ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Ophthalmology including FAQs

Revision Information

An omission of the Introduction, Sponsoring Institution section, Requirement 1.1, and Participating Sites section occurred between 7/1/2026 and 7/15/2026. These requirements have been updated and are included in this document

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 6
- Resources 7
- Other Learners and Health Care Personnel 9

Section 2: Personnel 9
- Program Director 9
- Faculty 15
- Program Coordinator 19
- Other Program Personnel 21

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

Section 4: Educational Program 23
- Length of Program 23
- Educational Components 23
- ACGME Competencies 24
- Curriculum Organization and Resident Experiences 31
- Scholarship 34
- Program Responsibilities 35
- Faculty Scholarly Activity 35
- Resident Scholarly Activity 36

Section 5: Evaluation 36
- Clinical Competency Committee 39
- Faculty Evaluation 40
- Program Evaluation and Improvement 41
- Board Certification 43

Section 6: The Learning and Working Environment 44
- Culture of Safety 44
- Quality Metrics 45
- Supervision and Accountability 45
- Professionalism 48
- Well-Being 50
- Fatigue Mitigation 52
- Clinical Responsibilities 53
- Teamwork 53
- Transitions of Care 53
- Clinical Experience and Education 54

Frequently Asked Questions: Ophthalmology 59

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education

in Ophthalmology

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

Ophthalmologists are physicians who provide patient-centered medical and surgical care to individuals across all ages presenting with disorders of the eye, adnexa, surrounding face, and visual system. The practice of ophthalmology encompasses the understanding of systemic diseases that interact with or manifest themselves within the eye and visual system. Ophthalmologists

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

apply their medical knowledge of optics to diagnose and treat refractive error both medically and surgically.

Ophthalmologists integrate patient history, physical examination, imaging, and laboratory data to diagnose and manage complex ophthalmic disease, collaborating with other medical specialties as necessary. Ophthalmologists manage patients holistically by also considering their psychosocial concerns. Ophthalmologists understand how systemic diseases affect the eye and visual system and how the social determinants of health and the environment impact ocular diseases. They identify barriers to care and communicate with patients to optimize, preserve, and protect visual function.

Ophthalmologists may elect to pursue additional graduate medical education, and specialize in the fields of cornea, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, ophthalmic oncology, ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery, pediatric ophthalmology, retina, uveitis, and other areas of focus. Ophthalmologists are lifelong learners who stay current with advanced and emerging technologies. Ophthalmologists adapt both their knowledge and their clinical care to the evolving needs of their local, national, and global communities. They understand and manage the business of medicine to ensure high-value, cost-conscious care for their patients. They apply a data-driven approach to addressing the clinical problems of their patients and communities.

Ophthalmologists are leaders of effective eye care teams, optimizing relationships and supporting their own and their teams' well-being. They act ethically in all aspects of their professional and public lives. Ophthalmologists are culturally sensitive and demonstrate empathy for all patients. Ophthalmologists clearly explain medical information to educate patients and their caregivers. They advocate for the needs of their patients using shared decision-making to value the perspective of patients, patients' families, and other members of the health care team.

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**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

1.3. 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)

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**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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. Participating sites should not require excessive travel without appropriate housing provisions. (Detail)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Rotations at distant sites that significantly augment residents' overall educational experience may be offered by programs. When the program requires rotations that necessitate commuting to a geographically distant site three or more days per week, it is the program's responsibility to ensure that residents are not unduly burdened by travel to these sites and that the educational justification is well documented. Elective rotations are not subject to these requirements.

1.6.b. Elective international rotation(s) must not be longer than one month in total over the course of the residency. (Core)

1.6.b.1. Surgical procedures completed during an elective international rotation must not be counted toward the required minimum numbers of procedures. (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. The program must provide access to diagnostic equipment necessary for patient care, including equipment designed for corneal topography/tomography, ophthalmic photography (including fluorescein angiography), optical coherence tomography, pachymetry, perimetry, and ultrasonography. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

1.7.b. The outpatient area of each participating site must have a minimum of one examining room or lane for each resident in the clinic. (Core)

1.7.c. Each participating site where residents rotate for intraocular ophthalmic surgical education must have at least one operating room equipped for ophthalmic surgery that includes an operating microscope. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

1.7.d. Each inpatient facility where residents rotate for ophthalmology education must have dedicated ophthalmic equipment necessary to perform a comprehensive eye examination, including a slit lamp and an indirect ophthalmoscope. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is essential for patient care that facilities provide adequate equipment to conduct examinations. For sites where residents and faculty members are providing consultative services, those clinical spaces will include, at a minimum, a room that can completely darken, basic ophthalmic equipment in proper functioning condition, and safe and secure storage to access this equipment.

1.7.e. Surgical skills development resource(s), including a hands-on surgical skills laboratory, must be available. This may be a wet lab, dry lab, or surgical simulation lab. (Core)

1.7.f. Each resident must be provided with a variety of clinical ophthalmological problems in children and adults needed to develop competence in diagnostic, therapeutic, and procedural skills. (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 as-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

sist 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)

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 individual 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.

2.3.a. The program director must be appointed for a term of at least three years. (Core)

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 support equal to a dedicated minimum of 0.2 FTE for administration of the program. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.4.b. Program leadership, in aggregate, must be provided with support equal to a dedicated minimum time specified below for administration of the program. This may be time spent by 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)
1-8	0.2
9-16	0.3
17-24	0.4
25-32	0.5
33 ore more	0.6

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,

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 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.

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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** Ophthalmology **or by the American Osteopathic Board of** Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery**, or specialty qualifications that are acceptable to the Review Committee.** (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

2.5.a.1. The program director must be a member of the medical staff at the Sponsoring Institution, primary clinical site, or a participating site acceptable to the Review Committee. (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.

