

ACR Well-Being Curriculum for Radiology Residency Programs

5. Allow an appropriate length of absence for residents unable to perform patient care responsibilities

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) regularly updates Section VI of its Common Program Requirements for all accredited residency and fellowship programs regardless of specialty to address well-being more directly and comprehensively. The updated requirements below emphasize that psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical in the development of the competent, caring, and resilient physician.

The ACR joins the ACGME in prioritizing physician well-being. The curriculum for radiology residency program leaders provides resources and experiential exercises to strengthen your residency and meet the VI.C. Well-Being requirements.

ACGME VI.C. Well-Being Requirement	ACR Learning Objectives
VI.C.2. There are circumstances in which residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and medical, parental, or caregiver leave. Each program must allow an appropriate length of absence for residents unable to perform their patient care responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the importance of structured policies that allow residents to take necessary absences while ensuring continuity of patient care. • Identify circumstances in which residents may need to be absent and describe best practices for handling these situations fairly and effectively. • Assess institutional policies on leave and propose improvements to better support resident well-being and patient care.

These activities are intended for program directors/coordinators and assistant/associate program directors.

Instructions:

1. Read the section *Theme 1: You Cannot Manage What You Cannot Measure* in the following article.
 - a. [A Road Map to Foster Wellness and Engagement in Our Workplace](#), which discusses the rationale for measuring burnout, well-being, and resilience and tools for collecting this data.
2. Read this article.
 - a. [This article](#) discusses the ACGME's mandate for sponsoring institutions to provide residents and fellows with a minimum of six weeks of approved medical, parental, and caregiver leave, emphasizing the significance of structured leave policies in supporting resident well-being.
3. Read this article.
 - a. The [American Board of Radiology's policy](#) allows residents up to eight weeks of time off per academic year without extending training, highlighting the importance of formalized leave structures.

4. Read this article.
 - a. [Operationalizing the New ABR Residency Leave Policy for Trainees](#): This article explores the implementation of the ABR's leave policy, discussing best practices for managing resident absences due to various circumstances.
5. Read this article.
 - a. [Residents' Wellbeing Policy at Yale](#): Yale's Department of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging outlines their policies on vacation, night float, duty hours, and wellness days, serving as a model for effectively handling resident absences.
6. Read this article.
 - a. [Our Recommendation for an Inclusive and Equitable Parental Leave Policy in Radiology](#): This editorial discusses the benefits of parental leave and outlines the current status of family leave policies in radiology residency programs, offering insights into policy improvement.
7. Read this article.
 - a. [Guiding Principles to Protect Resident & Fellow Physicians](#): The American Medical Association provides principles for managing resident engagement during challenging times, emphasizing the need for supportive institutional policies.
8. Exercise: Case-study analysis
 - a. Provide participants with a case study where a resident experiences a personal emergency (e.g., sudden illness, family emergency).
 - b. Have them identify gaps in the leave policy that could impact the resident's well-being and patient care.
 - c. Ask participants to propose solutions for ensuring both the resident's well-being and continued care for patients.
 - d. Ask: "How do structured policies benefit both residents and their patients? What challenges might arise when these policies are not in place or not well communicated?"
9. Exercise: Role-playing scenarios
 - a. Assign participants different roles: program director, resident, attending physician, and administrator.
 - b. Present scenarios where a resident requests leave due to various reasons (fatigue, illness, parental leave, mental health concerns).
 - c. Ask participants to engage in a structured conversation where they discuss how to handle the request while maintaining fairness and ensuring adequate patient coverage.
 - d. Debrief: Discuss the key takeaways and best practices for handling leave requests effectively and compassionately.
10. Exercise: Policy review and improvement workshop
 - a. Have participants review their own institution's resident leave policy (or provide an example policy).

- b. Ask them to assess the policy against ACGME requirements and best practices.
- c. Have small groups draft recommendations for improvements, considering flexibility, coverage planning, and support systems for residents on leave.
- d. Groups present their recommendations and discuss feasibility and implementation strategies.
- e. Ask: “If you could make one policy change today to improve resident well-being related to leave, what would it be and why?”