ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Neurological Surgery including FAQs

Revision Information

Frequently asked questions (FAQs) incorporated into the Requirements July 1, 2026; effective July 1, 2026

ACGME-approved interim revision February 9, 2026; effective immediately. Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirements 1.3.a., 2.2.a., 2.8.c., 4.2.a., 4.2.e., 5.5.f., 5.5.h., 6.24., and 6.24.a. has been suspended. See explanatory text under 1.2. for modifications to this and related specialty-specific requirements.

ACGME-approved interim revision September 29, 2025; effective July 1, 2026

Definitions

For more information, see the ACGME Glossary of Terms.

Core Requirements: Statements that define structure, resource, or process elements essential to every graduate medical educational program.

Detail Requirements: Statements that describe a specific structure, resource, or process, for achieving compliance with a Core Requirement. Programs and sponsoring institutions in substantial compliance with the Outcome Requirements may utilize alternative or innovative approaches to meet Core Requirements.

Outcome Requirements: Statements that specify expected measurable or observable attributes (knowledge, abilities, skills, or attitudes) of residents or fellows at key stages of their graduate medical education.

Osteopathic Recognition

For programs with or applying for Osteopathic Recognition, the Osteopathic Recognition Requirements also apply (www.acgme.org/OsteopathicRecognition).

Table of Contents

Introduction 4
- Definition of Graduate Medical Education 4
- Definition of Specialty 4

Section 1: Oversight 5
- Sponsoring Institution 5
- Participating Sites 5
- Resources 8
- Other Learners and Health Care Personnel 10

Section 2: Personnel 10
- Program Director 10
- Faculty 16
- Program Coordinator 20
- Other Program Personnel 21

Section 3: Resident Appointments 21
- Eligibility Requirements 21
- Resident Complement 22
- Resident Transfers 23

Section 4: Educational Program 23
- Length of Program 23
- Educational Components 23
- ACGME Competencies 24
- Curriculum Organization and Resident Experiences 31
- Scholarship 36
- Program Responsibilities 37
- Faculty Scholarly Activity 37
- Resident Scholarly Activity 38

Section 5: Evaluation 38
- Clinical Competency Committee 41
- Faculty Evaluation 42
- Program Evaluation and Improvement 43
- Board Certification 44

Section 6: The Learning and Working Environment 46
- Culture of Safety 46
- Quality Metrics 47
- Supervision and Accountability 47
- Professionalism 49
- Well-Being 51
- Fatigue Mitigation 54
- Clinical Responsibilities 54
- Teamwork 55
- Transitions of Care 55
- Clinical Experience and Education 56

Frequently Asked Questions: Neurological Surgery 61

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education

in Neurological Surgery

Common Program Requirements (Residency) are in BOLD

Where applicable, italicized text is used to provide definitions or describe the underlying philosophy of the requirements in that section. These statements are not program requirements and are therefore not citable.

Introduction

Definition of Graduate Medical Education

Graduate medical education is the crucial step of professional development between medical school and autonomous clinical practice. It is in this vital phase of the continuum of medical education that residents learn to provide optimal patient care under the supervision of faculty members who not only instruct, but serve as role models of excellence, compassion, cultural sensitivity, professionalism, and scholarship.

Graduate medical education transforms medical students into physician scholars who care for the patient, patient's family, and a heterogeneous community; create and integrate new knowledge into practice; and educate future generations of physicians to serve the public. Practice patterns established during graduate medical education persist many years later.

Graduate medical education has as a core tenet the graded authority and responsibility for patient care. The care of patients is undertaken with appropriate faculty supervision and conditional independence, allowing residents to attain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, judgment, and empathy required for autonomous practice. Graduate medical education develops physicians who focus on excellence in delivery of safe, accessible, affordable, high-quality care for all, to improve the health of the populations they serve.

Graduate medical education occurs in clinical settings that establish the foundation for practice-based and lifelong learning. The professional development of the physician, begun in medical school, continues through faculty modeling of the effacement of self-interest in a humanistic environment that emphasizes joy in curiosity, problem-solving, academic rigor, and discovery. This transformation is often physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding and occurs in a variety of clinical learning environments committed to graduate medical education and the well-being of patients, residents, fellows, faculty members, students, and all members of the health care team.

Definition of Specialty

Neurological surgery is a medical discipline and surgical specialty that provides care for adult and pediatric patients in the treatment of pain or pathological processes that may modify the function or activity of the central nervous system (e.g., brain, hypophysis, and spinal cord), the peripheral nervous system, (e.g., cranial, spinal, and peripheral nerves), the autonomic nervous system, and

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

the supporting structures of these systems (e.g., meninges, skull and skull base, and vertebral column) and their vascular supply (e.g., intracranial, extracranial, and spinal vasculature).

Treatment encompasses non-operative management (including prevention, diagnosis, image interpretation, and neurocritical intensive care and rehabilitation) and operative management (including image interpretation, endovascular surgery, functional and restorative surgery, stereotactic radiosurgery, and spinal fusion and instrumentation).

Section 1: Oversight

Sponsoring Institution

The Sponsoring Institution is the organization or entity that assumes the ultimate financial and academic responsibility for a program of graduate medical education, consistent with the ACGME Institutional Requirements.

When the Sponsoring Institution is not a rotation site for the program, the most commonly utilized site of clinical activity for the program is the primary clinical site.

> **Background and Intent: Participating sites will reflect the health care needs of the community and the educational needs of the residents. A wide variety of organizations may provide a robust educational experience and, thus, Sponsoring Institutions and participating sites may encompass inpatient and outpatient settings including, but not limited to a university, a medical school, a teaching hospital, a nursing home, a school of public health, a health department, a public health agency, an organized health care delivery system, a medical examiner's office, an educational consortium, a teaching health center, a physician group practice, federally qualified health center, or an educational foundation.**

1.1. The program must be sponsored by one ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institution. (Core)

Participating Sites

A participating site is an organization providing educational experiences or educational assignments/rotations for residents.

1.2. The program, with approval of its Sponsoring Institution, must designate a primary clinical site. (Core)

1.2.a. Residents from ACGME-accredited programs in anesthesiology, diagnostic radiology, internal medicine, neurology, pediatrics, and surgery should be available at the primary clinical site in significant numbers. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, the presence of a clinical serv-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ice in each specialty referenced will be considered an acceptable alternative to an ACGME-accredited program. It is important to note that before the new Common Program Requirements are finalized, this modification will be subject to public comment when the proposed Common Program Requirement major revision is posted on the ACGME website, tentatively scheduled to occur before the end of 2026.

1.2.a.1. To request an exception, programs must submit a plan for how the intent of the requirement will be met. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The intent of this requirement is to promote and ensure interdisciplinary education in the tertiary and quaternary care setting that is essential for the primary clinical site of neurological surgery residency education. These specialties are regularly involved in the care of the same patients, and the presence of these ACGME-accredited programs provides evidence of not only the presence of the specialty physicians but also the commitment to education needed to foster interdisciplinary learning. Residents who learn together also learn the value each discipline contributes to each patient's care, and the result is more team-based care, a national goal espoused not only by the ACGME, but also the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and other organizations.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, the presence of a clinical service in each specialty referenced will be considered an acceptable alternative to an ACGME-accredited program. It is important to note that before the new Common Program Requirements are finalized, this modification will be subject to public comment when the proposed Common Program Requirement major revision is posted on the ACGME website, tentatively scheduled to occur before the end of 2026.

1.3. There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

1.3.a. The PLA must be renewed at least every 10 years. (Core)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 1.3.a has been suspended]

1.3.b. The PLA must be approved by the designated institutional official (DIO). (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: While all residency programs must be sponsored by a single ACGME-accredited Sponsoring Institution, many programs will utilize other clinical settings to provide required or elective training experiences. At times it is appropriate to utilize community sites that are not owned by or affiliated with the Sponsoring Institution. Some of these sites may be remote for geographic, transportation, or communication issues. When utilizing such sites, the program must ensure the quality of the educational experience.

Suggested elements to be considered in PLAs will be found in the Guide to the Common Program Requirements. These include:

- **Identifying the faculty members who will assume educational and supervisory responsibility for residents**
- **Specifying the responsibilities for teaching, supervision, and formal evaluation of residents**
- **Specifying the duration and content of the educational experience**
- **Stating the policies and procedures that will govern resident education during the assignment**

1.4. The program must monitor the clinical learning and working environment at all participating sites. (Core)

1.5. At each participating site there must be one faculty member, designated by the program director as the site director, who is accountable for resident education at that site, in collaboration with the program director. (Core)

1.6. The program director must submit any additions or deletions of participating sites routinely providing an educational experience, required for all residents, of one month full time equivalent (FTE) or more through the ACGME's Accreditation Data System (ADS). (Core)

1.6.a. The addition or deletion of any participating site, as well as any change in rotations at an existing participating site, must be approved by the Review Committee prior to assigning any residents to that site. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Because most site changes are reviewed at a scheduled Review Committee meeting, a good practice for programs considering a site change request is to contact the Executive Director of the Review Committee at the ACGME to discuss the optimal timing for the submission of needed information. Information and guidelines for site change requests are available in the Neurological Surgery section of the ACGME website, in the document Guidelines for Participating Site Change Requests.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

1.6.b. The program director must ensure peer interaction and regular attendance of residents at joint conferences and other activities regardless of the location of their assigned rotations. (Core)

1.7. Resources

The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure the availability of adequate resources for resident education. (Core)

1.7.a. Inpatient facilities must be available. (Core)

1.7.a.1. Inpatient facilities must include a neurological surgery operating room with microsurgical capabilities. (Core)

1.7.a.2. Inpatient facilities must include an intensive care unit specifically for the care of neurological surgery patients. (Core)

1.7.a.3. Inpatient facilities must include a neuroangiography suite with extracranial and intracranial interventional capabilities. (Core)

1.7.a.4. Inpatient facilities must include access to a stereotactic radiosurgery facility. (Core)

1.7.a.5. Inpatient facilities must include a unit designated for the care of neurological surgery patients. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The unit designated for the care of neurological surgery patients may either be a stand-alone unit that is physically distinct, or be one that is located within a patient care unit and that contains beds designated for neurological surgery patients and has staff members trained in the care of such patients.

1.7.b. There must be outpatient facilities, and clinic and office space for educating residents in the regular pre-operative evaluation and post-operative follow-up for cases for which residents have responsibility. (Core)

1.7.c. There must be space and support personnel for research. (Detail)

1.7.d. There should be clinical services available for the education of residents in anesthesiology, critical care, emergency medicine, endocrinology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, otolaryngology, pathology, and psychiatry. (Detail)

1.7.e. There must be cases distributed among cranial, extracranial, spinal, peripheral nerve, and endovascular surgical procedures to include all of those areas related to required outcomes for patient care and medical knowledge. (Core)

1.7.e.1. There must be a total of at least 500 major neurological surgery procedures at the primary clinical site per year for each resident completing the program. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

1.7.e.2. Each hospital participating in the program must have at least 100 major neurological surgery procedures per year distributed appropriately among the spectrum of clinical areas that are the focus for rotations at each site. (Core)

1.7.f. Programs must notify the Review Committee when they sponsor or participate in any clinical fellowship taking place within sites participating in the program. (Core)

1.7.f.1. Notification must occur before the commencement of such education. (Core)

1.7.f.2. Documentation must be provided describing the fellowship's relationship to and impact on the residency. (Core)

1.8. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure healthy and safe learning and working environments that promote resident well-being and provide for:

1.8.a. access to food while on duty; (Core)

1.8.b. safe, quiet, clean, and private sleep/rest facilities available and accessible for residents with proximity appropriate for safe patient care; (Core)

> **Background and Intent: Care of patients within a hospital or health system occurs continually through the day and night. Such care requires that residents function at their peak abilities, which requires the work environment to provide them with the ability to meet their basic needs within proximity of their clinical responsibilities. Access to food and rest are examples of these basic needs, which must be met while residents are working. Residents should have access to refrigeration where food may be stored. Food should be available when residents are required to be in the hospital overnight. Rest facilities are necessary, even when overnight call is not required, to accommodate the fatigued resident.**

1.8.c. clean and private facilities for lactation that have refrigeration capabilities, with proximity appropriate for safe patient care; (Core)

> **Background and Intent: Sites must provide private and clean locations where residents may lactate and store the milk within a refrigerator. These locations should be in close proximity to clinical responsibilities. It would be helpful to have additional support within these locations that may assist the resident with the continued care of patients, such as a computer and a phone. While space is important, the time required for lactation is also critical for the well-being of the resident and the resident's family, as outlined in 6.13.c.1.**

1.8.d. security and safety measures appropriate to the participating site; and, (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

1.8.e. accommodations for residents with disabilities consistent with the Sponsoring Institution's policy. (Core)

1.9. Residents must have ready access to specialty-specific and other appropriate reference material in print or electronic format. This must include access to electronic medical literature databases with full text capabilities. (Core)

1.10. Other Learners and Health Care Personnel

The presence of other learners and other health care personnel, including, but not limited to residents from other programs, subspecialty fellows, and advanced practice providers, must not negatively impact the appointed residents' education. (Core)

Background and Intent: The clinical learning environment has become increasingly complex and often includes care providers, students, and postgraduate residents and fellows from multiple disciplines. The presence of these practitioners and their learners enriches the learning environment. Programs have a responsibility to monitor the learning environment to ensure that residents' education is not compromised by the presence of other providers and learners.

Section 2: Personnel

2.1. Program Director

There must be one faculty member appointed as program director with authority and accountability for the overall program, including compliance with all applicable program requirements. (Core)

2.2. The Sponsoring Institution's GMEC must approve a change in program director and must verify the program director's licensure and clinical appointment. (Core)

2.2.a. Final approval of the program director resides with the Review Committee. (Core)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 2.2.a has been suspended. It is noted that appointment of a program director who does not meet the Common Program Requirements and specialty specific requirements related to minimum qualifications of the program director may result in citation(s) for non-compliance with those requirements]

Background and Intent: While the ACGME recognizes the value of input from numerous individuals in the management of a residency, a single in-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

dividual must be designated as program director and have overall responsibility for the program. The program director's nomination is reviewed and approved by the GMEC.

2.3. The program must demonstrate retention of the program director for a length of time adequate to maintain continuity of leadership and program stability. (Core)

Background and Intent: The success of residency programs is generally enhanced by continuity in the program director position. The professional activities required of a program director are unique and complex and take time to master. All programs are encouraged to undertake succession planning to facilitate program stability when there is necessary turnover in the program director position.