2.6. **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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

The program director creates an environment where respectful discussion 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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

> **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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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

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

2.7.a. Residents must have ready access to faculty members with a broad range of ophthalmic expertise, including contact lens, cornea, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmology, ophthalmic pathology, oculofacial plastic and reconstructive surgery, pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, refractive surgery, retina, uveitis, and visual rehabilitation. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is understood that for certain areas of expertise, external resources and faculty members may be used to provide specific educational and patient care experiences, including via telecommunication.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

> **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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 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.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Transforming medical education requires time and support for dedicated faculty development activities to improve skills in assessment of learners and to adopt a growth mindset.

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 Ophthalmology **or the American Osteopathic Board of** Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery**, or possess qualifications judged acceptable to the Review Committee.** **(Core)**

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

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;**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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;**
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.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Programs can support time-intensive faculty educational activities, such as surgical wet lab, with a variety of methods, including protected time or compensation models, or support for promotion and tenure.

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

2.11.b. In addition to the program director, there must be a minimum of one core faculty member for every five residents. (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Core faculty members may be part-time provided that they meet the requirements outlined in 2.11.

2.11.c. Core faculty members must spend a minimum of one half day per week on average on resident education, including clinical and non-clinical time. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The core faculty members devote significant time to resident education, reflected by active engagement in activities such as application review; curriculum development; educational committee participation; clinic supervision and debrief; surgical education, including preoperative and postoperative debrief; wet lab and simulation instruction; departmental lectures and conferences; and mentorship.

Background and Intent: The core faculty time requirements address the role and responsibilities of core faculty members, including both clinical and non-clinical activities, and the corresponding time to meet those responsibilities. The requirements do not address how this is accomplished, and do not mandate dedicated or protected time for these activities. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, will determine how compliance with the requirements is achieved.

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
1-8	0.5
9-16	0.8
17-24	1.0
25-32	1.2
33 ore more	1.4

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 responsibilities, 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]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

3.3.a.1. Residents entering a joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format program should have completed 12 months of preliminary clinical education in an ACGME-accredited program sponsored by the same institution that sponsors the ophthalmology residency program and that meets the requirements defined in 4.11.b. – 4.11.b.2. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Residents that have completed a PGY-1 outside of the integrated or joint ophthalmology format may enter the program and may advance to the PGY-2 curriculum upon completion of the required three months of ophthalmology or with approval from the Review Committee.

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

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

[See FAQ in Appendix]

3.4.a. There must be a minimum of one resident in each year of the program. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

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)**

[See FAQ in Appendix]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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**

Education in ophthalmology must be provided in one of two formats: (Core)

1. Integrated ophthalmology format: The educational program in ophthalmology must be 48 months in length and be under the authority and direction of the ophthalmology program director. (Core)
2. Joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format: The educational program must include a preliminary year of graduate medical education followed by 36 months in an ophthalmology program. (Core)

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

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)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Ophthalmologists understand how systemic diseases affect the eye and visual system and mitigate the impact of social determinants of health on ocular diseases.

Residents must demonstrate competence in:

[See FAQ in Appendix]

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)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

improving the clinician's well-being as a means to improve patient care and reduce burnout among residents, fellows, and practicing physicians.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Ophthalmologists are physicians who provide patient-centered medical and surgical care to individuals across all ages presenting with disorders of the eye, adnexa, surrounding face, and visual system. The practice of ophthalmology encompasses the understanding of systemic diseases that interact with or manifest themselves within the eye and visual system. Ophthalmologists apply their medical knowledge of optics to diagnose and treat refractive error both medically and surgically.

4.4.a. Residents must be able to provide emergent, routine, and preventive care in outpatient and hospital-based settings. (Outcome)

4.4.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in preoperative evaluation, including risk assessment, choice of procedure, and obtaining informed consent. (Outcome)

4.4.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in postoperative evaluation, including management and ethical disclosure of complications and patient-centered communication. (Outcome)

4.4.d. Residents must demonstrate competence in the appropriate use and interpretation of relevant diagnostic modalities (ophthalmic, laboratory, and radiographic). (Outcome)

4.4.e. Residents must demonstrate critical thinking in the prioritization of the differential diagnosis, clinical decision-making, and management. (Outcome)

4.4.f. Residents must demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between systemic and ophthalmic conditions, and the ability to work across specialties in the management of complex patients. (Outcome)

4.4.g. Residents must demonstrate the ability to identify and address patient-specific barriers to eye care with respect to underserved groups. (Outcome)

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)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Surgical and medical practice are rapidly evolving, and so it remains important to continue to build skills through simulation and continuing medical education in order to provide safe and modern patient care.

4.5.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in the evaluation of visual function for adults and children; slit lamp; biomicroscopy; direct and indirect ophthalmoscopy; sensorimotor exam; and refraction. (Outcome)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.5.b. Residents must demonstrate competence in the performance and management of complications of cataract surgery, including complex cases, and all of the surgical procedures required by the specialty (refer to minimum case numbers). (Outcome)

4.5.c. Residents must demonstrate competence in the interpretation of ophthalmic testing, including but not limited to, biometry, corneal topography/tomography, fluorescein angiography, fundus photography, ophthalmic ultrasound, optical coherence tomography, and visual fields. (Outcome)

4.5.d. Residents must understand teleophthalmology devices and systems for screening, monitoring, and delivering optimal care, including interpretation of images, quality control, and referral process. (Outcome)

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)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is important to recognize current and emerging areas of specialization within ophthalmology. The field of ophthalmology encompasses knowledge of anatomy, physiology, optics, and pathology as it relates to the diagnosis and treatment of cataract, cornea and external disease, glaucoma, neuro-ophthalmic disorders, ocular trauma, orbital and oculofacial disorders, pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus, ophthalmic manifestations of systemic diseases, uveitis, visual rehabilitation, and vitreoretinal diseases. Additional areas of focus may evolve with time with population and environmental changes. It is important that residents are aware of emerging conditions both nationally and internationally.

