

## Frequently Asked Questions: Accreditation of Combined Programs

Question	Answer
Topic	
<p>What are the implications for an unaccredited combined program that decides to remain unaccredited by the ACGME?</p>	<p>Residents or fellows who enter an unaccredited combined program on or after July 1, 2026 will not be considered to be enrolled in an ACGME-accredited program, even if each of the participating programs is ACGME accredited. If these residents seek to enter an ACGME-accredited fellowship program, they will not be considered to have met the eligibility requirements specified in Common Program Requirement (Fellowship) 3.2. These residents <i>may</i> be eligible for appointment to an ACGME-accredited fellowship program under the eligibility exception requirements in Section 3.2.b. if exceptions are permitted for the subspecialty.</p> <p>In addition, these residents and fellows should consult with the relevant certifying boards regarding their board eligibility status.</p> <p>Residents who entered an unaccredited combined program listed in the Accreditation Data System (ADS) <i>before</i> July 1, 2026, will, upon program completion, continue to be considered graduates of an ACGME-accredited program.</p>
<p>Should programs planning a novel combined format that will be offered only one time or infrequently submit an application for accreditation?</p>	<p>No. The ACGME will accredit only programs that plan to offer an ongoing combined program in one of the combined formats listed on the <a href="#">Combined Programs page</a> of the ACGME website. Programs interested in designing a novel combined program format for a single resident/fellow, or a format that will not be offered every year, should contact the applicable certifying board(s) to ensure that the resident/fellow meets the board's eligibility requirements for certification.</p>
<p>Will combined programs be assessed accreditation-related fees?</p>	<p>Information regarding the current ACGME fee structure is available <a href="#">here</a>. Combined programs receive a 50 percent discount on annual program accreditation fees.</p>
<p>Which Review Committee will accredit and be responsible for communicating with a combined program on accreditation-related matters?</p>	<p>Each combined program format has been assigned to one of the specialty Review Committees offering the combined format. A list of combined formats and the corresponding Review Committee assignments appears on the <a href="#">Combined Programs page</a> of the ACGME website.</p>

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When a combined program uses the same participating sites as the participating programs with which it is affiliated, are separate program letters of agreement (PLAs) for the combined program required?	No; the PLAs in place for the participating specialty/subspecialty programs are sufficient, and PLAs specific to the combined program are not needed if program sites are the same as those used in the participating programs.
Do applications for accreditation of a combined program require a site visit?	Generally, yes. If at least one of the participating specialties that make up a combined program requires an application site visit, then the combined program application will require a site visit. If none of the participating specialties that make up a combined program require an application site visit, then the combined program will not require an application site visit  Information on the ACGME application process is available <a href="#">here</a> .
If the same person is the program director for the combined program and another program, must they have extra full-time equivalent (FTE) support? [Requirement 3.1]	The program leadership support must be exclusive to the combined program and cannot “double-count” toward any other ACGME-accredited program. For example, in a situation where the program leadership of the combined program and of the participating program is a single person, if the combined program requires a minimum of 0.2 FTE support and the participating program requires minimum 0.5 FTE support for program leadership, this person must have a minimum of 0.7 FTE support.
For a combined program with participating programs in different Sponsoring Institutions, what should be done to address the error message, “ <i>Sponsorship of an accredited program in the following specialties is required to begin this application</i> ” that appears when initiating a program application in ADS? [Requirement 2.2.a]	At present, combined program applications where the participating programs are not all sponsored by a single Sponsoring Institution must be handled manually by ACGME staff. For further assistance, contact the executive director of the Review Committee assigned to oversee the applicable combined format. A list of combined formats and the corresponding Review Committee assignments appears on the <a href="#">Combined Programs page</a> of the ACGME website.
What is the process to request a complement change in the combined program?	Any complement changes in combined programs must have support from all the participating program directors. If the participating programs exist at multiple Sponsoring Institutions, the designated institutional officials (DIOs) of all Sponsoring Institutions must also support the change. While submitting the complement change

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	<p>request, the combined program director must specify the names and titles of the above listed personnel, with a statement that they all support the complement change request.</p> <p>Also see any specialty-specific instructions for complement changes on the relevant Review Committee section of the ACGME website.</p>
<p>How will graduate board certification data and compliance with requirement 8.8. be assessed? [Requirement 8.8.]</p>	<p>Existing unaccredited combined programs have been preparing their graduates for board certification in accordance with requirements published by the certifying boards and the participating programs' specialties. This data has been reported in ADS annually. Therefore, Review Committees will assess compliance with requirement 8.8. (and other requirements pertaining to graduate board certification) by including performance of residents who graduated prior to the combined program attaining Initial Accreditation. In other words, the graduate board certification metric will not reset during the transition to ACGME accreditation, and Review Committees may start citing programs not meeting the minimum requirement.</p>
<p>How often must combined programs report resident Milestones in ADS? [Requirement 8.2.]</p>	<p>In a typical academic year, combined program residents spend less time in each participating specialty compared to their participating program peers. It is expected that their progression on the Milestones will initially lag their peers in participating programs. Therefore, program directors must report Milestones data to ADS for each resident, for each participating specialty, on an annual basis at the end of the academic year. For programs that combine a specialty and subspecialty, it is expected that residents may be determined to have "not yet achieved Level 1" on the subspecialty Milestones during the initial years of education and training.</p> <p>Note that the program director must still evaluate the residents on a semi-annual basis.</p>
<p>Where are the Program Requirements for education and training in a specific combined format located (e.g., for combined emergency medicine-internal medicine)?</p>	<p>There will be no format-specific requirements for any combined format except internal medicine-pediatrics. Programs should be in substantial compliance with the specialty- or subspecialty-specific Program Requirements for the participating disciplines, with the Program Requirements for Combined Programs serving as an addendum to address any conflicts.</p> <p>In addition, programs should use their block diagram to demonstrate compliance with Combined Program Requirement 6.1. Curricular and educational experiences for combined programs have been collated from participating certification boards and posted on the <a href="#">Combined Programs</a> webpage.</p>

Additional questions may be submitted to [accreditation@acgme.org](mailto:accreditation@acgme.org) or to the executive director of the assigned Review Committee.