



## SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION AND RESIDENCY TRAINING MANUAL: ONCOLOGY

### Certification and Residency Training Manual (Oncology CM) For Residents, Candidates, Sponsoring Institutions, Program Directors, Resident Advisors, Supervising Diplomates, and Secondary-Specialty Supervising Diplomates

Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

The information contained in this Manual becomes effective on July 1, 2024. It represents the current policies, procedures, and requirements for individuals involved in the certification processes of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine (synonyms: ACVIM or the College).

ACVIM policies, procedures and requirements are subject to periodic review and change. All residents, Candidates, sponsoring institutions, program directors, resident advisors, supervising diplomates, and secondary-specialty supervising diplomates must read the current an relevant Certification and Residency Training Manuals.

While a concerted effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this document, if clarification is required, program directors, resident advisors, supervising Diplomates, secondary-specialty supervising Diplomates, residents, and Candidates should contact the ACVIM certification and accreditation staff at the ACVIM office, preferably by email at [certification@acvim.org](mailto:certification@acvim.org), or by mail or phone, as referenced below.

If program directors, resident advisors, supervising Diplomates, secondary-specialty supervising Diplomates residents, and/or Candidates have any questions, or if concerns arise about proposed or actual changes that could impact the certification and/or residency training processes, they should contact the ACVIM certification and accreditation staff at the ACVIM office, preferably by email at [certification@acvim.org](mailto:certification@acvim.org) or by mail or phone, as referenced below.

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The ACVIM certifies specialists in veterinary oncology. Oncologists focus on the diagnosis and management of cancer. This Manual describes the policies, procedures and requirements for Candidates working toward certification in this specialty and the specific requirements for ACVIM oncology residency training programs (RTPs), in this specialty that are in addition to the requirements specified in the Certification Manual (CM) which are required of Candidates in all specialties.

## 1 ONCOLOGY DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

The following may *not* be an exhaustive list of applicable documents and forms. Please navigate the [ACVIM website](#) for additional documentation and forms.

- [Online Candidate Registration Form](#) (via Candidate Dashboard)
- [Standardized resident evaluation form.](#)
- [Oncology weekly schedule.](#)
- [Application to take the General Examination](#) (via Candidate dashboard)
- [General Examination blueprint, reading list & study resources](#) (60 days before examination date)
- [Oncology Credentials Packet](#) (prerequisite for the Specialty Exam)
- [Registration to take the Oncology Specialty Examination](#) (via the Candidate dashboard)
- [Oncology Specialty Examination blueprint, reading list & study resources](#) (60 days before the examination date)

## 2 DEFINITIONS FOR ONCOLOGY RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAMS

Review important definitions related to the specialty of oncology in Appendix A: Important Oncology-related Definitions. These definitions expand upon those provided in the ACVIM Certification Manual as they pertain specifically to the specialty of oncology.

## 3 ONCOLOGY RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAMS

The residency training program (RTP) is the foundation for the education and training of ACVIM oncology Candidates seeking certification as ACVIM oncology Diplomates.

All the general requirements for residents and residency training found in the ACVIM Certification Manual must be met, in addition to the specific Oncology requirements contained in this Manual. The standards contained in this Manual are the minimum requirements for the specialty of Oncology. Any ACVIM-approved Oncology RTP may include additional requirements above the minimum required by this Manual. Those additional requirements then become part of that specific RTP. A resident in such an RTP must fulfill all the additional requirements of that RTP, along with the minimum requirements in this Manual, in order to become an ACVIM Oncology Diplomat, as those additional requirements are necessary for that resident to complete the RTP and obtain a residency certificate.

### 3.A ACCEPTABLE ONCOLOGY RTPS

A registry of current ACVIM-approved oncology RTPs, as evaluated by the oncology RTC, is available from the [ACVIM website](#), or upon request from the [ACVIM office](#).

### **3.B ONCOLOGY RTP REGISTRATION AND EVALUATION**

The ACVIM's policies, procedures and criteria for RTP registration, annual re-approval, probation and termination are standardized across all ACVIM specialties and are described in the Certification Manual (sections 3.C.4-6).

### **3.C ONCOLOGY CANDIDATE REGISTRATION**

ACVIM's policies, procedures and criteria for resident registration as an ACVIM Candidate in an ACVIM-approved RTP are standardized across all ACVIM specialties and are described in the Certification Manual (sections 3.C.3).

### **3.D GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE ONCOLOGY RTP**

- Provide intensive training in oncology, including major responsibility for the care of patients with neoplastic disease.
- Ensure that the resident will acquire proficiency in oncology by exposure to a sufficient number and variety of cases representing all facets of oncology in a hospital equipped for a specialty practice of oncology.
- Ensure that the resident acquires broad working knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology of all body systems and in-depth knowledge of the effects of cancer on the tumor-bearing host.
- Provide experience and training sufficient for the resident to understand the fundamentals and applications of diagnostic methods including hematology, blood chemistry and urinalysis, surgical pathology, cytopathology, radiology and other imaging methods, and immunology.
- Provide experience and training sufficient for the resident to gain in-depth knowledge of cancer treatment methods, including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, cryosurgery, and immunotherapy, and be aware of important investigational methods of therapy.
- Ensure that the resident will acquire a comprehensive understanding of the safe handling of chemotherapy agents in veterinary practice.
- Ensure the resident gains awareness and understanding of the important neoplastic diseases in domestic species and common laboratory animals other than the small companion animals typically emphasized in clinical training.
- Provide a designated time for residents to gain experience in basic science and/or clinical research as part of a residency-based project and clinical trial design and implementation.

### **3.E SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE ONCOLOGY RTP**

It is incumbent upon the SI, PD, RAs, SDs, SSSDs, residents and Candidates, as well as relevant ACVIM staff and committee members, to be aware of these RTP requirements, and to collectively work toward ensuring they are being fulfilled.

