

**Guidelines for Resident Support**  
**RCPSC (Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada) Psychiatry Exam**  
**General Psychiatry Residency Program**

---

### **Background**

The overarching goal of residency training is to prepare residents for unsupervised or independent practice. Certification in Psychiatry requires that a resident complete all the required components of residency training as articulated by the RCPSC and University of Toronto, General Psychiatry Residency Program. Completion of the RCPSC written and practical exams in Psychiatry is a key assessment *informing* preparation for practice and in Competence by Design (CBD), typically occurs in the Core of Discipline (COD) stage of training.

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that in supporting residents to prepare for the RCPSC exam in Psychiatry:

1. Residents continue to receive core teaching as required by the RCPSC and UofT General Psychiatry Residency Program.
2. Residents have protected time for exam preparation.
3. Learning and service requirements are integrated with considerations regarding learner well-being and patient care responsibilities.

### **Values**

Excellence – Academic and Operational

Justice and Transparency – Principle-based approach with key stakeholder input

### **Key references**

PARO

[PARO-OTH Collective Agreement](#)

RCPSC <https://www.royalcollege.ca/en/standards-and-accreditation/information-by-discipline>

Psychiatry Training Experiences

Psychiatry Competences

Standards of Accreditation for Psychiatry Programs

### **PGY4 Academic Half Day (AHD)**

- July-December and June
- January-May
  - no AHD to support attendance at review courses, protect time for exam preparation, and ensure sufficient attendance on core rotations
  - residents continue to have a half-day protected for study time on Wednesday afternoons (can negotiate a different day on case-by-case basis with supervisor and PG Site Director)

### **Protected Time for Exam Preparation, Test-Taking, and Review Courses**

- Half-day protected time for exam preparation in the year residents are writing their Royal College Exam
- Alongside the 7 working days of professional/educational leave provided through [PARO collective agreement](#), the residency program will grant *5 consecutive weekdays of protected exam review course time* in either the academic year prior or current year that residents are writing their Royal College Exam (typically PGY3 and 4)
  - *Residents must submit confirmation of enrollment in a review course to the residency program no later than 4 weeks prior to the review course, alongside confirmation of primary supervisor approval [if residents are using the residency program's exam review course protected time or unpaid education leave]*
  - *The exam review course protected time (5 consecutive weekdays) can only be used once during residency training – any other time that residents wish to take to attend review courses can be done ideally via PARO professional leave as per the terms of the collective agreement (alternatively residents can use vacation time or take an unpaid education leave as per UofT PGME guidelines regarding leaves of absences)*
  - *Please note that residents who are sitting for the RC Exam in the current academic year will be prioritized to attend review courses*
- For the written component (test taking) – this is a protected day for residents that does not count towards the 7 working days of educational leave as per PARO
- The residency program will comport with all provisions of the PARO-OTH collective agreement with regards to professional leave
  - One allotment of 7 days of paid leave in the 4 weeks before written and/or practical components – these 7 days can be split between both components or taken altogether for a single component of exam
  - Reasonable travel time to and from the site of the examination (Ottawa, ON)
    - For in-person components of the exam, the program will grant 3 days protected travel time

### **STACERS**

As per RCPSC standards, all residents are required to complete two successful STACERs in the Core of Discipline (COD) stage of training, which is generally during PGY4. Residents who started residency training from July 1, 2020 onwards will be required to successfully complete (i.e. “pass”) one COD STACER (previously known as an Exit STACER) prior to sitting for the RC Exam. As per previous residency program practices, residents who are unsuccessful at their first attempt at a COD STACER will be provided with coaching/supports as needed and be re-booked for a make-up STACER. There is generally no limit to the number of STACER attempts; however, repeated unsuccessful STACERs may indicate the need for an enhanced support plan.

Residents accepted into a Geriatric Psychiatry or Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (CAP) program should inform the residency program as soon as possible as they will need to complete all COD requirements, including passing two COD STACERs, prior to proceeding to subspecialty training.

All other residents in the General Psychiatry Residency Program will complete their second COD STACER following the practical portion of the RC Exam.

### **Role of Psychiatry Competence Subcommittee (PCS)**

The PCS will advise the PRPC as to residents on track to sit for the RC Exam following regular PCS meetings (fall and spring of each academic year) and at the call of the Chair of the PCS as needed. In general, the expectation is that residents “progressing as expected” will proceed with sitting for the RC Exam during the COD stage of training. Residents who are undergoing either informal or formal remediation or who have had leaves of absences during training may be delayed in sitting for the RC Exam.

### **Call Requirements**

- Hospital sites will comport with all provisions of the PARO-OTH collective agreement with regards to call requirements <https://myparo.ca/your-contract/#professional-leave>
- During the year that a resident is writing the Royal College Exam call requirements will be as follows:
  - 0.5 call
  - Any call accommodations as confirmed by the Office of Learner Affairs or provided on an interim basis by the Program Director will be honoured by hospital sites
  - Reduction in call is subject to consideration of operational requirements of hospital sites, alongside the well-being of *all* residents in the call pool
  - Should there be any unforeseen health human resource constraints, the residency program, at the request of hospital leadership and in consultation with key stakeholders, may reconsider any reductions in call requirements below what is required by the PARO-OTH collective agreement following due consideration of all perspectives and relevant issues

Please note that call experiences are a RCPSC Required Training Experience (FOD to TTP):

- Psychiatry – Emergency, including after hours coverage (FOD)
- After hours coverage for psychiatry and/or one of its subspecialties (COD)
- After hours coverage for psychiatry or one of its subspecialties (TTP)

### **Other Curriculum/Program Elements** (for PGY4 residents as of July 1, 2023)

- Psychotherapy – 4-6 hours per week protected time inclusive of supervision
- CSP and Chief Residents (CAMH, MSH, SHSC, SMH, UHN)
  - half-day protected for Chief duties or CSP
  - 2 days protected - 1 day study time + AHD, ½ day psychotherapy, ½ day CSP or Chief from July-December
  - 1.5 days protected – ½ day study time, ½ day psychotherapy, ½ day Chief or CSP from January-May & June (instead of ½ day study there will be AHD)
  - on weeks when a resident is post-call or if there are any full-day residency program events, no ½ day protected for Chief or CSP to ensure residents meet minimum standard of 3-3.5 days per week on core rotation (as per Psychiatry Standards of Accreditation – *“A resident must not spend fewer than 3 to 3½ days per week, exclusive of his/her [their] academic half-day or day, if offered, on his/her [their] primary rotation”*)

**Prepared by:** Program Director in consultation with PARO, UofT PGME, Call Working Group, Rotation Coordinators and Curriculum Leads, and PRPC

**Approved at PRPC:** November 4, 2024

**Next Review:** 2027-28 academic year