

Non-Standard Training (NST) Recognition Guidance Document

Last Updated October 2025

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1. NST Recognition Application Process

The Institutional Review Committee (IRC) reviews applications for Initial Recognition at their Review Committee meetings. Applications must be submitted by the designated agenda closing deadline – a list of these meeting dates and the agenda closing dates can be found at the bottom of the [NST page](#) of the ACGME website.

To begin an application for Non-Standard Training Recognition, log into the Accreditation Data System (ADS) and navigate to the “Institution” tab. Select the “Non-Standard Training” option under the “Recognition” heading on the right. Review the instructions, click “Begin Application,” and complete the required data fields in each section of the application. There are also two uploads that will be required as part of the application process:

1. [Non-Standard Training Recognition application](#)
2. Copy of the appointment agreement for NST trainees

A description of the associated [fees](#) for NST Recognition can be found on the NST page of the ACGME website under the “Fees” header.

2. Managing/Reviewing NST Data in ADS



Once an application for Non-Standard Training Recognition has been initiated, a new navigational tab will appear in ADS called “NST Recognition.” This tab will provide access to the in-process application for completion and submission for review. After Initial Recognition is achieved, this is where users can review and create new Non-Standard Training programs, review program data for verification, or request additional focus areas for use in creating new programs.

3. Adding NST Programs and Requesting New Focus Areas

a. Adding NST Programs to the NST Administration Dashboard



To begin entering NST programs, navigate to the blue action button reading “+New NST Program” and complete a set of initial data fields.

b. Selecting a Focus Area

The ACGME has a published list of accepted NST focus areas and their most closely related ACGME specialty/subspecialty. This list of accepted NST focus areas is updated regularly. These NST focus areas, and their relationships to existing ACGME-accredited specialties/subspecialties, are also available in the dropdown menus when creating a new NST program.

c. Requesting a new Focus Area

If the desired NST focus area name or the most closely related ACGME specialty/subspecialty linkage is not available, requesting a new focus area request may be submitted. New focus area requests will undergo ACGME review and will be given a status of “accepted” or “not accepted.” A notice of “accepted” means that the newly requested focus area and most closely related ACGME specialty/subspecialty will be added to the dropdown menu in ADS. A notice of “not accepted” means that the particular name was not accepted and a different focus area name may be requested.

1. Linking a focus area to its most closely related ACGME-accredited program

All NST programs must be linked with a most closely related ACGME-accredited program. There are several NST Recognition Requirements that outline how to make this determination, including 1.1.b.; 1.1.b.1.; and 1.3.. Full details of these requirements can be found [here](#).

2. Naming conventions of focus area names

Newly requested NST focus area names should clearly identify the advanced clinical focus of the program. They should not have the same name as existing specialties/subspecialties that the ACGME accredits or specialties/subspecialties that have board certification offered by a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Common reasons that new NST focus area names are not accepted include:

- Adding non-clinical descriptors such as “research, academic, advanced, international, or complex”
- Similar naming to a specialty/subspecialty for which ACGME accreditation is available
- Inappropriate linkage between requested NST focus area and most closely related ACGME program

3. Use of “research pathway” focus areas

The “research pathway” focus areas reflect programs in which a physician who holds a J-1 visa completing education and training in an ACGME-accredited program may need to add one year to fulfill program requirements in internal medicine and pediatric subspecialties. These “research pathway” programs may

not exceed 12 months. “Research pathway” programs are also available for surgical trainees who leave and re-enter ACGME-accredited programs to complete required non-accredited training.

d. NST programs with academic/research tracks

Stand-alone research programs are not considered Non-Standard Training programs. However, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) can consider sponsorship for participation in a research pathway on a case-by-case basis at a Sponsoring Institution that has achieved ACGME NST Recognition if the pathway is **predefined** as a **required component** of an ACGME-accredited program and documented as such **prior** to an applicant’s entry into the accredited program. Refer to the [Intealth](#) website for more information.

e. Determining training program length

NST programs must be entered in ADS in the number of months necessary to complete the program. The number of months should account for the maximum training length required to complete training. Research cannot serve to extend the originally defined duration of a clinical training program under J-1 visa sponsorship.

4. Completing NST Program Descriptions and Adding Participating Sites

a. Listing participating sites

In the NST program’s profile, navigate to the “Sites” tab.

Overview Program ▾ Trainees ▾ **Sites** Reports

NST

Program Leadership + Add Personnel

ADS Role ▾	Name ▾	Title ▾	Contact Information ▾	Username ▾
Program Director				
Program Coordinator				

Select “Add Site” to begin listing the participating sites for this NST program. NST trainees’ assignment/rotation options will be limited to the participating sites of the most closely related ACGME-accredited program, as identified by the Sponsoring Institution and listed in ADS (requirement 1.5.).