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### **3.E.1 DURATION OF THE ONCOLOGY RTP**

An ACVIM-approved oncology RTP requires a minimum of 106 weeks of intensive clinical training, following at least 1 year of training (internship or equivalent) in general veterinary medicine and surgery, as well as the completion of additional scholarly and research activities.

The resident should complete the entire RTP within 3 contiguous years, but under extenuating circumstances, and with oncology RTC approval, the RTP may be completed within a maximum of 5 years from the start date of the RTP. Under extenuating circumstances, the PD may petition to have extra weeks added to the end of an RTP to allow a resident to complete the requirements of the RTP. Also, under exceptional circumstances, a non-traditional RTP may be approved by the RTC, which will consist of noncontiguous blocks of full-time training. Such non-traditional RTPs must meet all the requirements of the RTC. Part-time RTPs in oncology will not be approved.

If a Candidate fails to complete the Board-certification process within 8 years of commencing their continuous 3-year traditional RTP, or within 5 years from the end date of a non-traditional or interrupted residency, that individual is no longer considered an ACVIM Candidate. The individual may not resubmit credentials, is not permitted to participate in additional examination attempts, and is ineligible to become a Diplomate of the ACVIM (Board-certified).

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### **3.E.2 INTENSIVE CLINICAL TRAINING IN ONCOLOGY**

A minimum of 74 weeks of the oncology RTP must involve intensive clinical training in oncology, under the supervision of an ACVIM oncology Diplomate. This training should be accrued in a minimum of 2-week blocks.

Of these 74 weeks, a minimum of 50 weeks must be under the direct supervision of an ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member, with the remaining minimum of 24 weeks under the direct or indirect supervision of an ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member. Additional weeks of intensive training in clinical oncology may be accrued, totaling greater than 74 weeks minimum.

Academic degree programs, such as master's (MS) or doctorate (PhD) programs, cannot be substituted for direct or indirect intensive clinical training in oncology.

During these 74 weeks, the oncology resident will actively participate in the management of oncology patients, including patient receiving (history taking and physical examination), diagnostic testing, clinical decision-making, treatment(s), follow-up, client communication, and professional communication with relevant colleagues and the referring veterinarian. Patient management should be directly or indirectly (as appropriate) supervised and reviewed by the SD.

While on clinic duty, the resident will participate in daily patient-oriented rounds with the SD. These rounds may include remote supervision between the SD and the resident.

### **3.E.3 INTENSIVE CLINICAL TRAINING IN SECONDARY ACVIM SPECIALTIES**

Because oncology is a multimodal discipline, the oncology resident must also have intensive clinical training under the direct supervision of SSSDs in additional veterinary specialty disciplines. A minimum of 32 weeks of the oncology RTP must involve intensive clinical training in required secondary specialties, including the required time in small animal internal medicine, radiation oncology, radiology, clinical pathology and anatomic pathology as outlined below. These training experiences should be accrued in a minimum of 2-week blocks, unless otherwise specified.

During this time, the resident must be under the direct supervision of the SSSD(s) and must participate in the affiliated specialty to the level of which they are capable.

This training may occur at a secondary training site. However, in the RTP proposal to the oncology RTC, the SI must provide the names of the SDs involved, their areas of specialization, and details about the anticipated professional interaction. For each secondary training site rotation included in the 32 weeks of clinical training in other specialties, the resident should obtain written approval from their PD, who will forward documentation of this approval to the RTC.

The RTC will allow for remote training with ABVS or EBVS specialists as SSSDs only if that specialty is *not* available at the SI. The RTC will need a letter from the PD supporting the virtual format, including documentation of intended daily interactions and how the time will be spent. The expectation is that the resident attends daily rounds and case discussions, performs literature reviews and attends virtual JC, and discusses cases under (remote) supervision of RA just like that resident would do in person. The oncology CC will also need a letter from the resident post-rotation documenting how the time was spent, with the letter signed off by the RA to ensure satisfactory completion).

If a resident is Board-certified in one of the required affiliated specialties, they are not required to complete additional directly supervised time in that specialty. For example, an ACVIM-SAIM Diplomate is not required to complete the additional 4 weeks of rotation in small animal internal medicine as part of an oncology residency. Alternatively, the resident may choose to accrue an additional 4 weeks of directly supervised training in one, or more, of the other affiliated rotations.

#### ***SMALL ANIMAL INTERNAL MEDICINE***

A minimum of 4 weeks of intensive clinical training in small animal internal medicine (SAIM) is required during an oncology RTP. This must be provided under the direct supervision of an ACVIM SAIM Diplomate. This requirement may be met through a single 4-week rotation, or two rotations of 2 weeks apiece.

Fourteen additional training weeks, in addition to those required by section 3.E.3 and section 3.E.4, are required to meet the 32-week requirement. This may include clinical training accrued under the direct supervision of an ACVIM Diplomate, including Cardiology, LAIM, Neurology, Nutrition and Small Animal Internal Medicine, as well as perhaps additional oncology weeks beyond those specified in section 3.E.2. This may also include clinical training accrued under the direct supervision of specialist and member, of another ABVS- or EBVS-approved veterinary specialty, including, but not limited to, the American College of Veterinary Radiology, the American College of Veterinary Radiology (Radiation Oncology), the European

College of Veterinary Neurology, the American College of Veterinary Pathology, the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, and the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care.

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### ***3.E.4 INTENSIVE CLINICAL TRAINING IN NON-ACVIM SPECIALTIES***

As noted above, because oncology is a multimodal discipline, the oncology resident must also have intensive clinical training under the direct supervision of SSSDs in additional veterinary specialty disciplines. A minimum of 32 weeks of the oncology RTP must involve intensive clinical training in required secondary specialties, including the required training in radiation oncology, radiology, clinical pathology and anatomic pathology as outlined below. These experiences should be accrued in a minimum of 2-week blocks, unless otherwise specified.

#### ***RADIATION ONCOLOGY***

A minimum of 8 weeks intensive clinical training in radiation oncology is required during an oncology RTP, in order to develop an understanding of clinical management of patients receiving radiation therapy, radiation planning, dosimetry, and physics related to clinical radiation therapy. This must be provided under the direct supervision of an ACVR veterinary radiation oncologist. This requirement may be met through a single 8-week rotation, two rotations of 4 weeks apiece, or 4 rotations of 2 weeks apiece.

