



Psychiatry Residents' Association of Toronto (PRAT) Terms of Reference General Psychiatry Residency Program, University of Toronto

Mandate

The Psychiatry Residents' Association of Toronto (PRAT) represents the needs and views of residents in the University of Toronto's General Psychiatry Residency Program. PRAT aims to create a cohesive and supportive community for residents during their postgraduate training, collaborating with the residency program—including faculty leadership—to advocate for enhancement of the program as a whole. This includes optimizing the training experience, promoting resident wellbeing, and highlighting opportunities for leadership and career development.

Key Documents

[Psychobabble Listserv Guidelines](#)

[Current PRAT Council](#)

PRAT Council Composition

All residents within the General Psychiatry Residency Program are members of PRAT; this does not include residents within the Department's three Subspecialty Programs (Child and Adolescent, Forensic, and Geriatric Psychiatry). The **PRAT Council** is composed of Executive and Non-Executive Members who are elected to their positions by the resident body. PRAT Council Members must be in good standing with the residency program to participate in a resident leadership position.

Executive Members

- 2 Co-Presidents (must be in PGY3/4 with at least one year of experience on PRAT Council; however, if no one with prior experience self-nominates during the initial election, an exception can be made)
- 2 Senior Call Officers
- 2 Senior Events Officers
- Senior Communications Officer
- Senior Finance Officer
- Senior Wellness Officer

Non-Executive Members

- 2 Past Presidents
- Select Group Representatives
 - Internationally Funded Trainee (IFT) Representative
 - International Medical Graduate (IMG) Representative
 - Indigenous Stream Representative
- Postgraduate Year Representatives

- 2 PGY1 Representatives
- 2 PGY2 Representatives
- 2 PGY3 Representatives
- 2 PGY4 Representatives
- 2 PGY5 Representatives
- Junior Officers
 - Junior Call Officer (must be in PGY2)
 - Junior Events Officer (must be in PGY1)
 - Junior Communications Officer (must be in PGY1)
 - Junior Finance Office (must be in PGY1)
 - Junior Wellness Officer (must be in PGY1)

All Executive Member positions must be filled each year and may receive the [PARO-CAHO agreement](#) senior resident administrative bonus of \$2060.15 per year with support from the Program Director, TAHSN full-affiliate hospital Psychiatrist-in-Chiefs, and U of T PGME, Executive Members who hold another paid position outside of PRAT (e.g. Chief Residents) are only eligible to receive one of these stipends according to the Office of Postgraduate Medical Education and the Postgraduate Director and will automatically receive the chief resident administrative bonus. No resident can hold two Executive Member positions, but a single resident may hold an Executive Member and a Non-Executive Member position simultaneously.

Non-Executive Member positions should be filled each year whenever possible, with the recognition that there may not always be interested and/or suitable candidates. If there is insufficient interest from PGY1 or PGY2 residents for the Junior Officer positions, these positions may be opened up to senior residents (i.e. PGY3/4/5).

The PRAT Council can establish new Non-Executive Member positions and working/interest groups as needed to support key activities.

Reporting

The PRAT Council will report to the Psychiatry Residency Program Committee (PRPC) and Program Director through the Co-Presidents. The PRAT Council will report to the general resident body through dissemination of meeting minutes and through updates provided by Select Group Representatives and Postgraduate Year Representatives to their respective cohorts.

Meetings

PRAT meetings are scheduled monthly, typically on weekday evenings and in close proximity to PRPC meetings. These are open to all residents. All PRAT Council Members (Executive and Non-Executive) are expected to attend as many meetings as possible. Members can attend and vote in-person, virtually (via videoconference), or over the phone. If unable to attend a meeting, PRAT Council Members should attempt to send a proxy to the meeting. If unable to find a proxy, Council Members should send a written update to the Senior Communications Officer in advance of the meeting. Meeting quorum is a simple majority of Council Members. If a quorum is not reached, the meeting will be rescheduled.

Prior to each meeting, the PRAT Council may decide to schedule an in-camera meeting (e.g. to discuss disciplinary actions regarding specific Council Members, or to discuss confidential matters without the presence of the general resident body). The Communications Officer should be notified at least one week prior to the

meeting with specific reference as to who should not be present. The first agenda item of an in-camera meeting must pertain to the rules that will apply to the discussion and how results will be reported. In-camera meetings should only be used in extraordinary circumstances and utmost professionalism is expected from all attendees.

Decision-making

Decisions will be made by consensus. It is desirable that decisions are acceptable to the majority of PRAT Council Members; therefore, discussion should continue until a consensus is reached. If no consensus can be reached, then a vote of PRAT Council Members will be conducted and a two-thirds majority required for decision-making.

Confidentiality

It is understood that at times, sensitive matters related to the residency program, residents, or faculty may be discussed at PRAT meetings. Attendees are to maintain confidentiality as to the details of these discussions, with minutes providing a high-level summary of discussions being made available to all residents and faculty via Quercus once approved at the subsequent PRAT meeting.

