

ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

February 12, 2008

Table of Contents

I. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION	1
A. Description	1
B. ACGME Mission	1
C. Purpose of Accreditation	1
D. Definition of Accreditation.....	2
E. List of Accredited Programs and Institutions	2
F. Standing Committees of the ACGME	2
1. Description.....	2
a) Meetings	2
b) Reporting	2
c) Compensation.....	3
d) Composition.....	3
2. Committee on Strategic Initiatives	3
a) Purpose	3
b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures.....	3
3. Committee on Finance	4
a) Purpose	4
b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures.....	4
4. Committee on Requirements.....	5
a) Purpose	5
b) Operational Guidelines	5
c) Conflict of Interest.....	6
d) Procedures for Revision of Requirements	7
e) Disagreement between an ABMS Board and a Review Committee Regarding the Accreditation of Subspecialty Programs.	8
f) Resolution of Inter-Specialty Conflicts	9
5. Monitoring Committee	9
a) Purpose	9
b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures.....	10
6. Bylaws and Policies Committee	13
a) Purpose	13
7. Awards Committee	14
a) Purpose	14
b) Operational Guidelines	14
G. Councils of the ACGME	14
1. Description.....	14
a) Meetings	14
b) Reporting	15
c) Compensation.....	15
d) Composition.....	15
2. Council of Review Committee Chairs	15
a) Composition.....	15
b) Operational Guidelines for Inter-specialty Conflicts and Revisions of Program Requirements.....	16
3. Council of Review Committee Residents	19
a) Appointment.....	19
b) Purpose	19
H. ACGME Agreements for Directors and Committee Members	19
1. Fiduciary Duty.....	19

2.	Conflict of Interest.....	19
3.	Confidentiality	20
I.	Procedures for Accreditation of Programs in New Medical Specialties.....	22
1.	Criteria for Accreditation	22
2.	Processing the Proposal.....	22
J.	Procedures for the Accreditation of Programs in a New Subspecialty	25
1.	Criteria for Accreditation	25
2.	Processing the Proposal.....	25
3.	Procedures for Considering Opinions of the Relevant ABMS Board.....	26
4.	Initial Accreditation	28
5.	Periodic Review	28
K.	Procedures for Additional Review Committees to Offer Accreditation in an Existing Subspecialty	29
L.	Delegation of Authority to Review Committees	30
1.	Introduction.....	30
2.	Application Procedures.....	30
3.	Procedure to Evaluate Requests for Accreditation Authority.....	31
4.	Periodic Review of a Review Committee's Activities	31
M.	Review Committees.....	32
1.	Description.....	32
2.	Staff	33
3.	Review Committee Members	33
a)	Appointment of Residency Review Committee Members.....	33
b)	Appointment of Institutional Review Committee and Transitional Year Committee Members	34
c)	Terms.....	34
d)	Qualifications for Appointment.....	34
e)	Composition.....	35
f)	Responsibilities.....	36
g)	Failure of Member to Perform.....	37
h)	Other Attendees.....	37
i)	Size.....	38
4.	Policies Governing Member Conduct	39
a)	Fiduciary Duty (excludes ex officio members)	39
b)	Conflict of Interest (includes ex officio members)	39
c)	Confidentiality (includes ex officio members)	40
d)	Published Information Released through ACGME	41
e)	Summary data.	41
f)	Individual resident physician data.....	41
g)	Confidentiality Administration (includes ex officio members).....	41
5.	Request for Pilot Project.....	43
N.	Responsibilities of Review Committees	44
1.	Delegation of Authority	44
2.	Accreditation Responsibilities:.....	44
3.	Use of Information on Resident Performance on Certification Examinations in Program Review.....	45
4.	Conduct of Review Committee Meetings	45
5.	Use of Conference Calls to Transact Review Committee Business	46
6.	Cancellation of a Review Committee Meeting.....	47
O.	Procedures for the Development and Approval of Requirements	47
1.	Initial Approval of Proposed Requirements	47

2.	Major Revision of Existing Requirements	47
3.	Minor Revisions of Existing Requirements	50
4.	Revisions to the Common Program Requirements	50
5.	Impact Statement	51
6.	Inter-specialty Conflicts about Revisions of Requirements	53
7.	Procedures for Developing Program Requirements for Multidisciplinary Subspecialties	53
P.	Finance.....	54
1.	Fee Structure.....	54
a)	Accreditation Fee.....	54
b)	Application Fee.....	55
c)	Appeal Fee	55
d)	Canceled or Postponed Site Visit Fee	55
e)	Due Date.....	55
2.	Expenses.....	56
a)	Committee Meetings.....	56
b)	Site Visit.....	57
II.	ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	58
A.	Types of Graduate Medical Education Programs and Institutions	58
1.	Residency Programs	58
2.	Subspecialty Programs.....	58
a)	Dependent Subspecialty Programs	58
b)	Independent Subspecialty Programs.....	58
3.	Transitional Year Programs.....	59
4.	Types of Sponsoring Institutions	59
a)	Multiple-Program Institutions	59
b)	Single-Program Institutions Reviewed by One Review Committee	59
B.	The Accreditation Process	60
1.	Written Documents for Accreditation Review	60
2.	The Site Visit	60
3.	The Review Process.....	61
4.	The Accreditation Cycle.....	62
5.	Notification of Review Committee Actions.....	63
C.	Accreditation Actions	64
1.	Withheld Accreditation.....	64
2.	Initial Accreditation	66
3.	Continued Accreditation	67
4.	Probationary Accreditation	67
5.	Withdrawal.....	68
a)	Withdrawal of Accreditation After Probationary Accreditation	68
b)	Expedited Withdrawal of Accreditation (Programs Only).....	70
c)	Procedures for Appeal of Expedited Adverse Action.....	72
6.	Reduction in Resident Complement.....	76
	ACCREDITATION SCHEMA	77
7.	Other Actions.....	78
a)	Deferral of Accreditation	78
b)	Progress Report.....	78
c)	Participating Sites	78
d)	Integrated Site	79
e)	Change in Institutional Sponsor.....	79
f)	Resident Complement	79

8.	Administrative Actions	80
a)	Voluntary Withdrawal of Accreditation	80
b)	Administrative Withdrawal	82
9.	Accreditation Actions for Dependent Subspecialty Programs	83
a)	General Policies.....	84
b)	Accreditation Actions	84
10.	Program Procedures for Adverse Actions and Appeal.....	86
a)	Adverse Actions.....	86
b)	Procedures for Adverse Actions	86
c)	Procedures for Appeal of Adverse Actions Other than Expedited Adverse Actions.....	87
11.	Institutional Procedures for Adverse Actions and Appeals.....	93
a)	Adverse Actions.....	93
b)	Procedures for Proposed Adverse Actions for Institutional Review.....	93
c)	Procedures for Appeal of Institutional Adverse Actions.....	95
d)	Notification of Residents and Applicants	99
D.	Procedures for Granting Duty-Hour Exception.....	100
1.	Approval Process	100
a)	Institutional Endorsement	100
b)	Review Committee Review.....	100
2.	Eligibility Criteria	101
3.	Required Documentation.....	101
a)	Patient Safety	101
b)	Educational Rationale.....	101
c)	Moonlighting Policy.....	101
d)	Call Schedules.....	102
e)	Faculty Monitoring	102
f)	Institutional Endorsement	102
4.	Monitoring.....	102
E.	Procedures for Addressing Complaints against Residency Programs and Sponsoring Institutions	102
1.	Submitting a Formal Complaint	103
2.	Content of the Formal Complaint.....	103
3.	Procedures for Processing a Formal Complaint.....	103
4.	Review Committee Action	104
5.	Confidentiality	104
6.	Complaint File.....	105
F.	Alleged Egregious or Catastrophic Events.....	105
G.	ACGME Plan to Address a Disaster that Significantly Alters the Residency Experience at One or More Residency Programs	106
1.	Overview.....	106
2.	Definition of Disaster	106
3.	ACGME Declaration of a Disaster	106
4.	Resident Transfers and Program Reconfiguration	106
5.	ACGME Website	107
6.	Communication with ACGME from Disaster Affected Institutions/Programs.....	107
7.	Institutions Offering to Accept Transfers	108
8.	Changes in Participating Sites and Resident Compliment	108
9.	Temporary Resident Transfer.....	108
10.	Site Visits.....	109

III. EFFECTIVE DATE..... 110

I. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION

A. Description

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is a separately incorporated non-governmental organization responsible for the accreditation of Graduate Medical Education (GME) programs. The scope of ACGME accreditation extends to those institutions and programs in GME within the jurisdiction of the United States of America, its territories and possessions. The ACGME has five member organizations:

- The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)
- The American Hospital Association (AHA)
- The American Medical Association (AMA)
- The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- The Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS)

Each member organization nominates four individuals to the ACGME's Board of Directors. In addition, the Board of Directors includes three public directors, two resident directors, and the chair of the Council of Review Committee Chairs. A representative of the federal government may, without vote, attend meetings of the Board.

Under the authority of the ACGME, accreditation of GME programs is carried out by Review Committees. The term "Review Committee" is used to denote a Residency Review Committee, the Transitional Year Review Committee, and the Institutional Review Committee.

B. ACGME Mission

We improve health care by assessing and advancing the quality of resident physicians' education through accreditation.

ACGME Approved: 9/13/05

C. Purpose of Accreditation

At its meeting on February 13-14, 1984, the ACGME voted to reaffirm the statement of the purpose of accreditation. This statement was originally adopted by the Liaison Committee on Graduate Medical Education, the predecessor organization of the ACGME, at its November 17-18, 1980 meeting.

The ACGME reaffirmed its policy that in the accrediting process, the ACGME is not intent upon establishing numbers of practicing physicians in the various specialties in the country, but rather that the purpose of accrediting by the ACGME is to accredit those programs which meet the minimum standards as outlined in the institutional and program requirements. The purpose of accreditation is to provide for training programs of good educational quality in each medical specialty.

This resolution remains the policy of the ACGME.

D. Definition of Accreditation

Accreditation of residency programs and sponsoring institutions by the ACGME is a voluntary process of evaluation and review performed by a non-governmental agency of peers. The goals of the process are to evaluate, improve, and publicly recognize programs or sponsoring institutions in GME that are in substantial compliance with standards of educational quality established by the ACGME. Accreditation was developed to benefit the public, protect the interests of residents, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice.

E. List of Accredited Programs and Institutions

The list of programs and sponsoring institutions accredited by the ACGME is published at www.acgme.org.

F. Standing Committees of the ACGME

1. Description

The Chair of the ACGME, with the advice of the ACGME Executive Committee, shall determine the size of each standing committee, and shall appoint members of the ACGME Board of Directors and others as appropriate to these standing committees on an annual basis.

a) Meetings

The standing committees shall meet at the time of the regular meetings of the ACGME Board of Directors, and at such other times as may become necessary.

b) Reporting

These standing committees shall report at the plenary sessions of the ACGME and to the Executive Committee as appropriate.

c) Compensation

Members of the standing committees shall receive no financial compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Committee members, in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws.

d) Composition

Typically, at least one director from each of the ACGME's member organizations should be appointed to each of the standing committees. Additional members may be appointed to the ACGME standing committees and councils by the Board of Directors as needed.

2. Committee on Strategic Initiatives

a) Purpose

The Committee on Strategic Initiatives is charged with reviewing general issues in GME, choosing specific issues to explore in depth, and advising the ACGME regarding these matters by means of position papers or recommendations for changes in standards or accreditation procedures.

b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures

(1) The Committee shall develop a list of and periodically review general issues in GME with the following in mind: Graduate medical education is changing rapidly because of major changes in the health care delivery system and in academic medical centers, which have been the traditional locus of GME. Characteristically, accrediting agencies make changes deliberately.

Nevertheless, in the rapidly changing environment of GME, there is a need for accreditation of residency programs to respond to changing circumstances, and to maintain standards which are flexible enough to allow for needed innovation.

(2) Issues identified by the Committee will be prioritized so that specific matters may be discussed and explored in depth. Staff shall prepare studies or background information that will assist the Committee in its deliberations.

3. Committee on Finance

a) Purpose

The Committee on Finance shall monitor ACGME revenue and expenditures, and prepare an annual budget for ACGME review and approval. The Committee shall analyze and submit recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or the ACGME regarding the financial impact of policies, practices, and procedures.

b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures

The Committee shall review ACGME revenue and expenditures during the course of the fiscal year. The ACGME fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. An annual budget shall be prepared for ACGME review and approval during the fall meeting for the next fiscal year. The Committee shall:

- (1) recommend for ACGME Board approval of all ACGME fees, per diems, and honorariums as part of the budgeting process;
- (2) review ACGME investments and recommend for ACGME Board approval the ACGME investment strategy;
- (3) recommend for ACGME Board approval the ACGME financial reserve strategy;and
- (4) review and submit recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or the ACGME Board of Directors regarding all major capital expenditures and the financial impact of policies, practices, and procedures requested by Review Committees, other ACGME committees, or the ACGME Board.

4. Committee on Requirements

a) Purpose

- (1) The Committee on Requirements shall review and make recommendations to the ACGME on all matters pertaining to the Requirements submitted by the Review Committees or other committees of the ACGME. This includes, but is not limited to, the initial approval of proposed institutional requirements and the program requirements in specialties and subspecialties, as well as the approval of all subsequent proposed revisions to these Requirements.

A majority of voting members of the Committee must be present for any official recommendation.

- (2) The Committee shall serve as the first ACGME level of consideration in those cases in which a Review Committee and the associated ABMS Board disagree concerning the accreditation of subspecialty programs.

b) Operational Guidelines

- (1) The Committee shall review and evaluate the basis on which decisions about program and institutional requirements are made. Such review and evaluation shall include both *content*, such as consistency with ACGME guidelines, clarity of language, and general reasonableness of standards, and *impact*, such as effects on institutions sponsoring GME on education in other disciplines, and on the financial position of the institution and of other residency programs in the institution. With respect to content that is specialty-specific (e.g., types of procedures and experiences necessary for resident education), the Committee and the ACGME may rely on the expertise of the appropriate Review Committee.

- (2) Proposed requirements shall be assigned to one or more members of the Committee for review. The members shall prepare comments for presentation to the full Committee. These reviewer comments shall be forwarded to the chair of the applicable Review Committee at least three weeks prior to the meeting so that the chair may prepare a response. A written response will be distributed to the Committee at least one week prior to the meeting.

This Committee meeting is an open forum where any member or a representative of a Review Committee, institution, or the public with an interest in the institutional or program requirements may speak to the relevant issues. The proposing Review Committee should have full opportunity to respond to comments from interested parties.

The recommendation of the Committee shall reflect the opinion of a majority of the Committee on Requirements present and voting on the recommendation at a meeting of the Committee at which a quorum is present, and shall be presented to the ACGME Board of Directors for final action.

c) Conflict of Interest

- (1) The Committee members should avoid conflicts of interest in making recommendations on Requirements to the Board of Directors.
- (2) Prior to a Committee meeting, a Committee member shall not accept a review assignment if the Committee member, because of his/her background or otherwise, feels that s/he cannot fairly participate in a recommendation to the Board of Directors.
- (3) During the Committee meeting the following apply:
 - (a) As to program requirements to which no other Review Committee objects in writing:
 - (i) The Committee reviewer should not be of the same specialty as the requirements.
 - (ii) Committee members of the same specialty as the requirements under consideration may (a) participate in Committee discussion, (b) participate in Committee vote, and (c) moderate Committee consideration.
 - (b) As to program requirements to which other Review Committees object in writing, and for which the objections have not been reconciled,

- (i) The Committee reviewer should not be of the same specialty as the requirements or as the objecting specialty(ies).
 - (ii) Committee members of the same specialty as the requirements and of the objecting specialty(ies) may participate in Committee discussion, but may not participate in Committee vote, and may not moderate Committee consideration.
 - (c) A Committee member shall not participate in Committee discussion, participate in Committee vote, and/or moderate Committee consideration on any requirements that the Committee member, because of his/her background or otherwise, feels that s/he cannot fairly participate in a recommendation to the Board of Directors.
 - (d) At each Committee meeting at which requirements are considered, the Committee will determine whether any member, because of a conflict of interest should not participate in the recommendation on each set of requirements to be considered.
- d) Procedures for Revision of Requirements
- (1) All Review Committees must review their respective requirements every five years. Likewise, the Council of Review Committee Chairs must review the ACGME Common Program Requirements every five years. If during this review, the Review Committee or Council determines that no changes are required, the Review Committee or Council should notify the Committee on Requirements in writing of this decision. If the Review Committee or Council determines that changes are required, the Review Committee or Council should present the proposed revised document for review and approval to the ACGME Board following the stated policies.
 - (2) Major or substantive changes to the requirements must be considered by the Committee on Requirements.

- (3) Minor revisions should be indicated, and only those sections should be considered for review and recommendation by the Committee on Requirements. At the same time, the Committee may make any comments or suggestions regarding the remainder of the document; these in turn shall be forwarded to the Review Committee for consideration and comment by a deadline determined by the Committee on Requirements. This action shall not preclude review and action by the Committee on Requirements on the changes currently proposed.
 - (4) If, (based upon mutual discussion and agreement between the Committee on Requirements and the Review Committee Chair), further modifications in the document are agreed upon in the course of review, staff may complete the editorial changes before the document is distributed.
- e) Disagreement between an ABMS Board and a Review Committee Regarding the Accreditation of Subspecialty Programs.

In those cases in which a Review Committee or the Council of Review Committee Chairs and the associated ABMS Board disagree on the accreditation of subspecialty programs, the Committee on Requirements may arrange for a hearing as described in the Policies and Procedures for Accreditation of New Subspecialty Areas.

When the pertinent ABMS Board(s) does not award a Certificate of Qualifications in an emerging subspecialty and, in addition, when it is opposed to the accreditation of programs in that area, a Review Committee may petition the ACGME to consider the request to begin the accreditation process for that subspecialty as an exception to the criteria stipulated in this document. This request must include documentation that at least three-fourths of the Review Committee members agree that the accreditation of programs in the subspecialty area would benefit patient care, and that the accreditation process should progress regardless of opposition by the relevant board.

If the Committee on Requirements judges that there is an adequate basis for considering the above request, it shall arrange for a hearing to be held at the next ACGME meeting. This hearing shall take place at a designated session of the Committee on Requirements in conjunction with a regular ACGME meeting. Representatives from the Review Committee and the ACGME Board must be invited to participate in the hearing.