#### ***CLINICAL PATHOLOGY***

A minimum of 2 weeks (or 80 hours) of clinical training in clinical pathology is required during an oncology RTP. This must be provided under the direct supervision (Certification Manual, section 3.C.8.a) or remote supervision (Certification Manual, section 3.C.8.c) of an ABVS or EBVS Board-certified specialist in clinical pathology. This requirement may be met through training hours accrued during weekly or biweekly interactive rounds. To satisfy this requirement, the resident may accumulate training hours (Certification Manual, section 3.C.10) with 40 training hours being equal to 1 training week.

#### ***SURGICAL PATHOLOGY***

A minimum of 2 weeks (or 80 hours) of clinical training in surgical pathology is required during an oncology RTP. This must be provided under the direct supervision (Certification Manual, section 3.C.8.a) or remote supervision (Certification Manual, section 3.C.8.c) of an ABVS or EBVS Board-certified specialist in anatomic pathology. This requirement may be met through training hours accrued during weekly or biweekly interactive rounds. To satisfy this requirement, the resident may accumulate training hours (Certification Manual, section 3.C.10) with 40 training hours being equal to 1 training week.

#### ***DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING***

A minimum of 2 weeks (80 hours) of intensive clinical training in diagnostic imaging is required during an oncology RTP. This must be provided under the direct supervision of an ABVS or EBVS



Board-certified radiologist. This training is in addition to any individual case management interactions. This requirement cannot be satisfied by the accumulation of training hours. This requirement must be met through a single 2-week rotation.

As noted above, 14 additional training weeks, in addition to those required by section 3.E.3 and 3.E.4, are required to meet the 32-week requirement specified here. This may include clinical training accrued under the direct supervision of an ACVIM Diplomate, including Cardiology, LAIM, Neurology, Nutrition and Small Animal Internal Medicine, as well as additional oncology weeks beyond those specified in section 3.E.2. This may also include clinical training accrued under the direct supervision of specialist and member of another ABVS- or EBVS-approved veterinary specialty, including, but not limited to, the American College of Veterinary Radiology, the American College of Veterinary Radiology (Radiation Oncology), the European College of Veterinary Neurology, the American College of Veterinary Pathology, the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, and the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care.

### **3.E.5 RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY**

The oncology resident is expected to actively participate in a laboratory or clinical investigative research project during the RTP. A minimum of 8 weeks (320 hours) of an oncology RTP should be dedicated to the research aspect of training.

Research time should be scheduled as either weekly time (hours per week) or in blocks of time sufficient to complete the research, perform data analysis, and ideally prepare a manuscript for publication by the third year of their residency (see section 5.C). This experience must be documented by the resident, with dates, and signed by the RA and/or SD.

Proof of completion of this research requirement can include any of the following:

- Copy of a first-author research paper published in a peer-reviewed journal, documenting research accomplished predominantly during the RTP, or letter of acceptance (unconditional) from a peer-reviewed journal documenting the same.
- Evidence of presentation of an abstract (oral or poster) at a scientific forum, describing original work undertaken predominantly during the RTP.
- Documented (letter from RA) completion of a prospective or retrospective research project, undertaken predominantly during the RTP, that is unpublished (e.g., thesis).
- Documented (letter from RA) submission of a prospective research grant/project, generated predominantly during the RTP, pertinent to the Candidate's specialty.
- Documented (letter from RA and/or transcript) completion of 3 credits, or the equivalent, of graduate course work in research methods, biostatistics, and/or research ethics.
- Documented (letter from RA and/or certificate) completion of at least 25 hours of research-focused seminars or classes of an appropriately advanced level undertaken during the RTP. These may be offered by the ACVIM, through online programs, or by other institutions. These seminars or classes will cover subjects such as the following:
  - Critical evaluation of the veterinary medical/biomedical literature.
  - Grant writing.

- Study design and participation in clinical trials.
- Biostatistics.
- Research ethics.

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### **3.E.6 PUBLICATION REQUIREMENT**

As of July 2023, there is no publication requirement for candidacy or RTPs in the specialty of oncology, although evidence of completion of the aforementioned research requirement (section 3.E.5) must be provided. Please note, this change does not apply to those Candidates whose ACVIM candidacy is guided by previous editions of the General Information Guide (GIG), i.e., those Candidates commencing their ACVIM oncology RTPs prior to July 2018.

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### **3.E.7 JOURNAL CLUB**

An organized and routinely scheduled journal of a minimum of 80 hours over the duration of the RTP must be an integral part of all oncology RTPs. Teleconferencing and programs coordinating a joint or shared journal club are acceptable, providing they meet the ACVIM's definition of remote supervision (Certification Manual, section 3.C.8.c). The journal club must be attended and directly or remotely supervised by an oncology SD. The RTP application requires a schedule of the proposed journal club for oncology RTC approval, and the RTC may ask for documentation that the journal club actually met, such as dates and articles discussed, if there are questions raised during an RTP's annual evaluation.

Oncology residents are encouraged to maintain a log of journal clubs attended, including the date, topics / papers discussed, and those in attendance.

The purpose of the journal club is to provide structured learning time and to facilitate the resident's ability to critique and appraise peer-reviewed, evidence-based publications that pertain to aspects of veterinary oncology. This may take the form of reviewing a single publication or a group of publications in one aspect of veterinary oncology. Supervision by the SD is important to guide the critical evaluation of each journal article. Here is one suggested approach:

- Provide a description of the study (identifying the research question and or problem).
- Evaluate the literature review and introduction for completeness.
- Describe and evaluate the appropriateness of the study design used to evaluate the research question, the effectiveness of the sample size, and the statistical methods used.
- Review the results of the research and comment about the appropriateness of the author's interpretations of those results.
- Discuss how the publication may change the approach to the disease in clinical practice or process and how the results may lead to new questions or future research.

