Instructions for Requesting
ACGME Rural Track Program (RTP) Designation
Medically Underserved Areas/Populations and Graduate Medical Education (MUA/P and GME)

This instructional document was created to assist programs requesting an ACGME RTP designation* so they can better prepare for and navigate the ACGME RTP designation processes.

Designation Processes
There are two ACGME RTP designation processes. To request ACGME RTP designation through either process, a program must submit information through the ACGME’s Accreditation Data System (ADS).

ACGME RTP Designation within an Existing Program (with a permanent complement increase and new rural site(s))

There are five sections of this ACGME RTP designation request:

1) Program information updates (if applicable)
2) Participating site information (add/identify the new rural participating site(s))
3) Faculty member information (if applicable)
4) Permanent complement increase request
5) RTP Rotation Information Form and Specialty-Specific RTP Questionnaire (if applicable)

Receipt of ACGME RTP designation is contingent on approval of the permanent complement increase request from the relevant Review Committee. Permanent complement increases are reviewed consistent with ACGME Policies and Procedures and Review Committee processes.

ACGME RTP Designation as a New Program

There are three sections of this ACGME RTP designation request:

1) Program director information
2) Program information (program details and participating site information)
3) Block diagram, RTP Rotation Information Form, and Specialty-Specific RTP Questionnaire (if applicable) uploads

The program director may complete sections of the program’s accreditation application while the ACGME’s response to a request for RTP designation is pending.

Receipt of ACGME RTP designation is contingent on the program’s achievement of Initial Accreditation. Initial Accreditation is a status conferred by ACGME Review Committees following policies set forth in the ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures.
Email muap@acgme.org with questions.

*The ACGME RTP designation is independent of any rural track designation by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and does not guarantee that a program will meet CMS eligibility requirements for GME or other financial support. If you have questions about the CMS rural track policy, contact the local GME finance staff and/or the Prospective Payment System (PPS) hospital’s Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC).*
Steps to Initiate and Submit a Request for ACGME RTP Designation (within Existing Program)

1. The program director initiates a Rural Track Program designation request from the “Program” tab within the program’s ADS account.

2. The program director reads the Rural Track Program designation instructions and clicks “Begin Request.”
3. The program director completes the ACGME RTP designation request, which includes the following:

**Program Information Section**
The program director reviews the program information, providing updates as needed.

*Click the “Rural Track Program Designation” button to return to the designation request steps.*

**Participating Sites Section**
The program director follows the instructions to enter participating site information. This section will be incomplete until at least one participating site is identified as “Rural Track Only.”
The program director clicks “Add Site” to add a new rural participating site (if applicable).

The program director edits each participating site to include the following information:

- CMS Certification Number (required for each participating site that is a PPS hospital). A value will autopopulate if already entered by the Sponsoring Institution’s designated institutional official (DIO). If there is no CMS Certification Number, leave this field blank.

- The name of the hospital providing financial support for faculty member supervision and education of residents/fellows at each of the program’s participating sites (using the drop-down menu of the Sponsoring Institution’s participating sites).

- The use of each participating site. The default setting is “Non-Rural Track Only.”
  - Choose “Required Rotation: Yes” for all sites that are required for the rural track.
  - If selecting “Rural Track Only,” pick “Do all residents rotate through this site? No.”
  - If selecting “Entire Program,” pick “Do all residents rotate through this site? Yes.”
When “Rural Track Only” is selected, the Rotation Months per program year will not be editable, and the participating site information rotation grid will identify those sites as “Rural Track Only” with an icon. *The participating site information rotation grid should reflect the non-rural track program where most residents/fellows rotate.*

Use the “Comments” section below the participating site information rotation grid to explain the months per program year for the rural track rotations. *Ensure this is consistent with the block diagram and that the block diagram clearly delineates rural track rotations (contact the staff of the relevant Review Committee with block diagram questions).*

**Note:** Any new sites added require identification and selection of a Site Director. A faculty member can only be identified within the system as the Site Director from among the faculty members listed on the program’s ADS Faculty Roster. If the faculty member to be designated as the Site Director is not listed when adding the new participating site(s), the program director will need to come back to this section to select a Site Director after updating the Faculty Roster.
Click “Rural Track Designation” to return to the designation request steps.