In this hearing, the Committee on Requirements shall give due consideration to all points of view, and shall make one of the following recommendations:

- (1) to recognize the subspecialty as sufficiently well established so that the accreditation of fellowship programs in that area may be considered, or
- (2) to deny the request of the Review Committee.

If the recommendation of the Committee is to recognize the subspecialty as meriting accreditation of its fellowship programs, the specialty board concerned may petition the ACGME Board for a special hearing by that body. Such a hearing shall be arranged for the next meeting of the ACGME Board.

f) Resolution of Inter-Specialty Conflicts

There may be special circumstances in which the proposed program requirements or the institutional requirements appear to have a significant impact on residency education in other disciplines. In such instances, the procedures for the resolution of inter-specialty conflicts shall be followed (Section I.G.2.b)(1)(b)-(d)). If in accordance with those procedures the written report has been presented to the Committee on Requirements but agreement between the disciplines involved has not been reached, the Committee on Requirements shall make its recommendation to the ACGME Board on the program requirements or institutional requirements after considering all information that it judges relevant and appropriate.

5. Monitoring Committee

a) Purpose

The Monitoring Committee is charged with responsibility to:

- (1) evaluate the performance of Review Committees;

- (2) monitor, advise, and make recommendations to the ACGME regarding Review Committee activities and delegation of accreditation authority; and,
- (3) accrue knowledge about improving accreditation practices by:
 - (a) developing and distributing summary information regarding the performance of the Review Committees;
 - (b) identifying and sharing the “best practices” of Review Committees;
 - (c) suggesting, where appropriate, standardized approaches to requirements;
 - (d) evaluating the work of relevant Review Committees in assessing compliance with the institutional requirements in single program institutions;
 - (e) monitoring and assessing the consistent application and enforcement of the standards, including the duty hour standards; and,
 - (f) reviewing accreditation data and information addressing special issues as directed by the ACGME Board.

b) Operational Guidelines and Procedures

- (1) The Monitoring Committee shall review each Review Committee at least once every five years.

The Monitoring Committee shall invite the Review Committee Chair and the Review Committee Executive Director to discuss and clarify the Review Committee activities.

Approximately eight weeks prior to the ACGME Board meeting, members of the Monitoring Committee shall be sent information about the Review Committee for review, submitted by the Review Committee Executive Director. This information shall include, but is not limited to:

- (a) Monitoring Committee Report Form, including special reports requested;

- (b) minutes of Review Committee meetings;
- (c) Program Information Forms (specialty and subspecialty) for a Review Committee and the Institutional Review Document for the Institutional Review Committee;
- (d) Site-visitor Report Forms (if unique);
- (e) Program or Institutional Requirements;
- (f) historical Monitoring Committee reports;
- (g) Review Committee newsletters, if applicable; and
- (h) statistical data on accreditation activities, including citations and duty-hour activities.

Members shall review the submitted information to assess the compliance of the Review Committee with the applicable requirements and the *Policies and Procedures*.

During the scheduled review with the Monitoring Committee, the Review Committee Chair and Executive Director shall discuss and clarify information about the Review Committee. At the conclusion of this interview, the Monitoring Committee shall reconvene in executive session to finalize its recommendations, which shall be delineated in a written report and shall include a recommendation for a period of delegated authority to the Review Committee.

This report shall be mailed to the appropriate Review Committee Chair for comment. The final draft shall be included in the Monitoring Committee agenda book for its next meeting. At the next meeting of the ACGME Board, the Monitoring Committee shall discuss the final draft, and the final report shall then be submitted to the ACGME Board for approval with final copy to the Review Committee for discussion at the next Review Committee meeting.

This final report shall be filed with the archival copy of the minutes of the ACGME Board. Review Committees may be asked to provide progress reports at times other than scheduled Monitoring Committee reviews.

(2) Review of Subspecialty Accreditation

The Monitoring Committee shall also review the accreditation actions for each subspecialty area in which the Review Committee under review accredits programs.

- (a) If the Monitoring Committee concludes that a Review Committee should discontinue accrediting programs in a subspecialty, (due, for example, to inactivity for educational reasons), a special procedure shall be followed.

Should the Review Committee disagree and wish to continue accreditation of programs in that area, the Review Committee shall be invited to address in writing each of the seven criteria set forth in the "Processing the Proposals" of a new subspecialty Section I.J.2 a-g of these *Policies and Procedures* for presentation to the Monitoring Committee at a subsequent meeting. Interested parties, including the relevant ABMS Board, shall be permitted to comment prior to or at the meeting of the Monitoring Committee at which the Review Committee presents its rationale for continuing accreditation in the subspecialty area. Following this meeting with the Review Committee and interested parties, the Monitoring Committee shall make a final recommendation that accreditation be continued or discontinued in the subspecialty area.

- (b) Should the Monitoring Committee find that "Criteria for Recognition" are not met, the Monitoring Committee may recommend one of the following options:

Accreditation of programs in the subspecialty area should continue for a specified period of time to determine if the criteria can be met (at the conclusion of which time another review shall be conducted);

Accreditation of programs in the subspecialty area should discontinue at a specified date.

- (c) At the end of the provisional approval period for a new subspecialty, the Monitoring Committee will consider whether the ACGME should continue to accredit programs in the subspecialty. This review will include consideration of the number of programs that have been accredited in the subspecialty, the number of approved fellow positions in those programs, staff support required for accreditation activities related to the subspecialty, including expenses related to maintaining accreditation in the subspecialty, and other relevant information.

6. Bylaws and Policies Committee

a) Purpose

The Bylaws and Policies Committee shall:

- (1) review the adequacy of the ACGME Bylaws and prepare and submit recommended Bylaw amendments to the Board of Directors at least once every two years;
- (2) consider and make recommendations on potential amendments to ACGME Bylaws as directed by the Board of Directors;
- (3) review the adequacy of the *ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures* and prepare and submit recommended revisions to the Board of Directors at least once every two years; and,
- (4) consider and make recommendations on potential revisions to the *ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures* as directed by the Board of Directors.

7. Awards Committee

a) Purpose

- (1) The Committee shall review and make recommendations to the ACGME Board of Directors on all matters pertaining to the Awards program.
- (2) A majority of voting members of the Committee must be present for any official recommendation.

b) Operational Guidelines

- (1) At the September ACGME Board meeting, the Committee shall review and evaluate the nominations for awards based on established criteria.
- (2) The Committee shall submit to the Board for approval at least 10 nominations for the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award, one to three nominations for the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award, and one nomination for the John C. Gienapp Award.
- (3) The recipients of the awards shall be announced at the September ACGME meeting.
- (4) The ACGME Executive Director shall notify the award recipients following the September ACGME meeting.
- (5) The Awards dinner and ceremony shall be held at the following February ACGME meeting.

G. Councils of the ACGME

1. Description

The ACGME is advised in matters pertaining to GME and accreditation by two Councils: the Council of Review Committee Chairs, and the Council of Review Committee Residents.

a) Meetings

The ACGME Councils shall meet at the time of the regular meetings of the ACGME Board of Directors and at such other times as may become necessary.

b) Reporting

These Councils shall report at the plenary sessions of the ACGME and to the Executive Committee as appropriate.

c) Compensation

Members of the Councils shall receive no financial compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Council members, in accordance with Article X of the Bylaws.

d) Composition

In general, only members of Review Committees may hold membership in the two ACGME Councils.

2. Council of Review Committee Chairs

a) Composition

The Council of Review Committee Chairs (Council of Chairs) comprises the current chairs of all Review Committees and two resident ACGME directors. A representative from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and a representative from the Organization of Program Director Associations are official observers. A representative from the Veterans Administration is an invited observer.

The Council of Chairs shall elect its Chair from among its own members. The Chair of the Council of Chairs shall serve a single term of two years. The Chair must be a chair of a Review Committee at the time of election, but need not be a Chair or member of a Review Committee for the duration of the two-year term. The Chair of the Council of Chairs shall serve as a voting member of the Committee on Strategic Initiatives and shall serve as an ACGME director with vote.

The Council of Chairs shall also elect its Vice-chair from among its own members for a one-year term. The Vice-chair shall be eligible for election as the Chair upon expiration of his or her term as the Vice-chair, but may or may not be elected Chair.

The Vice-chair of the Council of Chairs shall be appointed as an ex officio member, without vote, to serve as a liaison between the Council of Chairs and the Committee on Requirements.

Any additional appointments to ACGME Committees from the Council of Chairs shall be determined by the Executive Committee of the ACGME Board of Directors.

b) Operational Guidelines for Inter-specialty Conflicts and Revisions of Program Requirements

In addition to its advisory role, the Council of Chairs also shall serve as an intermediary between Review Committees in the resolution of inter-specialty conflicts, and in the revision of the common program requirements, in accordance with the procedures indicated below.

- (1) Inter-specialty Conflicts about the Accreditation of New Subspecialty Programs
 - (a) Review Committees that intend to initiate accreditation of programs in a new subspecialty must inform in writing the chairs of all other Review Committees through the Council of Chairs.
 - (b) Review Committee chairs who have concerns about the impact of the proposed subspecialty on education in their specialty should express this concern in writing to the Review Committee Chair that is initiating the subspecialty, with a copy also submitted to the chair of the Council of Chairs.
 - (c) If significant concerns have been expressed by a Review Committee as outlined above, the chair of the Council of Chairs shall propose a means for the concerned relevant parties to discuss the issues, usually through their meeting under the leadership of the Council of Chairs or a designated substitute at the time of a regularly scheduled ACGME Board meeting. If other meeting arrangements are necessary, the chair of the Council of Chairs shall request funding for this purpose from the ACGME.
 - (d) The chair of the Council of Chairs shall report the results of the meeting(s) to the full Council of Chairs and to the ACGME Executive Committee. The chair of the relevant Review Committee shall respond to this report as part of the Impact Statement that is distributed with the requirements.

(2) Inter-specialty Conflicts about Revision of Currently Approved Requirements

When the requirements of any currently approved specialty or subspecialty have been completed and distributed with the Impact Statement, any Review Committee chair who believes the proposed requirements will have an adverse impact on the education of residents/fellows in his or her specialty should express this concern in writing to the Review Committee Chair that is initiating the requirements and may request the Council of Chairs to convene a meeting of interested parties to discuss and address the perceived conflicts. The Council of Chairs shall proceed as in Section I.G.2.b)(1)(b)-(d) above.

(3) Inter-specialty Conflicts about Accreditation of Multidisciplinary Subspecialties

(a) When a Review Committee seeks ACGME approval to offer accreditation in an existing ACGME-approved subspecialty, the Review Committee must notify the Review Committees currently offering accreditation in the subspecialty of its intent to seek ACGME approval to offer accreditation in the subspecialty.

(b) If one or more Review Committee expresses concern regarding the impact of this change on education of fellows in the subspecialty, the Review Committee(s) should express this concern in writing to the Review Committee Chair that is seeking to offer accreditation in the subspecialty, with a copy to the chair of the Council of Chairs.

(c) If significant concerns have been expressed by a Review Committee, the chair of the Council of Chairs shall propose a means for the concerned relevant parties to discuss the issues, under the leadership of the Council of Chairs or a designated substitute. This is usually done at the time of a regularly scheduled ACGME Board meeting. If other meeting arrangements are necessary, the chair of the Council of Chairs shall request funding from the ACGME.

- (d) The chair of the Council of Chairs shall report the results of the meeting(s) to the full Council of Chairs and to the ACGME Executive Committee. The chair of the relevant Review Committee shall address this report as part of the request to offer accreditation in the subspecialty that is submitted to the ACGME.
- (4) Revisions to the Common Program Requirements
- (a) The Council of Chairs is responsible for maintaining and initiating revisions to the ACGME's Common Program Requirements. Proposed revisions to the Common Program Requirements may, however, be submitted by any member of the community of interest (e.g., program director, resident, Review Committee, Designated Institutional Official, appointing organization or member organization), or by a standing committee or council of the ACGME or its Board of Directors.
 - (b) The Council of Chairs staff shall bring the proposals to the attention of the Council of Chairs annually or as necessary. If revision is required due to state statute or federal law, such revisions shall take precedence. Proposals for revision should occur at infrequent intervals, but not less than five years.
 - (c) Revisions to the Common Program Requirements by the Council of Review Committee Chairs shall be conducted by following the standard ACGME procedures for revision of requirements.

3. Council of Review Committee Residents

a) Appointment

The Council of Review Committee Residents (Council of Residents) comprises the current resident members of the ACGME Board of Directors and of the Review Committees. The Council of Residents shall elect its chair from among its own members. The chair of the Council of Residents shall serve a single term of two years. The chair must be a member of a Review Committee at the time of election, but need not be a member of a Review Committee for the duration of the two-year term as chair. The Chair of the Council of Residents also serves as an ACGME director.

b) Purpose

The Council serves as an advisory body to the ACGME concerning resident matters, GME, and accreditation.

H. ACGME Agreements for Directors and Committee Members

1. Fiduciary Duty

a) An ACGME director shall discharge his or her duties to the ACGME in a manner consistent with Illinois law. This shall include, but not be limited to, the discharge of duties as a director in a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the interests of the ACGME.

b) A member of an ACGME Review Committee or other ACGME committee, who is not an ACGME director, shall discharge his or her duties as a committee member in a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the interests of the ACGME.

2. Conflict of Interest

The following policies shall be observed by ACGME directors and committee members in order to avoid conflict of interest:

a) ACGME directors and committee members shall not participate in the accreditation review of a program or sponsoring institution if for any reason it is judged that participation of that individual would involve a conflict of interest. Under such circumstances, the individual shall withdraw from all deliberation of the issue under discussion, and shall leave the meeting room. These actions shall be recorded in the record of meeting actions.

- b) ACGME directors and committee members shall not serve as program consultants or as site visitors to GME programs or sponsoring institutions.

3. Confidentiality

- a) The ACGME requires that its procedures and those of its committees recognize the need for confidentiality in maintaining certain information and documents acquired during the accreditation process. Adherence to confidentiality is vital to the operation of the accreditation process. Intrinsic to private accreditation is the promotion of candor within its process, which may include constructive criticism that leads to improvement in the educational quality of a program or institution. Maintaining confidentiality within the accreditation process promotes candor. Confidentiality means that the ACGME and its committees will not disclose the documents listed in this Section a) nor the information contained therein, except as required for ACGME accreditation purposes, as may be required legally, or as provided in Sections b) through d). In order to meet the requirement, ACGME holds as confidential the following documents and the information contained therein:

- (1) institutional and program files, including without limitation, institutional review documents, program information forms, site visit reports, progress reports, program case log data, other survey data, and record of committee consideration;
- (2) appeals files;
- (3) additional documents and correspondences recording accreditation actions and consideration thereof by the ACGME; and,
- (4) case log data, personal resident physician information, and protected health information submitted electronically or otherwise to the ACGME.

b) The ACGME publishes and releases, through its website (www.acgme.org) and other media, the following information about accredited programs and institutional reviews:

- (1) name and address of the sponsoring institution;
- (2) name and address of major participating site(s);
- (3) name and address of program director;
- (4) name and address of GME coordinator;
- (5) length of program;
- (6) total number of positions;
- (7) effective date of program and institutional accreditation, program and institutional accreditation status;
- (8) date of last site visit; and,
- (9) date of next site visit.

c) Summary data and other information about programs, institutions, resident physicians, or resident physician education which is not identifiable by person or organization may be published in a manner appropriate to further the quality of GME and will be consistent with ACGME policies and with law.

d) Individual resident physician clinical experience data may be submitted to specialty certification boards upon authorization of both individual resident physicians and of programs.

e) Confidentiality Administration

In order to protect confidential information and its own interest in maintaining that confidentiality, the ACGME assumes responsibility to:

- (1) not make copies of, disclose, discuss, describe, distribute, or disseminate in any manner whatsoever, including in any oral, written, or electronic form, any confidential information, or any part of it, that the Review Committees receive or generate, except directly in conjunction with service to ACGME;

- (2) not use such confidential information for personal or professional benefit or for any other reason, except directly in conjunction with service to the Review Committees and/or the ACGME; and,
- (3) dispose of all materials and notes regarding confidential information in compliance with ACGME policies.

A breach of confidentiality could result in irreparable damage to the Review Committees, the ACGME and its mission, as well as to the public, and may result in removal of the director or committee member.

I. Procedures for Accreditation of Programs in New Medical Specialties

1. Criteria for Accreditation

The ACGME shall determine whether it will accredit programs in a new medical specialty and establish an associated Review Committee. The ACGME shall evaluate proposals for the accreditation of residency programs in a new medical specialty in accordance with the criteria set forth below. This evaluation will ensure that the accreditation of programs in the new medical specialty is consistent with the mission of the ACGME.

2. Processing the Proposal

The proposal shall be sent to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME. Prior to the ACGME's review and assessment, the Chair of the ACGME Board of Directors with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall appoint an ad hoc committee to review each proposal. The ad hoc committee should be composed of individuals who have experience in GME, experience in accreditation in GME, and practice in the general area of the new specialty. A member of the Board of Directors should be appointed to the ad hoc committee. Representatives from the ABMS Liaison Committee for Specialty Boards (LCSB) who are experienced in the critical review of new disciplines should be invited to submit information and opinions to the committee.

- a) The proposal must provide evidence that the new specialty:
 - (1) is sufficiently distinct from other specialties based on major new concepts in medical science;
 - (2) represents a new and well-defined field of medical practice;

- (3) is based on substantial advancement in medical science, (i.e., the necessary educational program must be sufficiently complex or extended that it is not feasible to include it within established residency programs);
- (4) will generate sufficient interest and resources to establish the critical mass of quality residency programs with long-term commitment for successful integration of the graduates in the health care system nationally;
- (5) is recognized as legitimate and significant by the medical profession and by the closely-related specialties in particular, for a consensus of the education required to perform in this new field; and,
- (6) is recognized as the single pathway to the competent preparation of a physician in this specialty.
- (7) has national medical societies with a principal interest in the proposed specialty; information should include the number of peer-reviewed journals published in the specialty, as well as how many national and regional meetings are held annually.

b) Following review of the proposal, the ad hoc committee shall recommend to the ACGME that the proposal for accreditation of programs in a new medical specialty be:

- (1) processed for *preliminary development* with the length of the educational program tentatively proposed for one or more years;

In cases of a recommendation for *preliminary development*, the proposers are authorized, upon the approval of the ACGME Board of Directors, to develop program requirements for the new specialty in coordination with ACGME staff.