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### **3.E.8 SEMINARS, LECTURE SERIES, AND FORMAL CONFERENCES**

An oncology resident must attend or participate in formal teaching seminars, lectures, or conferences in oncology and related disciplines throughout the RTP, occurring on average 4 times per month. Unless these

are formal didactic lectures or classes provided as a component of a master's or similar degree program, an oncology SD should be supervising these didactic learning opportunities.

Examples of such seminars, lectures, and conferences include, but are not limited to: 1) resident seminars, 2) clinical oncology topic presentations and classes, 3) tumor biology presentations and classes, 4) grand rounds, 5) clinical pathology rounds, seminars, and conferences, 6) anatomic pathology rounds, seminars, and conferences, and/or 7) journal clubs, in addition to those 80 hours outlined in (section 3.E.7).

Conferences or seminars given within a veterinary practice or hospital or at a medical school or medical teaching hospital are acceptable. These seminars or lectures may include remotely presented seminars, lectures, conferences, or other didactic classroom experiences. The RTP application includes the format and schedule of these conferences and presentations for Oncology RTC approval.

Additionally, the oncology resident must give a formal presentation, during such a seminar series, lecture series, or conference, at least once per year during the oncology RTP. Documentation of these formal presentations must be included in the Candidate's oncology credentials packet. A presentation at a regional, state, or national meeting is acceptable. In such cases, a copy of the meeting program must be included in the Candidate's oncology credentials packet.

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### **3.E.9 CONTINUING EDUCATION CONFERENCES**

Residents must attend at least 1 state, regional, national, or international veterinary or human medical continuing education conference during the oncology RTP. Documentation of attendance or participation at the conference must be included in the Candidate's oncology credentials packet.

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### **3.E.10 FORMAL EXAMINATION REVIEW SESSIONS**

An oncology RTP must provide at least 40 hours per year of intensive formal review sessions for residents and Candidates on topics covered in the general and specialty examinations. Attending daily clinical rounds does *not* meet this requirement. The requirement could be met in part by attending or participating in an ACVIM course, an ACVIM Forum, or formal resident review sessions at a Veterinary Cancer Society Annual Meeting. These may also include online reviews and remotely presented conferences, such as the ACVIM ACE Science of Oncology course. An oncology RTP must provide annual documentation of these formal reviews to the oncology RTC.

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### **3.E.11 STUDY TIME**

In addition to the research and scholarly time, an additional period of protected and uninterrupted study time, during which the resident is relieved of all clinic responsibilities, including the responsibility for client communications, must be allocated to the resident and Candidate to prepare for the ACVIM General Examination. Study time should be scheduled to immediately precede the General Examination date as much as is practical. During study time, residents should still attend journal club, seminars, and didactic learning opportunities as they arise.

A further additional period of protected and uninterrupted study time, during which the resident is relieved of all clinic responsibilities, including the responsibility for client communications, must be allocated to the

resident and Candidate to prepare for the oncology Specialty Examination. Study time should be scheduled to immediately precede the Specialty Examination date as much as is practical. During study time, residents should still attend journal club, seminars, and didactic learning opportunities as they arise.

Study time allocated for General Examination and oncology Specialty Examination preparation should not be taken during the 74 weeks allocated to intensive clinical training in oncology or the 32 weeks intensive clinical training in other veterinary specialties.

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### ***3.E.12 UNSUPERVISED, VACATION AND PERSONAL TIME***

Unsupervised time may contribute up to 6 weeks to the oncology RTP. Attendance at continuing education meetings related to oncology, uncompromised time to study for examinations, and independent study may be categorized as unsupervised time that may be considered part of the RTP, up to a total of 6 weeks.

An oncology resident should take vacation during the oncology RTP that is totally separate from other activities and requirements. The oncology RTC recommends total vacation time ideally be a minimum of 2 weeks per year of an oncology RTP. Vacation time should not be scheduled during the 74 weeks allocated to intensive clinical training in oncology or the 32 weeks intensive clinical training in other veterinary specialties.

An RTP is also expected to provide reasonable accommodation for a resident's medical needs (e.g., doctor's appointments, etc.).

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### ***3.E.13 RESIDENCY TRAINING INTERRUPTION***

Training interruptions may be unavoidable in circumstances where a resident must switch from one RTP to another to fulfill all RTP and credentialing requirements. In such cases, the following steps must be taken:

- A new training program must be identified.
- The Oncology RTC must approve the new RTP before clinical training begins.
- The resident must re-register with the ACVIM in the new RTP.
- The resident must complete training in continuous blocks of time once training resumes.

In some circumstances, a resident may need to take a leave of absence that would prevent them from completing the RTP in 3 years.

However, when actively engaged in the residency, the resident must attend full time. The residency must be completed in contiguous blocks of at least 20 weeks of training in any residency year (a residency year is the 12-month period beginning on the date when a residency is resumed).

When a leave of absence is necessary and approved by the RTC, the resident has a maximum of 5 years from the end of the RTP to achieve Board-certification in oncology.

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### ***3.E.14 VARIANCES***

Variations to oncology RTPs may be permitted by the oncology RTC, but a request for a variance will require a detailed explanation from the PD to the oncology RTC, and written permission from the oncology RTC must be granted. Documentation relating to approved variances must be included with the Candidate's credentials packet.

This Manual now allows for 1-week blocks only under specific circumstance necessitated by public health restrictions. It also allows for use of guided case studies, case rounds and topic discussions, directly or remotely supervised by the RA, SDs and/or SSNDs, if cases are not actively being seen at the SI due to public health restrictions. Request for variance approval, including candidate name, impacted rotation(s) / RTP requirement, date(s) / duration of impacted training, supervisor(s) and a description of actual training activities undertaken, must be submitted to the oncology RTC by the PD as soon as is reasonable, ideally within 14 days.

