

## Frequently Asked Questions: Single Accreditation System Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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Question	Answer
<b>Benefits</b>	
What are the benefits of a single accreditation system for graduate medical education (GME) in the US?	<p>A single accreditation system will promote improved health and health care for the public by enhancing the education of the next generation of physicians, and is intended to achieve four significant benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish and maintain consistent evaluation and accountability for the competence of resident and fellow physicians across all accredited GME programs in the US.</li> <li>2. Eliminate duplication in GME accreditation.</li> <li>3. Achieve efficiencies and cost savings for institutions currently sponsoring “dually” or “parallel” accredited ACGME and AOA programs.</li> <li>4. Ensure all residency and fellowship applicants are eligible to enter all accredited programs in the US, and can transfer from one accredited program to another without repeating training, and without causing the Sponsoring Institutions to lose Medicare funding.</li> </ol>
<b>Program Accreditation</b>	
What is the process for an AOA-approved program to become accredited by the ACGME?	<p>Prior to an AOA-approved program submitting an application to the ACGME for Initial Accreditation, its Sponsoring Institution must have, or must apply for, ACGME institutional accreditation (see additional detailed information under Institutional Accreditation below).</p> <p>The application period for Sponsoring Institutions began April 1, 2015.</p> <p>Upon receipt of a completed institutional application, the ACGME will assign a status of Pre-Accreditation to the institution, after which the institution’s AOA-approved programs can begin the application process for Initial Accreditation with the ACGME. A list of institutions with a status of Pre-Accreditation is available on the ACGME website.</p> <p>As of July 1, 2015, programs can apply for accreditation through the ACGME’s Accreditation Data System (ADS).</p> <p>The Sponsoring Institution’s designated institutional official (DIO) must endorse the submission of an application in ADS, which releases the application to the pertinent Review Committee.</p>

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Question	Answer
What does Pre-Accreditation status signify?	<p>Pre-accreditation is a specific status established as part of the agreement among the ACGME, the AOA, and AACOM. A status of pre-accreditation signifies that an AOA-approved program has initiated the process of applying for ACGME accreditation while still under AOA approval.</p> <p>Pre-accreditation is not synonymous with Initial Accreditation. In order to achieve Initial Accreditation (and, ultimately, Continued Accreditation), a Sponsoring Institution or program must be determined by the relevant ACGME Review Committee to be in substantial compliance with the applicable Institutional and/or Program Requirements.</p>
How does a program move from Pre-Accreditation to Initial Accreditation?	<p>Core programs and some subspecialty programs with Pre-Accreditation status will be scheduled for a site visit, which includes review of the application and interviews with program and institutional leadership, faculty members, and residents/fellows. After the visit, an objective, factual report is submitted to the applicable Review Committee.</p> <p>If review of the report and application demonstrates the program to be in substantial compliance with the Requirements, the Review Committee will confer a status of Initial Accreditation on the program.</p>
When can an AOA-approved subspecialty program apply for accreditation?	<p>An AOA-approved subspecialty (fellowship) program may initiate an application in ADS as soon as its associated specialty (residency) program has Pre-Accreditation status. Note, however, that the application can only be submitted in ADS after the specialty (residency) program has achieved Initial Accreditation.</p>
How long will it take before an accreditation decision is reached for a program with Pre-Accreditation status?	<p>Pre-Accreditation status is conferred instantly upon the ACGME's receipt of an application. The review of the application will take anywhere from four to 12 months. The time to review and reach an accreditation decision depends on when the scheduled Review Committee meeting occurs.</p>