2.4. The program director and, as applicable, the program's leadership team, must be provided with support adequate for administration of the program based upon its size and configuration. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.4.a. At a minimum, the program director must be provided with the dedicated time and support specified below for administration of the program. Additional support for program leadership must be provided as specified below. This additional support may be for the program director only or divided among the program director and one or more associate (or assistant) program directors. (Core)

Number of Approved Resident Positions	Minimum Support Required (FTE) for the Program Director	Minimum Additional Support Required (FTE) for Program Leadership in Aggregate
1-7	20%	n/a
8-14	20%	10%
15-20	20%	15%
21 or more	20%	20%

Background and Intent: To achieve successful graduate medical education, individuals serving as education and administrative leaders of residency programs, as well as those significantly engaged in the education, supervision, evaluation, and mentoring of residents, must have sufficient dedicated professional time to perform the vital activities required to sustain an accredited program.

The ultimate outcome of graduate medical education is excellence in resident education and patient care.

The program director and, as applicable, the program leadership team, devote a portion of their professional effort to the oversight and management of the residency program, as defined in 2.6. – 2.6.l. Both provision

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

of support for the time required for the leadership effort and flexibility regarding how this support is provided are important. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, may provide support for this time in a variety of ways. Examples of support may include, but are not limited to, salary support, supplemental compensation, educational value units, or relief of time from other professional duties.

Program directors and, as applicable, members of the program leadership team, who are new to the role may need to devote additional time to program oversight and management initially as they learn and become proficient in administering the program. It is suggested that during this initial period the support described above be increased as needed.

In addition, it is important to remember that the dedicated time and support requirement for ACGME activities is a *minimum*, recognizing that, depending on the unique needs of the program, additional support may be warranted. The need to ensure adequate resources, including adequate support and dedicated time for the program director, is also addressed in Institutional Requirement 2.2.a. The amount of support and dedicated time needed for individual programs will vary based on a number of factors and may exceed the minimum specified in the applicable specialty/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements. It is expected that the Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its accredited programs, will ensure support for program directors to fulfill their program responsibilities effectively.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.5. Qualifications of the Program Director

The program director must possess specialty expertise and at least three years of documented educational and/or administrative experience, or qualifications acceptable to the Review Committee. (Core)

Background and Intent: Leading a program requires knowledge and skills that are established during residency and subsequently further developed. The time period from completion of residency until assuming the role of program director allows the individual to cultivate leadership abilities while becoming professionally established. The three-year period is intended for the individual's professional maturation.

The broad allowance for educational and/or administrative experience recognizes that strong leaders arise through a variety of pathways. These areas of expertise are important when identifying and appointing a program director. The choice of a program director should be informed by the mission of the program and the needs of the community.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

In certain circumstances, the program and Sponsoring Institution may propose and the Review Committee may accept a candidate for program director who fulfills these goals but does not meet the three-year minimum.

2.5.a. **The program director must possess current certification in the specialty for which they are the program director by the American Board of** Neurological Surgery (ABNS) **or by the American Osteopathic Board of** Surgery (AOBS) in neurological surgery**, or specialty qualifications that are acceptable to the Review Committee.** **(Core)**

2.5.a.1. The Review Committee only accepts ABNS or AOBS neurological surgery certification for the program director. (Core)

2.5.b. **The program director must demonstrate ongoing clinical activity.** **(Core)**

Background and Intent: A program director is a role model for faculty members and residents. The program director must participate in clinical activity consistent with the specialty. This activity will allow the program director to role model the Core Competencies for the faculty members and residents.

2.5.c. The program director must demonstrate ongoing scholarly activity, including contributions to the peer-reviewed literature. (Core)

2.5.d. The program director must demonstrate ability as a faculty leader within the department and as a resident mentor. (Core)

2.6. Program Director Responsibilities

The program director must have responsibility, authority, and accountability for: administration and operations; teaching and scholarly activity; resident recruitment and selection, evaluation, and promotion of residents, and disciplinary action; supervision of residents; and resident education in the context of patient care. **(Core)**

2.6.a. **The program director must be a role model of professionalism.** **(Core)**

Background and Intent: The program director, as the leader of the program, must serve as a role model to residents in addition to fulfilling the technical aspects of the role. As residents are expected to demonstrate compassion, integrity, and respect for others, they must be able to look to the program director as an exemplar. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the program director model outstanding professionalism, high quality patient care, educational excellence, and a scholarly approach to work. The program director creates an environment where respectful discussion

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

is welcome, with the goal of continued improvement of the educational experience.

2.6.b. **The program director must design and conduct the program in a fashion consistent with the needs of the community, the mission(s) of the Sponsoring Institution, and the mission(s) of the program. (Core)**

Background and Intent: The mission of institutions participating in graduate medical education is to improve the health of the public. Each community has health needs that vary based upon location and demographics. Programs must understand the social determinants of health of the populations they serve and incorporate them in the design and implementation of the program curriculum, with the ultimate goal of addressing these needs and eliminating health disparities.

2.6.c. **The program director must administer and maintain a learning environment conducive to educating the residents in each of the ACGME Competency domains. (Core)**

Background and Intent: The program director may establish a leadership team to assist in the accomplishment of program goals. Residency programs can be highly complex. In a complex organization, the leader typically has the ability to delegate authority to others, yet remains accountable. The leadership team may include physician and non-physician personnel with varying levels of education, training, and experience.

2.6.d. **The program director must have the authority to approve or remove physicians and non-physicians as faculty members at all participating sites, including the designation of core faculty members, and must develop and oversee a process to evaluate candidates prior to approval. (Core)**

Background and Intent: The provision of optimal and safe patient care requires a team approach. The education of residents by non-physician educators may enable the resident to better manage patient care and provides valuable advancement of the residents' knowledge. Furthermore, other individuals contribute to the education of residents in the basic science of the specialty or in research methodology. If the program director determines that the contribution of a non-physician individual is significant to the education of the residents, the program director may designate the individual as a program faculty member or a program core faculty member.

2.6.e. **The program director must have the authority to remove residents from supervising interactions and/or learning environments that do not meet the standards of the program. (Core)**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: The program director has the responsibility to ensure that all who educate residents effectively role model the Core Competencies. Working with a resident is a privilege that is earned through effective teaching and professional role modeling. This privilege may be removed by the program director when the standards of the clinical learning environment are not met.

There may be faculty in a department who are not part of the educational program, and the program director controls who is teaching the residents.

2.6.f. The program director must submit accurate and complete information required and requested by the DIO, GMEC, and ACGME. (Core)

Background and Intent: This includes providing information in the form and format requested by the ACGME and obtaining requisite sign-off by the DIO.

2.6.g. The program director must provide a learning and working environment in which residents have the opportunity to raise concerns, report mistreatment, and provide feedback in a confidential manner as appropriate, without fear of intimidation or retaliation. (Core)

2.6.h. The program director must ensure the program's compliance with the Sponsoring Institution's policies and procedures related to grievances and due process, including when action is taken to suspend or dismiss, or not to promote or renew the appointment of a resident. (Core)

Background and Intent: A program does not operate independently of its Sponsoring Institution. It is expected that the program director will be aware of the Sponsoring Institution's policies and procedures, and will ensure they are followed by the program's leadership, faculty members, support personnel, and residents.

2.6.i. The program director must ensure the program's compliance with the Sponsoring Institution's policies and procedures on employment and non-discrimination. (Core)

2.6.j. The program director must document verification of education for all residents within 30 days of completion of or departure from the program. (Core)

2.6.k. The program director must provide verification of an individual resident's education upon the resident's request, within 30 days. (Core)

Background and Intent: Primary verification of graduate medical education is important to credentialing of physicians for further training and

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

practice. Such verification must be accurate and timely. Sponsoring Institution and program policies for record retention are important to facilitate timely documentation of residents who have previously completed the program. Residents who leave the program prior to completion also require timely documentation of their summative evaluation.

2.6.l. The program director must provide applicants who are offered an interview with information related to the applicant's eligibility for the relevant specialty board examination(s). (Core)

Faculty

Faculty members are a foundational element of graduate medical education – faculty members teach residents how to care for patients. Faculty members provide an important bridge allowing residents to grow and become practice-ready, ensuring that patients receive the highest quality of care. They are role models for future generations of physicians by demonstrating compassion, commitment to excellence in teaching and patient care, professionalism, and a dedication to lifelong learning. Faculty members experience the pride and joy of fostering the growth and development of future colleagues. The care they provide is enhanced by the opportunity to teach and model exemplary behavior. By employing a scholarly approach to patient care, faculty members, through the graduate medical education system, improve the health of the individual and the population.

Faculty members ensure that patients receive the level of care expected from a specialist in the field. They recognize and respond to the needs of the patients, residents, community, and institution. Faculty members provide appropriate levels of supervision to promote patient safety. Faculty members create an effective learning environment by acting in a professional manner and attending to the well-being of the residents and themselves.

Background and Intent: "Faculty" refers to the entire teaching force responsible for educating residents. The term "faculty," including "core faculty," does not imply or require an academic appointment.

2.7. There must be a sufficient number of faculty members with competence to instruct and supervise all residents. (Core)

2.7.a. The physician faculty members at each participating site must be of sufficient number to educate, supervise, and evaluate residents in clinical and other activities to ensure progressive development in the Milestones targeted by the rotations that take place at their respective sites . (Core)

2.8. Faculty Responsibilities
Faculty members must be role models of professionalism. (Core)

2.8.a. Faculty members must demonstrate commitment to the delivery of safe, high-quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: Patients have the right to expect quality, cost-effective care with patient safety at its core. The foundation for meeting this expectation is formed during residency and fellowship. Faculty members model these goals and continually strive for improvement in care and cost, embracing a commitment to the patient and the community they serve.

2.8.b. **Faculty members must demonstrate a strong interest in the education of residents, including devoting sufficient time to the educational program to fulfill their supervisory and teaching responsibilities.** (Core)

2.8.c. **Faculty members must administer and maintain an educational environment conducive to educating residents.** (Core)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 2.8.c. has been suspended]

2.8.d. **Faculty members must regularly participate in organized clinical discussions, rounds, journal clubs, and conferences.** (Core)

2.8.e. **Faculty members must pursue faculty development designed to enhance their skills at least annually:** (Core)

Background and Intent: Faculty development is intended to describe structured programming developed for the purpose of enhancing transference of knowledge, skill, and behavior from the educator to the learner. Faculty development may occur in a variety of configurations (lecture, workshop, etc.) using internal and/or external resources. Programming is typically needs-based (individual or group) and may be specific to the institution or the program. Faculty development programming is to be reported for the residency program faculty in the aggregate.

2.8.e.1. **as educators and evaluators;** (Detail)

2.8.e.2. **in quality improvement, eliminating health care disparities, and patient safety;** (Detail)

2.8.e.3. **in fostering their own and their residents' well-being; and,** (Detail)

2.8.e.4. **in patient care based on their practice-based learning and improvement efforts.** (Detail)

Background and Intent: Practice-based learning serves as the foundation for the practice of medicine. Through a systematic analysis of one's practice and review of the literature, one is able to make adjustments that

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

improve patient outcomes and care. Thoughtful consideration to practice-based analysis improves quality of care, as well as patient safety. This allows faculty members to serve as role models for residents in practice-based learning.

2.8.f. Faculty members must assist in maintaining documentation of their participation in faculty development activities. (Core)

2.8.g. Faculty members must have major clinical responsibilities at that site if they serve as the program's site director there. (Core)

2.9. Faculty Qualifications

Faculty members must have appropriate qualifications in their field and hold appropriate institutional appointments. (Core)

2.10. Physician Faculty Members

Physician faculty members must have current certification in the specialty by the American Board of Neurological Surgery **or the American Osteopathic Board of** Surgery in neurological surgery**, or possess qualifications judged acceptable to the Review Committee. (Core)**

2.10.a. Any other specialty or subspecialty physician faculty members must have current certification in their specialty or subspecialty by the appropriate American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) certifying board, or possess qualifications judged acceptable to the Review Committee. (Core)

Background and Intent: The ACGME expects that physician faculty members (especially core and other required faculty members) have current certification in the specialty or subspecialty by the relevant ABMS member board and/or AOA certifying board. However, in certain instances when a physician faculty member was never eligible for initial certification in the US by one of these entities, programs will be considered in compliance if all the following qualifications are met. The physician faculty member:

1. **completed residency or fellowship in the relevant specialty or subspecialty;**
2. **held board certification (if available) in the country where they trained or practiced, if outside the US;**
3. **holds full and unrestricted licensure to practice medicine in the state where the program is located;**
4. **has three years of experience in practice (after residency/fellowship) in the US, in the specialty or subspecialty for which they will serve as a physician faculty member;**
5. **meets standards of professionalism;**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6. **has demonstrated clinical qualifications and satisfactory patient outcomes; and,**
7. **fulfills at least one of the following: a) demonstrated participation in additional clinical or research training in the specialty or subspecialty; b) demonstrated scholarship in the specialty or subspecialty; c) demonstrated leadership during or after residency/fellowship.**

2.11. Core Faculty

Core faculty members must have a significant role in the education and supervision of residents and must devote a significant portion of their entire effort to resident education and/or administration, and must, as a component of their activities, teach, evaluate, and provide formative feedback to residents. (Core)

Background and Intent: Core faculty members are critical to the success of resident education. They support the program leadership in developing, implementing, and assessing curriculum, mentoring residents, and assessing residents' progress toward achievement of competence in and the autonomous practice of the specialty. Core faculty members should be selected for their broad knowledge of and involvement in the program, permitting them to effectively evaluate the program. Core faculty members may also be selected for their specific expertise and unique contribution to the program. Core faculty members are engaged in a broad range of activities, which may vary across programs and specialties. Core faculty members provide clinical teaching and supervision of residents, and also participate in non-clinical activities related to resident education and program administration. Examples of these non-clinical activities include, but are not limited to, interviewing and selecting resident applicants, providing didactic instruction, mentoring residents, simulation exercises, completing the annual ACGME Faculty Survey, and participating on the program's Clinical Competency Committee, Program Evaluation Committee, and other GME committees.

2.11.a. Core faculty members must complete the annual ACGME Faculty Survey. (Core)

2.11.b. There must be a minimum of three core neurological surgeons located at the primary clinical site and predominantly engaged in clinical activity there. (Core)

2.11.c. There must be additional core physician faculty members who demonstrate a commitment to the education, supervision, and evaluation of residents in clinical and other activities to ensure progressive development in all of the Milestones. (Core)

2.11.d. At a minimum, each required core faculty member, excluding program leadership, must be provided with support equal to a dedicated minimum of 5 percent FTE for educational and administrative responsibilities that do not involve direct patient care. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

2.12. Program Coordinator

There must be a program coordinator. (Core)

2.12.a. The program coordinator must be provided with dedicated time and support adequate for administration of the program based upon its size and configuration. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.12.b. At a minimum, the program coordinator must be provided with the dedicated time and support specified below for administration of the program. (Core)

Number of Approved Resident Positions	Minimum FTE
1-7	50%
8-14	70%
15-20	80%
21 or more	100%

Background and Intent: The requirement does not address the source of funding required to provide the specified salary support.