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### **3.E.15 NON-TRADITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS**

It is possible to achieve certification in oncology in a non-traditional RTP, but all of the RTP requirements of a traditional residency must be satisfied. Thorough justification must be made for a non-traditional residency to be approved by the oncology RTC, and the training period cannot exceed 5 consecutive years. If the 108-week clinical training program is not continuous, it must be arranged in blocks of time no less than 2 weeks of full-time training per block with a minimum of 20 weeks per year. Non-traditional residency RTPs must be submitted by the PD to the oncology RTC for approval at least 90 days in advance of the residency start date.

The Candidate resident and the PDs, RAs, and SDs are responsible for documenting that the training has occurred as specified. If a residency occurs at multiple sites, all training requirements for both direct, indirect and/or remote supervision, as well as requirements for rounds and conferences, equipment, and staffing, must be met at each site. Such programs will be required to provide lists of SDs, SSSDs and schedules of conferences in which the resident participates for each site.

Candidates have up to 5 years after completion of a non-traditional residency to complete the certification process. Failure to complete the certification process within 5 years will result in that individual no longer being regarded as an ACVIM Candidate, rendering them no longer eligible to become Board-certified.

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### **3.E.16 ONLINE EXIT INTERVIEW SURVEY**

Within 90 days of completing an RTP, residents are strongly encouraged to fill out an online survey regarding the quality of their training experience.

Responses are shared with the appropriate PD to provide important feedback regarding their RTP. Data, held strictly confidential, will be published as the 5-year rolling average score per surveyed category calculated for each RTP, and will be released every 3 years to ensure the anonymity of Candidates who completed smaller programs.

## 4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ONCOLOGY CANDIDACY AND RTPS

### 4.A RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SPONSORING INSTITUTION

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#### 4.A.1 ONCOLOGY SUPERVISION

In addition to those outlined in the Certification Manual, specific to oncology, the SI should fulfill the following criteria:

There must be a minimum of 2 full-time ACVIM oncology Diplomates with SD responsibility at the SI for an oncology RTP to be ACVIM-approved by the oncology RTC, and for it to maintain annual reapproval by the oncology RTC.

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#### 4.A.2 SUPPORTING DISCIPLINES REQUIRED

There must be an ACVIM-SAIM Diplomate with  $\geq 50\%$  full-time equivalent employment at the SI for an oncology RTP to be approved and to maintain annual reapproval.

There must be an American College of Veterinary Surgeons Surgery Diplomate with  $\geq 50\%$  full-time equivalent employment at the SI for an oncology RTP to be approved or to maintain annual reapproval.

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#### 4.A.3 FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

The SI must have adequate diagnostic facilities, including standard radiographic, ultrasonographic, electrocardiographic and endoscopic equipment. Access to nuclear medicine, CT, and MRI is required, although it is not required to be located at the SI.

The RTP must provide the resident access to a facility that provides radiation therapy and to a veterinary radiation oncologist who is Board-certified in radiation oncology to be able to fulfil the required minimum of 8 weeks of directly supervised training in radiation oncology. Ideally, this facility would be the SI, but may be a secondary training site.

The RTP must provide the resident routine / regular / daily access to 24-hour emergency and critical care facilities at the SI.

The RTP must provide the resident routine / regular / daily access to a fully equipped clinical laboratory, Board-certified veterinary clinical pathologist and Board-certified veterinary anatomic pathologist, available for evaluation of and consultation about clinical material submitted, at a minimum, for timely phone consultation.

The RTP must provide the resident with access to a veterinary medical library with online search capabilities and, at a minimum, access to the most recent editions of all textbooks and full-text access to all journals listed on the current examination reading list.

## 4.B RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR (PD)

As defined in the [Appendix](#), the oncology program director (PD) is the individual at the SI who assumes overall responsibility for the conduct and integrity of that institution's RTP(s). The oncology PD must be an ACVIM Diplomate and member in good standing, but *not* necessarily an ACVIM oncology Diplomate.

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### 4.B.1 ONCOLOGY RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND EVALUATION

The PD must submit a completed [oncology RTP registration form](#) to the ACVIM office for review by the oncology RTC by the date specified on the [ACVIM website](#) of each year. The oncology RTC will approve the RTP or provide details of the deficiencies that must be corrected before the RTP can be approved.

As part of the RTP registration, the PD must provide a written plan for allowing residents to continue their training should the RTP be placed on probation, or terminated, for any reason.

Each year, the PD must update and re-register the RTP to ensure each RTP remains approved, and in good standing, with the capability to train residents and Candidates in oncology.

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### 4.B.2 RESIDENT EVALUATION

The RA and PD, at the SI, will review the progress of all residents for the duration of the RTP and provide written evaluation to the resident. Resident evaluation occurs no less frequently than every 6 months (see Certification Manual section 3.C.16.a). The RA must have the resident sign the RA's copy of the written evaluation to confirm that the resident received a copy of the evaluation and had the opportunity to discuss it with the RA (or SI RTC). The oncology CC may ask for copies of these evaluations if questions are raised during a program's annual review.

## 4.C RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESIDENT ADVISOR (RA)

As defined in the [Appendix](#), an oncology resident advisor (RA) must be an ACVIM Diplomate in the specialty of oncology and ACVIM member in good standing. The oncology RA is the primary individual who monitors the oncology resident's progress during clinical training. An oncology RA may *not* advise more than 2 oncology residents concurrently. The RA may also be an SD and/or the PD.

In conjunction with the PD, the RA must evaluate the resident a minimum of once every 6 months and discuss the results of those evaluations with the Candidate or resident. The RA is encouraged to use the oncology milestones (section 5) as an aid in assessing the strengths and deficiencies of the resident and monitoring the RTP's success. The RA maintains a copy of each review until a Candidate receives full Board-certification and should be prepared to submit those copies to the oncology CC, if requested. The resident will sign the RA's copy of the written review as documentation that they have been informed of the results of the review.

In addition to the above evaluations, the RA will complete the ACVIM standardized annual [resident evaluation form](#) available on the ACVIM website for each resident. The RA will provide copies of resident evaluations to the PD who provides them to the oncology CC, if requested. The purpose of the evaluation by the oncology CC is to allow the oncology CC, the PD, and the resident to identify and correct programmatic problems before they would place an RTP in jeopardy of probation or termination.

