

**ACGME Recognition Requirements for Sponsoring Institutions
with Non-Standard Training Programs for J-1 Visa Sponsorship
Summary and Impact of New Recognition Requirements**

1. Describe the scope of practice of the new recognition, as well as the process involved in development of the requirements (e.g., date of approval of the recognition by the ACGME Board, involvement of specialty boards/organizations, etc.).

Recognition of Sponsoring Institutions with non-standard training (NST) programs by the ACGME will provide a framework for approval and oversight of training opportunities in the United States for physicians whose J-1 visas are sponsored by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) through the Exchange Visitor Program of the United States Department of State.

The term “non-standard training” refers to advanced clinical subspecialty disciplines or pathways for which there is no ACGME accreditation and/or American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Board certification available. Currently, all non-standard disciplines must be endorsed by an appropriate ABMS Member Board to be considered for J-1 sponsorship. The role of the ABMS Member Boards in providing this approval is detailed in federal regulation 22 CFR §62.27(e)(4)(i).

While the ABMS and its member boards have historically played a role in recognizing non-standard disciplines, ABMS initiated discussions several years ago with ECFMG about relinquishing that role. The rationale is that oversight of non-standard training does not fit with the mission of the ABMS and its member boards, which are responsible for certification of individuals; and, as such, the member boards are not structured to provide oversight of training programs and institutions. It was the consensus of the two organizations that the ACGME, as the primary national accreditor of graduate medical education programs and the institutions that sponsor them, is well suited to provide recognition of Sponsoring Institutions offering non-standard training opportunities to exchange visitor (J-1) physicians. At the request of the ECFMG and ABMS, the ACGME Board of Directors agreed to assume this responsibility at its September 2015 meeting.

The ECFMG, ABMS, and ACGME jointly submitted a proposal to the United States Department of State (DOS) to substitute Sponsoring Institution “recognition” by the ACGME for the current ABMS endorsement role, with a transition period during which either organization’s recognition or endorsement process may be honored. With publication of a Federal Register Notice on April 19, 2021, the DOS officially acknowledged the administrative change proposed by the ECFMG, ABMS, and ACGME.

2. How will the proposed requirements improve resident/fellow education?

The Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) of a recognized Sponsoring Institution must assess the impact of NST programs on ACGME-accredited programs at least annually. In this way, the proposed requirements promote institutional oversight that results in the enrichment of resident/fellow education through the presence of NST programs and trainees.

3. How will the proposed requirements improve patient care and patient safety/quality?

The proposed requirements describe consistent standards for the implementation of NST programs under the oversight of the designated institutional official (DIO), GMEC, and NST program directors. Requirements for the appointment, curriculum, and assessment of NST trainees introduce new protections that will enhance quality and patient safety within clinical learning environments and will thereby improve patient care.

4. How will the proposed requirements impact continuity of patient care?

The proposed requirements are not expected to substantially impact the continuity of patient care. If there is any change, continuity of patient care will improve due to the additional, structured institutional oversight that will be required for NST programs.

5. Will the proposed requirements necessitate additional institutional resources (e.g., facilities, organization of other services, addition of faculty members, financial support; volume and variety of patients), if so, how?

Additional institutional resources for the oversight and administration of NST programs may be required to ensure compliance with Recognition Requirements. Sponsoring Institutions with NST programs will be required to oversee the implementation of terms and conditions of the appointment of NST trainees, including but not limited to financial arrangements, grievances, due process, professional liability coverage, and health insurance benefits.

6. How will the proposed requirements impact ACGME-accredited programs?

The Sponsoring Institution must sponsor an ACGME-accredited residency/fellowship program in the specialty most closely related to each NST program. A single NST program director must be identified from among the faculty members of the most closely related program. The GMEC is required to assess the impact of NST programs on ACGME-accredited programs at least annually. As noted above, the proposed requirements will ensure additional, structured institutional oversight that will allow NST trainees to interact with ACGME-accredited programs without adverse impact. Specialty Review Committees may cite ACGME-accredited programs when the presence of NST trainees interferes with resident/fellow education.