

General Psychiatry Residency Program Guidelines for Structured Assessment of Clinical Evaluation Reports (STACERs)

Background and Purpose

The Department of Psychiatry is committed to supporting residents in completing Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) requirements as an essential part of training, including the successful completion of STACER examinations. According to the RCPSC, the purpose of the STACER is “to assess the Psychiatry Resident’s ability to acquire a comprehensive history from a patient, evaluate his/her current mental state, interpret the acquired information and arrive at a diagnosis, formulation and management plan.” Further, the assessing psychiatrist(s) will also provide feedback to the Resident.

This document reviews the University of Toronto General Psychiatry Residency Program’s guidelines for effective implementation of STACERs. Our aim is to meet Royal College requirements, maximize educational value, minimize burden to residents and faculty, and reduce redundancy wherever possible.

Reference Documents

Psychiatry - [National Standards for Training](#) AFTER July 1, 2020

University of Toronto Requirements for STACER Completion:

Both summative and formative (practice) STACERs are required.

For summative STACERs:

1. All PGY2s must successfully complete a Foundations of Discipline (FOD) general psychiatry STACER.
2. All PGY4/5s must successfully complete two Core of Discipline (COD) STACERs (aka "Exit STACERs").

For practice STACERs*:

1. They are required between FOD and COD (PGY2-4) with a total of 4 per academic year.
2. If a resident fails a practice STACER and there is gap identified in STACER performance, additional practice STACERs may be recommended and/or required by the program.
3. No longer required after COD STACERs have been successfully completed.
4. Any resident who wishes additional practice beyond what has been detailed above, can request support from their Postgraduate Education Site Director for their current core rotation.

*Please note *practice STACERs are not offered* during the PGY3/COD Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Rotation and at some elective sites – residents can contact the program via the STACER email below to request assistance with practice STACERs as needed.

For any questions regarding STACERs, contact psych.stacer@utoronto.ca

Step by Step Instructions for COD/Exit STACER Exams (virtual and in-person):

1. Two Examiners (or “Assessors”) are required who are not current supervisors of the resident during the current or last rotation. These examiners should have completed Faculty Development for STACER exams.
2. All conditions for privacy in terms of virtual care should be followed if the STACER is being provided virtually.
3. The patient is unknown to the Resident and the two Examiners.
4. Interview
 - a. The examiners introduce the patient to the resident. If virtual, the examiners can then turn their cameras off.
 - b. The resident interviews the patient for 50 minutes.
 - c. At 50 minutes the Examiners announce the time: “50 minutes”. The resident should start ending the interview as soon as possible but has until 55 minutes.
 - d. At 55 minutes, if the resident is still interviewing, the Examiners will terminate the interview by saying “We will have to end the interview at this time.” The patient should then leave (and if necessary be escorted back to the inpatient unit).
5. The Examiners then both leave the room/turn their cameras off and mute until the 60-minute mark of the exam.
6. The Examiners return to the room/turn cameras on at 60 minutes and prompt the resident to make their presentation with the following prompts:
 - a. “Please present your summary of this patient’s history.”
 - b. “Please present the patient’s mental status examination.”
 - c. “Please present your diagnostic impression, including your differential diagnosis.”
 - d. “Please present your formulation of this patient.”
 - e. “Please present your management plan for this patient if you were to take over their care.”

Examiners do not have to prompt the resident if they continue to present the above-mentioned data in an organized sequence spontaneously.

7. The presentation should be no longer than 25 minutes. At 20 minutes, the examiners announce “20 minutes” – no additional warnings are provided. If the resident has not concluded the presentation section by 25 minutes, the examiners will terminate the presentation section by saying “We will have to end the presentation section at this time.” The examiners will then proceed to ask questions.
8. The Examiner questions must end no later than 1 hour and 45 minutes after the exam commenced (45 minutes after the presentation section commenced).
9. The Examiners should then confer privately to reach a consensus about whether the resident’s observed performance *Meets Expectations* or *Does Not Meet Expectations*. If consensus cannot be reached, the examiners should inform the resident and Program Director.
10. To pass the COD STACER, the resident must perform at the level of a competent general psychiatrist in a community practice.
11. The Examiners should then meet with the resident to provide them with feedback about their performance.

12. Examiner disagreement – In the uncommon event that examiners are unable to come to consensus regarding the outcome of a STACER, they should inform the resident of this, document the reasons for their decision separately on STACER assessment forms, and consult the Program Director for further guidance. All documentation must be sent to the residency program for review relating to the STACER in question.
13. Resident appeals – Please refer to the residency program’s Appeals Guidelines for further details regarding this process.

Resident Accommodations

Residents may have accommodations related to exams such as STACERs. All accommodations are confirmed by Postgraduate Learner Affairs within the Office of Learner Affairs. Examiners will be informed in advance of the STACER of any accommodations. Examiners should continue to let residents know when there are 5 minutes left before the interview ends and terminate/end the interview at the maximum time permitted as per accommodations. Examiners should also comport with the specific times for preparation time, presentation, and question period as outlined by the accommodations.

Implementation of STACERs 2022-2025

Below are the recommended practice and formative STACERs per PGY/CBD stage of training.

2022-23

General standard across all years of training: minimum 4 practice STACERs with up to 6 total if any unsuccessful practice STACERs. Additional practice STACERs as per recommendation of Psychiatry Competence Subcommittee (PCS), Resident Assessment and Support Subcommittee (RASC), and/or Program Director.

PGY2

2 practice x inpatient rotation

2 practice x outpatient rotation

FOD/PGY2 general psychiatry STACER (summative RC requirement)

PGY3

2 practice x Geriatric Psychiatry

2 practice x Severe Mental Illness

1-2 practice as needed if unable to complete req’d practice on other rotations

Underserved/PLEX/Emergency Psychiatry

PGY4

Continue practice STACERs until pass all COD/exit STACERs

- CL Psychiatry - 2 practice

-Addictions – 1 practice

-Inpatients - 1 practice

-PLEX – as many needed to help pass COD STACERs

COD/PGY4 exit STACER x 2 (summative RC requirement)

PGY5

No specific requirement – residents can request from core site as needed to assist with COD STACER if 2 have not been completed in PGY4

2023-24

PGY2 – no change

PGY3

2 practice STACERs each on geri psych and SMI
(CAP cannot provide adult STACERs)

PGY4 and 5

No change

2024-25

PGY2 no change

PGY3 no change

PGY4

CL Psychiatry – 2 practice

Addictions – 1-2 practice as needed

Underserved – 1-2 practice as needed

PLEX – as many needed

PGY5 as noted above.

Prepared by: Associate Program Director & Chair, PRPC Subcommittee on Resident Assessment

Approved by PRPC: June 6, 2022 and revised to include guidance regarding accommodations January 9, 2023

Date of next scheduled review: 2025