

Graduate Medical Education (GME) in One Page

Everything a policymaker, journalist, or community member needs to know

What Is the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)?

The ACGME is a private, non-profit organization that accredits residency and fellowship programs — the structured clinical training that physicians complete after medical school and before entering independent practice — as well as the institutions that sponsor those programs. The ACGME sets the standards that residency and fellowship programs and institutions must meet through a peer-review process conducted by committees made up of practicing physicians, including resident/fellow members, and public representatives. Proposed standards are posted for public review during an open comment period prior to their becoming effective. The ACGME reviews all accredited institutions and programs every year, and when an institution or program falls short, it may issue citations and require corrective action and can place the institution or program on probation or withdraw its accreditation. The ACGME is independent of the federal government and of the institutions and programs it accredits.

GME By the Numbers

14,000+	ACGME-accredited residency and fellowship programs nationwide
146	Medical specialties and subspecialties with ACGME-accredited programs
170,000+	Residents and fellows in accredited programs at any given time
~900	Sponsoring Institutions — teaching hospitals and other entities that host programs
1981	Year the ACGME was established as an independent accrediting body

The ACGME's Role in the Medical Training System

After graduating from medical school, physicians must complete a residency program before practicing independently. Residency — and subspecialty fellowship — training takes place in teaching hospitals and other clinical education sites, and is supervised by experienced physicians. The ACGME accredits the institutions and programs that provide this training, ensuring that residents and fellows receive consistent, high-quality education regardless of where in the country they train.

ACGME accreditation standards address:

- + The structure and content of GME programs across specialties and subspecialties
- + Supervision requirements to protect residents/fellows and patients
- + Work hours and resident/fellow well-being
- + Faculty qualifications and the learning environment
- + Patient safety and quality improvement integration

ACGME Does	ACGME Does Not
+ Accredit residency and fellowship programs + Set educational and clinical training standards + Review programs and institutions and require corrective action when standards are not met, including issuing citations and withdrawing accreditation + Publish Institutional and Program Requirements and outcome data	- x License individual physicians - x Issue board certification - x Fund GME training - x Employ residents/fellows or control physician supply