

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Accreditation of New Programs and Sponsoring Institutions, Sponsorship Changes and Mergers, and Sponsoring Institution or Program Name Changes** (Updated December 2018)

This document offers general information about the application process for Sponsoring Institutions and programs. Specialty-specific questions should be addressed to the staff of the applicable Review Committee.

### **New Program Applications**

#### ***How does one apply to have a program accredited by the ACGME?***

Application Instructions, as well as the application for new programs, can be found on the Program Requirements and FAQs and Applications page of each specialty's section of the ACGME website. Before starting an application, consult with the Executive Director of the applicable Review Committee for advice.

#### ***How does the ACGME charge for new program applications?***

Fees charged for the accreditation of programs are assessed annually by the ACGME. [A listing of all accreditation fees](#) can be found on the ACGME website.

#### ***When will a newly accredited program appear in the list of ACGME-accredited programs and National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) list?***

Shortly after the applicable committee has reviewed an application, the program director and the designated institutional official (DIO) of the program's Sponsoring Institution will receive notification of the accreditation decision. Once the program has received Initial Accreditation, it is included in the list of newly accredited programs on the [ACGME website](#) according to the effective date of accreditation. This information is available to the public, including applicants. Once a program receives notification from the ACGME that it has been granted accreditation, the program director should contact the NRMP to request the program's inclusion in the NRMP listing.

#### ***How will a program know if its application requires a site visit?***

After an application has been processed, the Review Committee staff sends the program director an e-mail acknowledging this. This notice also indicates whether a site visit is needed prior to review of the application by the Committee (all specialty program applications and many subspecialty program applications require a site visit). If a site visit is needed, the Department of Field Activities will schedule the visit and send a site visit announcement letter indicating the date. Programs that do not have a site visit prior to the review of their application will have a site visit within two years of Initial Accreditation.

### ***How does a new Sponsoring Institution apply for institutional accreditation?***

New Sponsoring Institutions applications must use the online process within ADS. Instructions can be found on the [Institutional Review Committee web page](#).

Institutions applying must submit an Institutional Review Application, which will be reviewed by the Institutional Review Committee. No site visit is required at the time of institutional application. If the institution is accredited, it will have a full institutional site visit within two years of the Initial Accreditation decision. Once the institution is accredited, its programs can apply for accreditation.

### ***How long does it take to become accredited?***

The Review Committees and the ACGME give priority to new applications. Programs with applications requiring a site visit should expect the process to take as long as six to eight months. Applications that do not require a site visit prior will be reviewed at the next Committee meeting with room on the agenda (generally within six months of receipt of a completed application).

### ***How can a program ensure the Committee reviews the application in a timely way?***

Completing the application with careful attention to detail is the most important initial step for the program director. The document submitted should demonstrate how the requirements are met in the program.

Common errors that may delay scheduling of a site visit or Committee review include missing or discrepant information about the planned program, missing signatures, or missing documents, such as Program Letters of Agreement with participating sites. All submissions are considered final.

### ***How does the ACGME determine the name of the new program?***

The ACGME's practice for naming programs is to assign the name of the program's Sponsoring Institution, followed by the word "Program." The name of the specialty does not appear in the name, unless the official name of the Sponsoring Institution includes the name of the specialty. Programs may denote their affiliation with a medical school or a particular participating site in the name of the program, with the express written permission of the entity to be included in the name.

### ***What accreditation status does the Committee assign to new programs?***

Upon review of an application, a Review Committee may grant "Initial Accreditation" or "Withhold Accreditation." Accreditation is withheld when the Committee determines a new program or institution does not demonstrate substantial compliance with the applicable requirements.

### ***How can a program correct errors or add changes to its application documents?***

The ACGME accepts only one application, which must be submitted in final form. In the rare event that minimal corrections are needed, these will be reported by the Field Representative who conducts the accreditation site visit in his/her report. If added documentation is required, this will be appended to the Field Representative's report.

When a program deems that a complete revised application should be submitted, the ACGME allows this only if the program agrees to pay a second application fee. If a site visit was scheduled, the date of the visit likely will need to be rescheduled.