Each program requires a lead administrative person, frequently referred to as a program coordinator, administrator, or as otherwise titled by the institution. This person will frequently manage the day-to-day operations of the program and serve as an important liaison and facilitator between the learners, faculty and other staff members, and the ACGME. Individuals serving in this role are recognized as program coordinators by the ACGME.

The program coordinator is a key member of the leadership team and is critical to the success of the program. As such, the program coordinator must possess skills in leadership and personnel management appropriate to the complexity of the program. Program coordinators are expected to develop in-depth knowledge of the ACGME and Program Requirements, including policies and procedures. Program coordinators assist the program director in meeting accreditation requirements, educational programming, and support of residents.

Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, should encourage the professional development of their program coordinators and avail them of opportunities for both professional and personal growth. Programs with fewer residents may not require a full-time coordinator; one coordinator may support more than one program.

The minimum required dedicated time and support specified in 2.12.b. includes activities directly related to administration of the accredited program. It is understood that coordinators often have additional responsibil-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ities, beyond those directly related to program administration, including, but not limited to, departmental administrative responsibilities, medical school clerkships, planning lectures that are not solely intended for the accredited program, and mandatory reporting for entities other than the ACGME. Assignment of these other responsibilities will necessitate consideration of allocation of additional support so as not to preclude the coordinator from devoting the time specified above solely to administrative activities that support the accredited program.

In addition, it is important to remember that the dedicated time and support requirement for ACGME activities is a minimum, recognizing that, depending on the unique needs of the program, additional support may be warranted. The need to ensure adequate resources, including adequate support and dedicated time for the program coordinator, is also addressed in Institutional Requirement 2.2.d. The amount of support and dedicated time needed for individual programs will vary based on a number of factors and may exceed the minimum specified in the applicable specialty/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements. It is expected that the Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its accredited programs, will ensure support for program coordinators to fulfill their program responsibilities effectively.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.13. Other Program Personnel

The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution , must jointly ensure the availability of necessary personnel for the effective administration of the program. (Core)

Background and Intent: Multiple personnel may be required to effectively administer a program. These may include staff members with clerical skills, project managers, education experts, and staff members to maintain electronic communication for the program. These personnel may support more than one program in more than one discipline.

Section 3: Resident Appointments

3.1. Residents must not be required to sign a non-competition guarantee or restrictive covenant. (Core)

3.2. Eligibility Requirements

An applicant must meet one of the following qualifications to be eligible for appointment to an ACGME-accredited program: (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

3.2.a. graduation from a medical school in the United States, accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or graduation from a college of osteopathic medicine in the United States, accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (AOACOCA); or, (Core)

3.2.b. graduation from a medical school outside of the United States, and meeting one of the following additional qualifications: (Core)

- holding a currently valid certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) prior to appointment; or, (Core)
- holding a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States licensing jurisdiction in which the ACGME-accredited program is located. (Core)

3.3. All prerequisite post-graduate clinical education required for initial entry or transfer into ACGME-accredited residency programs must be completed in ACGME-accredited residency programs, AOA-approved residency programs, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC)-accredited or College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)-accredited residency programs located in Canada, or in residency programs with ACGME International (ACGME-I) Advanced Specialty Accreditation. (Core)

3.3.a. Residency programs must receive verification of each resident's level of competency in the required clinical field using ACGME, CanMEDS, or ACGME-I Milestones evaluations from the prior training program upon matriculation. (Core)

Background and Intent: Programs with ACGME-I Foundational Accreditation or from institutions with ACGME-I accreditation do not qualify unless the program has also achieved ACGME-I Advanced Specialty Accreditation. To ensure entrants into ACGME-accredited programs from ACGME-I programs have attained the prerequisite milestones for this training, they must be from programs that have ACGME-I Advanced Specialty Accreditation.

3.4. Resident Complement

The program director must not appoint more residents than approved by the Review Committee. (Core)

Background and Intent: Programs are required to request approval of all complement changes, whether temporary or permanent, by the Review Committee through ADS. Permanent increases require prior approval from the Review Committee and temporary increases may also require approval. Specialty-specific instructions for requesting a complement increase

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

are found in the "Documents and Resources" page of the applicable specialty section of the ACGME website.

3.5. Resident Transfers

The program must obtain verification of previous educational experiences and a summative competency-based performance evaluation prior to acceptance of a transferring resident. (Core)

3.6. Prior to accepting a transfer resident, the program must obtain from the resident, and retain written confirmation that the resident understands the impact of the transfer on their eligibility for their intended specialty board's initial certification. (Core)

Section 4: Educational Program

The ACGME accreditation system is designed to encourage excellence and innovation in graduate medical education regardless of the organizational affiliation, size, or location of the program.

The educational program must support the development of knowledgeable, skillful physicians who provide compassionate care.

It is recognized that programs may place different emphasis on research, leadership, public health, etc. It is expected that the program aims will reflect the nuanced program-specific goals for it and its graduates; for example, it is expected that a program aiming to prepare physician-scientists will have a different curriculum from one focusing on community health.

4.1. Length of Program

The educational program in neurological surgery must be 84 months in length. (Core)

4.2. Educational Components

The curriculum must contain the following educational components:

4.2.a. a set of program aims consistent with the Sponsoring Institution's mission, the needs of the community it serves, and the desired distinctive capabilities of its graduates, which must be made available to program applicants, residents, and faculty members; (Core)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 4.2.a. has been suspended]

4.2.b. competency-based goals and objectives for each educational experience designed to promote progress on a trajectory to autonomous practice. These

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

must be distributed, reviewed, and available to residents and faculty members; (Core)

> **Background and Intent: The trajectory to autonomous practice is documented by Milestones evaluations. Milestones are considered formative and should be used to identify learning needs. Milestones data may lead to focused or general curricular revision in any given program or to individualized learning plans for any specific resident.**

4.2.c. delineation of resident responsibilities for patient care, progressive responsibility for patient management, and graded supervision; (Core)

> **Background and Intent: These responsibilities may generally be described by PGY level and specifically by Milestones progress as determined by the Clinical Competency Committee. This approach encourages the transition to competency-based education. An advanced learner may be granted more responsibility independent of PGY level and a learner needing more time to accomplish a certain task may do so in a focused rather than global manner.**

4.2.d. a broad range of structured didactic activities; and, (Core)

> **Background and Intent: It is intended that residents will participate in structured didactic activities. It is recognized that there may be circumstances in which this is not possible. Programs should define core didactic activities for which time is protected and the circumstances in which residents may be excused from these didactic activities. Didactic activities may include, but are not limited to, lectures, conferences, courses, labs, asynchronous learning, simulations, drills, case discussions, grand rounds, didactic teaching, and education in critical appraisal of medical evidence.**

4.2.e. formal educational activities that promote patient safety-related goals, tools, and techniques. (Core)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 4.2.e. has been suspended]

ACGME Competencies

The Competencies provide a conceptual framework describing the required domains for a trusted physician to enter autonomous practice. These Competencies are core to the practice of all physicians, although the specifics are further defined by each specialty. The developmental trajectories in each of the Competencies are articulated through the Milestones for each specialty.

The program must integrate all ACGME Competencies into the curriculum.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.3. ACGME Competencies – Professionalism

Residents must demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and an adherence to ethical principles. (Core)

Residents must demonstrate competence in:

4.3.a. compassion, integrity, and respect for others; (Core)

4.3.b. responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest; (Core)

4.3.c. cultural awareness; (Core)

4.3.d. respect for patient privacy and autonomy; (Core)

4.3.e. accountability to patients, society, and the profession; (Core)

4.3.f. respect and responsiveness to heterogeneous patient populations, including but not limited to gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, national origin, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation; (Core)

4.3.g. ability to recognize and develop a plan for one's own personal and professional well-being; and, (Core)

4.3.h. appropriately disclosing and addressing conflict or duality of interest. (Core)

Background and Intent: This includes the recognition that under certain circumstances, the interests of the patient may be best served by transitioning care to another practitioner. Examples include fatigue, conflict or duality of interest, not connecting well with a patient, or when another physician would be better for the situation based on skill set or knowledge base.

4.4. ACGME Competencies – Patient Care and Procedural Skills (Part A)

Residents must be able to provide patient care that is patient- and family-centered, compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health. (Core)

Background and Intent: Quality patient care is safe, effective, timely, efficient, patient-centered, fair, and designed to improve population health, while reducing per capita costs. In addition, there should be a focus on improving the clinician's well-being as a means to improve patient care and reduce burnout among residents, fellows, and practicing physicians.

4.4.a. Residents must demonstrate sensitivity to their patients' pain and emotional states. (Core)

4.4.b. Residents must demonstrate the ability to discuss death honestly, sensitively, patiently, and compassionately. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.4.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in assessing post-operative recovery, recognizing and treating complications, communicating with referring physicians, and developing the physician-patient relationship. (Core)

4.4.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in analyzing patient outcomes. (Core)

4.4.e. Residents must demonstrate competence in providing health care services aimed at preventing health problems and maintaining health, including opioid use disorder in the management of acute and chronic pain. (Core)

4.5. ACGME Competencies – Patient Care and Procedural Skills (Part B)
Residents must be able to perform all medical, diagnostic, and surgical procedures considered essential for the area of practice. (Core)

4.5.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in gathering essential patient information in a timely manner. (Core)

4.5.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in synthesizing and properly utilizing acquired patient data. (Core)

4.5.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in generating a differential diagnosis and properly sequencing critical actions for patient care, including managing complications and morbidity and mortality. (Core)

4.5.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in generating and implementing an effective management plan. (Core)

4.5.e. Residents must demonstrate competence in prioritizing and stabilizing multiple patients simultaneously. (Core)

4.5.f. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including adult cranial procedures, to include: (Core)

4.5.f.1. craniotomy for brain tumors, such as intra-axial, extra-axial, skull base, and trephination for biopsy of cranial or intracranial tumors; (Core)

4.5.f.2. craniotomy and EEA for sellar/parasellar tumors; (Core)

4.5.f.3. craniotomy/craniectomy/ cranioplasty for trauma and non-tumor conditions; (Core)

4.5.f.4. open procedures for vascular lesions, including aneurysm, vascular malformation, ischemia, and extracranial cerebrovascular; (Core)

4.5.f.5. endovascular procedures for vascular lesions, including aneurysm, vascular malformation, ischemia, and tumor; (Core)

4.5.f.6. CSF diversion and intraventricular surgery; (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.5.f.7. procedures for cranial/extracranial treatment of pain, including craniotomy, stereotaxy, and rhizotomy; (Core)

4.5.f.8. cranial/extracranial procedures for functional disorders; and, (Core)

4.5.f.9. cranial/extracranial procedures for epilepsy (adult and pediatric patients). (Core)

4.5.g. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including adult spinal procedures, to include: (Core)

4.5.g.1. anterior cervical approaches for spinal conditions (e.g., tumor, non-tumor, and trauma); (Core)

4.5.g.2. posterior cervical approaches for spinal conditions (e.g., tumor, non-tumor, and trauma); (Core)

4.5.g.3. thoracic/lumbar instrumentation and fusion for spinal conditions (e.g., tumor, non-tumor, and trauma); (Core)

4.5.g.4. lumbar laminectomy/laminotomy for spinal conditions (e.g., tumor, non-tumor, and trauma); and, (Core)

4.5.g.5. procedures for spinal conditions (stimulation, lesion, pump, other). (Core)

4.5.h. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including peripheral nerve procedures. (Core)

4.5.i. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including radiosurgery. (Core)

4.5.j. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including peripheral device management. (Core)

4.5.k. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including critical care procedures, to include: (Core)

4.5.k.1. airway management; (Core)

4.5.k.2. angiography; (Core)

4.5.k.3. arterial line placement. (Core)

4.5.k.4. CVP line placement; (Core)

4.5.k.5. external ventricular drain/ transdural monitor placement; (Core)

4.5.k.6. lumbar/other puncture/drain placement; and, (Core)

4.5.k.7. percutaneous tap of CSF space/reservoir. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.5.l. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including pediatric procedures, to include: (Core)

4.5.l.1. procedures for brain tumor; (Core)

4.5.l.2. procedures for cranial trauma and non-tumor conditions; (Core)

4.5.l.3. CSF diversion and intraventricular surgery; and, (Core)

4.5.l.4. spinal procedures for conditions, such as dysraphism, tethered cord, spinal tumors, spinal deformity, and trauma. (Core)

4.5.m. Residents must demonstrate competence in performing neurosurgical operative procedures, including intradural microdissection. (Core)

4.6. ACGME Competencies – Medical Knowledge
Residents must demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological, and social-behavioral sciences, including scientific inquiry, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care. (Core)

4.6.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in their knowledge of neurosurgical emergencies. (Core)

4.6.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in their knowledge of treating neurosurgical conditions, to include: (Core)

4.6.b.1. cerebrovascular disorders; (Core)

4.6.b.2. functional neurosurgery; (Core)

4.6.b.3. neurocritical care; (Core)

4.6.b.4. neuro-oncology; (Core)

4.6.b.5. pain; (Core)

4.6.b.6. pediatric neurological surgery; (Core)

4.6.b.7. peripheral nerve disorders; (Core)

4.6.b.8. spinal disorders; and, (Core)

4.6.b.9. trauma. (Core)

4.6.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in their knowledge of different medical practice models and delivery systems and how to best utilize them to care for an individual patient. (Core)

4.6.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in their knowledge of study design and statistical methods. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.6.e. All residents tracking towards ABNS certification must pass the ABNS primary examination before completing the program. (Core)

4.7. ACGME Competencies – Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

Residents must demonstrate the ability to investigate and evaluate their care of patients, to appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and lifelong learning. (Core)

4.7.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in identifying strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge and expertise. (Core)

4.7.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in setting learning and improvement goals. (Core)

4.7.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in identifying and performing appropriate learning activities. (Core)

4.7.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in systematically analyzing practice using quality improvement methods, including activities aimed at reducing health care disparities, and implementing changes with the goal of practice improvement. (Core)

4.7.e. Residents must demonstrate competence in incorporating feedback and formative evaluation into daily practice. (Core)

4.7.f. Residents must demonstrate competence in locating, appraising, and assimilating evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems. (Core)

4.7.g. Residents must demonstrate competence in incorporating evidence-based principles into their clinical practice. (Core)

4.8. ACGME Competencies – Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Residents must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. (Core)

4.8.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in communicating effectively with patients and patients' families, as appropriate, across a broad range of socioeconomic circumstances, cultural backgrounds, and language capabilities, learning to engage interpretive services as required to provide appropriate care to each patient. (Core)

4.8.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in communicating effectively with physicians, other health professionals, and health-related agencies. (Core)

4.8.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in working effectively as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.8.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in educating patients, patients' families, students, other residents, and other health professionals. (Core)

4.8.d.1. This experience should include the education of undergraduate medical students. (Detail)

4.8.e. Residents must demonstrate competence in acting in a consultative role to other physicians and health professionals. (Core)

4.8.f. Residents must demonstrate competence in maintaining comprehensive, timely, and legible health care records, if applicable. (Core)

4.8.g. Residents must learn to communicate with patients and patients' families to partner with them to assess their care goals, including, when appropriate, end-of-life goals. (Core)

4.8.h. Residents must demonstrate competence in demonstrating effective listening and non-verbal communication skills. (Core)

4.8.i. Residents must demonstrate competence in demonstrating an effective therapeutic relationship with patients and their families, with respect for cultural, ethnic, spiritual, emotional, and age-specific differences. (Core)

4.8.j. Residents must demonstrate competence in demonstrating effective written communication skills. (Core)

4.8.k. Residents must demonstrate competence in involving patients in medical decisions. (Core)

4.9. ACGME Competencies – Systems-Based Practice

Residents must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care, including the social determinants of health, as well as the ability to call effectively on other resources to provide optimal health care. (Core)

Background and Intent: Medical practice occurs in the context of an increasingly complex clinical care environment where optimal patient care requires attention to compliance with external and internal administrative and regulatory requirements.