Documentation

Agendas and relevant documentation are pre-circulated to PRAT Council Members the week before the meeting and, once finalized, are shared with the general resident body via the Psychobabble listserv.

Standing items on the agenda include:

- Resident Feedback (during which general residents in attendance may raise concerns to be discussed)
- Executive Member Reports (Call, Events, Communications, Finance, Wellness)
- Non-Executive Member Reports (Select Group Representatives, Postgraduate Year Representatives)
- Co-President Report

Minutes are taken by the Senior or Junior Communications Officer or delegate and are disseminated to the general resident body via the Psychobabble listserv. After being approved at the following meeting, minutes are also made available on Quercus for all stakeholders including faculty and residents.

Elections

Elections for PRAT Council Executive Member positions are held in April/May each year. Residents may self-nominate for as many positions as desired, but they may only be elected to a maximum of one Executive Member position. All residents within the General Psychiatry Residency Program are eligible to vote; this does not include residents in the Subspecialty Programs.

Elections for Non-Executive Member positions are held in July (with the exception of the Past President positions, which are automatically inherited by the previous year's Co-Presidents). Select Group Representatives (IMG, IFT, and Indigenous Stream) and Postgraduate Year Representatives are elected by residents from their respective cohorts only. Junior Officers are elected by PGY1s (with the exception of the Junior Call Officer, who will be elected by PGY2s).

In any election where the number of nominations does not exceed the number of available positions, the election survey will become a vote of confidence. In the event of a tie for a Non-Executive position, the role can be split

among those who received equal numbers of votes. In the event of a tie for an Executive position, there will be an internal vote among the current PRAT Council to select one candidate. If no candidates self-nominate for a given position, another call for nominations will be circulated after the distribution of initial election results. Interested residents should contact the Senior Communications Officer and provide a brief statement outlining their interest, which would then be submitted for a vote of confidence by current PRAT Council Members at the next PRAT meeting on a first-come, first-served basis (requiring a two-thirds majority to pass, as specified under decision-making above).

Handover from the outgoing to incoming PRAT Council takes place during the June PRAT meeting and via additional in-person/email discussions as needed, with newly-elected Members assuming their responsibilities at the beginning of July (i.e. the start of the academic year).

Responsibilities

PRAT is responsible for the following important domains:

Liaising between residents and faculty to enhance the residency program experience

- Identify, advocate, and plan for resources needed to address any learner-identified issues within the residency program.
- Collaborate with program leadership to facilitate optimization of the residency experience.
- Actively seek and respond to stakeholder input.
- Coordinate with program leadership to allocate resident representatives as needed to various committees and working groups within the Department.

Community-building and promoting resident wellbeing

- Organize events and activities (including tri-annual Retreats) to help foster a cohesive resident community and support resident wellness.
- Facilitate clear, effective, and transparent bidirectional communication to help strengthen the relationship between residents and faculty.

Call pool management

- Coordinate allocation of residents to hospital site call pools with program leadership.
- Collaborate with Chief Residents, PG Site Directors, and the Program Director to address call-related concerns raised throughout the year.
- Provide input from the resident perspective to program leadership to determine call principles for the call allocation process.

PRAT Team Member Roles & Responsibilities

Executive Members

Co-Presidents

- Organize and chair monthly PRAT meetings.
- Meet with the Program Director (PD) and Associate Program Director (APD) on a monthly basis, or as required, to discuss key issues/concerns on behalf of the resident body.
- Attend Resident Leadership meetings with Chief Residents, PD, and APD every 4–6 weeks.

- Attend monthly PRPC, PEAC, and SAC meetings and relay updates on non-confidential information discussed at PRAT meetings.
- Attend biannual Coordinators of Psychiatric Education (COPE) meetings.
- Assist with the Robin Hunter Postgraduate Teaching Award nomination and selection process.
- Coordinate the PRAT presentations at the Departmental Resident Orientation Day, during Transition to Discipline PGY1 orientation/teaching sessions, on CaRMS interview days, and at the end-of-year Departmental Dinner.
- Review the PRAT Terms of Reference on an annual basis, updating and obtaining approval for any changes as needed.

Senior Call Officers

- Collaborate with program leadership to allocate residents to the various hospital site call pools in two 6-month blocks per year (July to December and January to June).
- Collaborate with Chief Residents, PG Site Directors, and the Program Director (as needed) to address call concerns.
- Provide input on possible modifications to call pools to program leadership as needed throughout the year, liaising regularly with program administration regarding call pool changes (e.g. maternity leaves, medical leaves, on-call exemptions, residents transferring in/out of the program).

Senior Events Officers

- Plan and organize three PRAT Retreats per year (one in fall/October, one in winter/February, and one in spring/June).
- Collaborate with the Senior Wellness Officer in organizing a variety of other events throughout the year to foster community-building and support resident wellbeing; these may include the following:
 - PGY1 Welcome (typically held in mid-July)
 - Summer Picnic (typically held in August)
 - PGY5 Farewell (typically held in June)
 - Leadership development and career-oriented sessions (e.g. CV workshops, talks on billing, community psychiatry and subspecialty information nights)
 - Wellness-oriented activities
- Collaborate with the Senior Finance Officer to manage the budget appropriately and with the Senior Communications Officer to disseminate information about events to the resident body.

