

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Flexible Rotations Review Committee for Surgery

Question: When should programs apply for a flexible rotation?

The flexible rotation allows PGY-5 residents to rotate on non-chief experiences. For example, a flexible rotation could provide a resident with more time in each clinical area of focus, outside the essential content areas, before going into subspecialized education and training.

This option is only possible after identifying PGY-4 rotations that are equivalent to chief experiences so that a resident may graduate with the full 12 months of chief rotations. The flexible rotation allows this by having chief experiences in both the fourth and fifth years of clinical education, so that a resident may rotate on a non-chief rotation as a PGY-5.

A program must apply for the flexible rotation and receive approval from both the Review Committee for Surgery and the American Board of Surgery, before the proposed chief experiences in the fourth clinical year occurs.

Question: Does a program need to apply for a flexible rotation if a PGY-3 resident wants to rotate in cardiac surgery as a PGY-4? If this will not change the PGY-5 rotation schedule, would the resident need chief experience as a PGY-4?

The flexible rotation is only for residents in the fifth year of the educational program who wish to complete rotations not considered chief experiences. Elective rotations in the fourth year of the program do not require review or approval by the Review Committee.

Question: Does a program need to apply for a flexible rotation for a PGY-5 resident who wants to do a rotation that differs from the program's block diagram, but that will still provide chief experience?

Block diagrams represent the overarching structure of the program at each level of education. The Committee expects some variance in rotations for each resident and the program can modify rotations as appropriate. If the rotation still falls within the requirements for chief rotations, the program will not need to apply for a flexible rotation.

Question: For a chief resident who wants to go into a transplant fellowship after completing the general surgery residency, does a program need to apply for a flexible rotation for the chief resident to do a transplant rotation as a PGY-5?

The Committee has determined that transplant rotations may be acceptable chief rotations. To be considered a chief experience, the transplant rotation must meet the conditions laid out in Program Requirement IV.C.8.c).(6).

A program does not need to use the flexible rotation option if the rotation provides chief experience.

Please review the document entitled "[Flexible Rotations During General Surgery Residency](#)," which outlines the information required to submit the request to the Committee. All requests should be submitted to the Review Committee Executive Director Dr. Chris Fox: cfox@acgme.org.

Please address any questions regarding the flexible rotation request to Review Committee staff members, whose contact information can be found on the [Surgery section of the ACGME website](#).