4.9.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in working effectively in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to their clinical specialty. (Core)

4.9.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in coordinating patient care across the health care continuum and beyond as relevant to their clinical specialty. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: Every patient deserves to be treated as a whole person. Therefore it is recognized that any one component of the health care system does not meet the totality of the patient's needs. An appropriate transition plan requires coordination and forethought by an interdisciplinary team. The patient benefits from proper care and the system benefits from proper use of resources.

4.9.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in advocating for quality patient care and optimal patient care systems. (Core)

4.9.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in participating in identifying system errors and implementing potential systems solutions. (Core)

4.9.e. Residents must demonstrate competence in incorporating considerations of value, cost awareness, delivery and payment, and risk-benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care as appropriate. (Core)

4.9.f. Residents must demonstrate competence in understanding health care finances and its impact on individual patients' health decisions. (Core)

4.9.g. Residents must demonstrate competence in using tools and techniques that promote patient safety and disclosure of patient safety events (real or simulated). (Detail)

4.9.h. Residents must learn to advocate for patients within the health care system to achieve the patient's and patient's family's care goals, including, when appropriate, end-of-life goals. (Core)

4.9.i. Residents must demonstrate competence in accessing, appropriately utilizing, and evaluating the effectiveness of the resources, providers, and systems necessary to provide optimal neurosurgical care. (Core)

Curriculum Organization and Resident Experiences

4.10. Curriculum Structure

The curriculum must be structured to optimize resident educational experiences, the length of the experiences, and the supervisory continuity. These educational experiences include an appropriate blend of supervised patient care responsibilities, clinical teaching, and didactic educational events. (Core)

Background and Intent: In some specialties, frequent rotational transitions, inadequate continuity of faculty member supervision, and dispersed patient locations within the hospital have adversely affected optimal resident education and effective team-based care. The need for patient care continuity varies from specialty to specialty and by clinical situation, and may be addressed by the individual Review Committee.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.10.a. The number of participating sites for required rotations should be limited to no more than five health care facilities. (Core)

4.10.a.1. Participating sites should be located within one hour's travel time from the primary clinical site so as not to fragment residents' educational experience. (Core)

4.10.a.2. To request an exception for requirements related to either the number of sites or sites with a travel time of greater than one hour from the primary clinical site, programs must submit a plan for how the intent of the requirement(s) will be met. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Models of the learning environment for successful residency training in neurological surgery vary and will certainly evolve in the future. That said, certain qualities have emerged that define highly effective educational programs. Principally, effective programs are typified by a primary clinical site that offers either all or the vast majority of the elements critical for education. Affiliate participating sites that offer special experiences can also be effectively utilized to achieve comprehensive neurological surgery education. However, large numbers of participating sites that lack an integrated educational environment tend to degrade the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning environment. Geographically dispersed programs also negatively impact resident well-being in several ways, including through disruption of the residents' living arrangements; demands on residents' family and friends; reducing "quality time" away from the work environment for rest, travel, and recreation; disruption of the cohesiveness of the faculty/resident team; and providing variable levels of institutional support for travel, housing, and insurance for "away" rotations. Widely separated geographic sites also degrade the integrity of the educational environment by diminishing participation in educational conferences, mentorship, faculty member-directed scholarly activity, cohesive experience in institutional quality improvement, and a team approach to residency education. Continuity of care and patient safety may also be compromised by multiple short-duration rotations, particularly when travel time to the participating site is excessive. Patient safety may also be compromised by inadequate supervision, if faculty members are not immediately available at distant participating sites, or if the faculty members are not experienced in and dedicated to the education process.

4.10.b. Core (non-elective) rotations during PGY-3-7 at the primary clinical site and at all participating sites must be at least three months in duration. (Core)

4.11. Didactic and Clinical Experiences

Residents must be provided with protected time to participate in core didactic activities. (Core)

4.11.a. The year of fundamental skills (PGY-1) must be organized so that residents participate in clinical and didactic activities to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

needed to formulate principles and assess, plan, and initiate treatment of patients with surgical and medical problems.(Outcome)

4.11.b. The year of fundamental skills (PGY-1) must be organized so that residents participate in clinical and didactic activities to be involved in the care of patients with surgical and medical emergencies, multiple organ system trauma, and nervous system injuries and diseases. (Core)

4.11.c. The year of fundamental skills (PGY-1) must be organized so that residents participate in clinical and didactic activities to gain experience in the care of critically-ill surgical and medical patients. (Core)

4.11.d. The year of fundamental skills (PGY-1) must be organized so that residents participate in clinical and didactic activities to participate in the pre-, intra-, and post-operative care of surgical patients. (Core)

4.11.e. The year of fundamental skills (PGY-1) must be organized so that residents participate in clinical and didactic activities to develop basic surgical skills and an understanding of surgical anesthesia, including anesthetic risks and the management of intra-operative anesthetic complications. (Outcome)

4.11.f. The program must provide 54 months of clinical neurological surgery education at the primary clinical site or at an approved participating site. A minimum of 21 months of neurological surgery education must occur at the primary clinical site. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The components of the required minimum 54 months of clinical neurological surgery education are: 42 months of operative neurological surgery; six months of structured education in general patient care if this takes place on the neurological surgery service; three months of basic clinical neuroscience education; and three months of critical care education applicable to the neurosurgical patient. The required 12 months as chief resident on the neurological surgery service may be included in these 54 months. Clinical research experience will not count toward the 54-month requirement for clinical neurological surgery education.

4.11.f.1. This must include a minimum of six months of structured education in general patient care and minimum of 42 months of operative neurological surgery. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The required six months of structured education in general patient care needs to ensure that residents have the experiences that enable them to demonstrate outcomes as required in Program Requirements 4.11.a. – f. The clinical and didactic activities the program provides are deliberately not specified to give each program the flexibility to take maximal advantage of available resources (patients, faculty members, services, etc.). While worded so as not to require that the six months of structured education in general patient care occur during the PGY-1, most programs would likely ensure

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

that every resident demonstrates these fundamental skills by the end of that PGY-1.

4.11.f.2. During the first 18 months of education residents must have at least three months of basic clinical neuroscience education and at least three months of critical care education applicable to the neurosurgical patient. (Core)

4.11.f.2.a. When a combination of rotations in various specialties (including rotations in neurology; additional rotations in neurological surgery critical care beyond the required three months of neurological surgery critical care; rotations in related specialties, such as neuropathology, medical neuro-oncology, neurorehabilitation, neuro-ophthalmology, or neuroradiology; or composite rotations such as concurrent rotations in neuropathology and neuro-ophthalmology) is used to fulfill the requirement for three months of clinical neuroscience, each rotation must be at least one month in duration. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The intent of the requirement is to provide programs with maximal flexibility to take advantage of institutional assets to best educate residents in this area. Neither the three months of clinical neuroscience nor the three months of critical care education will fulfill part of the requirement for six months of general patient care during the first 18 months of education.

4.11.f.3. Residents must spend a 12-month period of time as chief resident on the neurological surgery clinical service at the primary clinical site or at an approved participating site. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The chief resident experience is typically done as a 12-month continuous block at a single site during the PGY-6 or -7. The Review Committee will consider other proposals for a chief year experience.

4.11.f.3.a. The chief resident must have major or primary responsibility for patient management with faculty member supervision. (Core)

4.11.f.3.b. The chief resident must have administrative responsibility as designated by the program director. (Core)

4.11.f.3.c. The chief resident should have semi-autonomous responsibility for groups of patients as part of a team led by an attending physician. (Detail)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: This type of experience is very similar to the conditions of independent practice, which residents at this level will enter soon after graduating, and often occurs in the context of ‘home call,’ where the requirement for an eight-hour respite does not apply. Whether during at-home

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

call or during scheduled clinical work periods, it is important that chief residents have this kind of experience.

4.11.f.3.d. The specific portion of the clinical education that constitutes the 12 months of chief residency must be specifically designated as the chief residency experience. (Core)

4.11.f.4. The remaining months of the program must be used for elective clinical education and/or research. (Core)

4.11.f.4.a. All permanent electives and any electives requiring the addition of a new participating site must receive prior approval by the Review Committee. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: There are no specific expectations for the type of electives residents should have. For example, a program may propose an international elective, a transition-to-practice elective, or a research elective, any of which will be offered as a regular component of the program. Alternatively, a program may create a one-time elective to meet the needs of one or more specific residents. For example, a program may direct a resident to have an additional outpatient elective or specific rotation(s) to gain more experience in particular surgical procedures. Contact the Executive Director for additional information. Contact information is available on the Neurological Surgery section of the ACGME website.

4.11.g. Didactic sessions must include teaching conferences, rounds, and other educational activities in which both the neurological surgery faculty members and residents participate. (Core)

4.11.g.1. A majority of faculty members and residents must attend these sessions. (Core)

4.11.g.2. A conference attendance record for both residents and faculty members must be maintained. (Core)

4.11.h. Topics should include basic sciences, neuropathology, radiation oncology and basic physics as it relates to tumors of the central nervous system and the late effects of radiation on the central nervous system, and neuroradiology, as well as topics related to all required patient care and medical knowledge outcomes. (Core)

4.11.h.1. Additional topics should be agreed upon by individual residents and the program director. (Detail)

4.11.i. Resident experiences must include participating in the management (including critical care) and surgical care of adult and pediatric patients, which must include the full spectrum of neurosurgical disorders. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.11.j. Resident experiences must include evaluating patients referred for elective surgery in an outpatient environment. (Core)

4.11.j.1. This experience must include obtaining a complete history, conducting an examination, ordering (if necessary) and interpreting diagnostic studies, and arriving independently at a diagnosis and plan of management. (Core)

4.11.k. Resident experiences must include making pre-operative decisions and participating in procedures, including surgical, endovascular, interventional, and radiological procedures. (Core)

4.11.k.1. Each resident must record, in the ACGME Case Log System, the number and type of each procedure he or she performs as either assistant resident surgeon, senior resident surgeon, or lead resident surgeon. (Core)

4.11.k.2. Resident participation in and responsibility for procedures must increase progressively throughout residency. (Core)

4.11.l. Resident experiences must include post-surgical care and follow-up evaluation of patients. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Residents are expected to have significant experiences following the same patients through all phases of care to demonstrate competence in providing a continuum of care, including evaluation and diagnosis, making pre-operative decisions, participating in operative and other procedures, and post-operative care and counseling. While a minimum number of such patients has not been specified in the Program Requirements, these abilities are included in the Patient Care Milestones for all procedural areas. Programs are advised to design their curriculum and closely monitor each resident's developing abilities to ensure each resident is a competent provider of continuity care for neurological surgery patients by the time of graduation.

4.11.m. Resident experiences must include clinical experience in neuroradiology, endovascular surgical neuroradiology, and neuropathology designed specifically for neurological surgery residents. (Core)

4.11.m.1. Such experience should take place under the direction of qualified neuroradiologists and preferably endovascular neurosurgeons or neurologists, and neuropathologists. (Detail)

4.12. Pain Management

The program must provide instruction and experience in pain management if applicable for the specialty, including recognition of the signs of substance use disorder. (Core)

Scholarship

Medicine is both an art and a science. The physician is a humanistic scientist who cares for patients. This requires the ability to think critically, evaluate the literature, appropri-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ately assimilate new knowledge, and practice lifelong learning. The program and faculty must create an environment that fosters the acquisition of such skills through resident participation in scholarly activities. Scholarly activities may include discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

The ACGME recognizes the variety of residencies and anticipates that programs prepare physicians for a variety of roles, including clinicians, scientists, and educators. It is expected that the program's scholarship will reflect its mission(s) and aims, and the needs of the community it serves. For example, some programs may concentrate their scholarly activity on quality improvement, population health, and/or teaching, while other programs might choose to utilize more classic forms of biomedical research as the focus for scholarship.

4.13. Program Responsibilities

The program must demonstrate evidence of scholarly activities consistent with its mission(s) and aims. (Core)

4.13.a. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must allocate adequate resources to facilitate resident and faculty involvement in scholarly activities. (Core)

4.13.a.1. Resources must be sufficient to ensure that faculty members are regularly involved in scholarly activity that is disseminated through peer-reviewed publication. (Core)

4.13.b. The program must advance residents' knowledge and practice of the scholarly approach to evidence-based patient care. (Core)

4.14. Faculty Scholarly Activity

Among their scholarly activity, programs must demonstrate accomplishments in at least three of the following domains: (Core)

- **Research in basic science, education, translational science, patient care, or population health**
- **Peer-reviewed grants**
- **Quality improvement and/or patient safety initiatives**
- **Systematic reviews, meta-analyses, review articles, chapters in medical textbooks, or case reports**
- **Creation of curricula, evaluation tools, didactic educational activities, or electronic educational materials**
- **Contribution to professional committees, educational organizations, or editorial boards**
- **Innovations in education**

4.14.a. The program must demonstrate dissemination of scholarly activity within and external to the program by the following methods:

- **faculty participation in grand rounds, posters, workshops, quality improvement presentations, podium presentations, grant leadership, non-peer-re-**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

viewed print/electronic resources, articles or publications, book chapters, textbooks, webinars, service on professional committees, or serving as a journal reviewer, journal editorial board member, or editor; (Outcome)

- **peer-reviewed publication. (Outcome)**

Background and Intent: For the purposes of education, metrics of scholarly activity represent one of the surrogates for the program's effectiveness in the creation of an environment of inquiry that advances the residents' scholarly approach to patient care. The Review Committee will evaluate the dissemination of scholarship for the program as a whole, not for individual faculty members, for a five-year interval, for both core and non-core faculty members, with the goal of assessing the effectiveness of the creation of such an environment. The ACGME recognizes that there may be differences in scholarship requirements between different specialties and between residencies and fellowships in the same specialty.