Following established ACGME procedures:

- (a) The proposed program requirements shall be distributed for review and comment to the Review Committees, program director groups, ACGME and Review Committee appointing organizations, ACGME member organizations, and other interested groups and organizations.

- (b) The ad hoc committee shall collect comments and make a recommendation to the ACGME whether or not to proceed with the further development of accreditation of programs in the new specialty.
- (c) The program requirements developed for the new specialty must be reviewed by the Committee on Requirements prior to approval by the ACGME Board of Directors, as described in these *Policies and Procedures*.

The ad hoc committee shall recommend the structure and function of an appropriate Review Committee with no more than three appointing organizations. The ACGME Board of Directors must give final approval with clear guidelines to the Monitoring Committee to assess the progress and success of accreditation of programs in the new specialty and to monitor the Review Committee.

- (2) referred to an existing Review Committee to be considered for inclusion in the current specialty or as a new subspecialty of the existing specialty.

If the proposal is referred to an existing Review Committee for consideration of the new medical specialty as a new dependent or independent subspecialty, the established procedures of the ACGME shall be followed. In some instances, the new specialty may embrace elements of more than one existing Review Committee. In such cases, the Review Committees involved may establish a joint work group to assess and recommend how the accreditation of programs in the new specialty should be accomplished directly.

- (a) one existing Review Committee;
 - (b) jointly by two or more Review Committees;
 - (c) by a conjoint committee of several Review Committees; or
 - (d) by other appropriately representative bodies; or
- (3) denied.

J. Procedures for the Accreditation of Programs in a New Subspecialty

1. Criteria for Accreditation

The ACGME shall evaluate proposals for the accreditation of fellowship programs in a new subspecialty in accordance with the criteria set forth below. This evaluation will ensure that the accreditation of programs in the subspecialty is consistent with the mission of the ACGME.

A subspecialty program is a structured educational activity comprising a series of learning experiences which follows the completion of pre-requisite specialty education in GME, and which conforms to the program requirements of a particular subspecialty.

2. Processing the Proposal

The proposal shall be sent to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME. Prior to the ACGME's review and assessment, the Chair of the ACGME Board of Directors, with the approval of the Executive Committee, may appoint an ad hoc committee to review the proposal. The ad hoc committee should be composed of individuals who have experience in GME, experience in accreditation in GME, and practice in the general area of the new subspecialty. A member of the Board of Directors should be appointed to the ad hoc committee. If a Review Committee submits a proposal, the Chair may elect to have the Executive Committee review the proposal.

The proposal must provide documentation on the professional and scientific status of the new subspecialty to include at minimum, evidence of the following:

- a) the existence of a body of scientific medical knowledge underlying the subspecialty that is in large part distinct from or more detailed than that of other areas in which accreditation is already offered; this body of knowledge must be sufficient for educating individuals in a clinical field, and not simply in one or more techniques;
- b) the existence of a sufficiently large group of physicians who concentrate their practice in the proposed subspecialty; information should include the number of physicians, the annual rate of increase in the past decade in the number of such physicians, and their present geographic distribution;

- c) the existence of national medical societies with a principal interest in the proposed subspecialty; information should include the number of peer-reviewed journals published in the subspecialty area, as well as how many national and regional meetings are held annually;
- d) the regular presence in academic units and health care organizations of educational programs, research activities, and clinical services such that the subspecialty is broadly available nationally and sufficient to improve the quality of healthcare by providing high standards of medical education;
- e) the growth of the subspecialty to the extent that the projected number of programs to be accredited will be sufficient to assure that accreditation is a cost-effective method of quality evaluation;
- f) the duration of the residency program is at least one year beyond the core specialty; and,
- g) the education program is primarily clinical.

Once all documentation has been reviewed, the ad hoc committee (or the Executive Committee) must determine whether the subspecialty meets the criteria for accreditation of residency programs in a new subspecialty and recommend approval or non-approval by the ACGME.

Upon approval by the ACGME Board of Directors the proposer is authorized to develop program requirements appropriate to the new subspecialty in coordination with ACGME staff and following established ACGME procedures as noted in I.2.b)(1)-(3) above.

3. Procedures for Considering Opinions of the Relevant ABMS Board

Documentation of appropriate communication between the Review Committee and the relevant ABMS Board(s) concerning the new subspecialty must be provided. This documentation must indicate one of the following options:

- a) that the board(s) awards a certificate in the subspecialty and supports accreditation in that area;
- b) that the board(s) does not intend to award a certificate at this time, but that it is not opposed to the Review Committee's beginning to accredit programs in the subspecialty; or,

- c) that the board(s) is opposed to the accreditation of programs in this subspecialty.

When the relevant board(s) does not award a certificate in this subspecialty and, in addition, when it is opposed to the accreditation of programs in this area, a Review Committee may petition the ACGME to consider the request to begin the accreditation process for this subspecialty. This request must include documentation that at least three-fourths of the voting Review Committee members agree that the accreditation of programs in the subspecialty area would benefit patient care, and that the accreditation process should progress regardless of opposition by the relevant board.

If the ACGME Board of Directors judges that there is an adequate basis for considering the above request, it shall arrange for a hearing to be held at the next ACGME Board of Directors meeting. This hearing shall take place at a designated meeting of the ACGME Board of Directors in conjunction with a regular ACGME Board of Directors meeting. Representatives from the Review Committee and the relevant ABMS Board must be invited to participate in the hearing.

In the hearing, the ACGME Board of Directors shall give due consideration to all points of view, and shall make one of the following recommendations:

- (1) to recognize the subspecialty as sufficiently well established so that the accreditation of subspecialty programs may be considered, or
- (2) to deny the request of the Review Committee.

If the ACGME Board of Directors recommends recognition of a subspecialty as sufficiently well established so that the accreditation of programs in the subspecialty may be considered, the relevant ABMS Board may again petition the ACGME Board of Directors for a special hearing. This hearing shall be arranged for the next meeting of the ACGME.

4. Initial Accreditation

When the ACGME decides to extend accreditation activities to a subspecialty, the decision shall be provisional for a period of up to five years. At the end of this provisional period, the ACGME shall review its action using its criteria for the accreditation of programs in a subspecialty as specified in Section I.J.2 of this document. The ACGME may decide to continue accrediting programs in the subspecialty if the criteria are met. The Monitoring Committee shall conduct this review and shall recommend to the ACGME as to whether accreditation of programs in the subspecialty should continue (Section I.F.5.b) (2) (c).

If the criteria for accreditation of programs (Section I.J) are not met, the ACGME may decide to discontinue accrediting in the subspecialty. If a decision to discontinue accreditation is made, the ACGME shall follow its procedures for discontinuing accreditation.

5. Periodic Review

- a) Regular review of a subspecialty shall occur whenever the appropriate Review Committee is itself reviewed by the Monitoring Committee.
- b) If the Monitoring Committee judges that accreditation of a subspecialty should be discontinued, the Monitoring Committee shall make a recommendation to the ACGME Board of Directors using the following procedures:
 - (1) If the ACGME determines that a specialty or subspecialty no longer meets the criteria for recognition, a proposal for discontinuation of accreditation shall be announced at a regular ACGME Board of Directors meeting. Interested parties, including the relevant ABMS board, will be permitted to comment prior to or at the next regularly scheduled ACGME Board of Directors meeting when a final decision will be made.
 - (2) Alternatively, a Review Committee may petition the ACGME Board of Directors to discontinue accreditation of its subspecialty.
 - (3) After the ACGME Board of Directors takes final action to discontinue accreditation of a specialty or subspecialty, programs shall be notified not to accept new candidates as residents in an accredited program. Accreditation of those programs shall be withdrawn after all the current residents have completed the program.

K. Procedures for Additional Review Committees to Offer Accreditation in an Existing Subspecialty

The following procedures will apply when a Review Committee wishes to begin to offer accreditation in a subspecialty in which one or more Review Committees currently offers accreditation:

- a) The Review Committee that is interested in joining with the Review Committee(s) currently accrediting programs in the subspecialty will notify the other Review Committee(s) of its intent to seek ACGME approval to offer accreditation in the subspecialty.
- b) If changes in the program requirements will be required to allow the additional Review Committee to offer accreditation, the Review Committee(s) will agree to develop one set of program requirements and one program information form for the subspecialty which will apply to all programs regardless of the Review Committee to which the program submits an application for accreditation.
- c) The program requirements will include the common program requirements as well as requirements specific to the subspecialty.
- d) If one or more of the sponsoring Review Committee(s) uses a general set of subspecialty program requirements, the Review Committee must agree to include those relevant subspecialty requirements within the program requirements for the multidisciplinary subspecialty, or the Review Committee(s) with general subspecialty program requirements must agree to exempt programs in the multidisciplinary subspecialty from the relevant general subspecialty requirement(s).
- e) The Review Committees must reach agreement regarding the content of the requirements before they are submitted for ACGME consideration.
- f) If changes are proposed, the draft revision of the program requirements must be posted to the ACGME website for review and comment in accordance with ACGME procedures, and all program directors in the subspecialty must be provided with an opportunity to provide comment on the proposed changes.

- g) The Review Committee wishing to offer accreditation in the subspecialty must then submit a formal request with rationale to the ACGME Board of Directors. This request must include letters of support from each Review Committee currently offering accreditation in the subspecialty. If the program requirements have been revised, the draft revision of the requirements must be submitted as well.

L. Delegation of Authority to Review Committees

1. Introduction

The responsibility for the accreditation of programs and institutions in GME resides with the ACGME Board of Directors which may delegate responsibility for accreditation to the Review Committees. According to the ACGME Bylaws, Article XI, Section 2(c):

Upon application of a Review Committee, including Residency Review Committees, the Institutional Review Committee, and Transitional Year Review Committee and following a review of its performance, the Board of Directors may delegate accreditation authority to the Review Committee. Such delegation shall be for a period determined by the ACGME Board of Directors. The ACGME Board of Directors shall conduct periodic reviews of the accreditation process of the Review Committee and of its authority to accredit.

In order to obtain accreditation authority, a Review Committee must follow the procedures outlined below, and must submit the application to the ACGME Chief Executive Officer.

2. Application Procedures

The Review Committee must submit a written request to accredit programs in the specialty over which it has authority. The letter must include:

- a) a statement from the Review Committee that it will comply with the policies and procedures of the ACGME, including the currently approved version of the ACGME *Policies and Procedures*.
- b) an outline of any of the Review Committee's current procedures for conducting the review process which are unique or supplemental to those given in the *Policies and Procedures*; and,

- c) a statement that the appointing organizations of the Review Committee have reviewed and commented on the request by the Review Committee to be granted accreditation authority; all comments from the appointing organizations should be included.

3. Procedure to Evaluate Requests for Accreditation Authority

The ACGME shall use the following procedure to evaluate applications that request authority to accredit programs:

- a) The Chair of the ACGME, with the concurrence of the ACGME Executive Committee, shall appoint an ad hoc committee to assess the Review Committee request for authority to accredit residency and fellowship programs.
- b) If, after reviewing a request for accreditation authority documenting that the Review Committee's policies and procedures comply with the accepted procedures of the accreditation process as described in the ACGME *Policies and Procedures* and other policy statements of the ACGME, the ad hoc committee may recommend to the ACGME that the Review Committee be granted accreditation authority.
- c) If, however, the ad hoc committee recommends the application be denied and the ACGME concurs, the ACGME Board of Directors shall return the application to the Review Committee with its objections. The Review Committee may address these concerns and reapply for accreditation authority.

4. Periodic Review of a Review Committee's Activities

The ACGME shall use the following procedure to review the activity of each Review Committee to whom it has granted accreditation authority. The initial term of delegation of authority to accredit shall be up to five years.

- a) For details of continuing review of Review Committee Activity, see the specifics under Monitoring Committee, Section I. G. 5. of these *Policies and Procedures*.
- b) If, after reviewing the recommendations of the Monitoring Committee, the ACGME Board of Directors believes the documentation demonstrates that there is need for a more closely-supervised process of accreditation, the ACGME shall withdraw the Review Committee's delegation of authority to accredit.

M. Review Committees

1. Description

There are three types of Review Committees: the Residency Review Committee, the Transitional Year Review Committee, and the Institutional Review Committee. The function of each type of committee is to set accreditation standards and to provide a peer evaluation of residency programs and subspecialties (or, in the case of the Institutional Review Committee, to set accreditation standards and to provide a peer evaluation of sponsoring institutions). The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the degree to which the program or institution complies with a published set of educational standards, and to confer an accreditation status on programs and institutions meeting those standards.

- a) A Residency Review Committee shall be comprised of physician members, at least one of whom is a resident at the time of appointment, and all of whom are voting members. Members of this committee (except the resident member) are appointed by Residency Review Committee appointing organizations and confirmed by the ACGME Board of Directors.

Each Residency Review Committee comprises members appointed by the American Medical Association's Council on Medical Education, by the specialty board that certifies physicians within the specialty, and in most cases by the professional college or other professional organization or society associated with the specialty. Residency Review Committee appointing organizations may be added, changed, or deleted upon unanimous recommendation of the existing appointing organizations for that Residency Review Committee and approval by the ACGME Board of Directors.

- b) The Institutional Review Committee shall be comprised of 10 voting members, including the resident member, who shall be appointed by the ACGME Board of Director's Executive Committee and confirmed by the ACGME Board of Directors.
- c) The Transitional Year Review Committee shall be comprised of nine voting members, including the resident member, who shall be appointed by the ACGME Executive Committee and confirmed by the ACGME Board of Directors.

2. Staff

The Review Committee Executive Director, appointed by the ACGME Executive Director, is the chief staff person for the Review Committee and is responsible for all administrative matters. Additional staff support for each Review Committee is determined by the ACGME Chief Executive Officer.

3. Review Committee Members

a) Appointment of Residency Review Committee Members

The Residency Review Committee Executive Director shall communicate with the appointing organizations at least 18 months before the date of the appointment, regarding the general and specialty characteristics that may be required for the replacement member. In addition to professional qualifications, appointing organizations should consider the following characteristics during the selection process: geographic distribution and diversity in gender, race, and ethnicity.

Appointing organizations should provide the Residency Review Committee Executive Director with the name of at least one appointee (if two or more appointees are provided, the Residency Review Committee will select one appointee from among them) at least twelve months before the date of the appointment. An appointing organization may appoint a resident as one of its regular members. Upon receipt of the appointment, the Residency Review Committee shall communicate its recommendation on confirmation to the ACGME Chief Executive Officer, who will refer this information to the ACGME Board of Directors, which has the authority for confirming all Residency Review Committee member appointments. If the appointment is not confirmed, the ACGME Chief Executive Officer will communicate with the appointing organization and the Residency Review Committee Executive Director about the need for another appointee.

The appointment shall occur in a timely manner to ensure that the replacement member may be oriented formally before assuming the position of a voting member of a Review Committee.

b) Appointment of Institutional Review Committee and Transitional Year Committee Members

Candidates for the Institutional Review Committee and the Transitional Year Review Committee shall be solicited from the member organizations of the ACGME, its Board of Directors, the Council of Review Committee Chairs, and the GME community at large, to include resident organizations recognized by the ACGME for the one resident member.

c) Terms

(1) With the exception of the resident member, Review Committee members shall be appointed to an initial term of three years, renewable once for an additional three years. Upon completion of a six-year term, a member may not be appointed again to the same Review Committee.

(2) The date the member appointment begins shall be determined by the Executive Director of the Review Committee. Under exceptional circumstances, the date of completion may be adjusted by the Review Committee Executive Director for a brief period to accommodate the needs of the Review Committee.

d) Qualifications for Appointment

(1) Each member of the Residency Review Committee and the Transitional Year Review Committee, with the exception of a member who is a resident, must be certified by the appropriate ABMS Board; should be actively involved in GME; should demonstrate substantial experience in the administration and/or teaching in the specialty (e.g., program director, active faculty member, or participating site director); should have knowledge of the accreditation process; and should be associated with a program in good standing.

- (2) Each member of the Institutional Review Committee, with the exception of the resident member, should be associated with an institution that holds initial accreditation or continued accreditation; be familiar with the institutional review process and the institutional requirements and have experience with or current responsibility for their implementation; and possess demonstrated experience in institutional administration, institutional oversight, and/or institutional review.

e) Composition

- (1) Chair

A Review Committee Chair should be elected for a two-year term from the membership of the Review Committee, and shall be eligible for re-election. If the Chair for any reason relinquishes the position prior to the completion of the term, the Review Committee shall elect a new Chair.

- (2) Vice-chair

The Vice-chair should be elected by the Review Committee for a term not to exceed two years.

- (3) Resident

Each Review Committee must have a procedure for appointing the resident member. Candidates must be enrolled in a residency or fellowship program at the time of the appointment, and may not serve more than one year beyond completion of residency or fellowship. The resident term is a minimum of one year, and reappointment is permitted.

(4) Alternate Member

Although Review Committee members are expected to attend each meeting of the Review Committee, extraordinary circumstances may occasionally prevent a member from attending. A Review Committee may designate an alternate member who shall serve a term not to exceed two years and who may attend a meeting under extraordinary circumstances in order to substitute for a voting member. The alternate member must be someone who is sufficiently familiar with the review process.

f) Responsibilities

Prior to assuming responsibility for reviewing programs or sponsoring institutions, each member of the Review Committee must attend the Annual New Member Orientation or an alternative orientation procedure approved by the ACGME Chief Executive Officer. Each member must support ACGME policies and follow ACGME procedures; must give priority to attending Review Committee meetings; must agree to the number of meetings, the workload, and other tasks associated with membership; and, must agree to an evaluation of his/her performance by the other members of the Review Committee and ACGME senior staff. A summary of the evaluation is shared with the appointing organization.

(1) Chair

A Review Committee Chair shall call and preside over meetings of the Review Committee. The Chair shall ensure that the Review Committee conducts its responsibilities in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in these *Policies and Procedures* and in other official documents of the ACGME. The Chair shall attend the meetings of the Council of Review Committee Chairs.

