

**ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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## ACGME GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accreditation:** A voluntary process of evaluation and review performed by a non-governmental agency of peers.

**Applicant:** An M.D. or D.O. invited to interview with a GME program.

**At-Home Call** (see also Pager Call): A call taken from outside the assigned institution.

**Categorical Resident** (also see also "Graduate Year 1"): A resident who enters a program with the objective of completing the entire program.

**Certification:** A process to provide assurance to the public that a certified medical specialist has successfully completed an approved educational program and an evaluation, including an examination process designed to assess the knowledge, experience and skills requisite to the provision of high quality care in that specialty.

**Chief Resident:** Typically, a position in the final year of the residency (e.g., surgery) or in the year after the residency is completed (e.g., internal medicine and pediatrics).

**Clinical Supervision:** A required faculty activity involving the oversight and direction of patient care activities that are provided by residents.

**Combined Specialty Programs:** Programs recognized by two or more separate specialty boards to provide GME in a particular combined specialty. Each combined specialty program is made up of two or three programs, accredited separately by the ACGME at the same institution.

**Competencies:** Specific knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes and the appropriate educational experiences required of residents to complete GME programs.

**Consortium:** An association of two or more organizations or institutions that have come together to pursue common objectives (e.g., GME).

**Designated Institutional Official (DIO):** The individual in a sponsoring institution who has the authority and responsibility for the graduate medical education programs.

**Didactic:** A kind of systematic instruction by means of planned learning experiences, such as conferences, grand rounds, etc.

**Duty-Hours:** All clinical and academic activities related to the residency program, i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties related to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled academic assignments such as conferences. (See Common Program Requirements)

**ECFMG Number:** The identification number assigned by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) to each international medical graduate physician who receives a certification from ECFMG.

**Elective:** An educational experience approved for inclusion in the program curriculum and selected by the resident in consultation with the program director.

**Essential:** (See "Must")

**Faculty:** Any individuals who have received a formal assignment to teach resident physicians. In some institutions appointment to the medical staff of the hospital constitutes appointment to the faculty.

**Fellow:** A physician in a program of graduate medical education accredited by the ACGME who has completed the requirements for eligibility for first board certification in the specialty. Such physicians are also termed subspecialty residents. Other uses of the term "fellow" require modifiers for precision and clarity, e.g., research fellow.

**Fifth Pathway:** One of several ways that individuals who obtain their undergraduate medical education abroad can enter GME in the United States. The fifth pathway is a period of supervised clinical training for students who obtained their premedical education in the United States, received undergraduate medical education abroad, and passed Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination. After these students successfully complete a year of clinical training sponsored by an LCME-accredited US medical school and pass USMLE Step 2, they become eligible for an ACGME-accredited residency as an international medical graduate.

**Graduate Medical Education:** The period of didactic and clinical education in a medical specialty which follows the completion of a recognized undergraduate medical education and which prepares physicians for the independent practice of medicine, also referred to as residency education.

**Graduate-Year Level:** Refers to a resident's current year of accredited GME. This designation may or may not correspond to the resident's particular year in a program. For example, a resident in pediatric cardiology could be in the first program year of the pediatric cardiology program but in his/her fourth graduate year of GME (including the 3 prior years of pediatrics.)

**In-House Call:** Duty hours beyond the normal work day when residents are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution. (See Common Program Requirements)

**Institution:** An organization having the primary purpose of providing educational programs and/or health care services (e.g., a university, a medical school, a hospital, a school of public health, a health department, a public health agency, an organized health care delivery system, a medical examiner's office, a consortium, an educational foundation).

***Sponsoring Institution:*** The institution (or entity) that assumes the ultimate financial and academic responsibility for a program of GME.

***Major Participating Institution:*** An RRC-approved participating institution to which the residents rotate for a required educational experience. Generally, to be designated as a major participating institution, in a 1-year program, residents must spend at least 2 months in a required rotation; in a 2-year program, the rotation must be 4 months; and in a program of 3 years or longer, the rotation must be at least 6 months. RRCs retain the right to grant exceptions to this formula. (See individual Program Requirements)

***Other Participating Institutions:*** Those institutions to which residents rotate for a specific educational experience for at least one month, but which do not require prior RRC approval. (See specific Program Requirements) Subsections of institutions, such as departments, clinics, or units in a hospital do not qualify as participating institutions.

**Institutional Review:** The process undertaken by the ACGME to determine whether a sponsoring institution offering GME programs is in substantial compliance with the Institutional Requirements.

**Integrated:** An institution may be considered integrated when the program director a) appoints the members of the faculty and is involved in the appointment of the chief of service at the integrated institution, b) determines all rotations and assignments of residents, and c) is responsible for the overall conduct of the educational program in the integrated institution. There must be a written agreement between the sponsoring institution and the integrated institution stating that these provisions are in effect. This definition does not apply to all specialties. (See specific Program Requirements)

**Intern:** Historically, a designation for individuals in the first year of GME, which is no longer used by the ACGME.

**Internal Review:** A self-evaluation process undertaken by sponsoring institutions to judge whether its ACGME-accredited programs are in substantial compliance with accreditation requirements.

