

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAA) and Consortium Letters of Agreement (LOA) and Program Letters of Agreement (PLA)

What is an Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIAA)?

An Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIAA), also known as Master Affiliation Agreement (MAA), is a legal document between the sponsoring institution that sponsors the training program(s) and Review Committee-approved participating sites to which residents/fellows rotate for a required educational experiences.

What information is required in an IIAA?

An IIAA or MAA should delineate the scope of the program, program director responsibilities, teaching staff responsibilities, institutional support, duration of assignment, trainee responsibilities and activities, insurance/malpractice arrangements, stipend/benefit responsibility, and must be signed by the participating site President/CEO, BJC Chief Medical Officer or Hospital President, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean, and the Designated Institution Official (DIO). A term of an IIAA can be as long as 10 years with automatic renewal, unless specifically terminated by the sponsoring institution or participating site.

An IIAA generally covers more than one training program that has been approved by GME to rotate to a participating training site. The IIAA includes an exhibit that is used by GME to identify all approved training programs and their program directors. The GME Office cross-references the list of programs with WebADS participating site data reported by individual training programs each year. A training program must not add a participating site in WebADS without prior approval of the GME Office to ensure their program has been added to the IIAA exhibit.

Consortium Letter of Agreement (LOA)

A Consortium Letter of Agreement (LOA) is primarily developed for off-site hands-on elective or focused experiences within the United States. A Consortium LOA is typically developed to cover a particular trainee in one of the GME Consortium training programs who wishes to engage in clinical experiences for a defined period of time (eg: 4 week electives). The Consortium Letter of Agreement Template should be used to submit a request to generate an agreement. The template can be found at the following link: <https://gme.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Letter-of-Agreement-Template-GME-Consortium-08.25.22.pdf>

Consortium LOAs will identify the site director, their responsibilities for supervision, evaluation and teaching. The agreement will address the specific dates of training, language describing the arrangements for malpractice liability, licensure, stipend/benefits and will reference or attach the specific goals/objectives to be achieved during the experience. These agreements are signed by the resident/fellow's employer (Hospital President or CMO for BJC; Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean for WUSOM). The agreement is also signed by the DIO and the institutional official of the participating site. Consortium LOAs typically expire at the conclusion of the elective experience, and are not renewable.

AGREEMENTS AND VISITORS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED/PROCESSED/ONBOARDED FROM MARCH 1 AUGUST 31. Submissions may begin August 15. Submissions for educational experiences beginning in September must be submitted by February 28. Please allow a minimum of 12 – 16 weeks for Legal to develop the agreement and obtain appropriate signatures from each party. Rotations submitted should target a timeframe that allows

the GME office to complete the development and execution of the agreement. In order to ensure rotations begin on the date expected program directors are encouraged to confirm all rotation arrangements in advance.

Important Note:

Observational Experiences: External observational experiences may not require an agreement but should be reviewed and approved by GME prior to allowing the experience. The accepting institution generally provides guidelines for observational experiences. Observational experiences, research opportunities and classroom work must not include ANY hands on clinical experiences with patients. Licensure and malpractice coverage is generally not needed for these experiences. ALL off-site experiences MUST be reported in New Innovations and appropriately reflect the timeframe and location for approved experiences.

Program Letters of Agreement (PLA)

What is a Program Letter of Agreement (PLA)?

A Program Letter of Agreement (PLA) is a written document that addresses the educational expectations that has been agreed upon by your Program Director and the faculty supervisor at the participating site which residents/fellows have required educational experiences. PLA's are NOT legal agreements. The purpose of a PLA is to protect the program's residents/fellows by ensuring an appropriate educational experience as outlined between the Program Director and Site Director is under adequate supervision and meets the educational arrangements. PLAs are required by the ACGME Common Program Requirements (CPR: section I.B Participating Sites).

AGREEMENTS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED/PROCESSED FROM MARCH 1 AUGUST 31. Submissions may begin August 15. Submissions for educational experiences beginning in September must be submitted by February 28. Please allow a minimum of 12 – 16 weeks for Legal to develop the agreement and obtain appropriate signatures from each party. Rotations submitted should target a timeframe that allows the GME office to complete the development and execution of the agreement. In order to ensure rotations begin on the date expected program directors are encouraged to confirm all rotation arrangements in advance.

What information is required in a PLA?