NST
Non-Standard Training (ECFMG) - F

Instructions Participating Site Definition Sponsoring Institution Definition

Participating Site Information + Add Site

Filter Results

ID	Site Name

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 entries

b. Completing program information in ADS

NST programs must have program descriptions attached. The Sponsoring Institution will be responsible for submitting NST program information to the ACGME. Program information for each NST program must be completed. These program descriptions will be attached to each NST program and will be shared with InTealth once reviewed for completeness by the ACGME. A list of the [program descriptions](#) can be found on the NST page of the ACGME website.

Under the NST program profile, click the “NST Program Information” option under the “Additional Requirements” heading on the right. On this page, NST program or Sponsoring Institution users must complete all narrative and yes/no questions. Use the “Save” button to save progress along the way. There is a 1,600-character limit to the text box fields, so make sure that responses do not get cut off.

NST

Additional Requirements

Major Changes and Other Updates

Program Leadership + Add Personnel NST Program Information

c. Preparing to submit information to the ACGME

Once each question has been answered, click the “Submit” button to indicate that these responses are ready for review by the Sponsoring Institution. On the NST Recognition tab, Sponsoring Institution users will see that the NST program is assigned a badge reading “Pending Sponsor Review.”

NST. Hematology-Medical Oncology Research Pathway 168115LName 1317674LName **Pending Sponsor Review** View Verify Info Reactivate

At this point, the designated institutional official (DIO) will review this information. To review the program description, the Sponsoring Institution user will hover over the NST program and click the “Verify Info” button. On this page, the DIO can review the full program description. After review, the DIO or other Sponsoring Institution user can either request revisions to these responses or indicate that they are ready for review by the ACGME.

If revisions are requested, the DIO will be able to use the “Comments” function to record any requested changes. If returned, the NST program will be assigned a red badge reading “Revisions Required.”

NST Hematology-Medical Oncology Research Pathway 168115LName 1317674LName **Revisions Required**

Is the NST program accredited?
.....

If “Yes”, identify the accrediting body.

Is certification available to graduates of the program?

If “Yes”, identify the certifying body.

Is this primarily a research program?
.....

If “Yes”, please describe how this NST program will provide clinical training in advanced subspecialty program. *No Information provided*

Comments

If no further revisions are requested by the DIO they can select “Approve and Submit to the ACGME.” At this point, the ACGME will be able to review full NST program descriptions. On the Sponsoring Institution’s NST Recognition tab in ADS, the program will be assigned a gold badge reading “Pending ACGME Review.”

The screenshot shows a header bar with the following elements from left to right: a menu icon, the text 'NST', the text 'Hematology-Medical Oncology Research Pathway', the text '168115LName', the text '1317674LName', a yellow badge with the text 'Pending ACGME Review' (highlighted with a red box), and a red minus sign icon.

5. ACGME Review of NST Program Information

a. ACGME review process

The ACGME reviews NST data for completeness before sharing information with Intealth. ACGME staff members do not “approve” individual NST programs or make any accreditation or recognition decisions based on the information provided. The ACGME will regularly review programs (typically this occurs on a weekly basis).

b. Common reasons descriptions are returned

Common reasons that data will be returned for further clarification include:

- Direct copying/pasting from either the ACGME NST Recognition Requirements or specialty/subspecialty Program Requirements
- Specific references to faculty or staff members
- Including hyperlinks to outside resources
- Lack of NST program-specific information
- Program length entered in year format and not months
- Content does not address specific question(s) or incomplete responses due to ADS character limitations

c. Revising the new program descriptions

If the ACGME requires additional clarification, the program description information will be returned to the Sponsoring Institution and NST program users. The NST program will be marked in ADS with a “Revisions Required” badge. There will be comments entered at the bottom of the submission to indicate where additional information is needed. All changes must be made within ADS.

The screenshot shows a header bar with the following elements from left to right: a menu icon, the text 'NST', the text 'Hematology-Medical Oncology Research Pathway', the text '168115LName', the text '1317674LName', a red badge with the text 'Revisions Required' (highlighted with a red box), and a red minus sign icon.

d. Transmittal process between the ACGME and Intealth

Once the NST program has been reviewed and is marked as complete, the ACGME will prepare for data transmission to Intealth. These programs will be marked with a teal badge reading “Reviewed and Awaiting Export.”

	NST0300028 Hospital Neurology	1043594LName 1423627LName	Reviewed and Awaiting Export
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Once the data has been sent to Intealth, the NST program will be marked with a green badge with the label “Sent to Intealth.”

	NST Body Imaging	768366LName 795411LName	Sent to Intealth
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6. Active and Inactive NST Program Status

An “inactive” designation can be applied to an NST program when the Sponsoring Institution has reason to inactivate it (for example, if there are no NST trainees in the program). On the NST Recognition tab, hover over a program and use the “Inactivate” button to make this change. Subsequently, use the “Reactivate” button to return the program to an active state. When programs are marked “inactive,” there will be a null symbol next to the program name on the NST Recognition tab. NST programs must be marked as “active” to allow the ACGME to review newly entered program descriptions.