(2) Vice-Chair

The Vice-chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in the latter's absence.

g) Failure of Member to Perform

Consistent with Article IX, Section 3, of the ACGME *Bylaws*, a Review Committee member may be removed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors whenever, in the judgment of the Board, the best interests of the ACGME would be served thereby. This may include, but not be limited to, the failure of the member to perform his or her responsibilities appropriately or the violation of rules of confidentiality. In removing a member of a Review Committee, the following procedures shall apply:

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME shall provide the Review Committee member in question with written notice of the proposed removal; this written notice must include an explanation of the reason for the proposed removal.
- (2) The Review Committee member shall be given an opportunity to provide a written response to the allegations, and to appear before the Executive Committee of the ACGME.
- (3) The recommendation of the Executive Committee shall be presented for action to the ACGME at its next meeting. During this process, the Review Committee member in question may not attend Review Committee meetings.
- (4) The action of the ACGME shall be communicated by the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME to the Review Committee members, the appointing organization, and the Chair of the Review Committee. The details of the action shall be considered confidential, and shall not be shared with the Review Committee.

h) Other Attendees

- (1) Ex Officio

Each appointing organization may send one ex officio member, without vote, to attend Residency Review Committee meetings.

Ex officio members are subject to the same rules of conflict of interest and confidentiality as voting members. An ex officio member may participate in policy discussion, but shall not participate in program review, except that, the ex officio member from the relevant certifying board shall provide information on board score performance.

(2) Staff and Guests

- (a) A limited number of staff and guests may attend a Review Committee meeting. The number of staff and guests must be approved in advance by the Review Committee Executive Director.
- (b) Guest: a person invited to provide data or information for certain matters under consideration (e.g., a subspecialty expert who is invited to work with the Review Committee in drafting new requirements) or a person invited to observe the review committee process (e.g., person from a foreign country or other organization as well as members of the Board of Directors).
- (c) Staff and guests are subject to the same rules of confidentiality as members. Prior to the meeting, guests must sign the Agreement for Guests which is maintained in the meeting file.
- (d) In advance of the meeting, the Review Committee Executive Director in consultation with the Review Committee Chair shall inform the guest whether or not s/he may be present during the review portion of the meeting.

i) Size

The ACGME shall determine the number of Review Committee members based upon the number of specialty and subspecialty programs or sponsoring institutions, as well as the overall workload. Requests for an increase in the number of members on a Review Committee must be submitted to the ACGME Board of Directors, and must be approved and budgeted by the ACGME before implementation.

4. Policies Governing Member Conduct

Upon configuration, all Review Committee members (except ex officio members) must sign an agreement annually to comply with ACGME policies and procedures, including those relating to Fiduciary Duty, Conflict of Interest, and Confidentiality. The ex officio member must sign an agreement annually to comply with *ACGME Policies and Procedures*, including those related to Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Statement. These agreements shall be kept on file by the Review Committee Executive Director.

Members of the Review Committee may not act for or on behalf of the Committee or the ACGME without explicit authorization by the ACGME. This does not preclude Review Committee members from reporting on general committee activities to appropriate organizations.

a) Fiduciary Duty (excludes ex officio members)

- (1) Members of a Review Committee hold a fiduciary duty to the ACGME and its Review Committees. Each member of a Review Committee must be attentive to the needs and priorities of the ACGME, and must act in what he or she reasonably believes to be the best interests of the ACGME.
- (2) If a member of a Review Committee cannot exercise a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interest of the ACGME and in the work of the Review Committee on any particular issue, the member should declare a conflict of interest as described below.

b) Conflict of Interest (includes ex officio members)

- (1) Review Committee members shall not participate in the accreditation review of a program (or in the case of the Institutional Review Committee, a sponsoring institution), if for any reason it is judged that participation of that individual would involve a conflict of interest. Under such circumstances, the individual shall withdraw from all deliberation of the issue under discussion, and shall leave the meeting room. These actions shall be recorded in the record of accreditation actions.

(2) Members of Review Committees shall not serve as program or institutional consultants, or as program or institutional site visitors to GME programs or sponsoring institutions while serving on the Review Committee. Members of the Transitional Year Review Committee, however, are not precluded from participating in these activities in their own specialties.

c) Confidentiality (includes ex officio members)

The ACGME requires that its procedures and those of its committees recognize the need for confidentiality in maintaining certain information and documents acquired during the accreditation process. Adherence to confidentiality is vital to the operation of the accreditation process. Intrinsic to private accreditation is the promotion of candor within its process, which may include constructive criticism that leads to improvement in the educational quality of a program or institution. Maintaining confidentiality within the accreditation process promotes candor. Confidentiality means that the ACGME and its committees will not disclose the documents listed in this section nor the information contained therein, except as required for ACGME accreditation purposes, or as may be required legally, or as provided in Sections d through g following this Section c). In order to meet the requirement of confidentiality, ACGME holds as confidential the following documents and the information contained therein:

- (1) institutional and program files, including without limitation, institutional review documents, program information forms, site visit reports, progress reports, program case log data, other survey data, and record of committee consideration;
- (2) appeals files;
- (3) additional documents and correspondences recording accreditation actions and consideration thereof by the ACGME; and,
- (4) case log data, personal resident physician information, and protected health care information submitted electronically or otherwise to the ACGME.

d) Published Information Released through ACGME

The ACGME publishes and releases, through its website (www.acgme.org) and other media, the following information about accredited programs and institutional reviews:

- (1) name and address of the sponsoring institution;
- (2) name and address of major participating site(s);
- (3) name and address of program director;
- (4) name and address of GME coordinator;
- (5) length of program;
- (6) total number of positions;
- (7) effective date of program and institutional accreditation, program and institutional accreditation status;
- (8) date of last site visit; and,
- (9) approximate date of next site visit.

e) Summary data and other information about programs, institutions, resident physicians, or resident physician education which is not identifiable by person or organization may be published in a manner appropriate to further the quality of GME and consistent with ACGME policies and with law authorized by the ACGME Board of Directors.

f) Individual resident physician clinical experience data may be submitted to specialty certification boards upon authorizations of both individual resident physicians and of programs.

g) Confidentiality Administration (includes ex officio members)

In order to protect confidential information and its own interest in maintaining that confidentiality, Review Committee members assume responsibility to:

- (1) not make copies of, disclose, discuss, describe, distribute, or disseminate in any manner whatsoever, including in any oral, written, or electronic form, any confidential information, or any part of it, that the Review Committees receive or generate, except directly in conjunction with service to the ACGME;
- (2) not use such confidential information for personal or professional benefit or for any other reason, except directly in conjunction with service to the Review Committees and/or the ACGME; and,
- (3) dispose of all materials and notes regarding confidential information in compliance with ACGME policies.

A breach of confidentiality could result in irreparable damage to the Review Committees, the ACGME and its mission, as well as to the public, and may result in removal of the member from the Review Committee.

- (4) The confidentiality obligations continue to apply to former Review Committee members. A former Review Committee member may serve as a consultant to a program or institution, but s/he shall continue to maintain the confidentiality of ACGME confidential information. He/she may not serve as a consultant for a program or institution which has an accreditation decision pending before the ACGME in which decision, or part thereof, the former Review Committee member participated as a Review Committee member. If a former Review Committee member, while serving as a consultant, receives information from a program or institution, s/he may discuss such information with the program or institution, even if the same information had been submitted to the Review Committee. However, the former Review Committee member may not discuss the consideration of the program or institution by the Review Committee in which the Review Committee member participated or otherwise became aware by virtue of his/her Review Committee membership.

5. Request for Pilot Project
 - a) The Review Committee develops a written proposal by completing the Proposal for Review Committee Pilot Project form.
 - b) The proposal is first reviewed by ACGME senior management, which either returns it to the Review Committee with suggestions for revisions, e.g., more detail, clarification and/or modification or approves it for consideration by the ACGME.
 - c) If approved for consideration by the ACGME, the Review Committee Executive Director submits the proposal to the Monitoring Committee for review. The review process by the Monitoring Committee is similar to that used for Review Committee assessment:
 - (1) Prior to the Monitoring Committee meeting, the staff submits the proposal for review by two Committee members.
 - (2) The Review Committee Chair and Executive Director attend the Monitoring Committee meeting to discuss the proposal and receive the Committee's recommendations.
 - (3) The Monitoring Committee Chair presents the final proposal (including the Committee's recommendations) to the ACGME Executive Committee at the same ACGME meeting.
 - d) After the Monitoring Committee has made its recommendation, the ACGME Executive Committee determines final approval, the time period for the pilot project, and the timing of status reports (at least annually).
 - e) The Monitoring Committee receives the annual status reports, and the chair of the Monitoring Committee provides updates to the ACGME Executive Committee.
 - f) A copy of the approved pilot proposal is distributed to the Council of Review Committee Chairs for informational purposes. If another Review Committee wishes to conduct a similar pilot, the Review Committee will begin the process with step 5.a) above.

- g) At the conclusion of the approved time period, the Review Committee Chair presents the final report, which contains an explanation of the goals and objectives, both met and not met to the ACGME Executive Committee, to the Monitoring Committee and to the Council of Review Committee Chairs.
- h) The Review Committee may request an expansion of the pilot or permanent approval of a wide-scale implementation of the program by providing a rationale based on the assessment of the pilot project to the Monitoring Committee. The assessment report must address the impact on the accreditation process, staffing, and program compliance. After review, the Monitoring Committee proposes the recommendation to the ACGME Executive Committee.

N. Responsibilities of Review Committees

1. Delegation of Authority

Each Review Committee functions under accreditation authority delegated by the ACGME. Review Committee actions are monitored for procedural compliance at intervals determined by the ACGME.

2. Accreditation Responsibilities:

- a) To accredit programs and sponsoring institutions consistent with established ACGME policies and procedures using the program and institutional requirements;
- b) To confer an accreditation status and specify the length of the accreditation review cycle for the program or sponsoring institution being evaluated;
- c) To prepare or revise periodically the Requirements to reflect current educational and clinical practice;
- d) To prepare or revise program or institutional information forms, data collection systems, and other evaluation documents used in the accreditation process;
- e) To initiate discussion in matters of policy, best practices, and innovation relating to GME; and,
- f) To recommend to the ACGME changes in policy, procedures, and requirements.

3. Use of Information on Resident Performance on Certification Examinations in Program Review
 - a) Review Committees should use aggregate information pertaining to the performance of program graduates on certification examinations administered by a specialty board as one measure of the quality of a residency program. The following are set forth for Review Committees using such information:
 - (1) The program requirements for the specialty/subspecialty must indicate that such information will be used in evaluating and accrediting residency programs;
 - (2) Review Committees should establish and publish reasonable criteria and procedures for using such information in accrediting residency programs; and,
 - (3) The board information made available to the Review Committee must:
 - (a) Also be available from the board to the respective program directors (e.g. initial pass rate over a five-year period), and
 - (b) Be provided in writing to the Review Committee, so that it can be:
 - (i) considered by reviewers prior to the Review Committee and by the Review Committee meeting, and
 - (ii) included in the official file of the residency program.
4. Conduct of Review Committee Meetings
 - a) Review Committees shall meet at regularly prescribed intervals to conduct business. The length and frequency of meetings should be determined by workload. Any additional meetings or extended meetings require prior approval of the Director of Review Committee Activities.
 - b) A simple majority of the voting members and the Review Committee Executive Director or ACGME designee must be present for any business to be conducted.

- c) During its deliberations and conduct of business, Review Committee members must function in a manner consistent with *ACGME policies and procedures*, including Fiduciary Duty, Conflict of Interest, and Confidentiality Policies.
 - d) Accreditation actions must comply with ACGME accreditation policies and procedures.
 - e) Review Committee staff shall record the minutes of meetings and the record of accreditation actions.
5. Use of Conference Calls to Transact Review Committee Business
- a) A Review Committee may conduct a regular Review Committee meeting by conference call, using the following procedure:
 - (1) The Review Committee Chair and Executive Director shall determine whether to hold the meeting by conference call.
 - (2) At least a simple majority of voting members and the Executive Director of the Review Committee or ACGME designee must be present.
 - (3) The Review Committee staff shall keep minutes of the meeting, including any action taken as a result of the conference call. All votes taken during conference calls shall be by roll call. The Review Committee staff shall be responsible for conducting and recording all votes taken during conference calls.
 - (4) The Review Committee staff shall be responsible for making all arrangements for a conference call.
 - b) Review Committees may also use conference call meetings as necessary to conduct Review Committee business in certain circumstances, for example, when:
 - (1) it is not possible to gather a simple majority of the voting members to attend a regularly scheduled meeting;
 - (2) an emergency situation arises to transact official business between regularly scheduled meetings; or,
 - (3) the need arises to consider an accreditation action or a subcommittee meeting between regularly scheduled Review Committee meetings.

- c) Under special circumstances, the Review Committee Executive Director and Review Committee Chair may determine that accreditation reviews and other Committee business will be conducted by telephone conference call, or a means other than a face to face meeting. Special circumstances may include, but are not limited to a small number of accreditation actions on the agenda. The Review Committee Executive Director and Review Committee Chair will make the final decision in consultation with ACGME senior management. Under normal circumstances, the decision to alter the mode of conduct of the meeting should be made at least six months prior to a scheduled meeting date in order to avoid penalties on contracts already arranged.

6. Cancellation of a Review Committee Meeting

Circumstances may cause a Review Committee to reschedule a confirmed meeting for reasons such as inclement weather, a national emergency or other emergency situation. Permission to reschedule a meeting rests with the Chief Executive Officer or his designee in consultation with the Review Committee Chair and Executive Director. All staff and members of the Review Committee shall be notified immediately of the cancellation. Another date for the meeting shall be determined in a timely fashion.

O. Procedures for the Development and Approval of Requirements

1. Initial Approval of Proposed Requirements

Each Review Committee shall work with the internal ACGME Requirement Development Committee to develop and/or revise program and institutional requirements prior to submission to the ACGME Committee on Requirements. The Committee on Requirements shall review and make recommendations to the ACGME on the initial approval of proposed requirements, beginning with Section 2.b) below.

2. Major Revision of Existing Requirements

- a) Review Committees must review existing requirements every five years. If a Review Committee deems that no revisions are required, a letter explicitly stating that the review has been accomplished and that no revisions are required must be submitted to the ACGME Committee on Requirements. This fulfills the ACGME requirement for currency of each of the specialties' requirements.

- b) The Review Committee shall complete the proposal in the form and format required by the ACGME to include the development of an Impact Statement that responds objectively to each required question. After this step, the ACGME editor must edit the document.
- c) The community of interest shall be notified via email of the proposed revisions on the ACGME website.
- (1) The following groups constitute the ACGME community of interest who must be notified:
- member organizations of the ACGME,
 - appointing organizations of the Review Committee,
 - Designated Institutional Officials,
 - Review Committee Chairs and Executive Directors of each Review Committee,
 - program directors in the specialty, and the ACGME Committee on Requirements staff.
- (2) There may be additional specialty organizations that should be notified; these notifications, however, are made at the discretion of the applicable Review Committee.
- d) After the proposed program requirements and the Impact Statement have been listed on the ACGME website, a 45-day period of comment commences.
- e) Comments shall be evaluated by the Review Committee, and the Review Committee shall determine which suggestions will be incorporated into the proposal. If a Review Committee disagrees with a substantive suggestion submitted by an ACGME member organization, an appointing organization of the Review Committee, another Review Committee, a program director in the specialty, or a program director association, the Committee must address each of these written responses by explaining its reason for accepting or declining the suggestion. This information must be included in the cover memo when the document is presented to the ACGME for approval. (N.B.: There is no requirement that suggestions submitted by a member organization be distributed to other members, nor is there a requirement that the proposed requirements be distributed again for review and comment to the member organizations of ACGME.) The final proposal must be formally approved by the Review Committee before submission to the ACGME.

- f) The following documents must be submitted to the ACGME Committee on Requirements in the following order and format:
- (1) a cover memo from the Review Committee Executive Director explaining why each suggestion has been incorporated or not, as outlined above;
 - (2) the proposed requirements with additions underlined;
 - (3) the Impact Statement;
 - (4) copies of communications from the designated organizations that contain suggestions for revisions; and,
 - (5) a list of those designated organizations that have returned a statement of “no comment.”
- g) The proposed documents should be submitted to the staff of the ACGME Committee on Requirements for its review in a timely fashion for the ACGME meeting.
- h) Members of the Committee on Requirements shall review the documents, and provide the Chair of the Review Committee with their written comments in sufficient time for the Chair to respond to these comments in writing.
- i) The review of the proposed requirements shall occur at the Committee on Requirements’ meeting, and its recommendations shall be forwarded to the ACGME Board of Directors for action.
- j) The effective date for the revisions shall be July 1 or January 1, as recommended by the ACGME Committee on Requirements. The ACGME shall consider the recommendation of the Review Committee for the effective date of implementation. The effective date, however, must consider that there is sufficient time for programs or institutions to implement major changes.
- On initial approval of new requirements, the effective date will be that date on which the requirements are approved by the ACGME, unless otherwise provided by the ACGME. The ACGME shall consider a recommendation of a Review Committee as to the effective date.
- k) The approved requirements shall be edited by the ACGME editor or designated staff, if needed, before they are posted on the ACGME website.

- l) Editorial corrections made by the ACGME editor or designated staff to approved requirements must not substantively change standards approved by the ACGME Board of Directors.

3. Minor Revisions of Existing Requirements

- a) These procedures apply for revisions that are editorial in nature, that clarify common understanding without changing the standard, or that update standards which are technical or specific to a specialty, as with procedures or equipment in the specialty.
- b) The Review Committee shall distribute a revised document to its appointing organizations or the ACGME Board of Directors for information and comment, and shall simultaneously forward the revised document to the ACGME Committee on Requirements.
- c) With ACGME approval, the effective date of implementation of the program requirements shall ordinarily be 60 days following the date of general distribution of the document. If substantial objections are received from an addressee within 60 days following approval and distribution, the requirements shall be considered not effective, and the Review Committee shall follow the standard procedure for revision and approval of requirements.

4. Revisions to the Common Program Requirements

The Council of Review Committee Chairs has responsibility for initiating revisions to the ACGME's Common Program Requirements. Proposed revisions to the common program requirements may be submitted by any member of the community of interest (e.g., program director, resident, Review Committee, designated institutional official, member and appointing organization or by a standing committee of the ACGME or its Board of Directors). The staff of the ACGME's Council of Review Committee Chairs shall bring the proposals to the attention of the Committee on Requirements as necessary. Proposals for revision should occur at infrequent intervals, but no less frequently than every five years. If revision is required due to state statute or federal law, such revisions shall take precedence.