4.15. Resident Scholarly Activity

Residents must participate in scholarship. (Core)

4.15.a. Residents must participate in the development of new knowledge, learn to evaluate research findings, and develop habits of inquiry as a continuing professional responsibility. (Core)

4.15.b. All residents must be regularly involved in scholarly activity that is disseminated through peer- or non-peer-reviewed publications, chapters, abstracts, or presentations. (Core)

Section 5: Evaluation

5.1. Resident Evaluation: Feedback and Evaluation

Faculty members must directly observe, evaluate, and frequently provide feedback on resident performance during each rotation or similar educational assignment. (Core)

Background and Intent: Feedback is ongoing information provided regarding aspects of one's performance, knowledge, or understanding. The faculty empower residents to provide much of that feedback themselves in a spirit of continuous learning and self-reflection. Feedback from faculty members in the context of routine clinical care should be frequent, and need not always be formally documented.

Formative and summative evaluation have distinct definitions. Formative evaluation is *monitoring resident learning* and providing ongoing feedback that can be used by residents to improve their learning in the context

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

of provision of patient care or other educational opportunities. More specifically, formative evaluations help:

- **residents identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work**
- **program directors and faculty members recognize where residents are struggling and address problems immediately**

Summative evaluation is *evaluating a resident's learning* by comparing the residents against the goals and objectives of the rotation and program, respectively. Summative evaluation is utilized to make decisions about promotion to the next level of training, or program completion.

End-of-rotation and end-of-year evaluations have both summative and formative components. Information from a summative evaluation can be used formatively when residents or faculty members use it to guide their efforts and activities in subsequent rotations and to successfully complete the residency program.

Feedback, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation compare intentions with accomplishments, enabling the transformation of a neophyte physician to one with growing expertise.

Background and Intent: Faculty members should provide feedback frequently throughout the course of each rotation. Residents require feedback from faculty members to reinforce well-performed duties and tasks, as well as to correct deficiencies. This feedback will allow for the development of the learner as they strive to achieve the Milestones. More frequent feedback is strongly encouraged for residents who have deficiencies that may result in a poor final rotation evaluation.

5.1.a. Evaluation must be documented at the completion of the assignment. (Core)

5.1.a.1. For block rotations of greater than three months in duration, evaluation must be documented at least every three months. (Core)

5.1.a.2. Longitudinal experiences, such as continuity clinic in the context of other clinical responsibilities, must be evaluated at least every three months and at completion. (Core)

5.1.b. The program must provide an objective performance evaluation based on the Competencies and the specialty-specific Milestones. (Core)

5.1.b.1. The program must use multiple evaluators (e.g., faculty members, peers, patients, self, and other professional staff members). (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

5.1.b.2. **The program must provide that information to the Clinical Competency Committee for its synthesis of progressive resident performance and improvement toward unsupervised practice.** (Core)

5.1.c. **The program director or their designee, with input from the Clinical Competency Committee, must meet with and review with each resident their documented semi-annual evaluation of performance, including progress along the specialty-specific Milestones.** (Core)

5.1.d. **The program director or their designee, with input from the Clinical Competency Committee, must assist residents in developing individualized learning plans to capitalize on their strengths and identify areas for growth.** (Core)

5.1.e. **The program director or their designee, with input from the Clinical Competency Committee, must develop plans for residents failing to progress, following institutional policies and procedures.** (Core)

Background and Intent: Learning is an active process that requires effort from the teacher and the learner. Faculty members evaluate a resident's performance at least at the end of each rotation. The program director or their designee will review those evaluations, including their progress on the Milestones, at a minimum of every six months. Residents should be encouraged to reflect upon the evaluation, using the information to reinforce well-performed tasks or knowledge or to modify deficiencies in knowledge or practice. Working together with the faculty members, residents should develop an individualized learning plan.

Residents who are experiencing difficulties with achieving progress along the Milestones may require intervention to address specific deficiencies. Such intervention, documented in an individual remediation plan developed by the program director or a faculty mentor and the resident, will take a variety of forms based on the specific learning needs of the resident. However, the ACGME recognizes that there are situations which require more significant intervention that may alter the time course of resident progression. To ensure due process, it is essential that the program director follow institutional policies and procedures.

5.1.f. **At least annually, there must be a summative evaluation of each resident that includes their readiness to progress to the next year of the program, if applicable.** (Core)

5.1.f.1. At least semiannually, the program director must review the ACGME Case Log data with each resident to ensure the balanced progress of each resident towards achieving experience with a variety and complexity of neurological surgery procedures. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

5.1.g. **The evaluations of a resident's performance must be accessible for review by the resident.** (Core)

5.2. Resident Evaluation: Final Evaluation

The program director must provide a final evaluation for each resident upon completion of the program. (Core)

5.2.a. **The specialty-specific Milestones, and when applicable the specialty-specific Case Logs, must be used as tools to ensure residents are able to engage in autonomous practice upon completion of the program.** (Core)

5.2.b. **The final evaluation must become part of the resident's permanent record maintained by the institution, and must be accessible for review by the resident in accordance with institutional policy.** (Core)

5.2.c. **The final evaluation must verify that the resident has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to enter autonomous practice.** (Core)

5.2.d. **The final evaluation must be shared with the resident upon completion of the program.** (Core)

5.3. Clinical Competency Committee

A Clinical Competency Committee must be appointed by the program director. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

5.3.a. **At a minimum, the Clinical Competency Committee must include three members of the program faculty, at least one of whom is a core faculty member.** (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

5.3.b. **Additional members must be faculty members from the same program or other programs, or other health professionals who have extensive contact and experience with the program's residents.** (Core)

Background and Intent: The requirements regarding the Clinical Competency Committee do not preclude or limit a program director's participation on the Clinical Competency Committee. The intent is to leave flexibility for each program to decide the best structure for its own circumstances, but a program should consider: its program director's other roles as resident advocate, advisor, and confidante; the impact of the program director's presence on the other Clinical Competency Committee members' discussions and decisions; the size of the program faculty; and other program-relevant factors. The program director has final responsibility for resident evaluation and promotion decisions.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Program faculty may include more than the physician faculty members, such as other physicians and non-physicians who teach and evaluate the program's residents. There may be additional members of the Clinical Competency Committee. Chief residents who have completed core residency programs in their specialty may be members of the Clinical Competency Committee.

5.3.c. **The Clinical Competency Committee must review all resident evaluations at least semi-annually. (Core)**

5.3.d. **The Clinical Competency Committee must determine each resident's progress on achievement of the specialty-specific Milestones. (Core)**

5.3.e. **The Clinical Competency Committee must meet prior to the residents' semi-annual evaluations and advise the program director regarding each resident's progress. (Core)**

5.4. **Faculty Evaluation**

The program must have a process to evaluate each faculty member's performance as it relates to the educational program at least annually. (Core)

Background and Intent: The program director is responsible for the educational program and all educators. While the term "faculty" may be applied to physicians within a given institution for other reasons, it is applied to residency program faculty members only through approval by a program director. The development of the faculty improves the education, clinical, and research aspects of a program. Faculty members have a strong commitment to the resident and desire to provide optimal education and work opportunities. Faculty members must be provided feedback on their contribution to the mission of the program. All faculty members who interact with residents desire feedback on their education, clinical care, and research. If a faculty member does not interact with residents, feedback is not required. With regard to the varied operating environments and configurations, the residency program director may need to work with others to determine the effectiveness of the program's faculty performance with regard to their role in the educational program. All teaching faculty members should have their educational efforts evaluated by the residents in a confidential and anonymous manner. Other aspects for the feedback may include research or clinical productivity, review of patient outcomes, or peer review of scholarly activity. The process should reflect the local environment and identify the necessary information. The feedback from the various sources should be summarized and provided to the faculty on an annual basis by a member of the leadership team of the program.

5.4.a. **This evaluation must include a review of the faculty member's clinical teaching abilities, engagement with the educational program, participation in facul-**

ty development related to their skills as an educator, clinical performance, professionalism, and scholarly activities. (Core)

5.4.b. This evaluation must include written, anonymous, and confidential evaluations by the residents. (Core)

5.4.c. Faculty members must receive feedback on their evaluations at least annually. (Core)

5.4.d. Results of the faculty educational evaluations should be incorporated into program-wide faculty development plans. (Core)

Background and Intent: The quality of the faculty's teaching and clinical care is a determinant of the quality of the program and the quality of the residents' future clinical care. Therefore, the program has the responsibility to evaluate and improve the program faculty members' teaching, scholarship, professionalism, and quality care. This section mandates annual review of the program's faculty members for this purpose, and can be used as input into the Annual Program Evaluation.

5.5. Program Evaluation and Improvement

The program director must appoint the Program Evaluation Committee to conduct and document the Annual Program Evaluation as part of the program's continuous improvement process. (Core)

5.5.a. The Program Evaluation Committee must be composed of at least two program faculty members, at least one of whom is a core faculty member, and at least one resident. (Core)

5.5.b. Program Evaluation Committee responsibilities must include review of the program's self-determined goals and progress toward meeting them. (Core)

5.5.c. Program Evaluation Committee responsibilities must include guiding ongoing program improvement, including development of new goals, based upon outcomes. (Core)

5.5.d. Program Evaluation Committee responsibilities must include review of the current operating environment to identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats as related to the program's mission and aims. (Core)

Background and Intent: To achieve its mission and educate and train quality physicians, a program must evaluate its performance and plan for improvement in the Annual Program Evaluation. Performance of residents and faculty members is a reflection of program quality, and can use metrics that reflect the goals that a program has set for itself. The Program Evaluation Committee utilizes outcome parameters and other data to assess the program's progress toward achievement of its goals and aims.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

The Program Evaluation Committee advises the program director through program oversight.

5.5.e. **The Program Evaluation Committee should consider the outcomes from prior Annual Program Evaluation(s), aggregate resident and faculty written evaluations of the program, and other relevant data in its assessment of the program . (Core)**

Background and Intent: Other data to be considered for assessment include:

- **Curriculum**
- **ACGME letters of notification, including citations, Areas for Improvement, and comments**
- **Quality and safety of patient care**
- **Aggregate resident and faculty well-being; recruitment and retention; engagement in quality improvement and patient safety; and scholarly activity**
- **ACGME Resident and Faculty Survey results**
- **Aggregate resident Milestones evaluations, and achievement on in-training examinations (where applicable), board pass and certification rates, and graduate performance.**
- **Aggregate faculty evaluation and professional development**

5.5.f. **The Program Evaluation Committee must evaluate the program's mission and aims, strengths, areas for improvement, and threats. (Core)**

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 5.5.f. has been suspended]

5.5.g. **The Annual Program Evaluation, including the action plan, must be distributed to and discussed with the residents and the members of the teaching faculty, and be submitted to the DIO. (Core)**

5.5.h. **The program must complete a Self-Study and submit it to the DIO. (Core)**

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 5.5.h. has been suspended]

Board Certification

One goal of ACGME-accredited education is to educate physicians who seek and achieve board certification. One measure of the effectiveness of the educational program is the ultimate pass rate.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

The program director should encourage all eligible program graduates to take the certifying examination offered by the applicable American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) member board or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) certifying board.

5.6. Board Certification

For specialties in which the ABMS member board and/or AOA certifying board offer(s) an annual written exam, in the preceding three years, the program's aggregate pass rate of those taking the examination for the first time must be higher than the bottom fifth percentile of programs in that specialty. (Outcome)

5.6.a. For specialties in which the ABMS member board and/or AOA certifying board offer(s) a biennial written exam, in the preceding six years, the program's aggregate pass rate of those taking the examination for the first time must be higher than the bottom fifth percentile of programs in that specialty. (Outcome)

5.6.b. For specialties in which the ABMS member board and/or AOA certifying board offer(s) an annual oral exam, in the preceding three years, the program's aggregate pass rate of those taking the examination for the first time must be higher than the bottom fifth percentile of programs in that specialty. (Outcome)

5.6.c. For specialties in which the ABMS member board and/or AOA certifying board offer(s) a biennial oral exam, in the preceding six years, the program's aggregate pass rate of those taking the examination for the first time must be higher than the bottom fifth percentile of programs in that specialty. (Outcome)

5.6.d. For each of the exams referenced in 5.6.a.-c., any program whose graduates over the time period specified in the requirement have achieved an 80 percent pass rate will have met this requirement, no matter the percentile rank of the program for pass rate in that specialty. (Outcome)

Background and Intent: Setting a single standard for pass rate that works across specialties is not supportable based on the heterogeneity of the psychometrics of different examinations. By using a percentile rank, the performance of the lower five percent (fifth percentile) of programs can be identified and set on a path to curricular and test preparation reform.

There are specialties where there is a very high board pass rate that could leave successful programs in the bottom five percent (fifth percentile) despite admirable performance. These high-performing programs should not be cited, and 5.6.d. is designed to address this.

5.6.e. Programs must report, in ADS, board certification status annually for the cohort of board-eligible residents that graduated seven years earlier. (Core)

Background and Intent: It is essential that residency programs demonstrate knowledge and skill transfer to their residents. One measure of that is the qualifying or initial certification exam pass rate. Another important

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

parameter of the success of the program is the ultimate board certification rate of its graduates. Graduates are eligible for up to seven years from residency graduation for initial certification. The ACGME will calculate a rolling three-year average of the ultimate board certification rate at seven years post-graduation, and the Review Committees will monitor it.

The Review Committees will track the rolling seven-year certification rate as an indicator of program quality. Programs are encouraged to monitor their graduates' performance on board certification examinations.

In the future, the ACGME may establish parameters related to ultimate board certification rates.