**International Medical Graduate (IMG):** A graduate from a medical school outside the United States and Canada (and not accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education). IMGs may be citizens of the United States who chose to be educated elsewhere or non-citizens who were admitted to the United States by US Immigration authorities. All IMGs should undertake residency education in the United States before they can obtain a license to practice medicine in the United States even if they were fully educated, licensed, and practicing in another country.

**In-Training Examination:** Formative examinations developed to evaluate resident progress in meeting the educational objectives of a residency program. These examinations may be offered by certification boards or specialty societies.

**JCAHO:** Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations is an organization focused on improving the safety and quality of care provided to the public. It accomplishes this goal by accrediting healthcare organizations and offering healthcare improvement services.

**LCME:** Liaison Committee on Medical Education, an agency co-sponsored by the American Medical Association and Association of American Medical Colleges, with participation from the Canadian Medical Association for schools in Canada, that accredits educational programs in allopathic schools of medicine in the United States and Canada. Allopathic schools of medicine grant a doctor of medicine (M.D.) degree.

**Medical School Affiliation:** A formal relationship between a medical school and a sponsoring institution.

**Must:** A term used to identify a requirement which is mandatory or done without fail. This term indicates an absolute requirement.

**National Resident Matching Program (NRMP):** A private, not-for-profit corporation established in 1952 to provide a uniform date of appointment to positions in graduate medical education in the United States. Five organizations sponsor the NRMP: American Board of Medical Specialties, American Medical Association, Association of American Medical Colleges, American Hospital Association, and Council of Medical Specialty Societies.

**New Patient:** A new patient is defined as any patient for whom the resident has not previously provided care. An individual RRC may further define new patient. (See Program Requirements)

**One Day Off:** One (1) continuous 24-hour period free from all administrative, clinical and educational activities.

**Ownership of Institution:** Refers to the governance, control, or type of ownership of the institution. (See Common Program Requirements)

**Pager Call:** A call taken from outside the assigned institution.

**Preliminary Positions:**

*Designated Positions:* Positions for residents who have already been accepted into another specialty, but who are completing prerequisites for that specialty. (See General Surgery Program Requirements)

*Non-Designated Positions:* Positions for residents, who at the time of admission to a program have not been accepted into any specialty. (See General Surgery Program Requirements)

**Primary Teaching Institution:** If the sponsoring institution is a hospital, it is by definition the principal or primary teaching hospital for the residency program. If the sponsoring institution is a medical school, university, or consortium of hospitals, the hospital that is used most commonly in the residency program is recognized as the primary teaching institution.

**Program:** A structured educational experience in graduate medical education designed to conform to the Program Requirements of a particular specialty, the satisfactory completion of which may result in eligibility for board certification.

**Program Director:** The one physician designated to oversee and organize the activities for an educational program. The Program Director is responsible for the implementation of the Program Requirements for a specific specialty. (See specific Program Requirements for Program Director responsibilities and qualifications.)

**Program Information Form (PIF):** The PIF is the specialty-specific document completed by the program director in preparation for a site-visit. The document is a compilation of requested information that reflects the current status of the educational program. Part 1 of the PIF is electronically generated through the Accreditation Data System.

**Program Letters of Agreement:** See Common Program Requirements.

**Program Merger:** Two or more programs that combine to create a single program. One program may maintain continued accreditation while accreditation is voluntarily withdrawn from the other program or programs. Alternatively, both programs may be withdrawn and a new program may be established.

**Program Year:** Refers to the current year of education within a specific program; this designation may or may not correspond to the resident's graduate year level.

**Required:** Educational experiences within a residency program designated for completion by all residents.

**Resident:** A physician in an accredited graduate medical education program.

**Rotation:** An educational experience of planned activities in selected settings developed to meet the goals and objectives of the program.

**Scholarly Activity:** An opportunity for residents and faculty to participate in research and the scholarship of discovery, dissemination, application and active participation in clinical discussions and conferences. (See Common Program Requirements)

**Shall:** (See must)

**Should:** A term used to designate requirements so important that their absence must be justified.

**Subspecialty Program:** A structured educational experience following completion of a prerequisite specialty program in graduate medical education designed to conform to the Program Requirements of a particular subspecialty.

***Dependent Subspecialty Program:*** A program that is required to function in conjunction with an accredited specialty program, usually reviewed conjointly with the specialty program, usually sponsored by the same sponsoring institution, and geographically proximate. The continued accreditation of the subspecialty program is dependent on the specialty program maintaining its accreditation.

***Independent Subspecialty Program:*** A program that is not directly related to, or dependent upon, the accreditation status of a specialty program.

**Suggested:** A term along with its companion "strongly suggested," used to indicate that something is distinctly urged rather than required. An institution or program will not be cited for failing to do something that is suggested or strongly suggested.

**Transitional-Year Program:** A one-year educational experience in GME, which is structured to provide a program of multiple clinical disciplines; its design to facilitate the choice of and/or preparation for a specialty. The transitional year is not a complete graduate education program in preparation for the practice of medicine.