Revisions to the common program requirements by the Council of Review Committee Chairs shall be conducted by:

- a) requesting comments from ACGME member organizations, review committees, appointing organizations, standing ACGME committees and councils, program directors, and designated institutional officials;
- b) distributing the documents over the ACGME website, and expediting review of comments by electronic communication;
- c) conducting a review of the comments, and making final revisions to the document prior to submission to the ACGME Committee on Requirements for approval; and,
- d) ordinarily, the effective date of approved common program requirements will be the following July 1 or January 1, at least six months following the ACGME meeting at which the requirements were approved. Under special circumstances, the ACGME may designate an earlier or later date, and make this information available on the ACGME website.

5. Impact Statement

The Impact Statement serves as a complementary document to proposals for new requirements or revisions of current requirements. Many such revisions are often minor, and represent modifications that are consistent with some change in practice pattern or evolution of the discipline. In some cases, however, revisions are major and represent not only modifications that affect both residents and educators in the specialty, but other medical specialties whose body of knowledge and activities overlaps the specialty in question. With the proposal of new program requirements, for example, this will always be the case. The Impact Statement also serves to advise that some change in educational activities or in the residency requirements for a discipline may materially affect patient care or the allocation of resources within the sponsoring institution.

The following questions must be addressed in the Impact Statement for each area where substantive change is proposed.

a) Impact on Resident Education

How will the proposed change improve the quality of resident education?

- b) Impact on Patient Care (Answer only if appropriate to the change proposed)

How will the proposed change affect the way the resident, the service, and the staff provide patients with continuing care?

- c) Impact on Faculty Resources

Will an increase in the number of faculty from within the discipline or from other disciplines be required? If so, explain.

- d) Impact on Institutional Facilities, Services, and Faculty

(1) Will there be required institutional resources for the educational or service unit as a result of the proposed change?

(2) Will there be any additional costs to the institution(s) in this regard? If so, explain.

- e) Impact on Other Services and Educational Programs in the Institution

(1) If these changes are implemented, will there be an adequate volume and variety of patients to provide proper educational resources in the institution(s)?

(2) How will other services or departments of the institution be affected by the change?

- f) Implementation

What is the effective date of this proposed change? Justify the requested effective date based upon the need for faculty, institutional services, financial, or other support.

6. Inter-specialty Conflicts about Revisions of Requirements

When the Requirements of any currently approved specialty or subspecialty have been completed and distributed with the Impact Statement, any Review Committee that believes the proposed Requirements will have an adverse impact on the education of residents in its specialty should express this concern through the Chair in writing to the Review Committee Chair that is initiating the Requirements, and may request the Chair of the Council of Review Committee Chairs to convene a meeting of interested parties to discuss and address the perceived conflicts. The Chair of the Council of Review Committee Chairs shall proceed as in Section I.G.2.b)(1)(b)-(d). If the agreement between the disciplines involved has not been reached, the Committee on Requirements shall make its recommendation to the ACGME Board of Directors on the program requirements or institutional requirements after considering all information that it judges relevant and appropriate.

7. Procedures for Developing Program Requirements for Multidisciplinary Subspecialties

- a) The ACGME Chair shall appoint an advisory committee to include representatives of the specialties participating in the new multidisciplinary subspecialty. The ACGME Chair will also specify the role and length of appointment for the advisory committee. The advisory committee including a representative of the Requirement Development Committee with support provided by the ACGME staff will be responsible for drafting program requirements for the subspecialty. The program requirements shall include the common program requirements as well as requirements specific to the subspecialty.

- b) The draft program requirements will be forwarded to one or more Residency Review Committees that will accredit programs in the subspecialty. The Residency Review Committees shall agree to adhere to one set of program requirements and one program information form for the subspecialty which will apply to all programs regardless of which Residency Review Committee to which the program submits an application for accreditation. If one or more of the sponsoring Residency Review Committees uses a general set of subspecialty program requirements, the Residency Review Committees must agree to include those relevant subspecialty requirements within the program requirements for the subspecialty, or the Residency Review Committee(s) must agree to exempt programs in the multidisciplinary subspecialty from the relevant general subspecialty requirement(s). The Residency Review Committees must reach agreement regarding the content of the requirements before they are submitted to the Requirement Development Committee for consideration.
- c) The draft program requirements shall be submitted to the Requirement Development Committee for review and endorsement before the requirements are posted to the web for review and comment.
- d) The program requirements for the multidisciplinary subspecialty will be submitted to the Committee on Requirements for review and recommendation to the ACGME Board of Directors for approval.
- e) For subsequent revisions of the program requirements, the relevant Residency Review Committees must reach agreement on the revision of the requirements. The requirements submitted to the Requirement Development Committee must represent the consensus of all relevant Residency Review Committees.

P. Finance

1. Fee Structure

The ACGME charges fees to defray the cost of accreditation. These fees are annually determined by the ACGME.

a) Accreditation Fee

The ACGME shall charge a yearly accreditation fee to all accredited programs. This fee covers all of the costs associated with ongoing accreditation, including the following services:

- the site visit (field staff or specialist, program or institutional);
- preparation and distribution of information forms;
- review of the completed program materials by a Review Committee;
- operative log processing and reporting; and,
- notification regarding the decision of the Review Committee.

There shall be separate accreditation fees for programs with more than five residents and those with five or fewer.

b) Application Fee

A non-refundable fee is charged for processing applications of programs seeking initial accreditation, re-accreditation, or previously withdrawn programs. This fee is assessed upon receipt of the application.

c) Appeal Fee

In the event of an appeal of an adverse action, an appeal fee shall apply. In addition, the appellant and the ACGME shall equally share the following costs associated with the appeal: cost of court reporter, as well as actual expenses for travel, meals, and hotel for appeals panel and Review Committee member.

d) Canceled or Postponed Site Visit Fee

Should a program cancel or postpone a scheduled site visit, the ACGME may charge a cancellation fee. This fee may be charged at the discretion of the Director of Department of Field Activities.

e) Due Date

Fees are payable within 30 days of receipt of the invoice.

2. Expenses

The ACGME defrays expenses for accreditation proceedings in accordance with financial policies established annually. Expense report forms for reimbursement are provided by Committee staff.

a) Committee Meetings

(1) Facilities

Charges for facilities and services associated with a Review Committee meeting, such as meeting rooms, food service, or special arrangements, are paid by the ACGME.

(2) Members

Review Committee members are reimbursed for expenses associated with their attendance at Review Committee meetings. Members are reimbursed for actual travel expenses, as well as for meals and lodging expenses up to a specific per diem rate. The ACGME reimburses all actual expenses for travel, meals, and lodging of the member for attending a meeting. Lodging expenses are placed on a master account and meals except dinner, are provided during the course of the meeting. The ACGME will reimburse up to \$100 per day for dinner and other meal expenses during travel days.

Committee members may not accept payment for service on the Review Committee, to include travel upgrades at the expense of the appointing organization or the ACGME, honoraria, or similar remuneration except from the ACGME.

(3) Ex officio Members to a Review Committee

Ex officio members of a Review Committee shall be reimbursed for expenses by their appointing organization in accordance with the regulations of that organization.

(4) Resident Member

A resident member appointed by a Review Committee shall be reimbursed for actual expenses for travel, meals, and lodging under ACGME guidelines for attendance at Review Committee meetings.

(5) ACGME Staff

Expenses incurred by the ACGME staff shall be reimbursed by the ACGME.

(6) Guests

Guests shall be eligible for reimbursement of expenses if they are attending the meeting at the request of a Review Committee.

b) Site Visit

Members of the field staff are reimbursed for expenses in accordance with their individual contractual relationship. Specialist site visitors are reimbursed for transportation, meals, and lodging, and receive an honorarium for the service rendered. The honorarium is determined on an annual basis by the ACGME.

II. ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Types of Graduate Medical Education Programs and Institutions

Residency Programs are divided into three categories:

1. Residency Programs

A residency program is a structured educational activity comprising a series of learning experiences in GME designed to conform to the program requirements of a particular specialty.

2. Subspecialty Programs

A subspecialty program is a structured educational activity comprising a series of learning experiences following completion of prerequisite specialty education in GME, designed to conform to the program requirements of a particular subspecialty.

There are two types of subspecialty programs, dependent and independent. All of the programs within a subspecialty must be one of these two types, as designated by the Residency Review Committee.

a) Dependent Subspecialty Programs

Dependent subspecialty programs are required to function in conjunction with an accredited specialty program and are usually reviewed conjointly with the specialty program. The continued accreditation of the subspecialty program is dependent on the specialty program's maintaining its accreditation. The dependent subspecialty program must be sponsored by the same ACGME-accredited sponsoring institution, and should be geographically proximate. In those cases where a dependent subspecialty program is located in a specialized institution, the requirements pertaining to sponsorship and relationship to the core specialty program may be waived by the Residency Review Committee.

b) Independent Subspecialty Programs

An independent subspecialty program is not directly related to, or dependent upon, the accreditation status of a specialty program.

3. Transitional Year Programs

A Transitional Year Program is a one-year educational experience in GME which is structured to provide a program of multiple clinical disciplines designed to facilitate the choice of and/or preparation for a specialty. The Transitional Year is only a prerequisite; it does not comprise a complete program in GME.

4. Types of Sponsoring Institutions

Sponsoring institutions are divided into multiple-program institutions and single-program institutions. Multiple-program institutions sponsor two or more ACGME-accredited specialty programs and their subspecialty program(s); single-program institutions sponsor only one ACGME-accredited specialty program or one specialty program and its subspecialty program(s).

a) Multiple-Program Institutions

The Institutional Review Committee maintains accreditation responsibility for multiple-program institutions.

b) Single-Program Institutions Reviewed by One Review Committee

The review of institutions that sponsor only one ACGME-accredited specialty program or one specialty program and its subspecialty program(s) is carried out as part of the review of the specialty program by the relevant Residency Review Committee. Questions tailored to such institutions are completed by the program director as part of the specialty's program information forms. The site visitor shall verify matters of institutional commitment, support, and oversight. The site visit report shall include any information relevant to the institutional requirements that will provide the basis for comments and decisions regarding the review of these institutions by the Residency Review Committee at the time these accreditation decisions are made. The accreditation status and cycle length for a single-program sponsoring institution is the same as that cycle awarded to the program. However, if the Residency Review Committees confirms probation of the single program, no new program applications can be accepted by the single-program sponsoring institution.

B. The Accreditation Process

1. Written Documents for Accreditation Review

- a) Each Residency Review Committee and the Transitional Year Review Committee is responsible for developing program information forms which is to be completed by the program director in preparation for a site visit. The program information form should contain information representing the program at the time of the site visit. The program director is responsible for completing the program information form accurately.

The information in the program information form, along with all attachments and other documents (e.g., resident survey, operative logs) designated by the Review Committee is considered in the review of an application for a new program, or for a program with initial or continuing accreditation. The program information form must be signed by the designated institutional official prior to consideration by the Review Committee. Submission of the completed forms, along with the signature of the designated institutional official, constitutes the request of the sponsoring institution for program review and accreditation.

- b) The Institutional Review Committee is responsible for developing the Institutional Review Document. The institutional review document contains information which reflects the sponsoring institution at the time of the site visit. The designated institutional official is responsible for completing the institutional review document accurately. The information in the institutional review document may serve for the review of an application for a new sponsoring institution, or for one with initial or continuing accreditation. Submission of the completed forms, along with the signature of the designated institutional official, constitutes the request of the sponsoring institution for institutional review and accreditation.

2. The Site Visit

- a) Ordinarily, a Review Committee requires a site visit of a program or sponsoring institution before the status of an accredited program or sponsoring institution may be changed.
- b) A site visit is conducted by a member of the ACGME field staff, or by a Specialist Site-visitor, as determined by the Review Committee or its Executive Director.

- c) The site visitor holds responsibility to verify and clarify the information which has been provided in the documents submitted for accreditation review. The site visitor for a program interviews the program director and the designated institutional official, as well as administrators, faculty, and residents, in order to prepare a report on the various aspects of the program. The site visitor for a sponsoring institution interviews the designated institutional official, as well as administrators, faculty, and residents in order to prepare a report on the various aspects of the sponsoring institution. The site visitor does not make recommendations regarding the program's or sponsoring institution's accreditation status, does not consult with the program or institution under review, and does not participate in the accreditation decision by the Review Committee.

3. The Review Process

- a) Prior to a Review Committee meeting, the accreditation administrator shall forward the documents for review to one or two members of the Committee. These reviewers shall submit their written comments to the Review Committee staff to be compiled in accordance with established procedures in advance of the meeting.
- b) During the Review Committee meeting, the Committee shall evaluate each program or sponsoring institution based on the applicable requirements effective at the time of the site visit. The Review Committee shall base its action on the following information:
 - (1) the history of the sponsoring institution and/or the program, as applicable;
 - (2) the most recent program information form submitted by the program director and the designated institutional official, or the most recent institutional review document submitted by the designated institutional official;
 - (3) the most recent site visitor's report;
 - (4) correspondence pertinent to the review;
 - (5) other information such as board scores, operative data, procedure logs, resident survey, case logs, and resident experience data, as required by the Review Committee;

- (6) additional or revised information that may be submitted by the program director or designated institutional official, provided the information arrives sufficiently in advance of the committee meeting to allow for proper review; and, does not require verification by a site visit. This additional or revised information must be reviewed for accuracy by the sponsoring institution's graduate medical education committee and signed by the designated institutional official; and
- (7) materials pertaining to a complaint against a program or institution to which the program or institution has had an opportunity to respond (see section II.E.3).

- c) During program or institutional review, the Review Committee shall take formal action to include the accreditation status and the approximate date for the next site visit on each program or sponsoring institution under consideration. The Review Committee will issue a citation(s) based on finding that a program's or an institution's fails to comply substantially with an accreditation standard(s) or ACGME policy or procedure. The final action represents a peer judgment by the Committee as a whole.

4. The Accreditation Cycle

- a) The program or institutional review cycle is calculated from the date of the meeting at which the final accreditation action was taken to the time of the next site visit.
- b) Typically, the maximum length of the cycle that may be awarded by the Review Committee is five years. This cycle length is based upon the accreditation status, issues identified by the Review Committee, and any areas of noncompliance.
- c) When a new program or sponsoring institution is accredited, the effective date of accreditation shall be stipulated. Under special circumstances, the effective date may be retroactive. Unless specifically justified, an effective date should not be earlier than the beginning of the academic year during which the program or sponsoring institution is accredited.

- d) The accreditation status of a program or sponsoring institution changes only by action of the Review Committee. A program or sponsoring institution remains accredited until action is taken to withdraw accreditation by a Review Committee.
- e) If major changes occur between site visits, a program or institutional review cycle may be shortened, and the program director or designated institutional official shall be notified.
- f) The program director or designated institutional official may also request an early review of a program or sponsoring institution by communicating with the Review Committee Executive Director.
- g) Site visits will not be postponed for longer than six months to accommodate accredited programs having no residents or fellows enrolled.

5. Notification of Review Committee Actions

- a) The Review Committee Executive Director ensures that the Letter of Notification for each program or sponsoring institution is prepared consistent with the Review Committee action.
- b) The Program Letter of Notification shall state the action taken by the Review Committee, the current accreditation status, the length of the accredited program, the number of residents approved for the program as applicable, the approximate date for the next site visit, and the approximate date for the next mid-cycle internal review. For single program sponsoring institutions, the current accreditation status shall be included in the Program Letter of Notification.

The Institutional Letter of Notification shall state the action taken by the Review Committee, the current accreditation status, and the approximate date for the next site visit.

- c) If the program director, upon review of the notification letter, believes that an error has occurred, he or she should contact the Review Committee Executive Director, indicate the area(s) of contention and provide supporting evidence. The Review Committee Executive Director in consultation with the Review Committee Chair will examine the material provided and compare it with the program file that was used by the Review Committee in the accreditation action. If an error is confirmed that could impact the original accreditation decision, the Review Committee Executive Director will ask the Chair or the Review Committee to reevaluate the action.
- d) The program accreditation Letter of Notification is addressed to the program director and copied to the designated institutional official; the sponsoring institutional accreditation Letter of Notification is addressed to the designated institutional official.
- e) Residents and applicants must be notified of the current accreditation status of programs and institutions.
- f) The ACGME public website is updated with all accreditation actions by the Review Committee staff approximately two weeks after the Review Committee meeting.

C. Accreditation Actions

The following accreditation actions may be taken by a Review Committee in the accreditation of specialty programs, *independent* subspecialty programs, Transitional Year programs, and sponsoring institutions:

- Withheld Accreditation
- Initial Accreditation
- Continued Accreditation
- Probationary Accreditation
- Withdrawal of Accreditation

Accreditation withheld, probationary accreditation, and withdrawal of accreditation, as well as a reduction in resident complement by the Review Committee, are adverse actions and subject to an appeals process.

1. Withheld Accreditation

Accreditation shall be withheld when a Review Committee determines that the application for a new program or sponsoring institution does not demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements.

- a) This status shall first be proposed, providing the program or the sponsoring institution with an opportunity to rebut the citations and to document compliance with the requirements.
- b) If a program or sponsoring institution re-applies for accreditation within two years of its accreditation's being withheld or proposed withheld, the accreditation history of the last accreditation action of that program or sponsoring institution shall be included as part of the file. The program or sponsoring institution shall include with the new application:
 - (1) A statement rebutting each citation and documenting compliance with ACGME Requirements (in the case of application after proposed withheld), and/or
 - (2) A statement of the measures the program or institution has taken to comply with ACGME Requirements relating to each citation in the last letter of accreditation (in the case of application after either proposed withheld or withheld).
- c) Subspecialty Programs Accredited by More than one Review Committee
 - (1) If one Residency Review Committee proposes to withhold accreditation of a program in a subspecialty that is accredited by more than one Residency Review Committee, an application for accreditation of the program will not be considered by another sponsoring Residency Review Committee until the first Residency Review Committee takes final action on the application. Once the program director is notified of the proposed action, s/he must prepare a written response to the proposed action or accept the Residency Review Committee's decision to withhold accreditation.
 - (2) In either case, final action must be taken to confirm withhold accreditation or to grant initial accreditation. If the Residency Review Committee confirms withhold accreditation, the program may then submit a new application to another sponsoring Residency Review Committee.