RAs inform the resident to submit annual of their progress to the oncology CC by the date specified on the [ACVIM website](#), following the end of each year of residency, and upon completion of the program. The RA signs and verifies all documentation related to a resident's completion of RTP requirements.

#### 4.D RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISING DIPLOMATE (SD)

As defined in the [Appendix](#), the oncology supervising diplomate (SD) must be a Board-certified veterinary specialist in the specialty of oncology, who is contributing to the clinical training and didactic education of the oncology resident in the specialty of oncology. Here Board-certified refers only to ACVIM oncology Diplomates and members. The ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member must be in good standing with the ACVIM. There must be a minimum of 2 ACVIM oncology Diplomates and members with SD responsibility at the SI for an oncology RTP to be approved and to maintain annual re-approval. A residency-trained individual who has not completed Board-certification is not acceptable as an oncology SD.

The PD, RA and/or SD will ensure that the resident receives directly supervised, or where relevant remotely supervised, training from SSSDs in radiation oncology, diagnostic imaging, clinical pathology, surgical pathology, and SAIM. These experiences should occur as defined in specific clinical rotations.

In addition, the oncology journal club must be attended and supervised by an oncology SD. This may include remote supervision and participation by both SD and residents.

#### 4.E RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECONDARY-SPECIALTY SUPERVISING DIPLOMATE (SSSD)

As defined in the [Appendix](#), a secondary-specialty supervising diplomate (SSSD) for an oncology RTP must be a Board-certified veterinary specialist in any specialty other than oncology, who is contributing to the clinical training and didactic education of the oncology resident in any specialty other than oncology. Here Board-certified refers to any veterinary specialists certified by an ABVS or EBVS registered veterinary specialty or registered veterinary specialty organization. The Board-certified veterinary specialist must be a Diplomate, and where relevant member, in good standing with the relevant ABVS or EBVS registered veterinary specialty or registered veterinary specialty organization.

The SSSD in the discipline oversees the activities of the resident during each rotation (for example, the American College of Veterinary Radiology radiologist during the imaging rotation is considered the SSSD). An SSSD in supplemental rotations must have full-time status during the period of supervision, even if they have a less than 100% FTE the remainder of their time at the SI or secondary training site.

#### 4.F RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESIDENT

Residents can access registration forms, lists of approved traditional RTPs, examination information, and specialty credentials packets on the [ACVIM website](#), or obtain them from the [ACVIM office](#). Residents may contact the Oncology RTC to ensure their programs comply with the ACVIM and the specialty of oncology requirements.

Oncology residents and their RA document that training occurred as specified. Residents must initiate and maintain an annual report of their progress and submit that report online for the oncology CC by the date specified on the ACVIM website following the end of each year of residency. The resident and the RA must sign each report.



Residents retain the original reports and update the progress reports in their entirety every 12 months. In addition, upon completion of the program residents must submit the annual program reports to the oncology CC by the date specified on the ACVIM website of the year before the date the resident or Candidate plans to take the specialty of oncology examination. The report follows the standardized spreadsheet format found on the ACVIM website. The resident submits a copy to the ACVIM website for the oncology CC. Residents ensure that their RA keeps these standardized evaluations on file in case the oncology CC requests the information.

#### 4.G RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CANDIDATE

It is the responsibility of the Candidate to fulfill the requirements of the specialty's certification process as outlined in this Manual, while adhering to the highest professional standards and the ACVIM's Code of Conduct, in order to become a Diplomate of the ACVIM in the specialty of oncology. The certification process includes, but is not limited to, fulfilling all the requirements of the specialty's RTP as outlined in this Manual.

Candidates can access this Manual, other relevant information, all relevant forms, and deadlines on the [ACVIM website](#), or request said information from the [ACVIM office](#).

It is the Candidate's responsibility to be aware of all certification and RTP requirements, other relevant information and deadlines. It is the Candidate's responsibility to maintain a record of all receipts and essential documentation.

## 5 CLINICAL MILESTONES FOR ONCOLOGY RESIDENTS

### 5.A CLINICAL MILESTONES FOR FIRST-YEAR ONCOLOGY RESIDENTS

- Develop a basic understanding of cancer biology, chemotherapeutics, and cancer patient care.
- Manage clinical aspects of internal medicine and oncology patients effectively.
- Understand safe handling practices for chemotherapy in veterinary oncology practice to a level sufficient to inform other clinicians, support staff and clients.
- Co-manage radiation oncology and surgical oncology patients with their respective specialty clinicians effectively.
- Communicate effectively and clearly to build rapport and trust with clients and referring veterinarians.
- Become highly skilled in working collaboratively with clients regarding treatment options including palliative therapies and euthanasia.
- Perform a literature search and review.
- Develop an idea for investigation, design a research project, obtain funding if necessary, and begin investigational procedures.

### 5.B CLINICAL MILESTONES FOR SECOND-YEAR ONCOLOGY RESIDENTS

- Attain an advanced understanding of cancer biology, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, immunology, and cancer patient care.

- Become highly skilled in referring veterinarian and client communication skills, including client grief counseling.
- Understand study design and read, understand and critique published clinical studies.
- Develop a basic understanding of grant design and writing.
- Develop basic skills in public speaking, including giving a scientific presentation to professional peers.
- Continue progression with a research project.
- Take and pass the ACVIM General Examination.

### 5.C CLINICAL MILESTONES FOR THIRD-YEAR ONCOLOGY RESIDENTS

- Develop a more advanced understanding of cancer biology, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and immunology and become proficient at their application to patient care.
- Develop advanced public presentation skills.
- Communicate effectively in a work setting with challenging individuals in a manner that supports the best possible outcome for the oncology patient.
- Develop a thorough understanding of study design and be able to read, understand, and critique published studies.
- Complete a research project with data collection and analysis.
- Take and pass the Oncology Specialty Examination.