The Rural Sites step will be minimized and marked “Complete” as long as all participating site information is completed and there is at least one participating site identified as “Rural Track Only.”

**Faculty Information Section**

The program director reviews the faculty information, adding new faculty member(s) and providing updates as needed.

**Note:** Any new sites added require identification and selection of a Site Director. A faculty member can only be identified within the system as the Site Director from among the faculty members listed on the ADS Faculty Roster. If the faculty member to be designated as the Site Director is not listed when adding the new participating site(s), the program director will need to return to the Sites section to select a Site Director after updating the Faculty Roster.

**Permanent Complement Increase Request Section**

The program director completes a permanent complement increase request. **Note: this is a required step within the RTP designation request.**
Enter the Effective Start Date and Requested Total [number of desired residents/fellows in the entire program (including the rural track residents/fellows)] and hit “Next Step.”
Follow the prompts to complete the sections of the permanent complement increase request and hit “Complete” once all information is entered. (*Contact the staff of the relevant Review Committee with permanent complement increase request questions.*)

- Use the “Save” option to save the information and complete it in multiple sessions.

Click “Confirm” to complete the request and return to the RTP designation request steps.
The Permanent Complement Increase Request step will be minimized and marked “Complete.”

The DIO will not be able to view the permanent complement increase request until the program director completes and submits the Rural Track Program designation request.
Uploads Section
The program director completes an RTP Rotation Information Form using the template provided on the Rural Track Program designation web page on the ACGME website.

The program director saves the completed form as a PDF and uploads it here, along with the completed Specialty-Specific RTP Questionnaire (if applicable). Contact the relevant Review Committee staff with questions about the specialty-specific form.
4. Once the program completes all required sections of the ACGME RTP designation request, the request can be submitted by clicking the green “Submit” button.

5. Once submitted, the program can review the submitted RTP designation request but cannot edit it.

6. The DIO receives a notification of the designation request requiring approval. The DIO has the following options:
   - View – allows the DIO to review the RTP designation request information.
   - Re-Open for Editing – allows the DIO to send the request back to the program director for editing.
   - Approve/Submit – allows the DIO to submit the RTP designation request to the ACGME.
7. The DIO and program director receive a notification email from ADS stating that the designation request has been submitted for ACGME review. The program can also see the request status in ADS.

8. The ACGME reviews the RTP designation request and makes one of the following decisions:
   - Request not approved – the request did not meet one or more of the designation criteria:
     - Aggregated rotation months were not greater than 50 percent in rural participating site(s)
     - Rural site(s) not new (currently have required rotations for program residents/fellows)
     - Faculty members at rural site(s) are supported by a current rural participating site
     - Site(s) did not meet criterion for “rural”
     - Required rotations did not include some GME at non-rural participating sites
   - Request approved – the designation met all criteria and was approved, contingent on the program receiving approval of the permanent complement increase from the relevant Review Committee.

The designation request status is reflected on the program’s “Overview” tab in ADS (see Step 7 screenshot above).
9. If the designation request is approved, the Review Committee reviews the permanent complement increase request and any other relevant accreditation information (e.g., site changes, Specialty-Specific RTP Questionnaire) to render a decision.