## **Sponsorship Changes and Mergers**

### ***What is required to transfer sponsorship of a program to another institution?***

Transfer of sponsorship requires a letter from the program's current Sponsoring Institution (the DIO and the institution's senior administrative official) indicating willingness to relinquish sponsorship, and a letter from the proposed Sponsoring Institution (the DIO and the institution's senior administrative official) indicating willingness to sponsor the program. The letters should be addressed to the Executive Director of the program's specialty Review Committee, with a copy to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee and the Senior Vice President, Field Activities, all at the ACGME.

Several committees require a site visit prior to a transfer of sponsorship, and some committees have specific added requirements for the transfer of a dependent subspecialty program to another institution/new core program. Programs planning to transfer sponsorship should contact the Executive Director of the applicable Review Committee before initiating the process. Upon transfer of sponsorship, the ACGME changes the name of the program to conform to that of the new Sponsoring Institution.

### ***Will a program resulting from a merge with another program be considered a new application?***

Two options exist for processing planned mergers between two accredited programs: (1) one program absorbs the other; or (2) the two residencies combine to form a "new" program. In the first model, the program that will remain proposes to add rotations to the other program and demonstrates how all residents will participate in the educational program. The program being "absorbed" then requests Voluntary Withdrawal pending a successful merger.

In the second model, the merged program receives a new program number and review as an application by the applicable Review Committee; this is followed by the Voluntary Withdrawal of accreditation of the two previous programs. While most mergers are treated as the incorporation of the second program, the Review Committees reserve the right to decide whether the proposed change is so extensive that it constitutes a new application.

If a merger is planned, contact the staff of the Review Committee team to discuss the proposed changes. For the first accreditation review after a merger, the program director will need to provide responses to citations from the most recent reviews of both programs that formed the new merged program.

***What is the process to transfer institutional or program sponsorship to another ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institution?***

A letter must be written from the DIO and senior administrative official (president or dean) of the original Sponsoring Institution indicating willingness to give up sponsorship. Additionally, a letter must be written from the DIO and senior administrative official of the receiving Sponsoring Institution, indicating willingness to accept institutional or program sponsorship.

In the case of a Sponsoring Institution change, the letter should be addressed to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee, with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Field Activities.

***What is the process to transfer subspecialty programs within an institution to a core specialty program within the same institution?***

A letter of agreement from the subspecialty and core specialty program directors and the DIO is needed. The Executive Director(s) of the “sending” and “accepting” specialty Review Committee(s) should approve the request. The letter should be addressed to the Executive Director of the respective specialty Review Committee(s) with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Field Activities.

***What is the process to transfer subspecialty programs from one institution to a different institution?***

A letter of agreement from the subspecialty and core specialty program directors and the DIOs of both institutions is needed. The Executive Director(s) of the “sending” and the “accepting” specialty Review Committees should approve the request. The letter should be addressed to the Executive Director of the respective specialty Review Committee(s) and the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee, with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Field Activities.

## **Sponsoring Institution or Program Name Changes**

**What is the process to change the name of a program?**

The program director should first confer with his/her DIO, since the DIO has institutional authority to approve a name change. The request for the program name change should be addressed to the Executive Director of the applicable specialty Review Committee, with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Field Activities. Requests for name changes at the program level require a letter signed by the program director and DIO.

***What is the process to change the name of a Sponsoring Institution?***

Institutional-level requests for name changes should be addressed to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Field Activities. Requests for institutional name changes require a letter from the DIO and the institution's dean or chief executive officer. ACGME naming conventions dictate that all programs within a given Sponsoring Institution have the same name. On occasion, the name of a medical school or other affiliated institution may be included in the name of the program, separated by a slash (/). This requires the formal approval of the use of that name by the institution that has a legal right to it.

The written request to change the name needs to be approved via a letter from that institution's dean or chief executive officer, formally authorizing the use of the name. These letters must be sent electronically or by mail to:

Paul Foster Johnson, MFA, Executive Director, Institutional Review Committee

E-mail: [pjohnson@acgme.org](mailto:pjohnson@acgme.org)

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