



FAWM Frequently Asked Questions (updated 7/27/2021)

General

Q: What are the different types of wilderness medicine fellowships?

A: The three types of wilderness medicine fellowships are: graduate medical education programs (GME) typically completed after medical residency, post-nominal or conferred fellowships that recognize prior work, and certification or diploma based fellowships which require new education and assessment.

The Wilderness Medical Society's Fellowship in the Academy of Wilderness Medicine, or FAWM, is the third type. FAWM candidates must acquire specific wilderness medicine knowledge and training and demonstrate mastery of this material through teaching, scholarly activity, and leadership. Candidates have five years to achieve all required elements to earn the designation of Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine.

Q: Do activities completed prior to being a FAWM candidate count?

A: Experience credits prior to your candidacy generally count. Some educational credits may also be counted. For a small fee, you may request approved educational credits accrued prior to your candidacy.

Q: If I begin my FAWM with one medical credential and go back to school during my eligibility window, do I need to practice for one year with my new credential before completing my FAWM?

A: No. The FAWM prerequisites state:

In addition to accumulating the necessary credits, awarding of the Fellowship requires:

1. Completion of an initial qualifying, credentialing, or vocational degree-producing program in any recognized medical discipline or vocation (MD, DO, PA, RN, EMT, Pharm. D, RD, PT, Affiliate degree). Others may be considered on an individual basis.
2. Completion of at least one year of professional practice in their medical vocation or discipline after completion of an initial qualifying program or school.

As long as you complete at least one year of professional practice in your original vocation you will satisfy the prerequisite even if you return to school for a different credential.

Q: Can you extend the time to obtain your FAWM?

A: In general, no. Up to a 6 month extension may be granted for candidates with extenuating circumstances and a specific completion plan. All candidates who enroll(ed) in the FAWM program prior to December 31, 2020 will be granted one additional year to complete their FAWM, extending the time frame from five to six years.

Q: How long does it take for your application to be reviewed?

A: It depends on how many are currently under review, but the committee strives for one to two weeks. It is common for experience reports to be returned to applicants with follow-up questions.



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Q: If I do not complete my FAWM in the allotted window, do I need to start over?

A: Once your window of opportunity expires, you will need to apply and pay to enter the FAWM program again. You can pay to have five years of eligible retroactive credits carried forward from the date of your new application. Your experience credits can be re-entered in your new application.

Q: The term “wilderness medicine” is used throughout the experience report to describe relevant publications, research education activities, and public service? How do you define wilderness medicine?

A: Our official definition is “medical care delivered in those areas where fixed or transient geographic challenges reduce the availability of or alter requirements for, medical or patient movement resources.” In more common terms, it is “medical care delivered amidst geographic challenges and/or limited resources”.

Education Credits

Q: Can I claim education credits for a course that was not submitted to WMS for FAWM approval.

A: No, only courses submitted for credit can be used for lecture hour credits.

Q: Will I earn different credits at the summer meeting versus the winter meeting?

A: Though there is some overlap, WMS meetings have a seasonally influenced curriculum, especially in the environmental topics.

Q: What options exist for finding core credits when some topics are not frequently included in events?

A: We’ve made some recent updates that will help.

- The minimum number of core credits is now 50, decreased from 55.
- The maximum number of elective credits is now 15, increased from 10.
- FAWM candidates who have attended two or more WMS events may submit for review when they have achieved 95 credits, reduced from 100.

Journal articles and online lectures may offer options for less common credits. Also, up to 28 of core credits can be claimed from non-WMS activities



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Experience Credits

Q: What kinds of activities can be considered for experience?

A: The Experience Report has five sections: Certifications/Degrees, Publications/Research, Educational Activities, Public Service, and Other. Each section is further divided into categories. Since you will need to accrue a minimum of 20 experience credits, you are strongly encouraged to consider how you can apply your wilderness medicine skills and knowledge. There is a lot of latitude in what "counts". Consider public outreach education to local youth groups or outing clubs, volunteering with your search and rescue team or ski patrol, providing first aid at a backcountry adventure race, joining a disaster response team, or submitting an article focusing on wilderness medicine.

Q: Can I claim experience credits for teaching wilderness medicine if it is not through a WMS "partner" organization?

A: Yes under Experience Report Section III, Part 2, Educational Activities.

Q: Do military courses count for FAWM credit?

A: The pre-approved military courses are listed in the Experience Report Section I.3 and include:

- JSOMTC
- Ranger School
- Ranger First Responder
- DMO/Combat Diver
- Tropical Medicine Course
- Flight Surgeon Course
- Q Course
- Mountain/Cold Weather Medicine
- BUDDS
- EFMB
- Global Medicine
- SOCOM ATM
- DMT
- Bio/Chem Course

You may claim credit for completing these military courses through the experience report. Please be prepared to provide a copy of your credential.

Q: Does wilderness medicine experience as a Park Ranger count?

A: Yes, you could submit this in the Experience Report in Section IV. 1, Public Service.

Q: If we regularly teach wilderness medicine, do we need to list every class we've conducted?

A: No. There is a maximum number of credits you can for each activity, you could list as many unique classes as needed to complete this category.

Q: Can I use my work in pre-hospital medicine for experience credit?

A: Typically not. The experience hours must be directly related to wilderness, remote, or austere medicine.



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Q: Does teaching swift water rescue courses with medical scenarios and evacuation techniques gain you credits?

A: Yes, this can be listed in the Experience Report Section III, Part 2, Educational Activities. However, you cannot receive credit as a student or participant in this training unless it has been approved by WMS for education credit.

Q: Can I claim experience credit for providing first aid on a personal trip or as a bystander?

A: No, if your relationship is informal or you responded to an unexpected situation, that does not count for experience credit.

Q: Can you get credit for teaching the same topic multiple times?

A: No, topics should be unique.

Q: What qualifies as a publication? Do online articles count?

A: Publications are broken down into peer-reviewed, and non-peer reviewed. An online publications may count for non-peer reviewed, you would need to submit the link for review.

Q: Do publications need to relate to wilderness medicine?

A: Yes, all publications must directly relate to wilderness medicine.

Q: Can you claim credit for being expedition medic?

A: Yes, in the Experience Report, Section IV Public Service, Part 2.

Q: Do I receive credit for completing residency?

A: You do not receive credit for completing your medical residency since it is part of the training for your highest credential. You would, however, receive credit if you completed a second or subsequent residency.