Section 6: The Learning and Working Environment

The Learning and Working Environment

Residency education must occur in the context of a learning and working environment that emphasizes the following principles:

- ***Excellence in the safety and quality of care rendered to patients by residents today***
- ***Excellence in the safety and quality of care rendered to patients by today's residents in their future practice***
- ***Excellence in professionalism***
- ***Appreciation for the privilege of caring for patients***
- ***Commitment to the well-being of the students, residents, faculty members, and all members of the health care team***

Culture of Safety

A culture of safety requires continuous identification of vulnerabilities and a willingness to transparently deal with them. An effective organization has formal mechanisms to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of its personnel toward safety in order to identify areas for improvement.

6.1. The program, its faculty, residents, and fellows must actively participate in patient safety systems and contribute to a culture of safety. (Core)

Patient Safety Events

Reporting, investigation, and follow-up of safety events, near misses, and unsafe conditions are pivotal mechanisms for improving patient safety, and are essential for the success of any patient safety program. Feedback and experiential learning are essential to developing true competence in the ability to identify causes and institute sustainable systems-based changes to ameliorate patient safety vulnerabilities.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.2. **Residents, fellows, faculty members, and other clinical staff members must know their responsibilities in reporting patient safety events and unsafe conditions at the clinical site, including how to report such events.** (Core)

6.2.a. **Residents, fellows, faculty members, and other clinical staff members must be provided with summary information of their institution's patient safety reports.** (Core)

6.3. **Residents must participate as team members in real and/or simulated interprofessional clinical patient safety and quality improvement activities, such as root cause analyses or other activities that include analysis, as well as formulation and implementation of actions.** (Core)

Quality Metrics

Access to data is essential to prioritizing activities for care improvement and evaluating success of improvement efforts.

6.4. **Residents and faculty members must receive data on quality metrics and benchmarks related to their patient populations.** (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

Supervision and Accountability

Although the attending physician is ultimately responsible for the care of the patient, every physician shares in the responsibility and accountability for their efforts in the provision of care. Effective programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, define, widely communicate, and monitor a structured chain of responsibility and accountability as it relates to the supervision of all patient care.

Supervision in the setting of graduate medical education provides safe and effective care to patients; ensures each resident's development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to enter the unsupervised practice of medicine; and establishes a foundation for continued professional growth.

6.5. **Residents and faculty members must inform each patient of their respective roles in that patient's care when providing direct patient care. This information must be available to residents, faculty members, other members of the health care team, and patients.** (Core)

Background and Intent: Each patient will have an identifiable and appropriately credentialed and privileged attending physician (or licensed independent practitioner as specified by the applicable Review Committee) who is responsible and accountable for the patient's care.

6.6. **The program must demonstrate that the appropriate level of supervision in place for all residents is based on each resident's level of training and ability, as well as patient complexity and acuity. Supervision may be exercised through a variety of methods, as appropriate to the situation.** (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: Appropriate supervision is essential for patient safety and high-quality teaching. Supervision is also contextual. There is tremendous variability of resident-patient interactions, training locations, and resident skills and abilities, even at the same level of the educational program. The degree of supervision for a resident is expected to evolve progressively as the resident gains more experience, even with the same patient condition or procedure. The level of supervision for each resident is commensurate with that resident's level of independence in practice; this level of supervision may be enhanced based on factors such as patient safety, complexity, acuity, urgency, risk of serious safety events, or other pertinent variables.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

Levels of Supervision

To promote appropriate resident supervision while providing for graded authority and responsibility, the program must use the following classification of supervision.

6.7. Direct Supervision

***The supervising physician is physically present with the resident during the key portions of the patient interaction*.**

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.7.a. PGY-1 residents must initially be supervised directly, only as described in the above definition. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

Indirect Supervision

The supervising physician is not providing physical or concurrent visual or audio supervision but is immediately available to the resident for guidance and is available to provide appropriate direct supervision.

Oversight

The supervising physician is available to provide review of procedures/encounters with feedback provided after care is delivered.

6.8. The program must define when physical presence of a supervising physician is required. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.9. The privilege of progressive authority and responsibility, conditional independence, and a supervisory role in patient care delegated to each resident must be assigned by the program director and faculty members. (Core)

6.9.a. The program director must evaluate each resident's abilities based on specific criteria, guided by the Milestones. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.9.b. **Faculty members functioning as supervising physicians must delegate portions of care to residents based on the needs of the patient and the skills of each resident.** (Core)

6.9.c. **Senior residents or fellows should serve in a supervisory role to junior residents in recognition of their progress toward independence, based on the needs of each patient and the skills of the individual resident or fellow.** (Detail)

6.10. **Programs must set guidelines for circumstances and events in which residents must communicate with the supervising faculty member(s).** (Core)

6.10.a. **Each resident must know the limits of their scope of authority, and the circumstances under which the resident is permitted to act with conditional independence.** (Outcome)

Background and Intent: The ACGME Glossary of Terms defines conditional independence as: Graded, progressive responsibility for patient care with defined oversight.

6.11. **Faculty supervision assignments must be of sufficient duration to assess the knowledge and skills of each resident and to delegate to the resident the appropriate level of patient care authority and responsibility.** (Core)

6.12. **Professionalism**

Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must educate residents and faculty members concerning the professional and ethical responsibilities of physicians, including but not limited to their obligation to be appropriately rested and fit to provide the care required by their patients. (Core)

Background and Intent: This requirement emphasizes the professional responsibility of residents and faculty members to arrive for work adequately rested and ready to care for patients. It is also the responsibility of residents, faculty members, and other members of the care team to be observant, to intervene, and/or to escalate their concern about resident and faculty member fitness for work, depending on the situation, and in accordance with institutional policies. This includes recognition of impairment, including from illness, fatigue, and substance use, in themselves, their peers, and other members of the health care team, and the recognition that under certain circumstances, the best interests of the patient may be served by transitioning that patient's care to another qualified and rested practitioner.

6.12.a. **The learning objectives of the program must be accomplished without excessive reliance on residents to fulfill non-physician obligations.** (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: Routine reliance on residents to fulfill non-physician obligations increases work compression for residents and does not provide an optimal educational experience. Non-physician obligations are those duties which in most institutions are performed by nursing and allied health professionals, transport services, or clerical staff. Examples of such obligations include transport of patients from the wards or units for procedures elsewhere in the hospital; routine blood drawing for laboratory tests; routine monitoring of patients when off the ward; and clerical duties, such as scheduling. While it is understood that residents may be expected to do any of these things on occasion when the need arises, these activities should not be performed by residents routinely and must be kept to a minimum to optimize resident education.

6.12.b. The learning objectives of the program must ensure manageable patient care responsibilities. (Core)

Background and Intent: The Common Program Requirements do not define "manageable patient care responsibilities" as this is variable by specialty and PGY level. Review Committees will provide further detail regarding patient care responsibilities in the applicable specialty-specific Program Requirements and accompanying FAQs. However, all programs, regardless of specialty, should carefully assess how the assignment of patient care responsibilities can affect work compression, especially at the PGY-1 level.

6.12.c. The learning objectives of the program must include efforts to enhance the meaning that each resident finds in the experience of being a physician, including protecting time with patients, providing administrative support, promoting progressive independence and flexibility, and enhancing professional relationships. (Core)

6.12.d. The program director, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must provide a culture of professionalism that supports patient safety and personal responsibility. (Core)

Background and Intent: The accurate reporting of clinical and educational work hours, patient outcomes, and clinical experience data are the responsibility of the program leadership, residents, and faculty.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.12.e. Residents and faculty members must demonstrate an understanding of their personal role in the safety and welfare of patients entrusted to their care, including the ability to report unsafe conditions and safety events. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.12.f. **Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must provide a professional, respectful, and civil environment that is psychologically safe and that is free from discrimination, sexual and other forms of harassment, mistreatment, abuse, or coercion of students, residents, faculty, and staff.** **(Core)**

> **Background and Intent: Psychological safety is defined as an environment of trust and respect that allows individuals to feel able to ask for help, admit mistakes, raise concerns, suggest ideas, and challenge ways of working and the ideas of others on the team, including the ideas of those in authority, without fear of humiliation, and the knowledge that mistakes will be handled justly and fairly.**
>
> **The ACGME is unable to adjudicate disputes between individuals, including residents, faculty members, and staff members. However, information that suggests a pattern of behavior that violates the requirement above will trigger a careful review and, if deemed appropriate, action by the Review Committee and/or ACGME, in accordance with ACGME Policies and Procedures.**

6.12.g. **Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, should have a process for education of residents and faculty regarding unprofessional behavior and a confidential process for reporting, investigating, and addressing such concerns.** **(Core)**

Well-Being

Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical in the development of the competent, caring, and resilient physician and require proactive attention to life inside and outside of medicine. Well-being requires that physicians retain the joy in medicine while managing their own real-life stresses. Self-care and responsibility to support other members of the health care team are important components of professionalism; they are also skills that must be modeled, learned, and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training.

Residents and faculty members are at risk for burnout and depression. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, have the same responsibility to address well-being as other aspects of resident competence. Physicians and all members of the health care team share responsibility for the well-being of each other. A positive culture in a clinical learning environment models constructive behaviors, and prepares residents with the skills and attitudes needed to thrive throughout their careers.

6.13. **The responsibility of the program, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must include:**

6.13.a. **attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts resident well-being;** **(Core)**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.13.b. evaluating workplace safety data and addressing the safety of residents and faculty members; (Core)

> **Background and Intent:** This requirement emphasizes the responsibility shared by the Sponsoring Institution and its programs to gather information and utilize systems that monitor and enhance resident and faculty member safety, including physical safety. Issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to, monitoring of workplace injuries, physical or emotional violence, vehicle collisions, and emotional well-being after safety events.

6.13.c. policies and programs that encourage optimal resident and faculty member well-being; and, (Core)

> **Background and Intent:** Well-being includes having time away from work to engage with family and friends, as well as to attend to personal needs and to one's own health, including adequate rest, healthy diet, and regular exercise. The intent of this requirement is to ensure that residents have the opportunity to access medical and dental care, including mental health care, at times that are appropriate to their individual circumstances. Residents must be provided with time away from the program as needed to access care, including appointments scheduled during their working hours.

6.13.c.1. Residents must be given the opportunity to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, including those scheduled during their working hours. (Core)

6.13.d. education of residents and faculty members in:

6.13.d.1. identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance use disorders, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.13.d.2. recognition of these symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care; and, (Core)

6.13.d.3. access to appropriate tools for self-screening. (Core)

> **Background and Intent:** Programs and Sponsoring Institutions are encouraged to review materials to create systems for identification of burnout, depression, and substance use disorders. Materials and more information are available in Learn at ACGME (https://dl.acgme.org/pages/well-being-tools-resources).

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Individuals experiencing burnout, depression, a substance use disorder, and/or suicidal ideation are often reluctant to reach out for help due to the stigma associated with these conditions and may be concerned that seeking help may have a negative impact on their career. Recognizing that physicians are at increased risk in these areas, it is essential that residents and faculty members are able to report their concerns when another resident or faculty member displays signs of any of these conditions, so that the program director or other designated personnel, such as the department chair, may assess the situation and intervene as necessary to facilitate access to appropriate care. Residents and faculty members must know which personnel, in addition to the program director, have been designated with this responsibility; those personnel and the program director should be familiar with the institution's impaired physician policy and any employee health, employee assistance, and/or wellness/well-being programs within the institution. In cases of physician impairment, the program director or designated personnel should follow the policies of their institution for reporting.

6.13.e. **providing access to confidential, affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Core)**

Background and Intent: The intent of this requirement is to ensure that residents have immediate access at all times to a mental health professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Primary Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, or Licensed Professional Counselor) for urgent or emergent mental health issues. In-person, telemedicine, or telephonic means may be utilized to satisfy this requirement. Care in the Emergency Department may be necessary in some cases, but not as the primary or sole means to meet the requirement.

The reference to affordable counseling is intended to require that financial cost not be a barrier to obtaining care.

6.14. **There are circumstances in which residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, family emergencies, and medical, parental, or caregiver leave. Each program must allow an appropriate length of absence for residents unable to perform their patient care responsibilities. (Core)**

6.14.a. **The program must have policies and procedures in place to ensure coverage of patient care and ensure continuity of patient care. (Core)**

6.14.b. **These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is or was unable to provide the clinical work. (Core)**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Background and Intent: Residents may need to extend their length of training depending on length of absence and specialty board eligibility requirements. Teammates should assist colleagues in need and fairly reintegrate them upon return.

6.15. Fatigue Mitigation

Programs must educate all residents and faculty members in recognition of the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation, alertness management, and fatigue mitigation processes. (Detail)

Background and Intent: Providing medical care to patients is physically and mentally demanding. Night shifts, even for those who have had enough rest, cause fatigue. Experiencing fatigue in a supervised environment during training prepares residents for managing fatigue in practice. It is expected that programs adopt fatigue mitigation processes and ensure that there are no negative consequences and/or stigma for using fatigue mitigation strategies.

Strategies that may be used include but are not limited to strategic napping; the judicious use of caffeine; availability of other caregivers; time management to maximize sleep off-duty; learning to recognize the signs of fatigue, and self-monitoring performance and/or asking others to monitor performance; remaining active to promote alertness; maintaining a healthy diet; using relaxation techniques to fall asleep; maintaining a consistent sleep routine; exercising regularly; increasing sleep time before and after call; and ensuring sufficient sleep recovery periods.

6.16. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home. (Core)

6.17. Clinical Responsibilities

The clinical responsibilities for each resident must be based on PGY level, patient safety, resident ability, severity and complexity of patient illness/condition, and available support services. (Core)

Background and Intent: The changing clinical care environment of medicine has meant that work compression due to high complexity has increased stress on residents. Faculty members and program directors need to make sure residents function in an environment that has safe patient care and a sense of resident well-being. It is an essential responsibility of the program director to monitor resident workload. Workload should be distributed among the resident team and interdisciplinary teams to minimize work compression.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.17.a. Neurological surgery residents must practice across a a variety of care settings with varying degrees of primary patient responsibility that include first call cross-coverage on the floors and interactions with a primary intensivist, pediatric, or hospitalist service. (Core)

6.17.b. Peri-operative inpatient care must be further balanced with resident participation in the operating room. Program directors must consider the following when assigning patient loads: (Core)

6.17.b.1. adequate coverage and provision of patient care; (Core)

6.17.b.2. sufficient inpatient clinical responsibility to allow resident progression along clinical care milestones; and, (Core)

6.17.b.3. meaningful insulation of operative experiences from inpatient care to allow technical progress and facilitate resident development of organizational and triage skills. (Core)

6.18. Teamwork

Residents must care for patients in an environment that maximizes communication and promotes safe, interprofessional, team-based care in the specialty and larger health system. (Core)

Background and Intent: Effective programs will have a structure that promotes safe, interprofessional, team-based care. Optimal patient safety occurs in the setting of a coordinated interprofessional learning and working environment.