## 6 RESIDENT AND CANDIDATE EVALUATION

Oncology Candidates are required to submit an annual report of their progress for evaluation by the oncology CC, consisting of a record of completed weeks with each requirement signed by the appropriate SD(s) or SSSD(s). A standardized [oncology resident schedule](#) will be provided for this purpose by the oncology CC. The RA must keep copies of the residents' standardized schedule forms on file (forms available on the [ACVIM website](#)) should the information be requested by the oncology RTC or oncology CC.

## 7 GENERAL EXAMINATION

All ACVIM oncology Candidates must pass the General Examination in order to be eligible to attain Diplomate status (Board-certification). Information about the General Examination is outlined in the ACVIM Certification Manual, section 3.E.5.

## 8 ONCOLOGY CREDENTIALS

Credentials approval (or conditional approval of credentials) is a prerequisite for taking the ACVIM oncology Specialty Examination, and Board-certification.

## 8.A ONCOLOGY CREDENTIALS ELIGIBILITY, REQUIREMENTS AND SUBMISSION

**\*\*\*Always check the ACVIM website for the most up-to-date information before submission, as this process is subject to change.\*\*\***

Candidates may submit Credentials in the final 12 months of their RTP. Candidates must submit Credentials, including the reference letters, to the [ACVIM office](#) by the date specified on the [ACVIM website](#) in the year before they will attempt the ACVIM Oncology Specialty Examination.

A Candidate who intends to take the Oncology Specialty Examination must submit Credentials for the Oncology Specialty Examination so that the ACVIM office receives the credentials packet no later than the date specified on the [ACVIM website](#) in the year preceding that examination date. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE. CREDENTIALS PACKETS MUST BE SUBMITTED ON THE DUE DATE TO ALLOW ADEQUATE TIME FOR REVIEW BY THE ONCOLOGY CC. CREDENTIALS PACKETS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED IF THE CREDENTIALS FEE HAS NOT BEEN PAID BEFORE THE SUBMISSION OF THE CREDENTIALS PACKET.**

Payment of the credentials fee is also required at the time of submission. Please maintain the record and receipt associated with payment.

Applicant instructions for meeting the credentials requirements are available on the [ACVIM website](#), or by request in writing from the [ACVIM office](#). If a Candidate has any questions regarding the credentials process, the Candidate should request clarification in writing from the [oncology CC chair](#) or the [ACVIM office](#) well before the submission deadline.

Documentation of receipt of the Candidate's oncology credentials application, receipt of the paid fee, and documentation of oncology CC approval, with the Candidate's unique identification number, must be maintained by the Candidate as part of their essential documentation.

Separate receipts for each ACVIM fee paid and registration acknowledgement will be provided by the ACVIM and must be maintained by the Candidate as part of their essential documentation.

## 8.B CREDENTIALS ITEMS TO BE SUBMITTED

**\*\*\*Always check the ACVIM website for the most up-to-date information before submission, as this list is subject to change.\*\*\***

The following must be included in the [oncology credentials packet](#) to be submitted online:

- The completed [credentials application form](#).
- An updated curriculum vitae (CV).
- Evidence of the required research and scholarly activity.
- Letters documenting completion of rotations at secondary training sites other than the SI (if applicable), signed by the SD(s) and/or SSSD(s) who was responsible for oversight of the training time.

- An [oncology referee form](#) or a letter of reference from 3 associates with whom the resident has worked during their RTP forwarded as directed in the credentials packet; at least 1 reference letter must be from an ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member.
- A completed [weekly resident schedule form](#) documenting the Candidate's RTP contact time, including journal club and rounds schedules, and any previously submitted annual reports.

**It is the Candidate's responsibility to submit all credential items before the deadline, as late applications will not be reviewed.**

## 8.C EVALUATION OF CREDENTIALS FOR ONCOLOGY SPECIALTY EXAMINATION

The ACVIM office and the oncology CC review all applications and credentials packets. The Candidate credentials will be evaluated and rated as approved, conditionally approved or unacceptable by the oncology CC. The oncology CC reviewers will record the evaluation on a standard form that will be retained by the ACVIM office. Reviewer comments will be compiled by the oncology CC chair and sent by the ACVIM office to each unsuccessful Candidate. The ACVIM office will notify the Candidate of the acceptance or denial of their credentials within 60 days of the deadline for submission of credentials.

# 9 THE ONCOLOGY SPECIALTY EXAMINATION

## 9.A ONCOLOGY SPECIALTY EXAMINATION REGISTRATION AND FEE

Once credentials are approved or conditionally approved, Candidates may register to take the Oncology Specialty Examination. An additional fee is required. Candidates must register and pay online by the date specified on the [ACVIM website](#) for the year they plan to take the Oncology Specialty Examination.

Documentation of receipt of the Candidate's Oncology Specialty Examination registration, receipt of the paid fee, and documentation of credentials approval, with the Candidate's unique identification number, must be maintained by the Candidate as part of their essential documentation.

Separate receipts for each ACVIM fee paid and registration acknowledgement will be provided by the ACVIM and must be maintained by the Candidate as part of their essential documentation.

## 9.B THE ONCOLOGY SPECIALTY EXAMINATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

**\*\*\*Always check the Candidates' exam webpage(s) on the ACVIM website for the most up-to-date information pertaining to ACVIM Examinations. Examination format/design, item types and standard setting/cut score determination method(s) are subject to change, as necessary to continue to align the examination with best practice and accreditation industry standards. Any changes will be reflected in the current examination blueprint and/or information provided to Candidates. \*\*\***

A blueprint for the Oncology Specialty Examination will be posted on the [ACVIM website](#) a minimum of 60 days prior to the Oncology Specialty Examination date.

## 10 CORRESPONDENCE, INQUIRIES, ISSUES AND COMPLAINTS

Registration forms, lists of approved oncology residencies, and specialty credentials forms are [available online](#), or by request from the [ACVIM office](#). Residents may contact the chair of the RTC to ensure that their RTP complies with the ACVIM and the specialty of oncology RTP requirements.