4.6.a. Residents must demonstrate competence in their knowledge of the basic and clinical sciences in all areas of ophthalmology. (Outcome)

4.6.b. Residents must demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate new diagnostic entities, novel medical and surgical treatments, and new technologies, including evidence for effectiveness and significance, ethics, cost implications for the system and patients, and how this may impact access to care. (Outcome)

4.6.c. Residents must understand the indications and preoperative and postoperative considerations for all surgeries in which they participate. (Outcome)

4.6.d. Residents must understand the principles and physics of ophthalmic equipment (e.g., phacoemulsification, lasers, optical coherence tomography). (Outcome)

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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

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)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Analyzing practice includes tracking and analyzing surgical outcomes and adherence to best practice guidelines.

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 learning, evaluating, and implementing new diagnostic modalities and medical and surgical treatments. (Outcome)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: As ophthalmology is a specialty that is highly reliant on technology for diagnosis and management, it is critical that ophthalmologists understand how to appraise and adopt new technologies.

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)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Health literacy, language, and culture can influence a patient's understanding of their condition. It is the responsibility of the physician to ensure that patients understand their diagnosis and

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

recommended treatments, utilizing a variety of communication methods (e.g., interpreter services, model eye, teach-back technique).

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)

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

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 effective leadership in interprofessional team settings that include ophthalmic technicians and support staff. These activities include identifying and communicating goals for the team (e.g., leading a procedural time out or clinical huddle, quality improvement initiative) and implementing feedback to improve the function of the team. (Outcome)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Effective leadership qualities include, but are not limited to, effective communication, giving and receiving feedback, clarifying goals, and managing team dynamics.

4.8.i. Residents must adhere to best practices for the use of electronic health records (EHRs) and understand the principles of effective documentation (accurate, clear, concise, and patient-centered). (Outcome)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The primary function of the medical record is to support patient care. Best practices in EHR documentation, such as avoiding copying/forwarding without editing, promote patient safety and facilitate primary and secondary uses (e.g., patient billing, quality improvement, research) of the EHR.

4.8.j. Residents must demonstrate the ability to effectively and empathetically discuss unexpected diagnoses and procedural or surgical complications with patients and/or their caregivers. (Outcome)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.8.k. Residents must demonstrate competence in addressing difficult patient situations, such as harassment or mistreatment by patients or their families. (Outcome)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is well recognized that residents may witness and/or experience mistreatment. Residents must be able to recognize and address discrimination or abuse. In certain situations, this requires balancing the need to support a distressed individual with personal and/or team welfare. Simulation is one method to educate and build competence in these skills.

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.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is well established that social determinants of health have a greater impact on health outcomes of individuals and populations than direct medical care. Therefore, it is essential that they are considered in every patient care interaction in order to provide effective and fair care.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

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)

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: This includes an understanding of how to advocate for access to safe and effective care with decision-makers (e.g., charitable organizations, lawmakers, regulators, payors, institutional policy makers).

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)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

4.9.i. Residents must demonstrate competence in accessing available resources to address the social determinants of health for their patients. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Addressing social determinants of health can be essential for achieving optimal outcomes and maintaining the dignity of patients and their families. Being aware of and accessing resources available in health care and supportive systems is an essential skill for residents to develop.

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**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

4.10.a. The program must have a written program policy describing resident responsibility for the care of patients, and faculty members' responsibilities for supervision. (Core)

4.10.b. Assignments at participating sites must ensure a quality educational experience, and must provide opportunities for continuity of care. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

4.10.c. Residents must participate in pre-operative decision making and subsequent operative procedures, as well as post-surgical care and follow-up evaluation of their patients. (Core)

4.11. Didactic and Clinical Experiences

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

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: In both the integrated and joint preliminary year/ ophthalmology formats, it is expected that PGY-1 residents will have a well-balanced experience characterized by a variety of settings, patient populations, and responsibilities that include direct patient care to provide them with a solid foundation for their ophthalmologyfocused education during the PGY-2-4. Examples of appropriate settings include inpatient wards, the emergency room, outpatient clinics, and the operating room.

4.11.a. For the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format, the educational program for the preliminary year must be developed by the program director of the preliminary year program with the input and approval of the respective ophthalmology program director. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

4.11.a.1. Ophthalmology rotations must take place in the same Sponsoring Institution as the ophthalmology program or at a site acceptable to the Review Committee. (Core)

4.11.b. PGY-1

In both the integrated and joint preliminary year/ophthalmology formats, the PGY-1 must consist of:

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

4.11.b.1. at a minimum, three months of patient care experience in ophthalmology; and, (Core)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

4.11.b.2. at a minimum, eight months of patient care experience outside of ophthalmology. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The PGY-1, in addition to providing experience in ophthalmology, is intended to expose residents to a broad range of clinical medicine. The Review Committee recognizes that there are valuable non-clinical experiences that would benefit resident education, such as quality improvement, patient safety, public health, or research in any specialty.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

4.11.c. Residents must record all of their surgical cases in the ACGME Case Log System. (Core)

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

4.11.c.1. Each graduating resident must have performed and/or assisted in the minimum number of essential operative cases and case categories as established by the Review Committee. (Outcome)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