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Question	Answer
<p>What should a program do if it does not achieve Initial Accreditation on first review?</p>	<p>A program that does not achieve Initial Accreditation upon first review will receive a status of Continued Pre-Accreditation. The program will receive a Letter of Notification from the Review Committee with the accreditation decision and any citations that identify areas of non-compliance with the Program Requirements.</p> <p>The program can reapply while maintaining Continued Pre-Accreditation status. To do so, it must update its application in ADS, including information on how citations from the prior review have been, or are being, addressed. The program must submit an updated application to be reviewed again. The updated application and another site visit, if deemed necessary, will be used by the Review Committee to make a new accreditation decision.</p> <p>AOA-approved programs pursuing ACGME accreditation must achieve Initial Accreditation before June 30, 2020, the end-date specified in the agreement among the ACGME, the AOA, and AACOM.</p>
<p>Do programs currently accredited by both the ACGME and the AOA need to do anything?</p>	<p>Programs with dual accreditation do not need to do anything to maintain their ACGME accreditation other than continue to participate in the ACGME accreditation process.</p> <p>Starting July 1, 2015, these programs need to ensure that all of their residents (including those previously counted only in the AOA-approved program) are entered into ADS. Some programs will need to request a complement increase from their Review Committee to accommodate these residents.</p>
<p>In an institution that sponsors “parallel” accredited programs (i.e., both an ACGME-accredited and AOA-approved program in the same specialty), will the AOA-approved program have to apply for ACGME accreditation?</p>	<p>If the AOA-approved program is to remain separate, it would have to apply for ACGME accreditation under the terms of the agreement among the ACGME, the AOA, and AACOM.</p> <p>Alternatively, the two programs could merge into a single program. Before such a merger could occur, the ACGME-accredited program may need to seek an increase in resident complement from its Review Committee.</p>

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Question	Answer
<b>Program Director</b>	
How important is it for programs to record the scholarly activity of their program directors, and what types of scholarly activity does the ACGME consider acceptable?	It is vitally important that the program fully and accurately record the scholarly activity of the program director, faculty members, and residents/fellows. Scholarly activity includes: peer-reviewed publications; non-peer reviewed publications (such as book chapters); presentations at international, national, or regional meetings; other presentations, including local teaching; research grants; leadership roles in national medical organizations; and responsibility for organizing seminars, conference series, and courses. It is important for the Review Committees to understand the degree of scholarly activity in the program.
<b>Institutional Accreditation</b>	
When can institutions with AOA-approved programs apply for ACGME accreditation as Sponsoring Institutions?	<p>As of April 1, 2015 institutions not already accredited by the ACGME as Sponsoring Institutions could apply for ACGME accreditation. The current Sponsoring Institution application form can be found on the <a href="#">Institutional Review Committee web page</a>. The list of items required for completion of the application also apply to AOA institutions.</p> <p>Pre-Accreditation status for a Sponsoring Institution is not synonymous with Initial or Continued Accreditation. For a Sponsoring Institution to achieve Initial Accreditation (and, ultimately, Continued Accreditation), it must be found by the Institutional Review Committee to be in substantial compliance with the Institutional Requirements.</p> <p>Institutions that achieve Initial Accreditation will undergo an accreditation site visit after two years, and those deemed to be in substantial compliance with the Institutional Requirements at such time will achieve Continued Accreditation status.</p>

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Question	Answer
<p>What should an institution do if it does not achieve Initial Accreditation on first review?</p>	<p>An institution that does not achieve Initial Accreditation on its first review will receive a Letter of Notification from the ACGME's Institutional Review Committee indicating the accreditation decision and any citations (areas of non-compliance with the Institutional Requirements) that constitute the basis for the decision.</p> <p>The institution can reapply while maintaining its Continued Pre-Accreditation status. To do so, it will need to submit an updated application, including information on how the citations from the prior review have been, or are being, addressed. Institutions that do not achieve Initial Accreditation may continue in Continued Pre-Accreditation status, but must achieve Initial Accreditation before June 30, 2020, the end-date specified in the agreement among the ACGME, the AOA, and AACOM.</p> <p>AOA-approved programs in an institution with Pre-Accreditation or Continued Pre-Accreditation status can only advance to Initial Accreditation once their Sponsoring Institution has achieved Initial Accreditation.</p>
<p>What will be the role of the Osteopathic Post-doctoral Training Institutions (OPTIs) under the single accreditation system?</p>	<p>A variety of types of institutions serve as ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institutions. OPTIs are eligible to serve as Sponsoring Institutions under the same requirements as other ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institutions. If a program associated with an OPTI chooses to be sponsored by a different ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institution, it could still continue to have a relationship with the OPTI. The ACGME Program Requirements in no way preclude ACGME-accredited programs or their Sponsoring Institutions from participating in an OPTI.</p>
<p>Are there any distance restrictions for institutions to gain ACGME accreditation as institutional sponsors?</p>	<p>No, there are no distance restrictions to becoming a Sponsoring Institution. For instance, an OPTI with multiple programs in multiple states could qualify as a Sponsoring Institution, as long as it demonstrates assumption of ultimate financial and academic responsibility for the programs that it sponsors and is in substantial compliance with the other relevant ACGME requirements.</p>
<p>Does the Sponsoring Institution need to write checks to faculty members, staff members, and others, in order to qualify as a sponsor?</p>	<p>No, Sponsoring Institutions do not need to write the checks, but must demonstrate financial oversight. The Sponsoring Institution could have multiple payers. A key role of the Sponsoring Institution is to make sure that staff members and residents/fellows have resources they need.</p>