Residents with queries and/or complaints regarding program noncompliance, especially concerns that are not sufficiently resolved by the RTP's PD, should direct concerns in writing to the oncology ombudsperson and/or to the current RTC chair. Residents can obtain the names and contact information of these individuals from the [ACVIM office](#) or [ACVIM website](#). A response to the query and/or complaint can be expected within 4 weeks. Assistance from the oncology ombudsperson can also be sought for situations that are difficult to resolve. The oncology ombudsperson can be contacted directly by email at [OncologyOmbuds@ACVIM.org](mailto:OncologyOmbuds@ACVIM.org). The ACVIM can only address matters related to adherence to this Manual's requirements. Personnel matters are unique to each SI and its Human Resources policies and procedures and are not subject to ACVIM review.

## 11 MAINTENANCE OF CREDENTIALS (MOC)

As discussed in the Certification Manual every Diplomate who completed credentials and became a Diplomate on, or after, January 1, 2016, is awarded a Diplomate certificate that is valid for 10 years. These ACVIM oncology Diplomates are subject to MOC. The MOC requirements are posted on the [ACVIM website](#). The [oncology maintenance of credentials \(MOC\) committee](#) maintains a [list of acceptable continuing education experiences](#) and their associated points that count toward renewal of oncology credentials by the ACVIM. This information is available on the [ACVIM website](#), or by request from the [ACVIM office](#). It is the responsibility of each ACVIM Oncology Diplomate to maintain documentation of these activities.

## APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

### NON-TRADITIONAL RESIDENCY TRAINING IN ONCOLOGY

A non-traditional oncology RTP is an RTP that is approved by the oncology RTC and that is intentionally non-continuous. A non-traditional oncology RTP may be a maximum of 5 years in duration. The oncology specialty stipulates that in a non-traditional RTP, all the specialty's requirements for residency training must be met, and that all training must take place within clearly defined, continuous blocks of training time.

### ONCOLOGY CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (ONCOLOGY CC)

The oncology CC evaluates an oncology Candidate's progress during the ACVIM certification candidacy period, including completion of RTP requirements, General and Specialty Examination results, and fulfillment of any additional credentials requirements. The oncology CC is responsible for certifying that a Candidate meets all the requirements for becoming a Diplomate of the ACVIM in oncology.

### ONCOLOGY OMBUDSPERSON

The [oncology ombudsperson](#) is an individual appointed by the specialty president. This individual is available to Candidates and serves as a liaison during conflicts between a Candidate and either an RTP or the ACVIM. The oncology ombudsperson provides a neutral and confidential environment in which to voice concerns. The oncology ombudsperson advises and offers options toward resolution of a problem as deemed appropriate. The scope of the ombudsperson's work excludes matters relating to examinations and/or denial of credentials, which are addressed by the Appeals Committee (see the Certification Manual). The ombudsperson does not engage in any arbitration process, does not offer legal advice, and does not impose sanctions on individual Candidates or RTPs. If the oncology ombudsperson is personally involved in a dispute with a Candidate, the oncology ombudsperson must recuse themselves. In such a case, the ACVIM certification liaison will serve as the oncology ombudsperson during that dispute. All communications are held in strict confidence.

### ONCOLOGY PROGRAM DIRECTOR (PD)

The oncology program director (PD) is the individual at the SI who assumes overall responsibility for the conduct and integrity of that institution's oncology RTP(s). The oncology PD must be an ACVIM Diplomate and member in good standing (section 3.V), but not necessarily an ACVIM oncology Diplomate.

### ONCOLOGY RESIDENCY TRAINING COMMITTEE (RTC)

The oncology residency training committee (RTC), in collaboration with the specialty president, specialty members and BOR, is responsible for deciding the criteria required for oncology RTPs as then described in this Manual, and for ensuring compliance with this Manual's requirements for all oncology RTPs. The oncology RTC consists of at least 5 members appointed by the specialty president.

The oncology RTC expects oncology RTPs to be cohesive, integrated, stable, ongoing programs that continually raise the standards in oncology, while training highly capable oncologists whose capabilities build upon those of their mentors.

### ONCOLOGY RESIDENT ADVISOR (RA)

An oncology resident advisor (RA) must be an ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member in good standing. The oncology RA is the primary individual who monitors the oncology resident's progress during clinical training.

### ONCOLOGY SUPERVISING DIPLOMATE (SD)

The oncology supervising diplomate (SD) is the individual at the SI, or secondary training site, who is contributing to the clinical training and didactic education of the oncology resident in the specialty of oncology. An oncology SD may be either an ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member, or ECVIM oncology Diplomate. The ACVIM oncology Diplomate and member, or ECVIM oncology Diplomates, must be in good standing with the relevant RVSO. There must be a minimum of 2 ACVIM oncology Diplomates, or 1 ACVIM oncology Diplomate and 1 ECVIM oncology Diplomate, with SD responsibility at the SI for an oncology RTP to be approved by the oncology RTC, and to maintain annual reapproval.

### ONCOLOGY SECONDARY-SPECIALTY SUPERVISING DIPLOMATE (SSSDS)

A secondary-specialty supervising diplomate (SD) for an oncology RTP must be a Board-certified veterinary specialist in any specialty other than oncology, who is contributing to the clinical training and didactic education of the oncology resident in any specialty other than oncology. Here Board-certified refers to any veterinary specialists certified by an ABVS or EBVS registered veterinary specialty or registered veterinary specialty organization. The Board-certified veterinary specialist must be a Diplomate, and where relevant member, in good standing with the relevant ABVS or EBVS registered veterinary specialty or registered veterinary specialty organization.

## TRAINING TIMES

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### *TRAINING WEEKS*

A directly or indirectly supervised workweek is defined as a minimum of four 10-hour days or five 8-hour days that amount to a 40-hour calendar week. Training weeks are to be acquired in 2-week blocks, at a minimum, unless otherwise specified in this section of the CM. If needed, to meet physical distancing requirements, 1-week blocks may be accrued with a letter of explanation submitted by the PD to the oncology CC.