4.11.d. Basic and Clinical Sciences Education and Conferences

Residents must be educated in basic and clinical sciences through a structured and regularly-scheduled series of interactive sessions directed by faculty members (in-person, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous). (Core)

4.11.d.1. This series must include a minimum of 360 hours during the PGY-2-4. (Core)

4.11.e. A minimum of four hours per month must be devoted to conferences (e.g., case presentations, grand rounds, journal clubs, morbidity and mortality, and quality improvement presentations), conducted in-person or virtually, attended by faculty members and the majority of residents. (Core)

4.11.f. Resident and faculty member attendance at in-person or virtual educational sessions must be documented. (Core)

4.11.f.1. Residents must be provided with protected time for lectures and conferences, including assigned asynchronous content. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: It is necessary that the didactic curriculum encompasses all areas of basic and clinical sciences relevant to ophthalmology. The Review Committee recognizes that faculty expertise in some areas (e.g., contact lenses, keratorefractive surgery, optics and refraction, and pathology) can be challenging. It is expected that programs will curate resources to meet these requirements.

4.11.g. The curriculum should include content in in each of the following: advocacy, the business and economics of health care, care for patients with disabilities, ethics,

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

leadership development, practice management, social determinants of health, and vulnerable populations. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Although the following is not an exhaustive list, the Review Committee notes that patients with disabilities may include those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, dementia, mobility impairments, etc.

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

4.11.h. Additional topics to be addressed in the curriculum should include principles and best practices for reducing medical waste, and principles and technical/workflow requirements of teleconsultation in ophthalmology. (Detail)

4.11.i. Residents must have surgical skills instruction in a simulated setting (e.g., wet lab, model eyes, simulator), including a structured curriculum that includes assessment. (Core)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The Review Committee acknowledges rapidly evolving technologies, and in the interest of patient safety, programs are encouraged to utilize these technologies as available to assess residents' preparedness in a simulated setting prior to operating as primary surgeons.

4.11.j. Faculty members must assess a resident's preparedness to perform cataract surgery in a simulated setting prior to the resident operating as primary surgeon. (Core)

4.11.k. Residents must have experience operating ophthalmic equipment that is used to perform biometry, corneal topography/tomography, fundus photography, laser procedures, ophthalmic ultrasound, optical coherence tomography, perimetry, and phacoemulsification. (Detail)

> Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: As leaders of ophthalmic care teams, residents need to understand how to set up and operate ophthalmic equipment.

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, appropriately 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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.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-reviewed 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The Review Committee recognizes that there are many ways to engage in and disseminate scholarship. Peer-reviewed publications are encouraged, but not specifically required for programs meeting the dissemination requirements outlined in 4.14.a.

4.15. Resident Scholarly Activity

Residents must participate in scholarship. (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 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,

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.a.3. For rotations that include a surgical experience, evaluation must include an assessment of the resident's care of surgical patients. (Core)

5.1.b. The program must provide an objective performance evaluation based on the Competencies and the specialty-specific Milestones. (Core)
[See FAQ in Appendix] [See FAQ in Appendix]

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

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.b.3. The program must include annual administration of a national standardized examination as a component of assessing each resident's ophthalmic knowledge

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

during the PGY-2-4, the outcome of which must be shared with the residents to guide individualized learning plans. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The Ophthalmic Knowledge Assessment Program (OKAP) would fulfill this requirement. The results may not be used as the sole criteria for decisions regarding resident promotion or graduation.

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.c.1. This must include review of the surgical experiences of each resident, including the review of surgical evaluations, and the number and timely entry of cases recorded in the Resident Case Log System. (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)
[See FAQ in Appendix]

5.1.d.1. These individualized learning plans should be reviewed and updated at a minimum at the semi-annual evaluation meetings. (Core)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Individualized learning plans allow residents, in collaboration with program leadership, to identify learning goals tailored to their needs and interests and to create a shared mental model that is then documented for reference. Programs are responsible for providing residents with tools to assist in developing documented individualized learning plans (see https://www.acgme.org/milestones/resources/ for examples).

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.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]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 faculty 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)**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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. 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]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: A variety of data can be used to benchmark resident and faculty engagement with quality improvement. Examples include patient access (loss to follow-up rates, no-show rates, appointment wait times); patient characteristics (payor mix, socioeconomic status of patient, comorbid conditions); physician practice habits (note completion rate, EHR efficiency, individual patient outcomes, time to chart closure, time to surgery logging); as well as institution-level quality metrics.

[See FAQ in Appendix] [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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

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)

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] [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.

The supervising physician and/or patient is not physically present with the resident and the supervising physician is concurrently monitoring the patient care through appropriate telecommunication technology.

[See FAQ in Appendix]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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

6.7.b. Telecommunication technology for direct supervision must be limited to ambulatory care and inpatient or emergency department consults, and must not be used for operative care. (Core)

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)

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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]

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

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.**

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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).

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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

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 mon-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

itor 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.

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.

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: Team-oriented learning environments for patient care incorporate both outpatient and inpatient settings. The team may include faculty members and residents in ophthalmology, referring and consulting physicians, laboratory and administrative staff, medical students, nurses, optometrists, orthoptists, pharmacists, technicians, and social workers, among others.

6.19. Transitions of Care

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

[See FAQ in Appendix]

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 supervision for post-call residents is provided. This 24 hours and up to an addi-

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

tional 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.

The Review Committee for Ophthalmology will not consider requests for exceptions to the 80-hour limit to the residents' work week.

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

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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

6.27. 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 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)

Specialty-Specific Background and Intent: The structure of the program and call schedule require constant evaluation and adjustment based on the patient volume and complexity to support resident well-being and resident education. While at-home call is common in ophthalmology, changes in referral and practice patterns can result in significant shifts in on-call clinical volume and complexity that may necessitate implementing other models of emergency coverage.