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Question	Answer
Can a program change its Sponsoring Institution while it has Pre-Accreditation status? ( <i>This is for AOA-approved programs concerned that their institution may not receive Institutional Accreditation.</i> )	A program with Pre-Accreditation status has submitted an application that is predicated on its relationship to a particular Sponsoring Institution that has also applied for ACGME accreditation. The DIO of that Sponsoring Institution has explicitly agreed that the institution is willing and able to provide the necessary institutional support for the program. If the program then chooses to move to another Sponsoring Institution, it must have similar support affirmed by the DIO of the other institution. The program must withdraw its original application, and the DIO of the second institution must then initiate the process for the program to submit a new application, based on its relationship to that second institution. Under other circumstances, such a change would require the program to submit a second new program application fee. In the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the ACGME has determined that if it is clear that the same program has submitted a second application due to a change in Sponsoring Institution (i.e., by AOA program number), payment of a second application fee will not be required.
What are the fees associated with program application?	The program application fee is \$6,800 for accreditation, payable at the time of application. The annual accreditation fee is \$4,700 for programs with five or fewer residents/fellows, and \$5,700 for programs with more than five residents/fellows. For more on ACGME's fees, <a href="#">click here</a> .  AOA-approved programs with Pre-Accreditation status are exempt from paying additional application fees if they fail to achieve Initial Accreditation and apply again during the transition period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020.
Is Pre-Accreditation status sufficient to receive CMS reimbursements?	Programs with Pre-Accreditation status are not accredited by the ACGME. Programs will need to maintain their AOA approval until they achieve Initial Accreditation by the ACGME in order to receive their CMS payments. Pre-Accreditation status is not recognized by CMS.
<b>Osteopathic Recognition</b>	
When can a program apply for Osteopathic Recognition?	A program can submit an application for Osteopathic Recognition if it has ACGME accreditation (Initial Accreditation, Continued Accreditation, etc.) or ACGME Pre-Accreditation status. If a program applies for Osteopathic Recognition while in Pre-Accreditation status, the Osteopathic Principles Committee will hold the application for review until the program has achieved Initial Accreditation. As soon as the program achieves Initial Accreditation, the Osteopathic Recognition application will go on the next open agenda of the Osteopathic Principles Committee for review.

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Question	Answer
Will a program undergo a site visit after applying for Osteopathic Recognition?	No, a site visit is not required for an Osteopathic Recognition application. The Osteopathic Principles Committee will conduct a paper review of the program at the time of application.
Are there any fees associated with Osteopathic Recognition?	No, there are no fees associated with Osteopathic Recognition. There is no fee to apply for Osteopathic Recognition, or to maintain it, and no fees will be charged at the time of any future site visits related to a program's Osteopathic Recognition status.
Do osteopathic neuromusculoskeletal medicine programs need to apply for Osteopathic Recognition?	Osteopathic neuromusculoskeletal medicine programs (like any ACGME-accredited program) can apply for Osteopathic Recognition, but there is no requirement that they do so.
Do all residents/fellows in dually-accredited programs need to be assessed on the Milestones for Osteopathic Recognition?	No, programs with Osteopathic Recognition will only need to assess designated osteopathic residents on the Milestones for Osteopathic Recognition.
<b>ACGME Governance</b>	
Does the ACGME organizational structure include osteopathic representation?	Yes, the AOA and AACOM have joined the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies as member organizations of the ACGME. They will each nominate four individuals to serve on the ACGME Board of Directors, with this complement phased in over the period of the agreement.
What changes has the ACGME made to its staffing to accommodate and support osteopathic programs pursuing ACGME accreditation?	Lorenzo Pence, DO is Senior Vice President, Osteopathic Accreditation, and Tiffany Moss, MBA is Executive Director, Osteopathic Accreditation. Both of these individuals work with both the Osteopathic Principles Committee and the Review Committee for Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine.
How are AOA- and AACOM-nominated ACGME Board directors and Review Committee members be selected?	The AOA and AACOM nominates individuals to serve on the ACGME Board of Directors, and the AOA nominates individuals to serve on the ACGME Review and Recognition Committees. The ACGME Board of Directors will select from those nominees in the same fashion as it does for members nominated by any other member or nominating organization, in accordance with the policies specified in the <a href="#">ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures</a> .

