

## PROCEDURE GME03

**Subject:**  
RESIDENT ELIGIBILITY, SELECTION, AND  
APPOINTMENT

**Effective Date:**  
OCTOBER 2004

**Applies to:**  
THE METHODIST HOSPITAL SYSTEM  
– GME PROGRAMS

**Date Revised/Reviewed:**  
September 2024

**Originating Area:**  
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**Target Review Date:**  
September 2027

---

### I. **GENERAL STATEMENT**

Houston Methodist provides appropriate Graduate Medical Education (GME) training to physicians. By sponsoring GME Programs, Houston Methodist can provide additional services to its patients and enhance healthcare in general. This Procedure sets forth the requirements for Residents to participate in both ACGME and non-ACGME-accredited Programs sponsored by Houston Methodist. Each Houston Methodist GME Program must establish and maintain its own policy on resident eligibility, selection, and appointment in conformance with this policy.

### II. **PROCEDURE**

- A. Eligibility and Application Requirements for Houston Methodist GME Programs. To participate in an ACGME or non-ACGME accredited residency Program at Houston Methodist, a Resident must have either a Texas Medical Board (TMB) Physician-in-Training (PIT) permit or a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in Texas. The TMB requires that each applicant for a Physician-in-Training permit:
1. Be at least 18 years of age; and
  2. Be of good professional character; and
  3. Be a graduate of:
    - a. A US or Canadian medical school accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education or the American Osteopathic Association (AOA); **or**
    - b. A medical school outside the US and Canada and have:
      - (i) A current valid certificate from the Educational Commission on Foreign Medical Graduates prior to appointment; **or**
      - (ii) An unrestricted license to practice medicine in a U.S. licensing jurisdiction
    - c. Completed a Fifth Pathway program through an LCME-accredited medical school.

In addition, the TMB requires that each Resident applicant for a PIT permit must **not** have:

1. A medical license, permit, or other authority to practice medicine that is currently restricted for cause, canceled for cause, suspended for cause, revoked, or subject to other discipline in a state or territory of the US, Canada, or a uniformed service of the US; or
2. An investigation or proceeding pending for the restriction, cancellation, suspension, revocation, or other discipline of the applicant's medical license,

permit, or authority to practice medicine in a state or territory of the US, a province of Canada, or a uniformed service of the US; or

3. Prosecution pending in any state, federal, or Canadian court for any offense that under the laws of this state is a felony, a misdemeanor that involves the practice of medicine, or a misdemeanor that involves a crime of moral turpitude.

B. Eligibility Requirements for Applicants Entering or Transferring into ACGME Residency Programs

1. Applicants must meet one of the following qualifications for appointment into an ACGME accredited program:
  - a. Graduation from an LCME accredited medical school in the US or Canada.
  - b. Graduation from an AOA accredited school in the US.
  - c. Graduation from a medical school outside of the United States or Canada and meeting one of the following additional qualifications:
    - i. Holding a currently valid ECFMG certificate prior to appointment or;
    - ii. Holding a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States licensing jurisdiction in which the ACGME accredited program is located;
2. All prerequisite post-graduate clinical education required for initial entry or transfer into ACGME-accredited Residency Programs must be completed in ACGME-accredited Programs, AOA-approved residency programs, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)-accredited or College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)-accredited Programs located in Canada or in residency programs with ACGME International (ACGME-I) Advanced Specialty Accreditation.
  - a. Residency Programs must receive verification of each resident's level of competency in the required clinical field using ACGME, CanMEDS or ACGME-I Milestones evaluations from the prior training Program upon matriculation.
  - b. 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 the transferring training program. PGY level will be determined by the program director based on the review described above.
3. A physician who has completed a Program not accredited by the ACGME, AOA, RCPSC, CFPC or ACGME-I (with Advanced Specialty Accreditation) may enter an ACGME-accredited Program in the same specialty at the PGY1 level and, at the discretion of the program director of ACGME-accredited Program, and with the approval by the GMEC, may be advanced to the PGY2 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.
4. An ACGME Review Committee may permit an eligibility exception to the eligibility requirements if the specialty requires completion of a prerequisite residency program prior to admission. Presently, this pertains only to the following programs: Allergy and Immunology, Colon and Rectal Surgery, Nuclear Medicine, and Preventive Medicine.

