

Policy Title: Accommodations for Resident/Fellow Disabilities	Policy Number: SOMGME-021
Original Date: 29-10-2024	Next Review Date: 29-10-2027

I. Purpose of the Policy

The Lebanese American University (LAU) School of Medicine (SOM) is committed to provide equal opportunity in recruitment, selection, and education of applicants and Graduate Medical Education (GME) trainees with disabilities and to create an accessible clinical learning environment.

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for ensuring all LAU GME programs are compliant with disability-related laws.

II. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all applicants and current residents and fellows enrolled in the Lebanese American University (LAU) Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs who require accommodations due to disabilities.

III. Definitions

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Major life activities: functions that are important to most people's daily lives. Examples of major life activities are breathing, walking, talking, hearing, seeing, sleeping, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, and working. Major life activities also include major bodily functions such as immune system functions, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions.

Reasonable Accommodation: Modification or adjustment to the environment, practices, or procedures that enables qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of that position. Accommodation options may include job restructuring, modified work schedules,

making facilities more accessible, modification of policies, elimination of non-essential work functions, reassignment to another vacant position, modification of current equipment, and use of assistive technology.

An accommodation is not considered reasonable if it imposes excessive burden on the institution/program, changes the fundamental nature or requirements of the program, or postures a direct threat to the wellbeing or safety of others.

IV. Policy Statement

- A. Residents or fellows who have a disability will not be excluded from participation in the different LAU GME programs. They will not be denied any benefits and will not be subjected to discrimination in connection with the training programs or other services offered by the Lebanese American University School of Medicine and its affiliated medical centers.
- B. LAU is committed to fair and equal treatment of all the trainees regardless of their disabilities and acknowledges that some qualified applicants and trainees face barriers to employment without proper accommodation.
- C. LAU will not provide accommodation if it will compromise the basic requirements of the program or if it will pose a direct threat to the wellbeing or safety of the trainees or others.
- D. All applicants and current trainees, regardless of disability, will have to fulfill all the program requirements and satisfactorily achieve all the required milestones.
- E. All applicants and current trainees must be able to meet the below technical standards. These standards are essential requirements of LAU training programs for graduates to be ready for independent practice (please refer to the Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion Policy):
 - 1. Communication: Trainees must be able to adequately speak and hear and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing with all members of the healthcare team. They must be able to appropriately complete medical reports and other documentation in an efficient and timely matter.

2. Sensory and motor skills: All trainees must possess sufficient sensory and motor function to provide proper medical care to patients (observation, physical exams, performing procedures if applicable to the specialty, following-up on patients).
3. Intellectual abilities: all trainees must be able to incorporate new information from all team members and to possess good judgement in assessment and formulating treatment plans.
4. Behavioral and Social attributes: All trainees must be able to develop mature, and effective relationships with colleagues, staff, and patients and must be able to function effectively in stressful conditions. They must also be able to adjust to changing environments, display flexibility, and accept appropriate criticism.

Applicants and trainees who cannot meet the above technical standards may be denied admission to or excluded from their program on that basis.

Procedure:

- A. Applicants and current trainees with a disability, or those who develop a disability during their training, are entitled to request reasonable accommodations.
- B. The request should be submitted in written format as early as possible to the Program Director, the Department Chair (DC), and the GME Office/Assistant Dean for GME (DIO).
- C. Requests must be accompanied by a medical report from a LAU personnel physician or qualified professional. This report should specify the diagnosis and nature of the disability, outline the limitations on major life activities resulting from the disability, and recommend reasonable accommodations to address these limitations.
- D. The PD, the DC, and the DIO will review the request, assess the trainee's needs alongside the program's requirements, evaluate the medical report, and consult stakeholders relevant to the request. They will determine the reasonableness of the accommodation while considering the program's specific goals and objectives and the necessary technical standards for trainees.
- E. The PD will respond to the trainee's request within 3 weeks suggesting reasonable accommodations if feasible and referring the trainee to additional resources including but not limited to counseling services. Additional information may be requested, and further referrals may be necessary.

- F. Trainees may appeal the decision regarding their accommodation request if they believe the outcome was unjust or did not adequately address their needs. The trainee must submit a written appeal to the PD and the DIO within 3 weeks of receiving the initial decision. The appeal should include a statement of the reasons for the appeal and any supporting documentation. The PD and DIO will issue a written response to the trainee within 3 weeks following the appeal review after consulting relevant personnel and medical professionals or with an appeal committee. The final decision will be communicated to the trainee in writing and will be considered conclusive.

Confidentiality:

Information related to a trainee's disability, including medical documentation and accommodation needs, will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality and will only be disclosed to individuals directly involved in the accommodation process on a need-to-know basis.

Approved by	Date
GMEC	29-10-2024
Interim review	N/A