

**University of Kentucky  
Graduate Medical Education  
Extreme Event Policy for Emergent Situation or Disaster**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Minimize the impact of an extreme event on house staff and to protect their well-being, safety and educational experience.
- Provide policy and procedures for addressing continued administrative support for the University of Kentucky (UK) Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs and house staff in the event of an extreme event.
- Provide guidelines for communication with program directors and house staff regarding reconstitution or restructuring of a house officer's educational experience as rapidly as possible after an extreme event, or determining the need for transfer or closure in the event of that normal program activity cannot be reconstituted.

For purposes of this policy an extreme event can be either:

1. A disaster--defined as an event or set of events causing significant alteration to the house officer experience at one or more training program in an entire community or region. These may include but are not limited to natural disasters (tornado, external flood, earthquake, etc) or terrorism. The ACGME Executive Director makes the declaration of a disaster; or
2. An extreme emergent situation—defined as a local event (such as a hospital-declared disaster for an epidemic) that affects house staff education or the work environment but does not rise to the level of an ACGME-declared disaster

**Policy:**

All house officers are also encouraged to sign up for the UK emergency notification system, UK Alert. The primary source for communication regarding an extreme event and recovery plan for program directors, program coordinators, and house staff will be the UK GME web page.

House staff are, first and foremost, healthcare providers, whether they are acting under normal circumstances or in extreme events as defined above. House staff must be expected to perform according to society's expectations of healthcare providers as professionals and leaders in health care delivery, taking into account their degree of competence, their specialty training, and the context of the specific situation. Many house staff at an advanced level of training may even be fully licensed in their state, and, therefore, they may be able to provide patient care independent of supervision.

House staff are students who should not be first-line responders without appropriate supervision given the clinical situation at hand and their level of training and competence. If a house officer is working under a training certificate from a state licensing board, they must work under supervision. House officer performance during extreme events should not exceed expectations for their scope of competence as judged by program directors and other supervisors. House officers should not be expected to perform beyond the limits of self-confidence in their own abilities. In addition, a house officer must not be expected to perform in any situations outside of the scope of their individual license.

During and/or immediately after an extreme event house staff will be allowed and encouraged to continue their roles as possible, and to participate in the response and recovery efforts.

**DIO/GME Office Process for an Extreme Emergent Situation:**

The program directors should consult with Director of GME and/or the DIO concerning the impact of a local emergent situation will have on house staff education and work environment.

The DIO will contact the Executive Director, Institutional Review Committee (ED-IRC) via telephone only if an extreme emergent situation causes serious, extended disruption to resident assignments, educational infrastructure or clinical operations that might affect the Sponsoring Institution's or any of its programs' ability to conduct resident education in substantial compliance with ACGME Institutional, Common, and specialty-specific Program Requirements.

The DIO will provide information to the ED-IRC regarding the extreme emergent situation and the status of the educational environment for its accredited programs resulting from the extreme event. The DIO will receive electronic confirmation of this communication with the ED-IRC which will include copies to all EDs of Residency Review Committees (RRCs).

Only upon receipt of this confirmation by the DIO may the program directors contact their respective EDs-RRCs if necessary to discuss any specialty-specific concerns regarding interruptions to resident education or effect on educational environment. Program directors are expected to update the DIO on the results of conversations with EDs-RRCs regarding any specialty-specific issues.

The DIO will notify the ED-IRC when the institutional extreme emergent situation has been resolved.

**DIO/GME Office Process for a Disaster:**

The DIO will monitor progress of both healthcare delivery and functional status of GME programs for their educational mission during and following a disaster. The DIO or designee will call or email the Institutional Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information. Similarly the Program Directors will contact the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information. House staff can call or email the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.

The DIO or designee will work with the ACGME to determine the appropriate timing and action of the options for disaster impacted institution and/or programs:

- a) maintain functionality and integrity of program(s);
- b) arrange temporary transfers of house staff to other programs/institutions until such time as the training program(s) can provide an adequate educational experience for each of its house officers;
- c) assist the house staff in permanent transfers to other programs/institutions, as necessitated by program or institution closure.

If more than one program/institution is available for temporary or permanent transfer of a particular house officer, the transfer preferences of each house officer will be considered. Decisions to keep/transfer will be made expeditiously so as to maximize the likelihood that each house officer will timely complete the training year.

Within ten days after the declaration of a disaster by the ACGME, the DIO or his/her designee will contact ACGME to discuss due dates that ACGME will establish for the programs: (a) to submit program reconfigurations to ACGME, and (b) to inform each program's house officers of transfer decisions. The due dates for submission shall be no later than 30 days after the disaster unless other due dates are approved by ACGME.

Every effort will be made to insure that house staff continue to receive their salary and fringe benefits during disaster event response and recovery period, and/or accumulate salary and benefits until such time as utility restoration allows for fund transfer.

House staff should frequently refer to the University of Kentucky GME web page to keep informed regarding the status of programs affected by the extreme event.

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