



COLLEGE
OF MEDICINE



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEDICAL CENTER

South Campus

SUBJECT: SUMMATIVE LETTER POLICY

Effective Date: July 1, 2008

APPROVAL:

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Revision Number: 3

Date: March 22, 2013

DISTRIBUTION: Program Directors, Residents and Staff

The University of Arizona
College of Medicine at South Campus
Graduate Medical Education Committee
Policies and Procedures

Purpose: In order to comply with the Essentials of Accredited Residencies for Graduate Medical Education, this policy is set forth by The University of Arizona College of Medicine at South Campus Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC). At the conclusion of the residency, or at any time a resident terminates his/her participation in the residency program prior to graduation, the program director will prepare a summative letter that will remain a permanent part of that resident's file and must be available for the resident's review in accordance with the institution's policy.

1. At the conclusion of the residency, or at any time a resident terminates his/her participation in the residency program prior to graduation, the program director will prepare a summative letter, which outlines to what extent the resident has mastered each component of clinical competence, including:
 - a. patient care
 - b. medical knowledge
 - c. practice-based learning and improvement
 - d. interpersonal and communication skills
 - e. professionalism
 - f. systems-based practice

In addition, the summative letter should verify that the resident has demonstrated sufficient competence to enter practice without direct supervision.

2. Following a meeting with the resident to discuss the contents of the summative letter, the resident will sign the letter, acknowledging that s/he has had an opportunity to review and to discuss it with the program director, and that s/he either agrees or disagrees with its content. If, after discussion with the resident, the program director determines that the letter should/could be changed, s/he should do so.
3. Program directors are required to provide verification of residency education for any residents who may leave the program prior to completion of their education. Written documentation must include verification of previous educational experiences, a statement regarding the performance evaluation of the resident and, an assessment of competence in the six general competencies noted above.
4. The GMEC will document that each program is preparing a summative letter for each resident. The process of documentation will be included in the Internal Review.
5. A release of information (see attached) will be prepared, which the program director will present to the resident, along with the prepared summative letter

Requests for Information Related to Employment

1. All requests for information should be documented in the resident's file. A copy of a written request, along with the response to the written request, should suffice to keep a log of inquiries.
2. When an inquirer seeks information, the program should send a copy of the summative letter, without augmentation or verbal comment. Each residency program should maintain a centralized system for responding to requests for information, so that copies are disseminated only from one source.
3. If the resident has signed a release as set forth above, it is not necessary to send a copy of the summative letter to the resident each time an inquiry regarding his/her tenure with the University is received.
4. Records relating to employment of residents at The University of Arizona are personnel records and are subject to the provisions of Arizona Board of Regents Policy 6-912, which states, in relevant part:

Access or Disclosure to Third Parties

Access to or disclosure of personnel records or information shall not be provided to individuals or agencies other than those designated by the universities under this policy, except as follows:

1. The following information regarding present or former employees may be disclosed:
 - a. Name
 - b. Titles or positions (including academic degrees and honors received).
 - c. Campus telephone number and e-mail address.
 - d. Fact of past or present employment
 - e. Dates of employment; and
 - f. Salaries or rates of pay.
2. Access to personnel records or disclosure of personnel information may be provided when necessary to protect the interests of the institution when the institution believes the actions of the individual violate the conditions of employment or otherwise threaten injury to the institution or others, to a properly identified law enforcement authority when the institution reasonably believes that an applicant, employee or former employee may have engaged in illegal activities, or pursuant to a federal, state or local government statute or regulation that specifically requires disclosure of certain information to certain parties.
3. Access to certain personnel records or disclosure of personnel information may be provided in response to a lawfully issued administrative summons, search warrant, judicial order or subpoena, provided that:
 - a. legal counsel has reviewed the matter and approved disclosure; and
 - b. if the request is not issued on behalf of the affected employee(s), a reasonable effort has been made to notify the affected employee(s) of the request prior to compliance.

- c. the institution receiving such a summons or subpoena may seek a protective order to prevent disclosure of certain documents, such as promotion and tenure files, letters solicited from outside reviewers who were given a promise of confidentiality, and performance evaluations, on the basis that a qualified privilege exists to protect those documents in the employee evaluation system for making determinations of employee retention and the granting of tenured or continuing status.

4. Public Records Law

- a. Except as otherwise required by this policy or by applicable law, personnel records and information shall be treated as confidential and not subject to public inspection because public disclosure of this information would be contrary to the best interests of the state.
- b. To the extent required by A.R.S. § 39-128, records maintained by the Board or a university that are reasonably necessary to maintain an accurate knowledge of employee disciplinary actions will be open to inspection and copying, unless inspection or disclosure of the records or information in the records is contrary to law.
- c. If a university receives a request under public records law for employee records it will make reasonable efforts to provide notice to affected employees.
- d. For purposes of this policy:
 - i. "Disciplinary Action" means: involuntary demotion, involuntary dismissal, suspension without pay, and resignation in lieu of dismissal; and for classified staff under progressive discipline, written reprimands.
 - ii. "Records maintained by the Board or a university that are reasonably necessary to maintain an accurate knowledge of employee disciplinary actions" mean the final written disciplinary action and the employee's response, if any, to that action.
- e. This policy does not require disclosure of any individual's home address, home telephone number or photograph, or any information that may subject an individual to the risk of identity theft.

Personnel records and information are confidential and their disclosure, other than as provided for in this policy, would be contrary to the best interests of the state. Accordingly, except as provided for in this policy, personnel records shall be treated as exempt from the public documents statute.

Unless a resident has signed a release as set forth above, the only information that may be disclosed about a resident is that permitted by ABOR Policy Manual 6-912.

Arizona Medical Board Inquiries

A.R.S. § 32-1451 requires physicians and other providers of health care to report evidence that a physician is incompetent or guilty of unprofessional conduct to the Board. Any information supplied in good faith to the licensing board will not subject the individual to an action for civil damages as a result thereof. It would still be helpful to have a signed release in cases where a resident is applying for licensure, to defend against a charge of gratuitously providing defamatory information.

Original	July 2008
1st Revision	September 2010
2 nd Revision	April 2012
3 rd Revision	March 2013

Summative Letter**RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

I, _____, M.D., have reviewed the contents of the summative letter dated _____, and have had an opportunity to discuss the contents of this letter with my program director. I understand that, following completion of my residency, members of the faculty or staff of the University of Arizona College of Medicine may receive requests for information regarding my education, training, experience, qualifications and job performance for purposes of evaluating me for employment. I agree that, should such requests for information be made either at my request or for any other reason, a copy of the summative letter may be sent to the requesting party. My signature below constitutes continuing permission to the College of Medicine to distribute copies of this summative letter to individuals requesting information regarding my training at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, and I agree that it will not be necessary for the College of Medicine to send me a copy of such letter each time it responds to an inquiry. I hereby release the University, its College of Medicine, and any person authorized by them to release this information to inquiring entities, from any and all liability and claims, causes of action and damages arising out of the disclosure of the information contained in the summative letter, and any other information released in good faith and without actual malice.

DATED this ____ day of _____, 20____. Signature

Signature

Printed Name