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

[See FAQ in Appendix]

7. Frequently Asked Questions: Ophthalmology

FAQs related to Ophthalmology Program Requirements

Last updated July 2026

Review Committee for Ophthalmology

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)

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)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

Questions concerning *"The program must provide access to diagnostic equipment necessary for patient care, including equipment designed for corneal topography/tomography, ophthalmic photography (including fluorescein angiography), optical coherence tomography, pachymetry, perimetry, and ultrasonography. (Core)"* (1.7.a)

Q: What is considered to be diagnostic equipment?

A: In all ophthalmology clinics where patients are seen, standard diagnostic equipment would include devices to measure visual acuity and obtain refractive data, slit lamps, direct and indirect ophthalmoscopes, and appropriate diagnostic instruments (including lenses). The committee's expectation is that ophthalmic photography, echography, optical coherence tomography, fundus angiography, visual field testing, and biometry are easily available when treating patients, and that in pediatric or adult clinics where eye motility is assessed, prisms and tests to measure binocular function (e.g., Titmus, Worth 4-dot) are present. Less commonly used tests, such as visual evoked potential systems (VEP), electroretinography (ERG), and electrooculography (EOG), should be available regionally for program use.

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 support equal to a dedicated minimum of 0.2 FTE for administration of the program. (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 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

Questions concerning *"The program director must possess current certification in the specialty for which they are the program director by the American Board of Ophthalmology or by the American Osteopathic Board of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, or specialty qualifications that are acceptable to the Review Committee. (Core)"* (2.5.a) , *"Physician Faculty Members"* (2.10)

Q: Do programs need to review program director and faculty member certification information that is automatically provided in ADS?

A: Yes, programs are expected to review faculty member certification information for accuracy during the ADS Annual Update and when a new faculty member is entered into ADS. If an error is identified, programs should correct this in the faculty roster (Specialty Certification – Manual Entries > +Add > enter correct certification information and an explanation in "Explain Equivalent Qualifications for Review Committee Consideration (or missing information)").

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

Q: Should non-ophthalmology faculty members who teach PGY-1 residents be entered in the ADS Faculty Roster?

A: It depends on the program's format:

- In the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format, non-ophthalmology faculty members who teach residents during the preliminary year should *not* be included in the Faculty Roster. The Faculty Roster should include only faculty members who teach residents during the PGY-2 through PGY-4 levels.
- In the integrated ophthalmology format, the Review Committee recommends adding one faculty member involved in ophthalmology resident education into the Faculty Roster from each non-ophthalmology department in which the residents rotate. The faculty member may be the program director of the residency program in which ophthalmology residents are rotating, the site director, or another faculty member who is involved in the delivery of educational content to the residents. Programs can choose to add other faculty members. It is recommended that the program director designate non-ophthalmology faculty members as non-core. Non-core faculty members will not be asked to complete the annual ACGME Faculty Survey.

Questions concerning *"There must be a sufficient number of faculty members with competence to instruct and supervise all residents. (Core)"* (2.7) , *"Physician Faculty Members"* (2.10)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Q: Are non-physician faculty members permitted to supervise residents?

A: Supervision of residents must be by a physician faculty member with current certification in the specialty by ABO or AOBOO-HNS or who possesses qualifications judged acceptable to the Review Committee.

Non-physician faculty members are permitted to educate residents, and can offer valuable education in areas such as low vision, contact lens, and refraction; however, this must not be construed as permitting clinical supervision of patient care performed by residents by non-physician faculty members.

Section 3: Resident Appointments

Questions concerning *"Residents entering a joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format program should have completed 12 months of preliminary clinical education in an ACGME-accredited program sponsored by the same institution that sponsors the ophthalmology residency program and that meets the requirements defined in 4.11.b. – 4.11.b.2. (Core)"* (3.3.a.1)

Q: How should a program request an exception to the requirement that the PGY-1 be completed in an ACGME-accredited preliminary year program sponsored by the same institution that sponsors the ophthalmology residency program?

A: The program must submit a request to the Review Committee that explains: a) why the preliminary year experience cannot take place at the Sponsoring Institution; b) as appropriate, the efforts made by the program and Sponsoring Institution to establish a preliminary year at the Sponsoring Institution and why the efforts failed; and c) an alternative plan for the preliminary year that will meet the spirit of the requirements to better prepare incoming PGY-2 residents for ophthalmology residency. The names and ACGME 10-digit numbers of the proposed joint preliminary year program(s) and that program's Sponsoring Institution, as well as the distance between the programs, must be included. The request must be signed by the program director and designated institutional official (DIO), and emailed to the Review Committee's accreditation administrator, contact information for whom can be found in the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"Residents entering a joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format program should have completed 12 months of preliminary clinical education in an ACGME-accredited program sponsored by the same institution that sponsors the ophthalmology residency program and that meets the requirements defined in 4.11.b. – 4.11.b.2. (Core)"* (3.3.a.1) , *"Resident Transfers"* (3.5)

Q: Can a resident transfer into an ophthalmology program at the PGY-2 level if the resident completed the PGY-1 year in an unaffiliated preliminary year program?

A: The Review Committee's expectation is that ophthalmology residents will complete the PGY-1 within an integrated ophthalmology program or in an ophthalmology program's joint preliminary year program. Residents are expected to have met the PGY-1 curricular requirements in an ACGME-accredited program prior to starting the PGY-2. See Ophthalmology program requirements 4.11.a.- 4.11.b.1. for the PGY-1 curricular requirements. A program accepting a transfer resident lacking a required PGY-1 experience can provide this experience in an ACGME-accredited program prior to advancing the resident to PGY-2. Education and training time would be extended accordingly.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Programs may provide the committee with a rationale for non-compliance with the PGY-1 requirements during the ADS Annual Update in the "Major Changes and Other Updates" section. The committee will take the program's explanation into consideration when the program is next reviewed.

