Requests for House Officer Duty Hour Exceptions

Policy Number: GME - 017  
Effective Date: March 13, 2003  
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Description:
The ACGME allows requests for exception to duty hour standards up to a maximum 10% increase in the 80 hour limit. These requests must be evaluated and approved by the Sponsoring Institution’s Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) prior to submission to the ACGME. If approved, the maximum duration of the approval may not exceed the length of time until the program’s next review. Each RRC will publicize on its specialty page of the ACGME website whether it will consider requests for exceptions to the 80 hours per week limit.

Purpose:
This document sets forth the UCSD GMEC policy and procedure for training program directors’ to follow when requesting an exception to the ACGME and UCSD Duty Hour Standards.

Scope:
This policy applies only to those programs for which the respective RRC allows an exception to duty hour limits.

Definitions:
ACGME: Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
RRC: Residency Review Committee
GMEC: Graduate Medical Education Committee at UCSD

POLICY:

Approval Process – GMEC

1. A program director, with the written endorsement of the department chair, may submit a request to the GMEC for up to a maximum 10% increase in the 80 hour weekly limit to the UCSD GMEC. The program director must provide convincing evidence that the exception is necessary for educational reasons.
A. Such a request requires that UCSD has a Favorable Status from its most recent review by the ACGME Institutional Review Committee

B. Similarly, the program must be accredited in good standing, i.e., without a warning or a proposed or confirmed adverse action in order to consider such a proposal.

2. The following documentation must accompany the request to the GMEC:

   A. Patient Safety: Information must be submitted that describes how the program will monitor, evaluate, and ensure patient safety with extended resident work hours.

   B. Educational Rationale: The request must be based on a sound educational rationale which should be described in relation to the program’s stated goals and objectives for the particular assignments, rotations, and level(s) of training for which the increase is requested. Blanket exceptions for the entire educational program should be considered the exception, not the rule.

   C. Extra Work for Extra Pay/Moonlighting Policy: Specific information regarding the program’s moonlighting policies for the periods in question must be included.

   D. Call Schedules: Specific information regarding the resident call schedules during the times specified for the exception must be provided.

   E. Faculty Monitoring: Evidence of faculty development activities regarding the effects of resident fatigue, sleep deprivation, and alertness management must be provided.

3. Action to be taken by the GMEC

   A. The GMEC will act upon the request in a timely manner

   B. Following its review, a written response either approving or not approving the request will be forwarded to the program director and department chairperson.

   C. In the event a favorable decision is made, the GMEC will be responsible for defining in writing how the institution will monitor, evaluate, and ensure patient safety with the extended resident work hours.

Approval Process - RRC

1. Following approval by the GMEC, the program director may forward the request for exception to the duty hour limit to the RRC in accordance with ACGME policy and procedure. The program director should refer to the ACGME policy, “RRC Procedures for Granting Duty Hours Exceptions”.
2. The written endorsement of the GMEC and the GMEC designation of how the institution will monitor, evaluate, and ensure patient safety with the extended resident work hours, shall accompany the documentation that is sent to the RRC.

3. The RRC will act upon the request in accordance with ACGME policy and procedure.

References:
UCSD Housestaff Duty Hours and Working Environment Policy
ACGME RRC Procedures for Granting Duty Hours Exceptions
ACGME Institutional Requirements

Attachments:
NA

Approval Dates:
GMEC March 13, 2003; updated him July 2010

Contact Information:
Office of Graduate Medical Education; http://meded.ucsd.edu/gme/