If the designation request is not approved, the program may:
- Submit a new Rural Track Program Designation Request by clicking “Begin Request.”
- Complete a complement increase request without designation – the program director should follow the standard process to complete a permanent complement increase request. *Information entered in this section during the designation request process is still accessible to the program.*

10. After Review Committee review, the DIO and program director are notified of the decision, with the following implications if the ACGME RTP designation was approved:
- If the program receives permanent complement increase approval, the program’s ACGME RTP designation appears on the Letter of Notification and is included on the publicly available report of ACGME-accredited programs with RTP designation.
- If the permanent complement increase is denied, the program does not receive ACGME RTP designation. The program may submit a new request for ACGME RTP designation (back to Step 1) or submit a complement change request following policies set forth in the *ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures.*

Email **muap@acgme.org** with questions concerning the ACGME RTP designation process. Contact ACGME Review Committee staff members with questions concerning the permanent complement increase process or refer to the relevant *specialty section of the ACGME website* for more information – contact information for Review Committee staff members can be found in the applicable specialty section of the website.
Steps to Initiate and Submit a Request for ACGME RTP Designation (as a New Program)

1. The DIO initiates a program accreditation application in ADS.

2. The DIO selects the specialty of the new program and clicks “Proceed.”

3. When completing the “Basic Information” section, the DIO indicates the program is seeking designation as an ACGME Rural Track Program.
4. The DIO may identify an ACGME Rural Track Related Program (if applicable) using the drop-down menu of existing accredited programs in the same specialty and at the same Sponsoring Institution.

5. The DIO completes the required sections to initiate the program accreditation application, including entering the program director information.

6. The program director receives an email from ADS with login information to access the ACGME RTP designation request and the accreditation application.
7. The program director completes the ACGME RTP designation request, which includes the following items:

**Program Director Section**

The program director reviews the information that has been entered by the DIO, providing updates as needed.

[Diagram showing the ACGME Rural Track Program (RTP) Designation process]

**Program Information Section** (program details and participating sites information)

**Program Details**

The program director enters program details into this section.

[Diagram showing the Program Info section with options to enter program details and participating sites]

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Update Program Information

Program Information

Address Line 1: [Field]
Address Line 2: [Field]
Address Line 3: [Field]
City: [Field]
State: [Field]
Zip Code: [Field]
Website Address: [Field]
Public Contact Email/Director's External Email: [Field]

Accreditation Information

Program Requires Dedicated Research Year Beyond Accredited Program Length?
- Yes
- No

Program Requires Prior or Additional Accredited GME Training?
- Yes
- No

Mission and Aims

Provide the program's mission statement.
The mission statement is a written statement of a program’s core purpose. This statement should clarify the focus of the educational program (e.g., academic/research focus, community care focus, etc.), what community the program will serve and how that will be accomplished, and how the program's mission aligns with the larger mission of the sponsoring institution.

Provide the program's aims (e.g., goals, objectives) that are guided by the program's mission statement.
The program's aims (i.e., goals, objectives) should describe what the program has the intention of achieving in accordance with the Common Program Requirements. The program aims should be consistent with the overall mission of its sponsoring institution, the needs of the community it serves and that its graduates serve, and the distinctive capabilities of its graduates (e.g., leadership, research, public health).

Diversity

Describe how the program will achieve/ensures diversity in trainee recruitment, selection, and retention.
Please describe in detail what efforts your specific program is doing to advance diversity and inclusion for faculty, clinical and administrative personnel, etc. Evidence-based strategies and program success stories are strongly encouraged. Examples should only include efforts that the medical school or sponsoring institution is doing if it is done in partnership with your program, which is encouraged. Please do not copy and paste diversity and inclusion policies and statements. This is an opportunity to describe the practices that are instituted in your program to result in a diverse recruitment and retention strategy and creates an inclusive clinical learning environment.

Describe how the program will achieve/ensures diversity in the individuals participating in the training program (e.g., faculty, administrative personnel, etc.).
Please describe in detail what efforts your specific program is doing to advance diversity and inclusion for faculty, administrative personnel, etc. Evidence-based strategies and program success stories are strongly encouraged. Examples should only include efforts that the medical school or sponsoring institution is doing if it is done in partnership with your program, which is encouraged. Please do not copy and paste diversity and inclusion policies and statements. This is an opportunity to describe the practices that are instituted in your program to result in a diverse recruitment and retention strategy and creates an inclusive clinical learning environment.