6.18.a. As members of the interprofessional health care team, residents must have key roles in diagnostic work-up, operative procedures, treatment decisions, measurement of treatment outcomes, and the communication and coordination of these activities with program faculty members and referring sources. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Advanced practice providers, audiologists, certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), child-life specialists, nurses, nutritionists, operating room technicians, pharmacists, physical and occupational therapists, physician assistants, psychologists, radiology technicians, respiratory therapists, social workers, and speech and language pathologists are examples of professional personnel who may be part of interprofessional teams. The Review Committee recognizes that the needs of specific patients change with their health statuses and circumstances. The Review Committee's intent is to ensure that the program has access to these professional and paraprofessional personnel, and that interprofessional teams be constituted as appropriate and as needed, not to mandate that all be included in every case/care environment.

6.19. Transitions of Care

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Programs must design clinical assignments to optimize transitions in patient care, including their safety, frequency, and structure. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.19.a. **Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must ensure and monitor effective, structured hand-off processes to facilitate both continuity of care and patient safety.** (Core)

6.19.b. **Programs must ensure that residents are competent in communicating with team members in the hand-off process.** (Outcome)

Clinical Experience and Education

Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must design an effective program structure that is configured to provide residents with educational and clinical experience opportunities, as well as reasonable opportunities for rest and personal activities.

Background and Intent: The terms "clinical experience and education," "clinical and educational work," and "clinical and educational work hours" replace the terms "duty hours," "duty periods," and "duty." These terms are used in response to concerns that the previous use of the term "duty" in reference to number of hours worked may have led some to conclude that residents' duty to "clock out" on time superseded their duty to their patients.

6.20. **Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week**
Clinical and educational work hours must be limited to no more than 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, including all in-house clinical and educational activities, clinical work done from home, and all moonlighting. (Core)

Background and Intent: Programs and residents have a shared responsibility to ensure that the 80-hour maximum weekly limit is not exceeded. While the requirement has been written with the intent of allowing residents to remain beyond their scheduled work periods to care for a patient or participate in an educational activity, these additional hours must be accounted for in the allocated 80 hours when averaged over four weeks.

Work from Home

While the requirement specifies that clinical work done from home must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit, the expectation remains that scheduling be structured so that residents are able to complete most work on site during scheduled clinical work hours without requiring them to take work home. The requirements acknowledge the changing landscape of medicine, including electronic health records, and the resulting increase in the amount of work residents choose to do from home. The requirement provides flexibility for residents to do this while

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ensuring that the time spent by residents completing clinical work from home is accomplished within the 80-hour weekly maximum. Types of work from home that must be counted include using an electronic health record and taking calls from home. Reading done in preparation for the following day's cases, studying, and research done from home do not count toward the 80 hours. Resident decisions to leave the hospital before their clinical work has been completed and to finish that work later from home should be made in consultation with the resident's supervisor. In such circumstances, residents should be mindful of their professional responsibility to complete work in a timely manner and to maintain patient confidentiality.

Residents are to track the time they spend on clinical work from home and to report that time to the program. Decisions regarding whether to report infrequent phone calls of very short duration will be left to the individual resident. Programs will need to factor in time residents are spending on clinical work at home when schedules are developed to ensure that residents are not working in excess of 80 hours per week, averaged over four weeks. There is no requirement that programs assume responsibility for documenting this time. Rather, the program's responsibility is ensuring that residents report their time from home and that schedules are structured to ensure that residents are not working in excess of 80 hours per week, averaged over four weeks.

[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

6.21. Mandatory Time Free of Clinical Work and Education

Residents should have eight hours off between scheduled clinical work and education periods. (Detail)

Background and Intent: There may be circumstances when residents choose to stay to care for their patients or return to the hospital with fewer than eight hours free of clinical experience and education. This occurs within the context of the 80-hour and the one-day-off-in-seven requirements. While it is expected that resident schedules will be structured to ensure that residents are provided with a minimum of eight hours off between scheduled work periods, it is recognized that residents may choose to remain beyond their scheduled time, or return to the clinical site during this time-off period, to care for a patient. The requirement preserves the flexibility for residents to make those choices. It is also noted that the 80-hour weekly limit (averaged over four weeks) is a deterrent for scheduling fewer than eight hours off between clinical and education work periods, as it would be difficult for a program to design a schedule that provides fewer than eight hours off without violating the 80-hour rule.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

6.21.a. Residents must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work and education after 24 hours of in-house call. (Core)

Background and Intent: Residents have a responsibility to return to work rested, and thus are expected to use this time away from work to get adequate rest. In support of this goal, residents are encouraged to prioritize sleep over other discretionary activities.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.21.b. Residents must be scheduled for a minimum of one day in seven free of clinical work and required education (when averaged over four weeks). At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days. (Core)

Background and Intent: The requirement provides flexibility for programs to distribute days off in a manner that meets program and resident needs. It is strongly recommended that residents' preference regarding how their days off are distributed be considered as schedules are developed. It is desirable that days off be distributed throughout the month, but some residents may prefer to group their days off to have a "golden weekend," meaning a consecutive Saturday and Sunday free from work. The requirement for one free day in seven should not be interpreted as precluding a golden weekend. Where feasible, schedules may be designed to provide residents with a weekend, or two consecutive days, free of work. The applicable Review Committee will evaluate the number of consecutive days of work and determine whether they meet educational objectives. Programs are encouraged to distribute days off in a fashion that optimizes resident well-being, and educational and personal goals. It is noted that a day off is defined in the ACGME Glossary of Terms as "one (1) continuous 24-hour period free from all administrative, clinical, and educational activities."

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.22. Maximum Clinical Work and Education Period Length

Clinical and educational work periods for residents must not exceed 24 hours of continuous scheduled clinical assignments. (Core)

6.22.a. Up to four hours of additional time may be used for activities related to patient safety, such as providing effective transitions of care, and/or resident education. Additional patient care responsibilities must not be assigned to a resident during this time. (Core)

Background and Intent: The additional time referenced in 6.22.a. should not be used for the care of new patients. It is essential that the resident continue to function as a member of the team in an environment where other members of the team can assess resident fatigue, and that supervi-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

sion for post-call residents is provided. This 24 hours and up to an additional four hours must occur within the context of 80-hour weekly limit, averaged over four weeks.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.23. Clinical and Educational Work Hour Exceptions
In rare circumstances, after handing off all other responsibilities, a resident, on their own initiative, may elect to remain or return to the clinical site in the following circumstances: to continue to provide care to a single severely ill or unstable patient; to give humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or patient's family; or to attend unique educational events. (Detail)

6.23.a. These additional hours of care or education must be counted toward the 80-hour weekly limit. (Detail)

Background and Intent: This requirement is intended to provide residents with some control over their schedules by providing the flexibility to voluntarily remain beyond the scheduled responsibilities under the circumstances described above. It is important to note that a resident may remain to attend a conference, or return for a conference later in the day, only if the decision is made voluntarily. Residents must not be required to stay. Programs allowing residents to remain or return beyond the scheduled work and clinical education period must ensure that the decision to remain is initiated by the resident and that residents are not coerced. This additional time must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit.

6.24. A Review Committee may grant rotation-specific exceptions for up to 10 percent or a maximum of 88 clinical and educational work hours to individual programs based on a sound educational rationale.

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 6.24. has been suspended]

6.24.a. In preparing a request for an exception, the program director must follow the clinical and educational work hour exception policy from the *ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures*. (Detail)

[Pending the outcome of the major revision of the Common Program Requirements, enforcement of Common Program Requirement 6.24.a. has been suspended]

Background and Intent: Exceptions may be granted for specific rotations if the program can justify the increase based on criteria specified by the Review Committee. Review Committees may opt not to permit exceptions.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

The underlying philosophy for this requirement is that while it is expected that all residents should be able to train within an 80-hour work week, it is recognized that some programs may include rotations with alternate structures based on the nature of the specialty. DIO/GMEC approval is required before the request will be considered by the Review Committee.

6.24.b. The Review Committee will consider requests for a clinical and educational work hour exception only for residents at the PGY-2 level and above. (Core)

6.24.c. Programs submitting a first-time exception request must have a site visit prior to consideration by the Review Committee. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Requests for a continued exception will be considered only at the second Review Committee meeting of a calendar year. Details for what to include in such a request are available on the Neurological Surgery section of the ACGME website. All required documentation, including the Site Visit Report when needed, must be received by the posted agenda closing date in order for a request to be considered at a specific meeting.

6.25. Moonlighting

Moonlighting must not interfere with the ability of the resident to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational program, and must not interfere with the resident's fitness for work nor compromise patient safety. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.25.a. Time spent by residents in internal and external moonlighting (as defined in the ACGME Glossary of Terms) must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. (Core)

6.25.b. PGY-1 residents are not permitted to moonlight. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

6.26. In-House Night Float

Night float must occur within the context of the 80-hour and one-day-off-in-seven requirements. (Core)

6.26.a. Night float should be limited to four months per year, and must not exceed six months per year. (Detail)

6.27. Maximum In-House On-Call Frequency

Residents must be scheduled for in-house call no more frequently than every third night (when averaged over a four-week period). (Core)

6.28. At-Home Call

Time spent on patient care activities by residents on at-home call must count toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. The frequency of at-home call is not

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

subject to the every-third-night limitation, but must satisfy the requirement for one day in seven free of clinical work and education, when averaged over four weeks. (Core)

[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

6.28.a. At-home call must not be so frequent or taxing as to preclude rest or reasonable personal time for each resident. (Core)

Background and Intent: As noted in 6.20., clinical work done from home when a resident is taking at-home call must count toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. This acknowledges the often significant amount of time residents devote to clinical activities when taking at-home call, and ensures that taking at-home call does not result in residents routinely working more than 80 hours per week. At-home call activities that must be counted include responding to phone calls and other forms of communication, as well as documentation, such as entering notes in an electronic health record. Activities such as reading about the next day's case, studying, or research activities do not count toward the 80-hour weekly limit.

In their evaluation of residency/fellowship programs, Review Committees will look at the overall impact of at-home call on resident/fellow rest and personal time.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

7. Frequently Asked Questions: Neurological Surgery

FAQs related to the Common Program Requirements

Last updated July 2026

Section 1: Oversight

Questions concerning *"There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. (Core)"* (1.3)

Q: What is the purpose of program letters of agreement (PLAs)?

A: PLAs provide details on faculty members, supervision, evaluation, educational content, length of assignment, and policies and procedures for each required assignment that occurs outside of an accredited program's Sponsoring Institution. These documents are intended to protect the program's residents/fellows by ensuring an appropriate educational experience under adequate supervision.

Questions concerning *"There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. (Core)"* (1.3)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Q: Under what circumstances are PLAs required?

A: There must be PLAs between an accredited program and all participating sites to which residents/fellows rotate for required education or assignments. PLAs are not required for participating sites under the same governance as the program's Sponsoring Institution. PLAs are not required for elective rotations for individual residents and fellows, but programs and Sponsoring Institutions may determine if there are local expectations for a PLA or similar agreement.

Questions concerning *"There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. (Core)"* (1.3)

Q: Are PLAs necessary for "courses," such as the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology course or the Bellevue Hospital Toxicology Course?

A: These types of courses are not examples of participating sites, and therefore do not require PLAs.

Questions concerning *"There must be a program letter of agreement (PLA) between the program and each participating site that governs the relationship between the program and the participating site providing a required assignment. (Core)"* (1.3)

Q: Who should sign the PLAs?

A: It is the responsibility of the designated institutional official (DIO), in collaboration with the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) of the Sponsoring Institution, to establish and administer the local policies and procedures regarding PLAs and determine the individuals authorized to sign the PLAs.

Section 2: Personnel

Questions concerning *"The program director and, as applicable, the program's leadership team, must be provided with support adequate for administration of the program based upon its size and configuration. (Core)"* (2.4) , *"At a minimum, the program director must be provided with the dedicated time and support specified below for administration of the program. Additional support for program leadership must be provided as specified below. This additional support may be for the program director only or divided among the program director and one or more associate (or assistant) program directors. (Core)"* (2.4.a) , *"The program coordinator must be provided with dedicated time and support adequate for administration of the program based upon its size and configuration. (Core)"* (2.12.a) , *"At a minimum, the program coordinator must be provided with the dedicated time and support specified below for administration of the program. (Core)"* (2.12.b)

Q: Are there circumstances in which a Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its programs, is required to provide support and dedicated time that exceeds the minimum specified in the requirements?

A: The dedicated time and support requirements for ACGME activities specified in 2.4. and 2.4.a. for program leadership, 2.12.a. and 2.12.b. for program coordinators, and section 2.11. for those specialties that specify a minimum level of support for core faculty members, are minimum requirements, recognizing that, depending on the unique needs of the program, additional support may be warranted. The need to ensure adequate resources, including adequate support and dedicated time for the program director, is also addressed

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

in Institutional Requirements 2.2.-2.2.d. The amount of support and dedicated time needed for individual programs will vary based on a number of factors and may exceed the minimum specified in the applicable specialty-/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements. It is expected that the Sponsoring Institution, in partnership with its accredited programs, will ensure support for program directors, core faculty members, and program coordinators to fulfill their program responsibilities effectively. If the Institutional Review Committee determines that support and dedicated time for one or more programs within a Sponsoring Institution is inadequate, it may issue a citation even if the minimum specified in the applicable specialty-/subspecialty-specific Program Requirements has been met.

Note that Review Committees may choose to specify minimum time and support for the program director only, or may specify minimum time and support that may be divided among the program director and one or more associate or assistant program directors. Questions regarding the requirements for a specific specialty should be directed to the Review Committee Executive Director.

Section 5: Evaluation

Questions concerning *"Clinical Competency Committee"* (5.3)

Q: What is the role of the program director on the Clinical Competency Committee (CCC)?

A: The requirements regarding the CCC do not preclude or limit a program director's participation on the committee, however, programs should consult with Review Committee staff for any specialty or subspecialty-specific guidance. The intent is to leave flexibility for each program to decide the best structure for its own circumstances. Still, a program should consider: its program director's other roles as resident/fellow advocate, advisor, and confidante; the impact of the program director's presence on the other CCC members' discussions and decisions; the size of the program faculty; and other program-relevant factors. The program director has final responsibility for the program's evaluation and promotion decisions.

Questions concerning *"Clinical Competency Committee"* (5.3)

Q: What is the role of the program coordinator on the CCC?