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### Appendix 1: Eligibility for Residency and Fellowship

Question	Answer
<b>Eligibility for Residency</b>	
Are US and international medical school graduates allowed to enter ACGME-accredited programs with Osteopathic Recognition?	<p>Any graduate of a college of medicine accredited by the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA), a medical school within the United States or Canada accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), or a medical school outside of the United States or Canada that meets the established eligibility criteria is eligible to enter an ACGME-accredited program, including any program with Osteopathic Recognition.</p> <p>There may be prerequisite eligibility requirements for applicants who did not graduate from a COCA-accredited college of medicine prior to entry into a designated osteopathic resident position in an ACGME-accredited program with Osteopathic Recognition.</p>
Are individuals currently in AOA-approved programs eligible to transfer to ACGME-accredited programs to complete residency? If so, will they be given credit toward board certification for time completed in their AOA-approved programs?	<p>The issue of resident transfers between programs is not addressed in the agreement among the ACGME, AOA, and AACOM, and the currently-in-effect ACGME Program Requirements for each specialty remain applicable.</p> <p>For an individual planning such a transfer, the ACGME Review Committee staff should be contacted to determine if the individual's prior education and training meets ACGME eligibility requirements, and the relevant ABMS board should be contacted to determine whether the portion of their education and training completed in an AOA-approved program will be applicable toward board certification.</p>

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Question	Answer
Must DO candidates pass United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) examinations to be eligible to apply to ACGME-accredited residency programs?	<p>No. To be eligible for appointment in an ACGME-accredited residency program, candidates must have graduated from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a medical school in the United States or Canada, accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME); or,</li> <li>• a college of osteopathic medicine in the United States, accredited by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA); or,</li> <li>• a medical school outside of the United States or Canada, and meet additional qualifications.</li> </ul> <p>The ACGME does not specify which licensing board exam(s) (i.e., COMLEX-USA, USMLE) applicants must take to be eligible for appointment in ACGME-accredited residency programs.</p>
<b>Eligibility for Fellowship</b>	
Will individuals currently enrolled in AOA-approved residency programs be eligible for entry into ACGME-accredited fellowships?	Graduates of AOA-approved or ACGME-accredited residency programs are eligible to enter ACGME fellowship programs.
Must candidates pass USMLE examinations to be eligible to apply to ACGME-accredited fellowship programs?	An individual who has completed an ACGME-accredited residency program or an AOA-approved residency program in any given specialty is eligible for appointment to any ACGME-accredited fellowship program that allows prerequisite education and training in that specialty, regardless of which licensing examination(s) the individual has pursued.

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Question	Answer
<b>Resident/Fellow Board Certification</b>	
Will the AOA or the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) issue board certification?	<p>Board certification will continue to be offered by the ABMS and the AOA specialty certifying boards. Certification and eligibility determinations will remain the domain of the respective certifying boards.</p> <p>The agreement among the ACGME, AOA, and AACOM is limited to issues regarding accreditation and eligibility of ACGME-accredited programs and institutions.</p> <p>Questions regarding eligibility for ABMS member board certification should be directed to the appropriate ABMS member board; questions about AOA certification should be directed to the appropriate AOA specialty certifying board.</p>