Senior Communications Officer

- Manage the Psychobabble listserv and moderate the [U of T Psychiatry Facebook group](#) (including addition of residents entering the program and removal of residents no longer in the program).
- Prepare and circulate meeting agendas to PRAT Council Members in advance of each month's meeting, incorporating edits and distributing the finalized version to all residents via the Psychobabble listserv (alongside an open invitation to attend the meeting).
- Prepare and circulate meeting minutes to PRAT Council Members following each month's meeting, incorporating edits and distributing the finalized version to all residents via the Psychobabble listserv (as well as sending to program administration to post on Quercus once approved at the next month's meeting).
- Coordinate with the Senior Events Officers to advertise and share reminders about upcoming events.
- Facilitate elections for PRAT Council Executive Members each spring (typically in April/May) and Non-Executive Members each summer (typically in July).

Senior Finance Officer

- Prepare PRAT's annual budget and track income and expenses throughout the year, presenting monthly updates on the status of accounts at PRAT meetings.
- Coordinate the collection of PRAT dues from incoming PGY1 residents each year, as well as the collection of funds from the Psychiatry Postgraduate Office and hospital sites.
- Facilitate reimbursement of PRAT Council Members for expenses incurred (e.g. in the planning and organization of events).

Senior Wellness Officer

- Attend quarterly PRPC Resident Wellbeing Subcommittee meetings.
- Collaborate with the Senior Events Officers to plan and organize a variety of activities in support of resident wellbeing throughout the year.
- Coordinate with program leadership to implement or amend one policy or initiative supporting resident wellbeing each year based on resident feedback (e.g. revising the [Accommodations Guidelines](#) and [Waivers of Training Guidelines](#), developing the [Adverse Events Policy](#), piloting process groups).
- Oversee the Resident Wellness Interest Group, garnering support for and delegating tasks associated with the areas above as needed based on group member interests.

Non-Executive Members

Past Presidents

- Co-Presidents automatically transition to this role upon completion of their term with the goal of preserving institutional memory within the organization and providing guidance on key initiatives.

Select Group Representatives

- Collect feedback from their respective cohort prior to monthly PRAT meetings; consider conducting surveys in collaboration with residency program leadership for larger, specific issues arising.
- Represent the interests of their cohort during PRAT meetings in discussions and votes.
- Relay updates to their cohort after each PRAT meeting.
- May opt to take on additional projects as needed throughout the year based on interests and areas of concern identified by their cohort.

Postgraduate Year Representatives

- Collect feedback from their respective cohort prior to monthly PRAT meetings; consider conducting surveys in collaboration with residency program leadership for larger, specific issues arising.
- Represent the interests of their cohort during PRAT meetings in discussions and votes.
- Relay updates to their cohort after each PRAT meeting.
- Collaborate with the Senior Financial Officer to collect outstanding PRAT dues from residents within their cohort.
- May opt to take on additional projects as needed throughout the year based on interests and areas of concern identified by their cohort.

Junior Officers

- These are apprenticeship positions designed to provide junior residents (i.e. PGY1s and PGY2s) with exposure to PRAT while recognizing that they may not be able to participate as fully as senior members given the nature of their rotations.
- Specific functions/tasks of these positions are negotiated with the corresponding Senior Officer (e.g. the Junior Communications Officer may aim to prepare and distribute minutes for two PRAT meetings during the year).

Termination of PRAT Council Membership

A PRAT Council Member's role is terminated when:

- Their term expires (i.e. at the end of each academic year if not re-elected);
- They cease to be a resident within the University of Toronto's General Psychiatry Residency Program;
- They resign (by delivering a written resignation to the Co-Presidents);
- They fail to fulfill the duties of their position; or
- There are serious academic or professionalism concerns warranting formal remediation.

If a PRAT Council Member fails to fulfill their duties as described in this document, their membership will be terminated when the following conditions are met:

- The PRAT Council determines by two-thirds majority vote that they have not met the duties of their role;
- They have been provided with verbal and written feedback from the PRAT Co-Presidents with regards to their performance and specific guidance on areas for improvement;
- They have not remedied the concern by the end of a 6-week check-in period following provision of the feedback; and
- The PRAT Council determines by two-thirds majority vote to remove said Council Member from PRAT.

Finances

The University of Toronto's General Psychiatry Residency Program provides two-thirds of PRAT's budget each year, with the remaining third derived from PRAT dues collected from the resident body (\$100 per resident, paid upon entry into the program).

Prepared by: PRAT co-presidents in consultation with PRAT Executive/Council and Program Director

Approved by PRPC: February 7, 2022

Date of next scheduled review: 2025