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**Participating Sites Information**

The program director enters participating site information in this section. Additionally, the program director ensures the following information is provided:

- CMS Certification Number (required for each participating site that is a PPS hospital) – a value will autopopulate if already entered by the DIO. If there is no CMS Certification Number, leave this field blank.
- The name of the hospital providing financial support for faculty member supervision and education of residents/fellows at each of the program’s participating sites (using the drop-down menu of the Sponsoring Institution’s participating sites).
Note: A faculty member can only be identified within the system as the Site Director from the among the faculty members listed on the program’s ADS Faculty Roster. If the faculty member to be designated as the Site Director is not listed when adding the new participating site(s), the program director will need to come back to this section to select a Site Director after updating the Faculty Roster.
Uploads Section
The program director completes an RTP Rotation Information Form using the template provided on the Rural Track Program designation web page on the ACGME website. This form is uploaded in addition to (and as a separate document than) the block diagram.

The program director also uploads the completed Specialty-Specific Rural Track Program Questionnaire (if applicable). Contact the relevant Review Committee staff with questions about the specialty-specific form.
8. Once the program completes all required sections of the ACGME RTP designation request, the request can be submitted using the blue “Submit Request” button.

9. The DIO receives a notification of the designation request requiring approval. The DIO has the following options:
   - View – allows the DIO to review the RTP designation request information.
   - Re-Open for Editing – allows the DIO to send the request back to the program director for editing.
   - Approve/Submit – allows the DIO to submit the RTP designation request to the ACGME.
10. The DIO and program director receive a notification email from ADS stating that the designation request has been submitted for ACGME review. The program can also see the request status in ADS.

11. The ACGME reviews the RTP designation request and makes one of the following decisions:
   - Request not approved – the request did not meet one or more of the designation criteria:
     o Aggregated rotation months were not greater than 50 percent in rural participating site(s).
     o Site(s) did not meet criterion for “rural.”
     o Rotations did not include some GME at non-rural participating sites.
- Request approved – the designation met all criteria and was approved, contingent on the program receiving Initial Accreditation from the specialty Review Committee.
  - Review Committee staff members will be notified of ACGME RTP designation approvals and may send a request to the program for additional information related to the accreditation application.

12. If the request is approved, the program director then completes and submits the program accreditation application.

If the request is not approved, the DIO and program director may determine how to proceed, with the following options:
- Re-submit Request – the program director updates the information in ADS and re-submits the designation request.
  - This option returns the program to Step 7.
• Continue with new program application – the program director may complete and submit the program accreditation application without ACGME RTP designation by clicking the “Submit to DIO” button.

• Withdraw application – The DIO should email ADS@acgme.org to request deletion of the program accreditation application.

13. When proceeding with the program accreditation application, the DIO and program director follow the accreditation process as set forth in the ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures and in accordance with published specialty- or subspecialty-specific Program Requirements, including meeting agenda closing dates for review.

14. After the Review Committee meeting at which the application is reviewed, the DIO and program director are notified of the accreditation decision, with the following implications if the ACGME RTP designation was approved:

• If the program receives Initial Accreditation, the program’s ACGME RTP designation appears on the Letter of Notification and is included on the publicly available report of ACGME-accredited programs with designation at the time of application.

• If the Review Committee decision is Accreditation Withheld, the program will not receive ACGME RTP designation. The program may submit a new request for ACGME RTP designation and may reapply for accreditation (back to Step 1) following policies set forth in the ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures.

Email muap@acgme.org with questions concerning the ACGME RTP designation process. Contact ACGME Review Committee staff members with questions concerning the program application process or refer to the relevant specialty section of the ACGME website for more information – contact information for Review Committee staff members can be found in the applicable specialty section of the website.