A PLA should provide details on faculty, supervision, evaluation, educational content, length of assignment, and policies and procedure for each required assignment that occurs at off-site location. The Site Director (defined as the individual who is responsible for supervising and overseeing resident/fellow education at that location), Program Director, and DIO must sign PLAs. The Consortium PLA template should be used by sponsored programs and can be accessed at the following link: <https://gme.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Program-Letter-of-Agreement-Template-9.2022.docx>

What is the stated purpose of a PLA?

Program letters of agreement provide details on faculty, supervision, evaluation, educational content, length of assignment and policy and procedures for each required assignment that occurs outside of the sponsoring institution. These documents are intended to protect the residents by ensuring an appropriate educational experience under adequate supervision. If there are multiple off-site rotations, a PLA is required for each site.

When should PLAs be updated?

Agreements should be updated whenever there are changes in program director or participating site director or in resident/fellow assignments, or when there are revisions to the items specified in Common Program

Requirements I.B.1.a)-d) or Specialty Specific Requirements. PLAs must be renewed at least every 10 years, per ACGME requirements. If nothing in the agreement has changed at the end of ten years, it is acceptable to add an amendment signifying review and extension of the agreement with signatures. The GME office strongly encourages renewal every 5 years.

What is the difference between an IIAA and PLA?

An IIAA must exist between the Sponsoring Institution and each affiliated training site. A PLA must exist between the program director and the site director at the participating site where the rotations occurs.

Multiple programs can be covered under one IIAA, but each program must also have a specific, individualized PLA with the participating site director.

IIAAs contain complex legal language, while PLAs are intended to be short, less formal documents (approximately one-two pages in length) that address, as simply as possible the educational arrangements agreed upon by the Program Director and Site Director.

There must be an IIAA in place between the Sponsoring Institution and participating site before a program can develop and initiate an offsite rotation or PLA.

What is the minimum experience for which a PLA needs to exist between a training program and a site involved in residency/fellowship education?

There must be PLAs between an accredited program and all sites to which residents/fellows rotate for required education or assignments.

Are PLAs necessary for “courses,” such as the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology course or the Bellevue Hospital Toxicology Course?

These types of courses are not examples of participating sites, and therefore do not require PLAs.

Does a subspecialty program need a separate PLA if a specialty program already has one in place with a particular institution?

Although a single PLA that provides the Review Committee with appropriate information (i.e., the content of the experience, supervision, evaluation, length of assignment, policies and procedures) for both the specialty and subspecialty programs would be acceptable, such a document may be long and overly complicated. The preferred strategy would be to develop two separate letters, one for the specialty program, and another for the subspecialty program.

Are PLAs needed when sites are closely associated? For instance, would PLAs be necessary between a university hospital and the children’s hospital with which it has close ties?

A program sponsored by a university hospital that requires a rotation/assignment at the children’s hospital would require a PLA **if the two entities are operated by two different governing bodies (e.g., two separate Boards of Directors)**. However, if the two sites operate essentially as one entity (such as the WU/BJH/SLCH Consortium), that is, they are governed by one governing body (e.g., a single Board of Directors), a PLA is not necessary. This reasoning applies to all closely associated sites, not only those between university and children’s hospitals.

Important note: The GME Consortium only includes Washington University School of Medicine, Barnes-Jewish Hospital and St. Louis Children’s Hospital. Partner hospitals (eg: BJWC, MoBapt, St. Peter’s, etc.) as well as some

joint ventures (eg: The Rehab Institute) often require an IIAA and PLA. These sites are not a part of the GME Consortium. It is best to work closely with GME to determine when an IIAA may be required at a partner site. Please consult the GME Office at gme@wustl.edu if clarification is required on PLA necessity. We would be more than happy to help you through this process.

What is the turnaround time for approval for international rotations?

The approval of an international rotation requires at least 4 months. Please make sure to start the process at least 4 months in advance from the date of travel. If resident/fellow will be traveling to a site where an agreement is already in place, the approval time may be shorter.

I am a program director looking to start an international rotation for my trainees, where can I find additional support to get started?

We are happy to meet with you and walk you through the process of setting up an international rotation/program. Please contact Caline Mattar (cmattar@wustl.edu) to schedule a consultation.

I am a resident/fellow who is on a Visa. Can I participate in an international rotation?

J1-visa holders now require ACGME approval to participate in an international rotation. This may require more than 4 months to receive a response. Please contact the GME as early as possible to determine if the approval can be accomplished.

For more information, please refer to the ACGME Common Program Requirements, section I.B., for specific information related to PLAs. The Program Directors Guide to the Common Program Requirements provides detailed guidance. You can access the guide here:

<https://www.acgme.org/program-directors-and-coordinators/welcome/program-directors-guide-to-the-common-program-requirements/>