Programs with questions regarding resident transfers are encouraged to contact the Review Committee's executive director, contact information for whom can be found in the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"Resident Complement"* (3.4)

Q: Can a new program with a status of Initial Accreditation or a program with a recently approved permanent complement increase have both PGY-1 and PGY-2 residents start the first year?

A: In general, programs are expected to roll out the approved complement on a year-by-year basis, i.e., adding only PGY-1 residents each year. This approach allows programs to implement their plans in manageable stages.

The Review Committee allows a PGY-2 resident to start the first year of accreditation or of a complement increase. The program must ensure that a PGY-2 resident meets all of the PGY-1 curricular requirements prior to beginning the PGY-2 level.

Questions concerning *"There must be a minimum of one resident in each year of the program. (Core)"* (3.4.a)

Q: How can a program initiate a complement increase request?

A: See "Requests for Changes in Resident/Fellow Complement," available on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Section 4: Educational Program

Questions concerning *"Length of Program"* (4.1)

Q: How much leave time can a resident have during the educational program?

A: The Review Committee does not have requirements related to resident leave time. The Institutional Requirements, available on the Institutional Review Committee page, address requirements related to vacation and leaves of absence. Programs must have leave policies consistent with the policies of their Sponsoring Institution and the applicable board (American Board of Ophthalmology (ABO) or American Osteopathic Board of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AOBOO-HNS).

If a resident's educational program must be extended, the program should update the resident's completion date in the ACGME's Accreditation Data System (ADS).

In addition, a temporary complement increase for the additional education period may need to be requested. See "Requests for Changes in Resident/Fellow Complement" available on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website. A temporary increase in resident complement for up to 90 days does not require approval of the Review Committee.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Questions concerning *"Length of Program"* (4.1)

Q: Can a program's format be changed from a joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format to an integrated ophthalmology format or vice versa?

A: Yes. The program needs to inform the Review Committee by June 1st for a format change to begin with the upcoming academic year. Email the format update to the Review Committee's Accreditation Administrator, contact information for whom can be found in the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"Length of Program"* (4.1)

Q: Can a resident transfer into an ophthalmology program at the PGY-2 level if the resident completed the PGY-1 year in an unaffiliated preliminary year program?

A: The Review Committee's expectation is that ophthalmology residents will complete the PGY-1 within an integrated ophthalmology program or in an ophthalmology program's joint preliminary year program. Residents are expected to have met the PGY-1 curricular requirements in an ACGME-accredited program prior to starting the PGY-2. See Ophthalmology program requirements 4.11.a.- 4.11.b.1. for the PGY-1 curricular requirements. A program accepting a transfer resident lacking a required PGY-1 experience can provide this experience in an ACGME-accredited program prior to advancing the resident to PGY-2. Education and training time would be extended accordingly.

Programs may provide the committee with a rationale for non-compliance with the PGY-1 requirements during the ADS Annual Update in the "Major Changes and Other Updates" section. The committee will take the program's explanation into consideration when the program is next reviewed.

Programs with questions regarding resident transfers are encouraged to contact the Review Committee's executive director, contact information for whom can be found in the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"Length of Program"* (4.1) , *"For the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format, the educational program for the preliminary year must be developed by the program director of the preliminary year program with the input and approval of the respective ophthalmology program director. (Core)"* (4.11.a) , *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: During the PGY-1, is it acceptable for most of a resident's leave time (e.g., vacation, parental leave) to be scheduled during the resident's ophthalmology experience?

A: There are no program requirements regarding resident leave time during the scheduled PGY-1 rotations. Parameters for leave are made by the Sponsoring Institution and program.

Should evaluations indicate that an extended leave has had a detrimental effect on a resident's performance, the program director, with input from Clinical Competency Committee, is responsible for developing an individualized learning plan for the resident. To ensure due process, it is essential that the program follow Sponsoring Institution policies and procedures.

Questions concerning *"ACGME Competencies – Professionalism"* (4.3) , *"ability to recognize and develop a plan for one's own personal and professional well-being; and, (Core)"* (4.3.g) , *"ACGME*

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Competencies – Practice-Based Learning and Improvement" (4.7) , *"ACGME Competencies – Systems-Based Practice"* (4.9) , *"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.h)

Q: How can programs document how the Core Competencies of professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, and systems-based practices are taught?

A: There are no specific requirements with respect to documentation. However, the committee does expect a program to be able to demonstrate to an Accreditation Field Representative the ways in which the program teaches professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, interpersonal and communication skills, and systems-based practices.

Examples

Professionalism

- Document timely written feedback to residents on their professionalism, including routine multi-source assessment.
- Document structured learning activities for promoting professional behavior in the context of everyday practice.
- Document policies regarding lapses in professionalism.
- Document remediation activities for improvement in professionalism.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

- Document a structured process for resident reflection (e.g., a faculty advisor guides the resident in using feedback and evaluations to inform the self-assessment process).
- Document structured evidence-based medicine activities, such as a journal club presentation or critical appraisal of a topic.
- Document a full "plan-do-study-act" (PDSA) cycle in which residents actively participate with appropriate faculty member oversight.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Document regular feedback from faculty members to residents on their communication strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- Document feedback to residents on their communication style from non-faculty members, such as medical students and patients.
- Document the ways in which residents work in interdisciplinary teams to care for patients.
- Document a policy for the completion of comprehensive, timely, and legible medical records that includes monitoring, evaluation, and feedback to residents.