C. Eligibility Requirements for Fellowship Programs

1. All required clinical education for entry into ACGME-accredited or an approved GMEC Fellowship Programs must follow the [requirements](#) as set forth by the respective ACGME Residency Review Committee (RRC) or closest accredited program.
2. An ACGME-accredited or GMEC-approved fellowship program may accept an *exceptionally qualified international graduate* (as defined below) who does not satisfy the eligibility requirements listed in Sections II.C.1., above, but who does meet all of the following additional qualifications and conditions:
  - a. Evaluation by the program director and fellowship selection committee of the applicant's suitability to enter the program, based on prior training and review of the summative evaluations of training in the core specialty;
  - b. Review and approval of the applicant's exceptional qualifications by the GMEC or a subcommittee of the GMEC:
    - i. Requirements for exception:
      1. Satisfactory completion of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Steps 1, 2, and 3, within the past seven (7) years;
      2. Verification of Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certification.
      3. Evidence of Scholarly activity; posters, presentations or abstracts, within the past two (2) years.
      4. Interview of the applicant by either the program director or fellowship selection committee conducted in person, via telephone or video conference.
      5. To ensure familiarity with the United States (US) healthcare system, the applicant must have a minimum of three (3) months direct/hands on clinical experience. The US healthcare system clinical experience must be within the subspecialty of the program and must be within the past three years. Unique circumstances can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Accreditation Subcommittee and approved by GMEC.
    - ii. Request:
      1. Prior to submitting a rank order list or making an offer, Program Directors must receive approval from GMEC.
      2. Program Director must be present for the GMEC subcommittee where the request has been submitted
      3. Program Director must provide the subcommittee members with a summary of the credentials mentioned above and the reasoning for the exemption.
3. Applicants accepted through this exception must have an evaluation of their performance by the Clinical Competency Committee) within 12 weeks of matriculation.
4. If the trainee does not meet the expected level of Milestones competency following entry into the fellowship program, the trainee must undergo a period of remediation, overseen by the Clinical Competency Committee and monitored by the GMEC or a subcommittee of the GMEC. This period of remediation must not count toward time in fellowship training. An *exceptionally qualified applicant* has (1) completed a residency program in the core specialty outside the United

States that was not accredited by the ACGME, AOA, ACGME-I, RCPSC or CFPC, and (2) demonstrated clinical excellence, in comparison to peers, throughout training. Additional evidence of exceptional qualifications is required, which may include one of the following: (a) participation in additional clinical or research training in the specialty or subspecialty; (b) demonstrated scholarship in the specialty or subspecialty; and/or (c) demonstrated leadership during or after residency training;

a. The GMEC may establish additional qualifications or criteria in determining who is an exceptionally qualified candidate. Such criteria may include USMLE scores of specialties as provided by the NRMP.

5. Each Review Committee will decide whether the exception will be permitted. Please review your Program's ACGME requirements. Applicants being considered for these positions must be informed of the fact that their training may not lead to certification by ABMS member boards or AOA certifying boards.
6. Eligibility exceptions must be documented in each program's eligibility and selection policy, and any requests for exception be submitted by the program director in writing to the DIO and GMEC for review prior to offering a position to or ranking an applicant. The requests must address the criteria for exception and verify that the program's Clinical Competency Committee will complete an evaluation of the applicant's performance within 12 months.

D. Eligibility and Application Requirements for non-ACGME-accredited Programs.

Participants in non-ACGME accredited programs are not eligible for a PIT permit, unless the Program has received approval from the TMB. To participate in a non-ACGME-accredited program sponsored by Houston Methodist but not approved by the TMB, the applicant must have either a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in Texas or be eligible to obtain such license.

E. Application Process.

All Houston Methodist programs are required to use the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) or other centralized application service if available in their specialty to receive and accept applications to the Program. Programs in specialties that do not use a centralized service must have applicants complete the GME Application Form. The Graduate Medical Education Office shall verify that each Applicant to a GME Program at Houston Methodist meets the criteria for eligibility, including passage of appropriate USMLE/COMLEX exams required for entry or transfer into a Program (see Procedure GME30). The GME Office will review the application of all transferring Residents considered for appointment.

F. Filling Resident Slots.

As required by the National Residency Match Program (NRMP), any Program participating in the Main Match must attempt to fill all first-year residency positions (PGY-1) through the Match. When Programs do not fill through the Match, Residents may subsequently be appointed to unfilled positions from the pool of unmatched applicants, or other sources, as long as they meet Houston Methodist standards. It is strongly recommended that eligible Programs participate in the National Residency Matching Program SOAP—the Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program to fill unfilled positions. For new Programs that are not accredited in time to be included in the Match, Residents may be appointed outside of the Match as long as they meet Houston Methodist standards. All appointments will be made in accordance with this procedure. Program Directors and administrators are required to review the terms and conditions of the Match Participation Agreement each year and comply with Match policies, including the

All-In Policies for Main Match and Fellowship Matches, the Waiver and Violations policies.

- G. All Applicants must undergo a Security Background Check before beginning their training. Any individual listed by a federal agency as excluded, suspended, debarred, or otherwise ineligible for participation in federal programs is ineligible for training in a Program of GME at Houston Methodist.