- (3) To ensure that a program is not permitted to submit a new application to another Residency Review Committee until after the first Committee takes final action, the application process will occur through the Accreditation Data System and the program director will be asked to indicate the Residency Review Committee to which the application is being submitted. The Accreditation Data System will not allow the program director and designated institutional official to complete the application process for another Residency Review Committee until final action on the first application is complete.
- (4) On review of an application, the Review Committee may determine that a site visit is necessary.

2. Initial Accreditation

Accreditation is conferred initially when a Review Committee determines that a proposal for a new program or sponsoring institution substantially complies with the requirements.

- a) This initial cycle is considered a developmental stage during which the proposal for the new program or sponsoring institution will be fully developed and implemented. A program or sponsoring institution should be reviewed within three years of the initial action. If a program or sponsoring institution has *not* demonstrated substantial compliance on the next review, the Review Committee may propose withdrawal or extend accreditation *with warning* for one year. At the end of this additional one year, the program or sponsoring institution must demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements, or the accreditation of the program or sponsoring institution shall be withdrawn.

If the final accreditation action for withdrawal of accreditation is confirmed, the program or sponsoring institution shall be allowed to complete the current academic year and one additional academic year.

N.B.: The Review Committee may warn the program director or sponsoring institutional official of areas of noncompliance that may jeopardize the program's or sponsoring institution's future accreditation status. A warning is not an adverse action and is not appealable.

- b) Initial accreditation may be granted to a new program or sponsoring institution or a previously-accredited program or sponsoring institution, which had had its accreditation withheld or withdrawn or has voluntarily withdrawn and has subsequently applied for re-accreditation.
- c) Initial accreditation may also be used when separately accredited programs or sponsoring institutions merge into one, or when an accredited program or sponsoring institution has been so altered that in the judgment of the Review Committee it is the equivalent of a new program or sponsoring institution.
- d) When initial accreditation is granted to a program, the Review Committee may apply a retroactive effective date of accreditation to the beginning of the current academic year to accommodate a resident that is currently in the non-accredited program in order to allow board eligibility.

3. Continued Accreditation

Accreditation is continued when a Review Committee determines that a program or sponsoring institution has demonstrated substantial compliance with the requirements. Typically, the maximum length of the cycle awarded by the Review Committee is five years. Cycle length is based upon the accreditation status, issues identified by the Review Committee, and areas of non-compliance.

A Review Committee may grant continued accreditation in three circumstances:

- a) programs or sponsoring institutions holding initial accreditation that have demonstrated substantial compliance with the requirements;
- b) programs or sponsoring institutions holding continued accreditation that have demonstrated substantial compliance with the requirements; or,
- c) programs or sponsoring institutions holding probationary accreditation that have demonstrated, following a site visit and review, substantial compliance with the requirements.

4. Probationary Accreditation

Probationary accreditation is conferred when the Review Committee determines that a program or sponsoring institution, following a site visit and review, has failed to demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements.

This status shall first be proposed, providing the program or sponsoring institution with an opportunity to rebut the citations and document compliance with the requirements. The length of the review cycle for this status may not exceed two years. The response must be reviewed and approved by the institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee with review and co-signature by the designated institutional official prior to submission to the ACGME.

Following the next site visit and review, if the program or sponsoring institution does not demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements, or if new areas of noncompliance are identified, the Review Committee may confer an additional one year of probationary accreditation (continued probationary accreditation). This status shall first be proposed, providing the program or sponsoring institution with an opportunity to rebut the citations and document compliance with the requirements. At the end of this additional one-year period, the program or sponsoring institution must demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements, or the accreditation of the program or sponsoring institution will be withdrawn. Alternatively, a program or sponsoring institution documenting substantial compliance with the requirements will be restored to continued accreditation status.

Once the Institutional Review Committee confirms probationary accreditation of a sponsoring institution, no new program applications for the institution will be accepted.

5. Withdrawal

a) Withdrawal of Accreditation After Probationary Accreditation

A Review Committee may withdraw accreditation of a program or sponsoring institution under probationary accreditation when a Review Committee determines, following a site visit and review, that a program or sponsoring institution has failed to demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements.

This status shall first be proposed, providing the program or sponsoring institution with an opportunity to rebut the citations and to document compliance with the requirements. The response must be reviewed and approved by the institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee with review and co-signature by the designated institutional official prior to submission to the ACGME.

- (1) Following the final action for withdrawal of accreditation, the program or sponsoring institution shall be allowed to complete the current academic year and one additional academic year.
- (2) When the Review Committee confirms withdrawal of accreditation and the program or sponsoring institution has been notified of the effective date of withdrawal of accreditation, no new residents may be appointed to the program or in the case of withdrawal of accreditation of a sponsoring institution, no new residents may be appointed to any of the programs sponsored by the sponsoring institution. Whether or not the withdrawal is appealed, all candidates (i.e., applicants invited to interview) and residents matriculating to the program or to any of the sponsored programs must be notified in writing, with copies to the Executive Director of the Review Committee.
- (3) In determining whether to confirm withdrawal of accreditation, a Review Committee shall consider that, if it fails to confirm withdrawal of accreditation, the program or sponsoring institution shall revert to its prior accreditation status, unless the program has exhausted the maximum duration of accreditation status in that category (i.e., four years for initial and three years for probation).
- (4) The sponsoring institution shall be responsible to direct resources for placement of the residents affected.
- (5) If the program or sponsoring institution reapplies for accreditation within two years after accreditation has previously been withdrawn or proposed withdrawn, the accreditation history of the last accreditation action of that program or sponsoring institution shall be included as part of the file. The program or sponsoring institution shall include with the new application the following:
 - (a) statement rebutting each citation and documenting compliance with ACGME Requirements (in the case of application after proposed withdrawal), and/or

- (b) a statement of the measures the program or institution has taken to comply with ACGME Requirements relating to each citation in the last letter of accreditation (in case of application after either proposed withdrawal or withdrawal).

On review of an application, the Review Committee may determine that a site visit is necessary.

- (6) If the Institutional Review Committee confirms withdrawal of accreditation of a sponsoring institution, all ACGME-accredited programs sponsored by that sponsoring institution will be administratively withdrawn. The ACGME will coordinate communication and activities between the Institutional Review Committee and all applicable Residency Review Committees.

If accreditation of a multiple program institution is withdrawn, an application for a new program at a single program institution cannot be considered until the day after the effective date of withdrawal of the multiple program institution.

b) Expedited Withdrawal of Accreditation (Programs Only)

- (1) Regardless of a program's accreditation status, the Review Committee, following a site visit and review, may withdraw the accreditation of a program in an expedited process based on clear evidence of noncompliance with accreditation standards as follows:
 - (a) a catastrophic loss of resources, including faculty, facilities, or funding, or
 - (b) egregious noncompliance with accreditation requirements.
- (2) This status shall first be proposed, providing the program with an opportunity to rebut the citations and to document compliance with the requirements. The response must be reviewed and approved by the institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee with review and co-signature by the designated institutional official prior to submission to the ACGME.

- (3) The Review Committee may meet by conference call or in person to consider proposed expedited withdrawal and confirmed expedited withdrawal of accreditation.
- (4) The effective date of the confirmed expedited withdrawal shall be determined by the Review Committee, considering a reasonable time for resident placement. The effective date should not exceed six months from the time the action is confirmed.
- (5) In response to a notice of proposed expedited withdrawal, the program may:
 - (a) Accept the decision:
 - (b) Provide written information contending that it is in substantial compliance with accreditation standards. Such written information must be received by the Review Committee Executive Director within 30 days of the program's receipt of notification of proposed expedited withdrawal of accreditation; or
 - (c) Request a voluntary withdrawal of accreditation of the program or institution (Section II.C.8.a).
- (6) The Review Committee shall meet within 21 days of receipt of the written information to determine whether the proposed expedited withdrawal should be confirmed.
- (7) If the proposed expedited withdrawal is not confirmed, the program's accreditation status shall revert to its previous status; however, if the previous status was continued accreditation, the Review Committee may grant probationary accreditation, subject to appeal through the same procedure for expedited withdrawal in Section d) below. The Review Committee shall set a date for the next site visit.

- (8) Upon receipt of notification of a confirmed expedited withdrawal, the program must inform, in writing, the residents and any candidates (i.e., applicants who have been invited to interview with the program) that the expedited withdrawal has been confirmed, whether or not the expedited withdrawal will be appealed.
- (9) When the Review Committee confirms withdrawal of accreditation and the program has been notified of the effective date of withdrawal of accreditation, no new residents may be appointed to the program.
- (10) If the program reapplies for accreditation after accreditation has previously been expeditiously withdrawn or proposed expeditiously withdrawn, the accreditation history of the last accreditation action of that program shall be included as part of the file. The program shall include with the new application:
 - (a) Statement rebutting each citation and documenting compliance with ACGME Requirements (in the case of application after proposed expedited withdrawal), and/or
 - (b) A statement of the measures the program has taken to comply with ACGME Requirements relating to each citation in the last letter of accreditation (in the case of application after proposed expedited withdrawal or expedited withdrawal).

On review of an application, the Review Committee may determine that a site visit is necessary.

- (11) The sponsoring institution is responsible to direct resources for placement of the affected residents.

c) Procedures for Appeal of Expedited Adverse Action

- (1) If the Review Committee takes an expedited adverse action, the program may request a hearing before an appeals panel. If a written request for such a hearing is not received by the Executive Director of the ACGME within 21 days following receipt of the Letter of Notification, the action of the Review Committee will be deemed final and not subject to further appeal.

- (2) If a hearing is requested, the appeals panel shall consist of the ACGME Executive Committee, plus one public director of the ACGME, and the action of this appeals panel shall constitute the final action of the ACGME.
- (3) When a hearing is requested, the following policies and procedures shall apply:
 - (a) The Executive Director of the ACGME shall set an expedited schedule for the appeal procedures. Hearings conducted in conformity with these procedures may be by conference call or otherwise, as determined by the ACGME;
 - (b) When a program requests a hearing before an appeals panel, the program holds the accreditation status determined by the Review Committee with the term *under appeal* affixed to the status. For example, if the Review Committee determines expedited withdrawal status for a program, and the program appeals the decision, the status of the program shall be *expedited withdrawal, under appeal*. This accreditation status shall remain in effect until the ACGME makes a final determination on the accreditation status of the program. Nonetheless, at this time residents and any candidates (applicants who have been invited to interview with the sponsoring institution) must be informed in writing as to the confirmed adverse action taken by the Review Committee on the accreditation status. A copy of the written notice must be sent to the Executive Director of the Review Committee within 21 days of receipt of the Review Committee's Letter of Notification.
 - (c) The program will be given the documents before the Review Committee at its confirming expedited withdrawal or granting probationary accreditation per Section b) above.

- (d) The documents comprising the program file, the record of the Review Committee's action, together with oral and written presentations to the appeals panel, shall be the basis for the decision of the appeals panel.
- (e) The appeals panel shall meet to review the written record and receive the presentations. The appropriate Review Committee shall be notified of the hearing, and a representative of the Review Committee may attend the hearing in order to be available to the appeals panel to provide clarification of the record.
- (f) Proceedings before an appeals panel are not of an adversary nature as typical in a court of law, but rather provide an administrative mechanism for peer review of an accreditation decision about an educational program. The appeals panel shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence usually employed in legal proceedings.
- (g) The program may not amend the statistical or narrative descriptions on which the action of the Review Committee was based in preparing for an appeal hearing; the file is considered "frozen" at that time with respect to the addition of any information not previously presented to the Review Committee. The appeals procedures limit the appeals panel's jurisdiction to clarification of information at the time when the adverse action was confirmed or granted by the Review Committee. Information about the program subsequent to that time may not be considered in the appeal. Furthermore, the appeals panel shall not consider any changes in the program or descriptions of the program that were not in the record at the time when the Review Committee reviewed the program and confirmed or granted the adverse action.

- (h) When there have been substantial changes in a program and/or correction of citations after the date of the confirmed or granted action by the Review Committee, a program should forego an appeal and request a new evaluation and accreditation decision. Such an evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with ACGME procedures, including an on-site survey of the program. The adverse status shall remain in effect until a re-evaluation and an accreditation decision has been made by the Review Committee.
- (i) Presentations shall be limited to clarifications of the record and to arguments which address compliance by the program with the published standards for accreditation and the review of the program according to the administrative procedures which govern accreditation of GME programs. The appeals panel shall consider materials and oral arguments based thereon, but shall not consider oral testimony. The duration of the hearing and elements thereof shall be set prior to the hearing by the appeals panel.
- (j) The appellant shall communicate with the appeals panel only at the hearing or in writing through the Executive Director of the ACGME.
- (k) The appeals panel shall make decisions as to whether substantial, credible, and relevant evidence exists to support the action taken by the Review Committee in the matter that is under appeal. The appeals panel shall, in addition, decide whether there has been substantial compliance with the administrative procedures which govern the process of accreditation of GME programs.
- (l) The program may submit additional written material within a time to be determined by the appeals panel. The intention to submit such material must be made known to the appeals panel at the hearing.

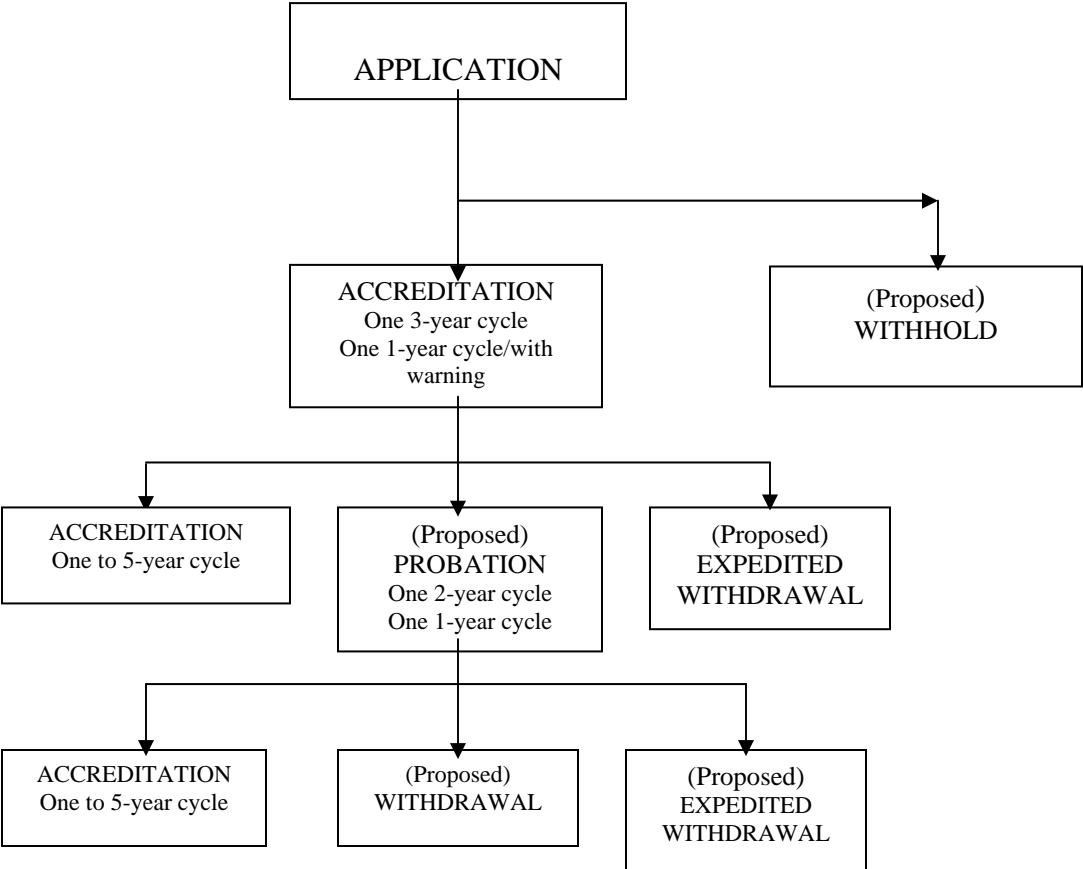
- (m) The appeals panel shall make its decisions within 20 days after receipt of additional written material.
- (n) The decision of the appeals panel in this matter shall be final. There is no provision for further appeal.
- (o) The Executive Director of the ACGME shall, within 15 days following the final decision, notify the program under appeal of the decision of the ACGME.
- (p) The appellant is fully responsible for the Appeal Fee as set yearly by the ACGME. Expenses of the appeals panel members and the associated administrative costs shall be shared equally by the appellant and the ACGME.

6. Reduction in Resident Complement

A Review Committee that designates resident complement may reduce resident complement if a program cannot demonstrate the capacity to provide each resident with a sufficient educational experience. This status shall first be proposed, providing the program with an opportunity to rebut the citations and to document compliance with the requirements.

The Review Committee may propose a reduction in the resident complement and simultaneously request a progress report to address subject matter unrelated to the reasons for the proposed reduction in the resident complement. Upon reconsideration of the proposed reduction, the Review Committee shall consider only issues underlying the proposed adverse action.