Systems-Based Practice

- Document opportunities residents have to learn to work effectively in a variety of settings.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

- Document resident completion of a systems-based practice project, including the system improvements that resulted.

Questions concerning *"Assignments at participating sites must ensure a quality educational experience, and must provide opportunities for continuity of care. (Core) "* (4.10.b)

Q: What does the Review Committee consider an "opportunity for continuity of care," and what are the expectations regarding its achievement?

A: Continuity of care comprises a variety of different concepts, each of which is enabled by residents' abilities to examine patients at multiple points along their disease or treatment course. For example, residents must have the opportunity to follow patients through pre-operative assessment, surgical intervention, and post-operative course. Residents must have the opportunity to follow patients at various points through the course of a disease process, both for acute conditions (e.g., conjunctivitis, cornea abrasions, hyphema), and chronic conditions (e.g., glaucoma, amblyopia), so that they may assess effects of medical or surgical interventions, as well as become familiar with the natural history of a disease. While a continuity clinic would provide these opportunities for residents, where this is not possible, rotations should be structured such that residents have the ability to participate in sustained patient follow-up.

Questions concerning *"For the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format, the educational program for the preliminary year must be developed by the program director of the preliminary year program with the input and approval of the respective ophthalmology program director. (Core)"* (4.11.a) , *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: Do programs using the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format need to include the PGY-1 on the block diagram?

A: Yes. Both joint and integrated formats must include PGY-1 on the block diagram. See "Block Diagram: Instructions for Ophthalmology Residency and Fellowship Programs," available on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: What experiences are acceptable for the required ophthalmology training during PGY-1?

A: The ophthalmology experience during PGY-1 may be clinical and/or research. Clinical experiences must take place under the supervision of ophthalmology faculty members. Research experiences must be conducted under the mentorship of an ophthalmologist, a non-physician researcher, or a non-ophthalmology physician affiliated with the ophthalmology department of the Sponsoring Institution.

Questions concerning *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: Can residents be scheduled on another service during a PGY-1 ophthalmology block rotation?

A: Programs have the flexibility to organize the required months of ophthalmology in the manner best suited to their setting. As such, residents may be scheduled on another service during an ophthalmology block rotation. However, those missed hours must be scheduled in ophthalmology at another time.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Questions concerning *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: Do the required months of ophthalmology during PGY-1 need to be in block rotations?

A: No. Programs have the flexibility to organize the required months of ophthalmology in the manner best suited for resident education in their setting. Block rotations and/or longitudinal experiences (e.g., continuity clinic) are acceptable.

Questions concerning *"PGY-1"* (4.11.b)

Q: How should the program represent a longitudinal ophthalmology experience during PGY-1 on the block diagram?

A: Programs can show longitudinal experiences within each block and/or in an annotation below the block diagram. Whichever approach is taken, the block diagram must clearly demonstrate compliance with the requirement for the required months of ophthalmology experience and required months of non-ophthalmology experience during PGY-1. See "Block Diagram: Instructions for Ophthalmology Residency and Fellowship Programs," available on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"at a minimum, eight months of patient care experience outside of ophthalmology. (Core)"* (4.11.b.2)

Q: Can PGY-1 residents be assigned to a non-clinical activity during the required nine months of non-ophthalmology experience?

A: Yes, a resident may be assigned up to one month of non-clinical activity. A resident must be assigned to at least three months of patient care experience in ophthalmology and at least eight months of patient care experience outside of ophthalmology. Therefore, there is potentially one month during the PGY-1 year where a resident could be assigned to a non-clinical activity in any specialty. The Review Committee recognizes that there are valuable non-clinical experiences that would benefit resident education, such as quality improvement, patient safety, public health, or research in any specialty.

Questions concerning *"Residents must record all of their surgical cases in the ACGME Case Log System. (Core)"* (4.11.c)

Q: Should PGY-1 residents in a program using the integrated ophthalmology format record their cases in the ACGME Case Log System?

A: Yes; however, the only cases they are required to log are those related to ophthalmology.

If residents choose to log non-ophthalmic procedures for their own purposes, the non-ophthalmology rotation program director or coordinator may be able to provide a list of common Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes for that specialty to facilitate logging. Programs can add an attending surgeon who is not on the Faculty Roster into the Case Log System as a "Case Log Attending." Go to: Case Logs > Attendings > + Add. Residents can also use the generic "Attending, Other." If this option is not available, it may need to be reactivated in ADS. Contact ADS@acgme.orgif assistance is needed.

Questions concerning *"Residents must record all of their surgical cases in the ACGME Case Log System. (Core)"* (4.11.c)

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Q: How does a resident in a program using a joint preliminary/ophthalmology format with the preliminary year in an internal medicine, transitional year, or other non-surgical program enter ophthalmology cases during PGY-1 into the ophthalmology Case Log?

A: Residents can manually track ophthalmology cases during PGY-1 and then back-enter them into their ophthalmology Case Log after they start PGY-2. Back-entering PGY-1 procedures is not required by the Review Committee. Programs that have residents back-enter cases are encouraged to use a secure and HIPAA-compliant mechanism for residents to track cases during PGY-1.

When PGY-2 residents back-enter cases, they can enter a date prior to the resident start date into the Case Log but will need to choose "1" for the Case Year for cases that took place during both PGY-1 and PGY-2.

Questions concerning *"Residents must record all of their surgical cases in the ACGME Case Log System. (Core)"* (4.11.c)

Q: How does a program using the joint preliminary year/ophthalmology format with a preliminary year in a general surgery program transfer the cases logged during the residents' general surgery year to the ophthalmology program when the resident becomes a PGY-2?

