

Q: A Program Director inquires: I need guidance – one of our residents has not been performing up to expectations, and we probably need to put him on probation. What issues do I need to be considering?

A: It depends – there are several important considerations before you take action.

Remember that our role is to help our trainees become competent. When they are not successful, it's our responsibility to work with them and to ensure that the following standards are met:

1. we must **formally inform the trainee of performance deficiencies** (generally that means in writing) and
2. we must **give him/her a chance to improve**, and
3. we must **follow our own policies** - the process must be fair.

Has the resident been given written evaluations? Has s/he had formal feedback regarding the areas of performance deficiency? Is this documented?

Before the Program Director takes any official action, please review a few things first (call the DIO for guidance):

- **Employee Assistance Program** – residents who may have issues with test-anxiety might benefit from the services of the EAP - <http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/documents/EAPinfo.pdf>.
- **GME policy 2.1.9** – Levels of Academic Status in Graduate Medical Education – at <http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/Policies/2.1.9%20Academic%20Status%20in%20GME.pdf>. The policy details the levels of academic status within our GME programs – from administrative status to probation – as well as the reporting requirements to the Texas Medical Board.
- **GME policy 2.1.10** – Resident Grievance and Appeal Procedure <http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/Policies/2.1.10%20res%20grievance%20and%20appeal.pdf> – a resident/fellow placed on probation has the right to appeal to a GME hearing panel.
- **GME policy 2.1.3** - Duration of Appointment, Conditions for Reappointment, and Non-Renewal of Resident Contracts <http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/Policies/2.1.3%20duration%20of%20appt.pdf> – our contracts are for one year.
- **Templates for letters** (administrative status or probation) are at <http://www.uthscsa.edu/gme/formstemplates.asp> (see the 6th and 7th bullets) - please access the appropriate form and draft responses (and replace the blue text). The templates were developed to both **give guidance to the Program Director** regarding the steps and processes, and to **ensure that all necessary elements have been addressed**. As these templates change from time to time, it's best to use the ones on the GME site rather than pulling up an archived copy you may have saved from another situation.
- **Timeline issues** to consider are described in 2.1.3 above – it is expected that you will give 4 months notice for nonrenewal – thus, for a typical July-thru-June year, the latest date should be **March 1**, unless the performance deficiencies became manifest later.