A: Program coordinators play a critical role in their programs and may, through the program's resident/fellow evaluation system, provide valuable insight on resident/fellow performance in areas such as interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, and professionalism. Further, the program coordinator may, at the program director's discretion, attend CCC meetings to support the activities of the CCC, such as collation of data on each resident/fellow, taking meeting minutes, recording decisions, and managing the submission of Milestones data to the ACGME. However, evaluation of resident/fellow competence related to the Milestones for patient care and medical knowledge is a vital responsibility of the CCC and these assessments should be made by individuals with background and experience in health care. Therefore, program coordinators, although they may administratively support the committee and take part in the 360 assessments of the residents/fellows, may not serve as voting members of the CCC.

Questions concerning *"At a minimum, the Clinical Competency Committee must include three members of the program faculty, at least one of whom is a core faculty member. (Core)"* (5.3.a)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Q: How can small programs have three program faculty members on the CCC?

A: The intent is to have enough members to broaden the input on each resident's/fellow's evaluation. Program faculty representation can include more than physician faculty members, such as other physicians and non-physicians who teach and evaluate the program's residents/fellows. For example, a fellowship may include faculty members from the affiliated residency program or from required rotations in other specialties.

Questions concerning *"At a minimum, the Clinical Competency Committee must include three members of the program faculty, at least one of whom is a core faculty member. (Core)"* (5.3.a)

Q: What role can program residents, including chief residents who have not completed the program, play on the CCC?

A: Program residents and chief residents in accredited years of the program may provide input to the CCC Chair and/or the program director, outside the context of CCC meetings, through the evaluation system. However, to ensure that residents' peers are not involved in promotion and graduation decisions, and that they are not involved in recommendations for remediation or disciplinary actions, these residents may not serve as CCC members or attend CCC meetings.

Section 6: The Learning and Working Environment

Questions concerning *"Residents and faculty members must receive data on quality metrics and benchmarks related to their patient populations. (Core)"* (6.4)

Q: With regards to the requirement relating to provision of data to residents/fellows and faculty members on quality metrics and benchmarks related to their patient populations, is the expectation that individual data regarding clinical performance must be provided?

A: Providing individual, specialty-specific data is desirable, but not required. The requirement seeks to ensure that quality metrics used by the Sponsoring Institution are shared with residents/fellows and faculty members. Examples of metrics include, but are not limited to, those provided by the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, Press Gainey, and National Surgical Quality Improvement Program.

Questions concerning *"The program must demonstrate that the appropriate level of supervision in place for all residents is based on each resident's level of training and ability, as well as patient complexity and acuity. Supervision may be exercised through a variety of methods, as appropriate to the situation. (Core)"* (6.6) , *"Direct Supervision"* (6.7) , *"The program must define when physical presence of a supervising physician is required. (Core)"* (6.8)

Q: How should the appropriate level of supervision be determined for each resident or fellow?

A: The assignment of progressive responsibility for patient care to residents and fellows is an essential component of graduate medical education and is necessary to prepare residents and fellows to be independent practitioners. While decisions regarding the appropriate level of supervision are made by the program director in consultation with the CCC, the Common Program Requirements provide a framework for the progression from direct supervision to oversight. The program director determines the level of supervision required for an individual resident or fellow both by assessing the abilities and competence of the resident/fellow

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

and the needs of the individual patient. Therefore, the level of supervision required for a resident or fellow may vary based on the circumstances.

Questions concerning *"PGY-1 residents must initially be supervised directly, only as described in the above definition. (Core)"* (6.7.a)

Q: Can PGY-1 residents take at-home call, and if so, what are the work hour restrictions for this?

A: PGY-1 residents are not initially allowed to take at-home call because appropriate supervision (either direct supervision or indirect supervision with direct supervision immediately available) is not possible when a resident is on at-home call. However, a Review Committee may specify the circumstances and achieved competencies required for residents to progress to be supervised indirectly with direct supervision available at some point after the beginning and before the end of the PGY-1. Program directors should review the specialty-specific Program Requirements for further clarification.

Questions concerning *"The program director, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must provide a culture of professionalism that supports patient safety and personal responsibility. (Core)"* (6.12.d) , *"Residents and faculty members must demonstrate an understanding of their personal role in the safety and welfare of patients entrusted to their care, including the ability to report unsafe conditions and safety events. (Core)"* (6.12.e) , *"Moonlighting"* (6.25) , *"PGY-1 residents are not permitted to moonlight. (Core)"* (6.25.b)

Q: In addition to the 80-hour maximum weekly limit, do all other clinical and educational work hour rules apply to moonlighting (maximum clinical and educational work period length, minimum time off between shifts, etc.)?

A: The hours spent moonlighting are counted toward the total hours worked for the week. No other clinical and educational work hour requirements apply, but the following requirements do:

- 6.25 “Moonlighting must not interfere with the ability of the resident/fellow to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational program, and must not interfere with the resident’s/fellow’s fitness for work nor compromise patient safety.”
- 6.12.d.-6.12.e.“The program director, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must provide a culture of professionalism that supports patient safety and personal responsibility. Residents/Fellows and faculty members must demonstrate an understanding of their personal role in the safety and welfare of patients entrusted to their care, including the ability to report unsafe conditions and safety events.”

Questions concerning *"identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance use disorders, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence, including means to assist those who experience these conditions; (Core)"* (6.13.d.1)

Q: Can residents/fellows be required to use vacation or sick time when attending appointments during scheduled working hours?

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

A: The requirements do not specify whether residents/fellows will be required to use vacation or sick time for medical, dental, and mental health appointments. Programs should comply with their institution's policies regarding time off for such appointments.

The intent of this requirement is to ensure that residents and fellows are able to attend appointments as needed, and that their work schedule not prevent them from seeking care when they need it, including during scheduled call days.

Questions concerning *"Transitions of Care"* (6.19)

Q: What are the ACGME's expectations regarding transitions of care, and how should programs and institutions monitor effective transitions of care and minimize the number of such transitions?

A: Transitions of care are critical elements in patient safety and must be organized such that complete and accurate clinical information on all involved patients is transmitted between the outgoing and incoming individuals and/or teams responsible for the specific patient or group of patients. Sponsoring Institutions and programs are expected to have a documented process in place for ensuring the effectiveness of transitions. Scheduling of on-call assignments should be optimized to ensure a minimal number of transitions, and there should be documentation of the process involved in arriving at the final schedule. Specific schedules will depend upon various factors, including the size of the program, the acuity and quantity of the workload, and the level of resident/fellow education.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: What are the ACGME's expectations regarding monitoring of clinical and educational work hours for all accredited programs?

A: The ACGME requires that Sponsoring Institutions and programs monitor residents'/fellows' clinical and educational work hours, including work done from home (as applicable), to ensure they comply with the requirements, but does not specify how monitoring and tracking of clinical and educational work hours should be accomplished. The ACGME does not mandate a specific monitoring approach since the ideal approach should be tailored to each program and its Sponsoring Institution.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: Do the ACGME Common Program Requirements related to clinical and educational work hours apply to research activities?

A: The clinical and educational work hour requirements pertain to all required hours in the program (the only exceptions are reading and self-learning). When research is a formal part of the residency/fellowship and occurs during the accredited years of the program, research hours or any combination of research and patient care activities must comply with the weekly limit on hours and other pertinent clinical and educational work hour requirements.

When programs offer an additional research year that is not part of the accredited years, or when residents/fellows conduct research on their own time, making these hours identical to other personal pursuits, these hours do not count toward the limit on clinical and educational work hours. The combined hours spent on self-directed research and program-required

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

activities should meet the test for a reasonably rested and alert resident/fellow when the resident/fellow participates in patient care.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: What is included in the definition of clinical and educational work hours under the requirement limiting them to 80 hours per week?

A: Clinical and educational work hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the residency/fellowship program. This includes inpatient and outpatient clinical care, in-house call, short call, night float and day float, transfer of patient care, and administrative activities related to patient care, such as completing medical records, ordering and reviewing lab tests, and signing orders. For call from home, time devoted to clinical work done from home and time spent in the hospital after being called in to provide patient care count toward the 80-hour weekly limit. Types of work from home that must be counted include using an electronic health record and taking calls. Reading done in preparation for the following day's cases, studying, and research done from home do not count toward the 80 hours.

Hours spent on activities that are required in the accreditation requirements, such as membership on a hospital committee, or that are accepted practice in residency/fellowship programs, such as residents'/fellows' participation in interviewing residency/fellowship candidates, must be included in the count of clinical and educational work hours.

Time residents and fellows devote to military commitments counts toward the 80-hour limit only if that time is spent providing patient care.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: If some of a program's residents/fellows attend a conference that requires travel, how should the hours be counted for clinical and educational work hour compliance?

A: If attendance at the conference is required by the program, or if the resident/fellow is a representative for the program (e.g., presenting a paper or poster), the hours should be included as clinical and educational work hours. Travel time and non-conference hours while away do not meet the definition of "clinical and educational work hours" in the ACGME requirements.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: Why do the requirements specify that clinical work done from home must count toward the 80-hour weekly maximum, averaged over four weeks?

A: The requirements acknowledge the changes in medicine, including electronic health records, and the increase in the amount of work residents and fellows choose to do from home. Resident/Fellow decisions to complete work at home should be made in consultation with the resident's/fellow's supervisor. In such circumstances, residents/fellows should be mindful of their professional responsibility to complete work in a timely manner and to maintain patient confidentiality. The requirement provides flexibility for residents/fellows to do this while ensuring that the time spent completing clinical work from home is accomplished within the 80-hour weekly maximum.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Questions concerning *"Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week"* (6.20)

Q: How should the averaging of the clinical and educational work hour requirements (e.g., 80-hour weekly limit, one day free of clinical and educational work every week, and call no more frequently than every third night) be handled? For example, what should be done if a resident/fellow takes a vacation week?

A: Averaging must occur by rotation. This is done over one of the following: a four-week period; a one-month period (28-31 days); or the period of the rotation if it is shorter than four weeks. When rotations are shorter than four weeks in length, averaging must be made over these shorter assignments. This avoids heavy and light assignments being combined to achieve compliance.

If a resident/fellow takes vacation or other leave, the ACGME requires that vacation or leave days be omitted from the numerator and the denominator for calculating clinical and educational work hours, call frequency, or days off. The requirements do not permit a "rolling" average, because this may mask compliance problems by averaging across high and low clinical and educational work hour rotations. The rotation with the greatest hours and frequency of call must comply with the common clinical and educational work hour requirements.

Questions concerning *"Residents must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work and education after 24 hours of in-house call. (Core)"* (6.21.a)

Q: If a post-call resident/fellow remains on site for up to four additional hours as described in the requirements, does the required 14-hour time-off period begin at the end of the scheduled 24-hour period, or when the resident/fellow leaves the hospital?

A: The 14-hour time-off period begins when the resident/fellow completes all required clinical and educational work, regardless of when the resident/fellow was scheduled to leave.

Questions concerning *"Residents must be scheduled for a minimum of one day in seven free of clinical work and required education (when averaged over four weeks). At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days. (Core)"* (6.21.b)

Q: Since the requirements state that residents/fellows must be provided with one day in seven free from all responsibilities, with one day defined as one continuous 24-hour period, how should programs interpret this requirement if the "day off" occurs after a resident's/fellow's on-call day?

A: The requirements specify a 24-hour day off. This day should ideally be a calendar day (i.e., the resident/fellow wakes up at home and has a whole day available). It is not permissible to have the day off regularly or frequently scheduled on a resident's/fellow's post-call day, but in smaller programs this may occasionally be necessary. Note that in this case, a resident/fellow would need to leave the hospital post-call early enough to allow for 24 hours off from clinical and educational work. Because call from home does not require a rest period, the day after home call may be used as a day off.

Questions concerning *"Maximum Clinical Work and Education Period Length"* (6.22)

Q: What activities are permitted during the four hours allowed for activities related to patient safety and/or resident/fellow education?

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

A: Residents/fellows who have completed a 24-hour clinical and educational work period may spend up to an additional four hours on site to ensure an appropriate, effective, and safe transition of care (including rounds), to maintain continuity of patient care, and to participate in educational activities such as conferences. During this four-hour period, residents/fellows must not be permitted to participate in the care of new patients in any patient care setting; must not be assigned to outpatient clinics, including continuity clinics; and must not be assigned to participate in a new procedure, such as an elective scheduled surgery. Residents/fellows who have satisfactorily completed the transition of care may attend an educational conference that occurs during this four-hour period.

Questions concerning *"At-Home Call"* (6.28)

Q: Is it permissible for residents/fellows to take call from home for extended periods, such as a month?

A: No. The requirement for one day free every week prohibits being assigned home call for an entire month. Assignment of a partial month (more than six days but fewer than 28 days) is possible. However, keep in mind that call from home is appropriate if service intensity and frequency of being called is low. Program directors are expected to monitor the intensity and workload resulting from home call through periodic assessment of workload and intensity of in-house activities.

Questions concerning *"At-Home Call"* (6.28) , *"At-home call must not be so frequent or taxing as to preclude rest or reasonable personal time for each resident. (Core)"* (6.28.a)

Q: Which requirements apply to time in the hospital after being called in from home call?

A: For call taken from home (home or pager call), the time a resident/fellow spends in the hospital after being called in counts toward the weekly clinical and educational work hour limit. The only other numeric clinical and educational work hour requirement that applies is the one day free of clinical and educational work every week that must be free of all patient care responsibilities, which includes at-home call. Program directors must monitor the intensity and workload resulting from at-home call through periodic assessment of the frequency of being called into the hospital, and the length and intensity of the in-house activities.

When residents/fellows assigned to at-home call return to the hospital to care for patients, a new time-off period is not initiated, and therefore the requirement for eight hours between shifts does not apply. The frequency and duration of clinical work done from home and time returning to the hospital must not preclude rest or reasonable personal time for residents/fellows.

Other

Q: Can the clinical and educational work hour requirements be relaxed over holidays or during other times when a hospital is short-staffed, during periods when some residents/fellows are ill or on leave, or when there is an unusually large patient census or demand for care?

A: The ACGME expects that clinical and educational work hours in any given four-week period comply with all applicable requirements. This includes months with holidays, during which institutions may have fewer staff members available. During the holiday period, scheduling

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

for the rotation (generally four weeks or a month) must comply with the common and specialty-specific clinical and educational work hour requirements. Further, the schedule during the holidays themselves may not violate common clinical and educational work hour requirements (such as the requirement for adequate rest between clinical and educational work periods), or specialty-specific requirements.

Q: Where are the ACGME Resident/Fellow and Faculty Survey -Common Program Requirements Crosswalk documents located?

A: The crosswalk documents for the Resident/Fellow and Faculty Surveys can be found on the ACGME website here. These resources help programs, residents, fellows, and faculty understand and interpret their ACGME Resident/Fellow and Faculty Survey results by mapping ACGME survey questions to the corresponding Common Program Requirements.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)