that will govern resident education during the assignment.
2. PLAs will be renewed at least every ten (10) years, and more often as needed upon changes in the educational arrangement and/or ACGME requirements.

Standardized templates

3. A standardized template will be used by WiNC programs for all PLAs and PLA amendments:
 - a. A PLA is used for:
 - i. an assignment at a new participating site;
 - ii. renewing an assignment at an existing participating site;
 - iii. complying with changes in ACGME requirements for PLAs; and
 - iv. at other times as determined by the Program, GME Office and/or the WINC Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC).
 - b. An Amendment to a PLA may be used for updates within ten (10) years of the effective date of the PLA for circumstances such as, but not limited to, revised educational goals and objectives, changes in name(s) of teaching faculty and program contact information. In all cases, a new PLA may be developed in lieu of an Amendment.
4. Templates for PLAs and Amendments will be:
 - a. Reviewed periodically by the WiNC GME Office, and always upon changes in ACGME Institutional, Common and/or Program requirements;
 - b. Revised as needed to meet current ACGME requirements and WiNC policy; and
 - c. Reviewed and approved by the WINC Graduate Medical Education Committee.

Process: Preparation; signature; retention

5. PLA: The following process is used for preparing a PLA:
 - a. New site: For a PLA for a new participating site, review and follow the “WiNC Program Guidelines for New Rotation / New Teaching sites” and be sure a site director has been identified and program leadership has vetted the site. Then continue with the following steps:

- b. Preparation: The PLA will be prepared using the most current template approved by GMEC. Please contact the WiNC GME office if you need a current version. In preparing the PLA document:
 - i. Consult with the WiNC GME Office for confirmation of funding language to use in the PLA.
 - ii. Send a draft of the completed PLA to the WiNC GME Office for review.
 - iii. Prepare the final PLA document, and attach the relevant competency-based rotation goals and objectives.
 - c. Signatures:
 - i. The program will then forward the PLA to the organization for signature.
 - ii. Obtain signature from the Program Director. Then forward the PLA, along with goals and objectives, to the WiNC GME Office.
 - iii. The GME Office or designee will then obtain signatures from the DIO and Executive Director. The original signed PLA will then be returned to the program.
 - d. GMEC Approval
 - e. All new, expiring, amended, or renewing PLAs must be approved by GMEC.
 - f. Review and approval will take place at the first available GMEC meeting.
 - g. File retention:
 - i. A fully executed copy will be retained by the WiNC GME office.
 - ii. The electronic copy of the PLA, including goals and objectives, will be retained in program files.
6. Amendment: The following process is used for preparing an Amendment to a PLA:
- a. Preparation: Amendments will be prepared using the most current template approved by GMEC. Consult with the WiNC GME Office with any questions and for review of the Amendment. Attach competency-based goals and objectives to the Amendment if relevant.
 - b. Signatures, file retention, and approval will follow as outlined in Step 5 above

Tracking and Monitoring

PLA Inventory: The WiNC GME Office will keep all PLAs and amendments approved by GMEC in a master file. In addition programs are required to keep all active PLAs and amendments current in Web ADS.

8. PLA Document Review: As a way to maintain and ensure currency, a PLA review will be done annually by GMEC before the start of the new Academic Year. Each Program is responsible for reviewing their PLAs. The GMEC will announce the review at its April GMEC meeting. The purpose of the review is to:
- a. Ensure templates meet ACGME requirements
 - b. Identify PLAs that need to be established for a new rotation and/or participating site
 - c. Identify rotations and/or participating sites that are no longer used
 - d. Identify PLAs that need to be renewed
 - e. Identify where an amendment or new PLA is needed because of changes from the PLA currently in effect.

Responsibilities

9. Each Program is responsible for:
- a. Initiating the PLA process for new rotations and new participating sites
 - b. Identifying participating sites that are no longer used, and therefore a PLA is no longer needed
 - c. Ensuring PLAs and Amendments accurately reflect the educational arrangement and content for all required rotations at participating sites, including names of teaching faculty, rotation site director, person(s) who is to sign from the participating organization
 - d. Identifying PLAs that need updated information due to changes such as teaching faculty, goals and objectives, duration of assignment, program director and program contact information.
 - e. Attaching competency-based rotation goals and objectives to the PLA.
 - f. Sending PLAs to participating sites for signature and ensuring their return to the program

- g. Maintaining current contact information for each participating site
 - h. Retaining fully executed electronic PLAs in program files
 - i. Providing a summative report of findings at the June GMEC meeting.
10. The GME Office, as assigned by the Designated Institutional Official (DIO), is responsible for:
- a. Tracking and ensuring programs are notified when PLAs are approaching a 10-year renewal date
 - b. Ensuring the use of standardized PLA and Amendment templates approved by the GMEC, compliant with ACGME requirements and WiNC policy
 - c. Coordinating GMEC reviews of PLAs and Amendments
 - d. Identifying and confirming the funding arrangement for each PLA.
 - e. Retaining a master file of fully executed electronic PLAs.

References

- *WiNC Program Guidelines for New Rotation / New Teaching sites* WiNC PLA Template & Amendment
- ACGME Common Program Requirements for Program Letters of Agreement at <http://www.acgme.org>

For GMEC ACGME Reference:

ACGME Common Program requirements (I.B.1. (2022))

I.B. Participating Sites

A participating site is an organization providing educational experiences or educational assignments/rotations for residents.

- I.B.1. The program, with approval of its Sponsoring Institution, must designate a primary clinical site. ^(Core)
- [The Review Committee may specify which other specialties/programs must be present at the primary clinical site]
- I.B.2. There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. ^(Core)
- I.B.2.a) The PLA must:
- I.B.2.a).(1) be renewed at least every 10 years; and, ^(Core)
- I.B.2.a).(2) be approved by the designated institutional official (DIO). ^(Core)
- I.B.3. The program must monitor the clinical learning and working environment at all participating sites. ^(Core)
- I.B.3.a) At each participating site there must be one faculty member, designated by the program director as the site director, who is accountable for resident education at that site, in collaboration with the program director. ^(Core)

Background and Intent: While all residency programs must be sponsored by a single ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institution, many programs will utilize other clinical settings to provide required or elective training experiences. At times it is appropriate to utilize community sites that are not owned by or affiliated with the Sponsoring Institution. Some of these sites may be remote for geographic, transportation, or communication issues. When utilizing such sites the program must ensure the quality of the educational experience. The requirements under I.B.3. are intended to ensure that this will be the case. Suggested elements to be considered in PLAs will be found

in the ACGME Program Director's Guide to the Common Program Requirements. These include:

- Identifying the faculty members who will assume educational and supervisory responsibility for residents
- Specifying the responsibilities for teaching, supervision, and formal evaluation of residents
- Specifying the duration and content of the educational experience
- Stating the policies and procedures that will govern resident education during the assignment

I.B.4. The program director must submit any additions or deletions of participating sites routinely providing an educational experience, required for all residents, of one month full time equivalent (FTE) or more through the ACGME's Accreditation Data System (ADS). ^(Core)