Thoracic Residency Start Date

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The American Board of Surgery has been concerned about the difficulty general surgery residents face in transitioning to fellowship. With roughly 80% of residents pursuing fellowship training, the tight turnaround from end of residency to start of fellowship can often cause problems.

It is with this in mind that the ABS has engaged the surgical fellowship community regarding this issue. The solution of shifting the start of fellowship programs from July 1 to August 1 is already being implemented by many fellowship programs.
The ABS strongly endorses a fellowship start date of August 1 for the following reasons:

- It allows residents to fully complete their final year of residency training. The issue of chief residents leaving their final year early is often a problem...
- It provides residents with time to move locations and for new fellowship orientation activities...
- It affords residents time to study for the General Surgery Qualifying Examination without being in training. To support the change in start date, we will be moving the General Surgery Qualifying Examination to July as of 2016.
- It will ensure seasoned fellows are present in the hospital during July to provide coverage and supervision for new residents...
- Feedback from residents regarding this change has been positive. While concerns have been raised regarding the loss of a month's salary and the need to arrange for health insurance coverage, it is felt that these are outweighed by the benefits of the later start date.
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- TSDA survey of incoming traditional thoracic residents
  - July 2016
  - Delivered to 86 incoming residents
  - 35 responses (41%)
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Q1 Please indicate the start date of your cardiothoracic surgery residency.

Answered: 35  Skipped: 0

- July 1, 2016
- August 1, 2016
- Other (please specify)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Q2 Did you move to a new location/city for your cardiothoracic surgery residency

Answered: 35   Skipped: 0

- Yes
- No
Q6 Do you plan to take Part 1 (written) of the American Board of Surgery (ABS) Exam in July 2016?

Answered: 32  Skipped: 3
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Q7 Did you remain at your general surgery program until June 31?

Answered: 32  Skipped: 3
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Q8 Please indicate when you left your general surgery program.

Answered: 32  Skipped: 3

- Less than 1 week early
- Between 1 and 2 weeks early
- More than 2 weeks early
- NA
Q9 Do you support the concept of an August 1 start date for cardiothoracic surgery residency programs?

Answered: 32  Skipped: 3

Yes

No
It is pretty obvious that more time would be appreciated to uproot a family move across the country all while starting a new fellowship and trying to study for written boards. I'm not sure what other explanation is needed. It's pretty obvious.

It will give time for moving and re-locations, as well as time to prepare for the GS board exam.

I think having this time has been invaluable. It's allowed me and my family to move relatively smoothly. I cannot imagine having to arrange graduating, taking/studying for the boards, moving, orientation for a new program, and setting up a new home in just 2 weeks. I also think it's great to take the general surgery boards before starting fellowship. Again, it's hard to imagine trying to learn an entire new service/specialty/hospital/area and still squeeze in time to study. I think pushing the date back has been great.
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- Is my program going to pay for my boards when I fail them? Graduating from residency, moving to a new city, starting a fellowship in a brand new specialty at a new hospital with a whole new team and trying to study for boards all within a 3 week period is an unbelievable amount of stress. It's not appropriate that some programs started on July 1 and others started on August 1. The curve in grading this exam is going to be incredibly difficult to overcome considering 90% of people taking it are sitting at home with nothing to do but study. The other 10% of us are at an incredible disadvantage.