H. Resident Selection.

1. Non-discrimination. It is the policy of Houston Methodist to sustain Resident selection processes that are free from impermissible discrimination. Accordingly, pursuant to HR 32, no Applicant shall be subject to discrimination in the process of Resident selection on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry or genetics, status with regard to citizenship, marital status, or status as a Vietnam or special disabled veteran.
2. Houston Methodist is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that values a variety of perspectives and experiences. Each GME Program is encouraged to incorporate specific selection strategies into their policy for selection and recruitment of Residents who would represent a diverse and inclusive workforce.
3. Selection Committee. Each Houston Methodist Program of GME shall organize a Resident Selection Committee ("Committee") to rank candidates on the basis of the Committee's assessment of the individual's potential contributions in that particular specialty of medicine. These judgments must be based on the Applicant's academic credentials, preparedness, ability, aptitude, the assessment of their faculty as reflected in letters of recommendation, and personal qualities such as motivation, integrity, and interpersonal and communication skills as evaluated during the interview process by Faculty and Resident representatives.
4. Applicants for ACGME-accredited Programs must be informed, in writing or by electronic means, of the terms, conditions, and benefits of appointment either in effect at the time of the interview or that will be in effect at the time of eventual appointment. This information must include: financial support; vacations; parental, sick, and other leaves of absence; professional liability insurance; hospitalization, health, disability, and other insurance accessible to Residents and their eligible dependents.
5. All Applicants and Residents are expected to be familiar with the TMB regulations governing PIT permits and full medical licenses at <http://www.tmb.state.tx.us>.

I. Transfers.

1. Before accepting a Resident who is transferring from another Program, the Program Director must obtain written or electronic verification of previous educational experiences and a summative competency-based performance evaluation of the transferring Resident and Milestones evaluations upon matriculation. The GME Office must review these documents before an offer of a position may be made to a transferring Resident. If the documentation is acceptable, the GME Office will initiate an Agreement of Appointment for the transferring Resident.

J. Resident Appointment.

1. Conditions of Appointment: The appointment to the position of Resident will be contingent upon:
  - a. Issuance of an active PIT permit or medical license from the TMB prior to assuming duties at Houston Methodist, and
  - b. Successful completion of all requirements specified by the particular Program offering the Resident appointment
  - c. Every non-citizen Applicant selected for appointment must have permanent resident status or a J-1 visa as a condition of appointment to a Resident position at Houston Methodist. Programs may request approval to sponsor residents for an H-1B visa. No other visas except J-1 and H-1B, if approved, are acceptable for Resident appointment. See GME 04, Residents with Visas.
2. Restrictive Covenants: No Resident will be asked or required to sign a noncompetition guarantee or restrictive covenant on entry to or exit from a Program of GME.
3. Essential Abilities: Residents may be required to sign a certificate that they possess the Essential Abilities required for training. The use of a third party to fulfill these attributes will not be considered adequate. However, individual residency Programs may require different specific abilities for training. All necessary accommodations requested by a Resident must be detailed and agreed to by the Resident before training begins. Procedure GME09—Accommodation of Residents with Disabilities outlines the process by which a Resident may request accommodation for disability.
4. Agreement of Appointment: Residents will be provided with a written Agreement of Appointment outlining the terms and conditions of their appointment to an ACGME-accredited or non-ACGME-accredited Program sponsored by Houston Methodist. This agreement will contain provision for or a reference to Houston Methodist policies regarding: Resident's responsibilities; duration of appointment; financial support; conditions for reappointment and promotion to a subsequent postgraduate year of training; grievance and due process; professional liability insurance; hospital and health insurance benefits for Residents and their eligible dependents that start the first recognized day of the Resident's Program; disability insurance; vacation, parental, sick, and other leaves of absence; timely notice of the effect of leave on Resident's ability to satisfy requirements to complete the Program; access to information related to eligibility for specialty board examinations; and duty hours and moonlighting.
5. Term of Appointment: The length of residency training varies across specialties. Upon acceptance into a Program of GME, a Resident should expect to be able to complete the course of training if the Resident's performance merits. The term of appointment is a maximum of 12 months (one year). A Resident's promotion to the subsequent postgraduate year of training is contingent upon the Resident's performance in the Program (see Procedure GME06—Promotion and Reappointment).
6. Orientation and Start Dates: Houston Methodist recognizes July 1 or August 1 as official start dates for all Residents, dependent upon the respective residency/fellowship program. All incoming Residents must attend mandatory new resident orientation corresponding with their official program start date. Residents who interrupt training at Houston Methodist to enroll in other ACGME or non-ACGME accredited programs, or who take time off from their program to participate in research or other activities inside or outside of Houston Methodist, may only restart their training in their original program on either July 1 or August 1 of the following academic year.

Exception to Recognized Start Dates: GME will consider exceptions for July 1 and August 1 start dates only if the program or individual can demonstrate hardship.

**III. COMMITTEE REVIEWING OR APPROVING PROCEDURE**

1. Graduate Medical Education Committee [14 October 2004] [13 December 2007] [11 December 2008] [12 January 2012] [9 January 2014] [13 October 2016] [12 November 2020] [13 March 2022] [11 September 2024]

**AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCES:**

1. Texas Medical Board Rules, Texas Administrative Code, Title 22, Part 9, Chapters 163 and 171.
2. Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, Institutional Requirements IV.A-B, effective July 1, 2022 and Common Program Requirements III.A. Effective July 1, 2020 ([www.acgme.org](http://www.acgme.org))