Accreditation Schema



7. Other Actions

a) Deferral of Accreditation

A Review Committee may defer action *only one time* on the accreditation status of a program or sponsoring institution, based upon lack of sufficient information about specific issues that preclude the Review Committee from making an informed decision. When a Review Committee defers accreditation action, the program or sponsoring institution retains its current accreditation status until an accreditation decision is made at the next Review Committee meeting.

b) Progress Report

- (1) A Review Committee may request a Progress Report that specifies information to be provided, including a specific due date for the report.
- (2) The Progress Report should be reviewed by the sponsoring institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee, and must be signed by the designated institutional official prior to submission to the Review Committee.
- (3) The Review Committee shall review the Progress Report, and may change the approximate date for the next site visit on the basis of the degree of progress reported.

c) Participating Sites

- (1) The sponsoring institution may identify one or more additional sites to provide necessary educational resources for a program. In such case, the Review Committee shall confirm that each participating site contributes meaningfully to the educational program.
- (2) A Review Committee may stipulate additional criteria for the addition or deletion of participating institutions.

d) Integrated Site

- (1) A Residency Review Committee may stipulate specific criteria for the relationship with an integrated institution. As a general rule, integrated institutions must function closely with the sponsoring institution, and must be in geographic proximity to allow all residents to attend conferences on a regular basis and at a central location.
- (2) A review committee also may require an agreement that clearly specifies the fact that the program director of the sponsoring institution appoints the members of the faculty, appoints the chief of the teaching service, appoints all residents in the program, and determines all rotations and assignments of both residents and members of the faculty.
- (3) An institution may not be integrated with another sponsoring institution if that institution already sponsors a residency program in the same specialty.

e) Change in Institutional Sponsor

Transfer of sponsorship requires a letter from the Institution's current sponsor (the designated institutional official and the institution's senior administrative official) indicating willingness to give up sponsorship, and a letter from the new sponsor (the designated institutional official and the institution's senior administrative official) indicating willingness to sponsor. The letters should be addressed to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee, with a copy to the Senior Vice President, Department of Field Activities.

f) Resident Complement

The complement of residents in a program must be commensurate with the total capacity of the program to provide each resident with a sufficient educational experience.

- (1) Consistent with its accreditation authority, a Review Committee may indicate that a program is approved to educate a specific number of residents as a maximum at any one time and/or a specific number of residents in each year of the program. A Review Committee may also indicate that a minimum number of residents is considered necessary in each program to provide an effective learning environment.
- (2) A Review Committee that designates resident complement shall indicate this in the program requirements, and develop and follow special procedures for complement changes.

8. Administrative Actions

a) Voluntary Withdrawal of Accreditation

A program or sponsoring institution may request voluntary withdrawal of accreditation when a decision has been made to no longer participate in ACGME accreditation.

- (1) Programs:
 - (a) A program director may request voluntary withdrawal of a program's accreditation (i.e., due to merger, loss of resources, having no residents or fellows enrolled in the program for several years, the specialty or the subspecialty is no longer being accredited). Such requests must be submitted through the Accreditation Data System, indicate designated institutional official and Graduate Medical Education Committee approval, state the proposed effective date, state whether resident/fellows are currently enrolled, and if so, explain the plan for placement of all residents in the program so the sponsoring institution may fulfill its responsibility for allowing residents to complete their residency program or facilitate their enrollment in another ACGME-accredited program.
 - (b) If two or more programs are merged into a single program and a Review Committee accredits the merged program, the Review Committee shall take concurrent actions for voluntary withdrawal for the previously accredited programs.

- (2) Sponsoring Institutions:
 - (a) A designated institutional official may request voluntary withdrawal of institutional accreditation (i.e., due to merger, loss of resources, having no residents or fellows enrolled in programs for several years or the specialties or subspecialties are no longer being accredited). Such requests must be made in writing with approval by the Graduate Medical Education Committee and sent to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee and include the effective date of withdrawal and the detailed plan for placement of all residents. The Institutional Review Committee will coordinate communications and activities between itself and all affected Residency Review Committees.
 - (b) If two or more sponsoring institutions are merged into a single sponsoring institution, and if the Institutional Review Committee accredits the merged institutions, the Institutional Review Committee shall take concurrent action for voluntary withdrawal of the previously accredited sponsoring institutions.
- (3) Pending Adverse Accreditation Actions
 - (a) A program or sponsoring institution may request voluntary withdrawal of accreditation when a program or institution has a pending adverse accreditation action status.

- (b) Such a request must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director of the Residency Committee or, in the case of a sponsoring institution, the Institutional Review Committee. The request must be signed by the designated institutional official in all cases. It must include the proposed effective date, and indicate whether resident/fellows are currently enrolled and if so, explain the plan for placement of all residents in the program so the sponsoring institution may fulfill its responsibility for allowing residents to complete their residency program or facilitate their enrollment in another ACGME-accredited program.

- (4) If a program or sponsoring institution reapplies for accreditation after accreditation has previously been voluntarily withdrawn, the accreditation history of the last accreditation action, including any proposed action, of the program or institution shall become part of the file. The program or sponsoring institution shall include with the new application:
 - (a) a statement rebutting each citation and documenting compliance with ACGME Requirements, and/or
 - (b) a statement of the measures the program or sponsoring institution has taken to comply with the ACGME requirements relating to each citation in the last letter of accreditation. On review of an application, the Review Committee may determine that a site visit is necessary.

b) Administrative Withdrawal

- (1) A program or sponsoring institution that is delinquent in payment of fees, according to ACGME policies and procedures, is not eligible for review, and shall be notified by Federal Express, signature required, of the effective date of administrative withdrawal of accreditation. On that date, the program or sponsoring institution shall be removed from the ACGME list of accredited programs or sponsoring institutions.

- (2) A program or sponsoring institution may be deemed to have withdrawn from the voluntary process of accreditation, and a Review Committee may take action to administratively withdraw accreditation, if the program or the sponsoring institution does not comply with the following actions and procedures:
 - (a) undergo a site visit and program/sponsoring institution review;
 - (b) follow directives associated with an accreditation action;
 - (c) supply a Review Committee with requested information (e.g., Progress Report, operative data, resident survey); and,
 - (d) maintain current data through ADS.
- (3) If the program or sponsoring institution reapplies for accreditation after accreditation has previously been administratively withdrawn, the accreditation history of the last accreditation action of that program or sponsoring institution shall be included as part of the file. The program or sponsoring institution shall include with the new application
 - (a) A statement rebutting each citation and documenting compliance with ACGME Requirements, and/or
 - (b) A statement of the measures the program or institution has taken to comply with ACGME Requirements relating to each citation in the last letter of accreditation. On review of an application, the Review Committee may determine that a site visit is necessary.

9. Accreditation Actions for Dependent Subspecialty Programs

The accreditation status of a subspecialty program that is required to function in conjunction with an accredited specialty program is related to, or dependent upon, the status of that program. Because of this dependency, only a limited number of accreditation actions are appropriate.

a) General Policies

- (1) A request for initial accreditation of a subspecialty program will be considered only if the accreditation status of the specialty program is continued accreditation, and the specialty program is not involved in any phase of the appeals procedures. Under special circumstances, a Residency Review Committee may grant initial accreditation to a subspecialty program when the specialty program holds initial accreditation. Further, a Review Committee may withhold accreditation when it determines that the new dependent subspecialty program does not have an educational relationship with the appropriate specialty program of the Residency Review Committee.
- (2) If a specialty program receives probationary accreditation, this simultaneously constitutes an administrative warning of potential loss of accreditation to any dependent subspecialty program that is attached to the specialty program.
- (3) If a specialty program has its accreditation withdrawn, the accreditation of any subspecialty program dependent on it is also withdrawn.
- (4) Unless otherwise specified by the Review Committee, these dependent subspecialty programs will ordinarily be reviewed on site in conjunction with the specialty program.
- (5) Ordinarily, a Review Committee requires a site visit of a subspecialty program before the status of an accredited subspecialty program may be changed.

b) Accreditation Actions

(1) Withheld Accreditation

A Review Committee may withhold accreditation when the application for a new subspecialty program does not substantially comply with the requirements. The policies and procedures on withheld accreditation of specialty programs also apply to the actions concerning subspecialty programs.

(2) Accreditation

A Review Committee may grant accreditation when the dependent subspecialty program has demonstrated substantial compliance with the requirements. When the dependent subspecialty program has been found to have one or more areas of non-compliance with the requirements that are of sufficient substance to require prompt correction, a Review Committee may resurvey the subspecialty program within either one or two years and warn the program that its accreditation may be withdrawn if, following a site visit and review, the accredited dependent subspecialty program does not substantially comply with the requirements.

(3) Accreditation with Warning, Administrative

A Review Committee must grant accreditation with warning, administrative, when a specialty program to which a subspecialty program is attached has been granted probationary accreditation. This constitutes an administrative warning of potential loss of accreditation to a subspecialty program.

(4) Withdrawal of Accreditation

A Review Committee may withdraw accreditation if, following a site visit and review, the accredited dependent subspecialty program does not substantially comply with the requirements and has received a warning about areas of noncompliance. The policies and procedures on withdrawal of accreditation for specialty programs also apply to the actions concerning dependent subspecialty programs.

(5) Withdrawal of Accreditation, Administrative

If a specialty program has its accreditation withdrawn, the accreditation of any subspecialty program that is attached to the general specialty program is administratively withdrawn simultaneously.

(6) Other Actions by a Review Committee

The policies and procedures on Expedited Withdrawal of Accreditation of general specialty programs in Section II.C.5.b, also apply to the actions concerning subspecialty programs.

10. Program Procedures for Adverse Actions and Appeal

a) Adverse Actions

The following accreditation actions are considered adverse actions for specialty specific programs, Transitional-Year programs, and *independent* subspecialty programs:

- accreditation withheld
- probationary accreditation
- withdrawal of accreditation
- a reduction in resident complement by the Review Committee.

b) Procedures for Adverse Actions

- (1) When the Review Committee determines that an adverse action is warranted, it shall first give notice of its proposed adverse action to the program director and the designated institutional official of the sponsoring institution. This notice of proposed adverse action shall include the citations that form the basis for the proposed adverse action, a copy of the site visitor's report if there was a site visit, and the date by which the program may submit its response in writing.
- (2) The program may provide to the Review Committee written information revising, correcting or expanding factual information previously submitted; challenging the findings of the site visitor if there was a site visit; rebutting the interpretation and conclusions of the Review Committee; demonstrating that cited areas of noncompliance with the requirements did not exist when the Review Committee initially reviewed the program and proposed an adverse decision (i.e., the date of the Review Committee meeting); and contending that the program is in substantial compliance with the requirements that were in effect at the time of the site visit. The Review Committee shall determine whether the information that is submitted may be considered without verification by a site visitor.

- (3) The Review Committee shall complete its evaluation of the program at a scheduled meeting.
 - (4) The Review Committee may confirm the adverse action, or modify its position. If the Review Committee confirms the adverse action, it shall communicate the confirmed adverse action and the citations, as described above, including comments on the program's response to these citations. The date of the next survey shall be specified.
 - (5) This Letter of Notification shall be sent to the program director and copied to the designated institutional official. The program director may appeal a confirmed adverse action; otherwise, the adverse action is final.
 - (6) Upon receipt of notification of a confirmed adverse action, the program director must inform, in writing, the residents and any candidates (applicants who have been invited to interview with the program) that the adverse action has been confirmed in compliance with procedures in these *Policies and Procedures*. The program director must inform residents and candidates, regardless of whether or not the action is appealed. A copy of this written notice must be sent to the Executive Director of the Review Committee within 50 days of receipt of the Review Committee's Letter of Notification.
- c) Procedures for Appeal of Adverse Actions Other than Expedited Adverse Actions
- (1) If the Review Committee takes an adverse action, the program may request a hearing before an appeals panel. If a written request for such a hearing is not received by the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME within 30 days following receipt of the Letter of Notification, the action of the Review Committee shall be deemed final and not subject to further appeal.
 - (2) If a hearing is requested, a panel shall be appointed according to the following procedures:
 - (a) The ACGME shall maintain a list of qualified persons as potential appeals panel members to review programs.

- (b) For a given hearing, the program shall receive a copy of the list of potential appeals panel members, and shall have an opportunity to delete a maximum of one-third of the names from the list of potential appeals panel members. Within 15 days of receipt of the list, the program shall submit its revised list to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME.
 - (c) A three-member appeals panel will be constituted by the ACGME from among the remaining names on the list.
- (3) When a hearing is requested, the following policies and procedures shall apply:
- (a) When a program requests a hearing before an appeals panel, the program holds the accreditation status determined by the Review Committee with the term *under appeal* affixed to the status. For example, if the Review Committee determines probationary status for a program, and the program appeals the decision, the status of the program shall be *probation, under appeal*. This accreditation status shall remain in effect until the ACGME makes a final determination on the accreditation status of the program.

Nonetheless, at this time residents and any candidates (applicants who have been invited to interview with the sponsoring institution) must be informed in writing as to the confirmed adverse action taken by the Review Committee on the accreditation status. A copy of the written notice must be sent to the Executive Director of the Review Committee within 50 days of receipt of the Review Committee's Letter of Notification.

- (b) Hearings conducted in conformity with these procedures shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the ACGME. At least 25 days prior to the hearing, the program shall be notified of the time and place of the hearing.

- (c) The program shall be given the documents before the Review Committee at its confirming the adverse action.
- (d) The documents comprising the program file, the record of the Review Committee's action, together with oral and written presentations to the appeals panel, shall be the basis for the recommendations of the appeals panel.
- (e) The appeals panel shall meet to review the written record and receive the presentations. The appropriate Review Committee shall be notified of the hearing, and a representative of the Review Committee may attend the hearing in order to be available to the appeals panel to provide clarification of the record.
- (f) Proceedings before an appeals panel are not of an adversary nature as typical in a court of law, but rather provide an administrative mechanism for peer review of an accreditation decision about an educational program. The appeals panel shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence usually employed in legal proceedings.
- (g) The program may not amend the statistical or narrative descriptions on which the action of the Review Committee was based in preparing for an appeal hearing; the file is considered "frozen" at that time with respect to the addition of any information not previously presented to the Review Committee. The appeal procedures limit the appeals panel's jurisdiction to clarification of information at the time when the adverse action was confirmed by the Review Committee. Information about the program subsequent to that time may not be considered in the appeal. Furthermore, the appeals panel shall not consider any changes in the program or descriptions of the program that were not in the record at the time when the Review Committee reviewed the program and confirmed the adverse action.

- (h) When there have been substantial changes in a program and/or correction of citations after the date of the confirmed action by the Review Committee, a program should forego an appeal and request a new evaluation and accreditation decision. Such an evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with ACGME procedures, including an on-site survey of the program. The adverse status shall remain in effect until a re-evaluation and an accreditation decision have been made by the Review Committee.
- (i) Presentations shall be limited to clarifications of the record and to arguments which address compliance by the program with the published standards for accreditation and the review of the program according to the administrative procedures which govern accreditation of GME programs. Presentations may include written and oral elements. The appellant may make an oral presentation to the appeals panel, but this presentation shall be limited to two hours.
- (j) The appellant shall communicate with the appeals panel only at the hearing or in writing through the Executive Director of the ACGME.
- (k) The appeals panel shall make recommendations to the ACGME as to whether substantial, credible, and relevant evidence exists to support the action taken by the Review Committee in the matter that is under appeal. The appeals panel shall, in addition, make recommendations as to whether there has been substantial compliance with the administrative procedures which govern the process of accreditation of GME programs.
- (l) The program may submit additional written material within 15 days after the hearing. The intention to submit such material must be made known to the appeals panel at the hearing.

- (m) The appeals panel shall submit its recommendation to the ACGME Board of Directors within 20 days after receipt of additional written material. The ACGME shall act on the appeal at its next regularly-scheduled meeting.
- (n) The decision of the ACGME in this matter shall be final. There is no provision for further appeal.
- (o) The Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME shall, within 15 days following the final decision, notify the program under appeal of the decision of the ACGME.
- (p) The appellant is fully responsible for the Appeal Fee as set yearly by the ACGME. Expenses of the appeals panel members and the associated administrative costs shall be shared equally by the appellant and the ACGME.

(4) Notification of Residents and Applicants

Program directors must inform current residents as well as applicants (i.e., all persons invited to come for an interview) of the accreditation status of the program, as follows:

- (a) Each resident in a program should be aware of the accreditation status of the program, and must be notified in writing following any change in the accreditation action taken by the Review Committee.

- (b) If an adverse action regarding the accreditation status of a program is confirmed by a Review Committee, the program director must ensure that all residents and applicants of the general specialty and the dependent subspecialty programs are advised in writing of the adverse action. This written notification must be made even if the program director requests a hearing before an appeals panel. For applicants, the information on accreditation status must be provided in writing prior to their coming to the program for an interview. A copy of the written notification must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Review Committee within 50 days of the date of the notification letter in which the program director is advised of the adverse action.
- (c) When a Review Committee withholds accreditation of a proposed program, residents enrolled in a formerly-accredited program, as well as applicants who have anticipated accreditation of the proposed program, must be advised by the program director in writing of the failure of the program to obtain accreditation. A copy of that notification must be submitted to the Review Committee Executive Director within 50 days of the date of the Letter of Notification to the program director, regardless of the institution's intent to appeal that decision.
- (d) A copy of the letters to residents and applicants must be kept on file by the program director.

- (e) Review Committee Executive Directors shall monitor compliance with the requirement to notify residents and applicants in the case of adverse action, and shall advise the Review Committee if a program director has failed to comply with the specified procedures. If a program director fails to comply, the Review Committee shall notify the sponsoring institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) to take appropriate action in order to ensure that residents are notified of the program's current accreditation status.

11. Institutional Procedures for Adverse Actions and Appeals

a) Adverse Actions

Adverse actions as to sponsoring institutions are defined as:

- Accreditation Withheld
- Probationary Accreditation
- Withdrawal of Accreditation

The above actions shall first be proposed, permitting the sponsoring institution to respond before final action is taken.

b) Procedures for Proposed Adverse Actions for Institutional Review

The following procedures will be implemented when the Institutional Review Committee determines that an institution is not in substantial compliance with the requirements.

- (1) When the Institutional Review Committee determines that an adverse action is warranted, it shall first give notice of its proposed adverse action to the designated institutional official of the sponsoring institution in a Letter of Notification. This notice of proposed adverse action will include the citations that form the basis for the proposed adverse action, a copy of the site visitor's report, and the date by which the institution may submit its response in writing.

- (2) The institution may provide to the Institutional Review Committee written information revising, correcting, and expanding factual information previously submitted; challenging the findings of the site visitor; rebutting the interpretation and conclusions of the Institutional Review Committee; demonstrating that cited areas of noncompliance with the requirements did not exist when the Institutional Review Committee initially reviewed the institution and proposed an adverse decision (i.e., the date of the meeting); and contending that the institution is in compliance with the standards that were in effect at the time of the site visit. The Institutional Review Committee shall determine whether the written information may be considered without verification by a site visitor.
- (3) The Institutional Review Committee shall complete its evaluation of the institution at a regularly-scheduled meeting.
- (4) The Institutional Review Committee may confirm the adverse action or modify its position. If the Committee confirms the adverse action, it shall communicate the confirmed adverse action and the citations as described above, including comments on the institution's response to these citations. The date of the next survey shall be specified.
- (5) A Letter of Notification shall be sent to the designated institutional official. The designated institutional official may appeal a confirmed adverse decision; otherwise, the adverse action is final.
- (6) Upon receipt of notification of a confirmed adverse action, the designated institutional official must inform, in writing, the residents and any candidates (applicants who have been invited to interview with the programs in the institution) that the adverse action has been confirmed in compliance with procedures in these *Policies and Procedures*. The designated institutional official must so inform residents and candidates, whether or not the action is appealed. A copy of this written notice must be sent to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee within 50 days of receipt of the Institutional Review Committee's Letter of Notification.