	NST Hematology-Medical Oncology Research Pathway	168115LName 1317674LName	
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	NST Hospital Neurology	1043594LName 1423627LName	Sent to Intealth		View	Reactivate
	NST Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgery	509777LName 1374974LName	Sent to Intealth	View	Inactivate	

7. Entering NST Trainee Information

a. Identification of NST trainees

An NST trainee is defined as a physician in an NST program who holds a J-1 visa sponsored by the ECFMG.

Physicians with other visa types (H-1B, O-1, etc.) and US citizens are not considered NST trainees.

b. Entering NST trainees into ADS

On the NST Recognition tab, hover over the applicable program and click “View.” On the NST Program Profile that appears, there is a tab labeled “Trainees.” Hover over this navigation tab and select “Add Trainee” to begin completing data fields about the NST trainee in this program.

Only NST trainees (J-1 visa holders) should be entered into this roster. Physicians with other visa types and US citizens should not be entered into this roster.

The screenshot shows the NST Program Profile for 'Abdominal Multi-Organ Transplantation Surgery'. The 'Trainees' dropdown menu is open, showing 'Add Trainee' and 'View Roster' options. Below the menu is a 'Program Leadership' section with a table of roles and a '+ Add Personnel' button.

ADS Role	Name	Title	Contact Information	Username
Program Director	1061024FName 1 1061024LName, MD		abc1061024@acgme.org	
Program Coordinator	1371023FName 1 1371023LName, BS		abc1371023@acgme.org (213) 506-2673	

c. NST trainee profile maintenance

To make edits to an NST trainee’s profile, navigate to the Trainee tab and hover over their name. Click the button labeled “Edit.”

The screenshot shows the 'Trainees' list interface. It includes a filter dropdown set to 'Active', a 'Filter Results' input field, and a table of trainees. The first trainee has an 'Edit' button next to their name.

Last Name	First Name	Status
1376175LName	1376175FName	Active Full Time
1376179LName	1376179FName	Active Full Time

When an NST trainee has completed training, their status in the program should be updated using the “Edit” button next to their name on the Trainee tab. Navigate toward the bottom of the NST trainee profile to find a section titled “Program Information” and make updates to the NST trainee’s status in the program.

Program Information

Trainee Status:

Training Start Date:

8. Navigating the NST Recognition Tab After NST Program Entry

After NST programs have been entered in ADS, users can navigate back to the NST Recognition tab for a snapshot of the status of each NST program. The color-coded badges are defined in [Section 4](#).

The screenshot shows the ACGME ADS interface. The top navigation bar includes: Overview, Institution, Participating Sites, Sponsored Programs, NST Recognition (selected), Institutional Review, CLER, Uploads, Reports. The main content area is titled 'Sponsored Programs (NST Recognition)' and includes a '+ New NST Program' and 'View NST Information' button. Below is a table with columns: Code, Focus Area, PD Last Name, Coordinator Last Name, and NST Program Verification Status. The table lists six programs with different verification statuses and associated action buttons.

Code	Focus Area	PD Last Name	Coordinator Last Name	NST Program Verification Status	Actions
	Advanced Diagnostic Molecular Hematopathology and Related Translational Studies				
	Breast Oncology			Revisions Required	
	Cardiothoracic Critical Care Anesthesiology			Pending Sponsor Review	View, Verify Info, Inactivate
	Cardiothoracic Imaging			Pending ACGME Review	
	Hepatopancreatobiliary Surgery			Reviewed and Awaiting Export	
	Internal Medicine Chief Residency			Sent to Intealth	


Showing 1 to 6 of 6 entries

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9. NST Site Visit and Annual Update

a. NST site visit process

Approximate NST site visit dates are posted in ADS and can be found on both the "Institution" and "NST Recognition" tabs. Information about the NST site visit can be found on the [Site Visit](#) section of the ACGME website.



Overview **Institution** Participating Sites Sponsored Programs NST Recognition Institutional Review CLER Uploads Reports

Institution Leadership

ADS Role	Name	Title	Contact Information	Username
DIO				
CEO/Director/President				
Institutional Coordinator				
Institutional Coordinator				
Institutional Coordinator				
Non-Standard Training Program Liaison				

Accreditation Status: Continued Accreditation
Effective Date: .

Non-Standard Training Recognition Status: Initial Recognition
Effective Date: .

Last Site Visit Date:
Date of Next Site Visit (Approximate):
Self-Study Due Date (Scheduled):
10-Year Site Visit (Approximate):
Non-Standard Training Recognition Site Visit Date (Approximate): October 01, 2025
Last CLER Site Visit Date:
Next CLER Site Visit Date:

b. NST Annual Updates

At this time, there is no ADS Annual Update for NST Recognition because all recognized Sponsoring Institutions have a status of Initial Recognition, which is not subject to ACGME annual review. The IRC is currently working with ACGME staff members to develop the Annual Update process for NST.

10. Contact for Additional Information

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