A: The ophthalmology program should request the transfer of logged cases from the general surgery Case Log to the ophthalmology Case Log from ADS staff members by emailing ADS@acgme.org. Before the request is made, the program should make sure the resident is on the resident roster in the ophthalmology program. The request should include the general surgery program name/10-digit number, ophthalmology program name/10-digit number, and resident information.

Questions concerning *"Each graduating resident must have performed and/or assisted in the minimum number of essential operative cases and case categories as established by the Review Committee. (Outcome)"* (4.11.c.1)

Q: What are the minimum procedural numbers?

A: Case Log information, including procedural categories and minimum numbers, is available in "Ophthalmology Case Log Information" on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

Questions concerning *"The curriculum should include content in in each of the following: advocacy, the business and economics of health care, care for patients with disabilities, ethics, leadership development, practice management, social determinants of health, and vulnerable populations. (Core)"* (4.11.g)

Q: What is meant by "advocacy" with regard to the requirement for documented educational sessions?

A: According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) publication *The Profession of Ophthalmology*, advocacy is a duty of physicians and requires that they support, defend, and protect their patients and the profession. Advocacy can empower a physician to directly affect legislation, regulation, policy, and public and professional opinion on patient care, patients' rights, access to health care, research funding, scope of practice, liability issues, and device and medication development. Residency programs should provide didactic training in

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

this area. Other formats through which residents may be exposed to advocacy include the AAO's Advocacy Day and Mid-Year Forum, local legislative meetings and events, US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conferences, or observation or service on an Institutional Review Board or other committee that protects patients' rights.

Questions concerning *"The curriculum should include content in in each of the following: advocacy, the business and economics of health care, care for patients with disabilities, ethics, leadership development, practice management, social determinants of health, and vulnerable populations. (Core)"* (4.11.g)

Q: Can online education be used to educate residents about advocacy, ethics, practice management, social determinants of health, and vulnerable populations?

A: Yes, education on these topics can be delivered through in-person, virtual, synchronous, or asynchronous formats.

Section 5: Evaluation

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

Q: What resident evaluation methods should ophthalmology programs use?

A: The Ophthalmology Milestones Supplemental Guide includes recommended tools for assessing each subcompetency. Programs are not expected to use all the tools listed. However, programs must utilize different methods to assess resident performance to provide residents with the feedback needed to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. The Supplemental Guide is available on the Milestones page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website.

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

Q: How should programs using the integrated ophthalmology format complete the Milestones evaluation for PGY-1 residents?

A: Programs using the integrated ophthalmology format are required to complete the Milestones assessment for PGY-1 residents. Clinical Competency Committees (CCCs) will use the information gathered from the ophthalmology and non-ophthalmology rotations to assess resident performance. CCCs have the option of indicating "Not Yet Assessable" for Patient Care and Medical Knowledge subcompetencies if there is insufficient information to assess resident performance. The other four subcompetencies should have been assessed during resident rotations and those sections of the Milestones must be completed.

Questions concerning *"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.d)

Q: During the PGY-1, is it acceptable for most of a resident's leave time (e.g., vacation, parental leave) to be scheduled during the resident's ophthalmology experience?

A: There are no program requirements regarding resident leave time during the scheduled PGY-1 rotations. Parameters for leave are made by the Sponsoring Institution and program.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

Should evaluations indicate that an extended leave has had a detrimental effect on a resident's performance, the program director, with input from Clinical Competency Committee, is responsible for developing an individualized learning plan for the resident. To ensure due process, it is essential that the program follow Sponsoring Institution policies and procedures.

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)

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?

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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: What types of quality metrics and benchmarks should be provided to residents and faculty members?

A: A program's quality metrics and benchmarks should represent meaningful patient data that residents and faculty members can use to review practice patterns and/or outcomes. The goal is to improve patient care. Data may be at the level of the resident, faculty member, service, department, and/or site. Examples of data are surgical complications, postoperative infection, return to the operating room, and needle stick injuries. Programs are encouraged to contact institutional leadership to identify existing data that will foster practice improvement. In most cases, institutions are already collecting quality data that can be used to meet this requirement.

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 *"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)"* (6.5)

Q: Are non-physician faculty members permitted to supervise residents?

A: Supervision of residents must be by a physician faculty member with current certification in the specialty by ABO or AOBOO-HNS or who possesses qualifications judged acceptable to the Review Committee.

Non-physician faculty members are permitted to educate residents, and can offer valuable education in areas such as low vision, contact lens, and refraction; however, this must not be construed as permitting clinical supervision of patient care performed by residents by non-physician faculty members.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)

Q: Can an optometrist, orthoptist, or ophthalmic technician supervise residents?

A: Although the Review Committee believes that it is important for residents to acquire experience in leading and participating in health care teams, including those with non-physicians (e.g., optometrists, orthoptists, or ophthalmic technicians), supervision of all clinical care rendered by residents is the responsibility of physician faculty members. Non-physicians are not permitted to independently supervise residents. While the attending physician may delegate an appropriately qualified non-physician to assist or teach a resident in a specific aspect of an eye exam (e.g., refraction, low vision, contact lens, orthoptics, and optics), the ultimate responsibility for resident supervision remains with the attending physician.

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 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*

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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?

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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.

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.

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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 *"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)"* (6.22.a)

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

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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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: Where can a program find information about the Case Log System?

A: Resources are available on the Documents and Resources page of the Ophthalmology section of the ACGME website and in ADS (ADS > Case Log Tab > Reference Materials).

Q: Where can a program find information about accreditation site visits?

A: See the Site Visit section of the ACGME website.

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 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

©2026 Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)

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)