- c) Procedures for Appeal of Institutional Adverse Actions
- (1) If the Institutional Review Committee takes an adverse action, the institution may request a hearing before an appeals panel for the Institutional Review Committee. If a written request for such a hearing is not received by the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME within 30 days following receipt of the Letter of Notification, the action of the Institutional Review Committee shall be deemed final and not subject to further appeal.
 - (2) If a hearing is requested, a panel shall be appointed according to the following procedures:
 - (a) The ACGME shall maintain a list of qualified persons as potential appeals panel members to review institutions.
 - (b) For a given hearing, the institution shall receive a copy of the list of potential appeals panel members, and shall have an opportunity to delete a maximum of one-third of the names from the list of potential appeals panel members. Within 15 days of receipt of the list, the institution shall submit its revised list to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME.
 - (c) A three-member appeals panel shall be constituted by the ACGME from among the remaining names on the list.
 - (3) When a hearing is requested, the following policies and procedures shall apply:
 - (a) When an institution requests a hearing before an appeals panel, the institution holds the accreditation status determined by the Review Committee with the term *under appeal* affixed to the status. For example, if the Institutional Review Committee determines probationary status for an institution, and the institution appeals the decision, the status of the institution shall be *probation, under appeal*. This accreditation status shall remain in effect until the ACGME makes a final determination on the accreditation status of the institution.

Residents and any candidates (applicants who have been invited to interview with the institution) must be informed in writing as to the confirmed adverse action taken by the Institutional Review Committee on the accreditation status. A copy of the written notice must be sent to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee within 50 days of receipt of the Institutional Review Committee's Letter of Notification.

- (b) Hearings conducted in conformity with these procedures shall be held at a time and place to be determined by the ACGME. At least 25 days prior to the hearing, the institution shall be notified of the time and place of the hearing.
- (c) The institution shall be given the documents before the Institutional Review Committee at its meeting confirming the adverse action.
- (d) The documents comprising the institutional file, the record of the Institutional Review Committee's action, together with oral and written presentations to the appeals panel, shall be the basis for the recommendations of the appeals panel.
- (e) The appeals panel shall meet to review the written record and receive the presentations. The Institutional Review Committee shall be notified of the hearing, and a representative of the Institutional Review Committee may attend the hearing in order to be available to the appeals panel to provide clarification of the record.
- (f) Proceedings before an appeals panel are not of an adversary nature as typical in a court of law, but rather provide an administrative mechanism for peer review of an accreditation decision about a sponsoring institution. The appeals panel shall not be bound by technical rules of evidence usually employed in legal proceedings.

- (g) The institution may not amend the statistical or narrative descriptions on which the decision of the Institutional Review Committee was based in preparing for an appeal hearing; the file is considered “frozen” at that time with respect to the addition of any information not previously presented to the Institutional Review Committee. The appeal procedures limit the appeals panel’s jurisdiction to clarification of information at the time when the adverse action was confirmed by the Institutional Review Committee. Information about the institution subsequent to that time may not be considered in the appeal. Furthermore, the appeals panel shall not consider any changes in the institution or descriptions of the institution which were not in the record at the time when the Institutional Review Committee reviewed the institution and confirmed the adverse decision.
- (h) When there have been substantial changes in an institution and/or correction of citations after the date of the confirmed action by the Institutional Review Committee, an institution should forego an appeal and request a new evaluation and accreditation decision. Such an evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the ACGME procedures, including an on-site survey of the institution. The adverse status shall remain in effect until the Institutional Review Committee has reevaluated the institution and has made an accreditation decision.
- (i) Presentations shall be limited to clarifications of the record and to arguments which address compliance by the institution with the published standards for accreditation and with the review of the institution according to the administrative procedures governing accreditation of institutions. Presentations may include written and oral elements. The appellant may make oral presentation to the appeals panel, but the oral presentation shall be limited to two hours.

- (j) The appellant shall communicate with the appeals panel only at the hearing or in writing through the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME.
- (k) The appeals panel shall make recommendations to the ACGME as to whether substantial, credible, and relevant evidence exists to support the action taken by the Institutional Review Committee in the matter that is under appeal. The appeals panel, in addition, shall make recommendations as to whether there has been substantial compliance with the administrative procedures which govern the process of accreditation of institutions.
- (l) The institution may submit additional written material within 15 days after the hearing. The intention to submit such material must be made known to the appeals panel at the hearing.
- (m) The appeals panel shall submit its recommendation to the ACGME within 20 days after receipt of additional written material. The ACGME shall act on the appeal at its next regularly-scheduled meeting.
- (n) The decision of the ACGME in this matter shall be final. There is no provision for further appeal.
- (o) The Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME shall, within 15 days following the final decision, notify the institution under appeal of the decision of the ACGME.
- (p) The appellant is fully responsible for the Appeal Fee as set yearly by the ACGME. Expenses of the appeals panel members and the associated administrative costs shall be shared equally by the appellant and the ACGME.

d) Notification of Residents and Applicants

Designated institutional officials must inform current residents, as well as applicants invited to come for an interview, of the accreditation status of the institution, as follows:

- (1) All residents in an institution must be notified by the designated institutional official of the accreditation status of the institution, and must be notified in writing following any change in the accreditation status.
- (2) If an adverse action regarding the accreditation status of an institution is confirmed by the Institutional Review Committee, the designated institutional official must ensure that all residents and applicants invited to interview in the institution are advised in writing of the adverse action. This written notification must be made even if the designated institutional official requests a hearing before an appeals panel. For those applicants invited to interview, the information on the institution's accreditation status must be provided in writing before their coming to the institution for an interview. A copy of the written notification which advises the residents and applicants invited to interview of the adverse action must be submitted to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee within 50 days of the date of the notification letter.
- (3) When the Institutional Review Committee withholds accreditation of a proposed sponsoring institution, any residents enrolled in a formerly-accredited program in the institution, together with applicants who have anticipated accreditation of the proposed sponsoring institution, must be advised by the designated institutional official in writing of the institution's failure to obtain accreditation. A copy of this notification must also be submitted to the Executive Director of the Institutional Review Committee within 50 days of the date of the Letter of Notification to the designated institutional official, regardless of institution's intent to appeal that decision.
- (4) A copy of the letters to residents and applicants must be kept on file by the designated institutional official.

- (5) The Institutional Review Committee Executive Director shall monitor compliance with the requirement to notify residents and applicants in the case of adverse action, and shall advise the Institutional Review Committee if a designated institutional official has failed to comply with the specified procedures. If a designated institutional official fails to comply, the Institutional Review Committee shall notify the sponsoring institution's GMEC to take appropriate action in order to ensure that residents are notified of the institution's current accreditation status.

D. Procedures for Granting Duty-Hour Exception

The following procedure shall be used by Review Committees to evaluate requests from individual programs for a maximum 10% increase in the 80 hour per week duty-hour limit. A Review Committee may judge that such a request cannot be considered without a site visit. If approved, the maximum duration of the approval may not exceed the length of time until the program's next site visit and review. Each Review Committee shall publish on its specialty page of the ACGME website either this standard or an explicit statement that it will not consider any request for exceptions to the 80 hours per week limit.

1. Approval Process

a) Institutional Endorsement

- (1) Prior to initiation of a program's request, the GMEC of the sponsoring institution must have developed written procedures and criteria for endorsing requests for an exception to the duty-hour limits.
- (2) The institutional GMEC, or its equivalent in single-residency institutions, must review and formally endorse the request for an exception, as noted above. The endorsement shall be indicated by the signature of the designated institutional official.

b) Review Committee Review

The Review Committee shall:

- (1) formally review such proposals and retain documentation of its actions in the program history;
- (2) judge whether the request justifies granting approval of the extension of the maximum weekly number of duty hours from 80 up to 88 hours, as averaged over four weeks;

- (3) specify the assignments and level(s) of training to which the proposal applies if the requested exemption is granted; and,
- (4) stipulate the duration of the exception, which shall not extend past the next review.

In the event that the Review Committee denies a request, the action is not open to appeal.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Both the sponsoring institution and the program must be accredited in good standing (i.e., without a warning, or a proposed or confirmed adverse action). A program with a confirmed duty hour citation shall not be considered for an exception until after the next site visit.

3. Required Documentation

It is the program's responsibility to present clear evidence that the exception is necessary for educational reasons. The proposal from a program to the Review Committee must include the following documentation:

a) Patient Safety

Information must be submitted that describes how the program and institution will monitor, evaluate, and ensure patient safety with extended resident work hours.

b) Educational Rationale

The request must be based on a sound educational rationale, which should be described in relation to the program's stated goals and objectives for the particular assignments, rotations, and level(s) of training for which the increase is requested. Blanket exceptions for the entire educational program should be considered the exception, not the rule.

c) Moonlighting Policy

Specific information regarding the program's moonlighting policies for the periods in question must be included.

d) Call Schedules

Specific information regarding resident call schedules during the times specified for the exception must be provided.

e) Faculty Monitoring

Evidence of faculty development activities regarding the effects of resident fatigue and sleep deprivation must be appended.

f) Institutional Endorsement

A documented written statement of institutional endorsement of the proposal signed by the designated institutional official must be appended. In addition, a copy of the sponsoring institution's written procedures and criteria for endorsing requests for an exception to the duty hour limits must be submitted.

The current accreditation status of the program and of the sponsoring institution should be provided in the formal request.

4. Monitoring

Prior to each site visit and review, the designated institutional official and Graduate Medical Education Committee shall re-evaluate both patient safety and the educational rationale for the exception, and append the findings to the program's request to the Review Committee for a continued exception. The Review Committee may continue, deny, or modify the exception.

E. Procedures for Addressing Complaints against Residency Programs and Sponsoring Institutions

The programs and their sponsoring institutions that are accredited by the ACGME are expected to comply with the ACGME's Institutional and Program Requirements. Anyone having evidence of non-compliance with these standards by a program or institution may submit a formal complaint to the ACGME. Such complaints must be submitted in writing and bear the signature and mailing address of the complainant(s). Anonymous complaints or complaints submitted solely by e-mail will not be considered. Complaints addressing subject matter, the entirety of which occurred prior to the residency year preceding the current residency year, are discouraged.

ACGME Review Committees address only matters regarding compliance with the published standards and do not adjudicate individual disputes between persons and residency programs or sponsoring institutions.

Nevertheless, sponsoring institutions and programs must provide an educational and work environment in which residents may raise and resolve issues without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

1. Submitting a Formal Complaint

If the complainant is a resident, a member of the teaching staff, or other person affiliated with the program or institution in question, the following steps should be taken before submitting a complaint to the ACGME:

- a) Contact the program director to discuss the problem.
- b) If the issue either involves the program director or is not resolved by meeting with the program director, contact the institutional GME committee or similar oversight body, the designated institutional official of the sponsoring institution, the GME office identified on the ACGME website (under Accredited Programs and Sponsors, ADS), or the resident representative on any of these oversight groups.
- c) If the efforts above do not resolve the issue, or there is good reason for not following steps a) and b) above, contact the ACGME Complaint Officer to discuss submitting a formal complaint. If the complainant is someone outside the institution, the ACGME Complaint Officer may be contacted as the first step in the process.

2. Content of the Formal Complaint

When submitting a complaint that alleges non-compliance with the requirements, the complainant should identify the requirement(s) in question and provide both an explanation and evidence of non-compliance. The complaint should also specify steps that have been taken to resolve the issues within the program or institution prior to the submission of the complaint to the ACGME.

3. Procedures for Processing a Formal Complaint

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the Complaint Officer shall determine if additional information from the complainant is required. When sufficient information has been provided, the Complaint Officer shall request from the program director or the designated institutional official of the subject institution a written response to the allegation(s). This communication shall specify that a written response should be submitted within a time not to exceed one month of the date of the request. The name of the complainant shall remain confidential except in the situations mentioned in 5 Confidentiality below. The response must be co-signed by the designated institutional official of the sponsoring institution.

The Complaint Officer shall review the complaint and the response with the Executive Director of the Review Committee to determine whether the allegations were successfully rebutted or whether the complaint requires a formal consideration by the Review Committee.

4. Review Committee Action

A Review Committee may determine that:

- a) the response satisfactorily addressed the allegations and no further action is required;
- b) there is validity to the complaint and a subsequent report on correction is needed;
- c) there is validity to the complaint and the site visitor shall be directed to investigate the matter at the time of the next (regularly scheduled) site visit; and,
- d) the matter is sufficiently serious to warrant an immediate site visit and review.

Following consideration by a Review Committee, the program director, and the designated institutional official shall be informed in writing of the Review Committee's decision on the complaint, and the complainant shall be informed in writing as to whether the complaint resulted in a change in accreditation status of the program or sponsoring institution.

5. Confidentiality

If the complaint involves failure of a program or institution to provide due process, the name of the complainant must be used when a response to the allegation is requested from the program director or institutional official. In all other cases, the ACGME shall keep the name of the complainant confidential throughout its processing of the complaint, except when a complainant specifically waives the right to confidentiality.

6. Complaint File

During the period when the complaint is being processed, the Complaint Officer shall maintain the relevant correspondence in a case file that is separate from the official program file. When the case has been closed, the file shall not be retained.

Complaints should be addressed to:

ACGME Complaint Officer
ACGME
515 North State Street, Suite 2000
Chicago, Illinois 60610

F. Alleged Egregious or Catastrophic Events

The occurrence of an alleged egregious accreditation violation or a catastrophic institutional event which, because of its urgency, must be addressed outside of the established processes of the ACGME, should be reported promptly to the Chief Executive Officer of the ACGME. Anyone directly affiliated with the ACGME accrediting process has a responsibility to report the matter promptly and directly to the ACGME Chief Executive Officer, who will initiate an investigation to determine credibility and degree of urgency. Whenever the ACGME Chief Executive Officer determines that the matter disclosed is of sufficient importance and urgency to require a rapid response, the following procedures shall be initiated:

1. An ad hoc committee composed of the ACGME Chief Executive Officer, the Chair of the Institutional Review Committee, and the Chair of the Council of Review Committee Chairs shall be convened. This committee may request a formal and prompt response from the appropriate responsible individual(s), decide that a site review should occur, or recommend that the matter be referred to the appropriate Review Committee for action.
2. If the ad hoc committee decides that a site review should occur, a review shall be conducted by one or more members of the ACGME field staff or other knowledgeable individuals appointed by the ad hoc advisory committee. The ACGME Chief Executive Officer shall inform both the appropriate responsible individual(s) in the program and the institution of the site visit and the stated reason(s).
3. The site visitor(s) shall conduct a review of the residency program or institution, including at least all matters related to the allegation(s). At the conclusion of the survey, the site visitor(s) shall submit a written report to the ACGME Chief Executive Officer. The ACGME Chief Executive Officer shall forward the report to the relevant Review Committee for consideration at the next regular meeting or earlier.

4. The Review Committee may take, without limitation, the following actions:
 - a) Accreditation
 - b) Probationary Accreditation
 - c) Withdrawal of Accreditation
 - d) Expedited Withdrawal of Accreditation (for programs only)
- G. ACGME Plan to Address a Disaster that Significantly Alters the Residency Experience at One or More Residency Programs
1. Overview

ACGME is committed to assisting in reconstituting and restructuring residents' educational experiences as quickly as possible after a disaster.
 2. Definition of Disaster

An event or set of events causing significant alteration to the residency experience at one or more residency programs. Hurricane Katrina is an example of a disaster.
 3. ACGME Declaration of a Disaster

When warranted, the ACGME Chief Executive Officer, with consultation of the ACGME Executive Committee and the Chair of the Institutional Review Committee, will make a declaration of a disaster. A notice of such will be posted on the ACGME website with information relating to ACGME response to the disaster.
 4. Resident Transfers and Program Reconfiguration

Insofar as a program/institution cannot provide at least an adequate educational experience for each of its residents/fellows because of a disaster, it must:

 - a) arrange temporary transfers to other programs/institutions until such time as the residency/fellowship program can provide an adequate educational experience for each of its residents/fellows, or
 - b) assist the residents in permanent transfers to other programs/institutions, i.e., enrolling in other ACGME-accredited programs in which they can continue their education.

If more than one program/institution is available for temporary or permanent transfer of a particular resident, the preferences of each resident must be considered by the transferring program/institution. Programs must make the keep/transfer decision expeditiously so as to maximize the likelihood that each resident/fellow will complete the year in a timely fashion.

Within 10 days after the declaration of a disaster (see above), the designated institutional official of each sponsoring institution with one or more disaster-affected programs (or another institutionally designated person if the institution determines that the designated institutional official is unavailable) will contact the ACGME to discuss due dates that the ACGME will establish for the programs:

- (1) to submit program reconfigurations to ACGME, and
- (2) to inform each program's residents of resident transfer decisions. The due dates for submission shall be no later than 30 days after the disaster unless other due dates are approved by ACGME.

If within the 10 days, the ACGME has not received communication from the designated institutional official(s), ACGME will attempt to establish contact with the designated institutional official(s) to determine the severity of the disaster, its impact on residency training, and next steps.

5. ACGME Website

On its website, ACGME will provide, and periodically update, information relating to the disaster.

6. Communication with ACGME from Disaster Affected Institutions/Programs

On its website, the ACGME will provide phone numbers and email addresses for emergency and other communication with the ACGME from disaster affected institutions and programs. In general,

Designated Institutional Officials should call or email the Institutional Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.

Program Directors should call or email the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.

Residents should call or email the appropriate Review Committee Executive Director with information and/or requests for information.

On its website, the ACGME will provide instructions for changing resident email information on the ACGME Web Accreditation Data System.

7. Institutions Offering to Accept Transfers

Institutions offering to accept temporary or permanent transfers from programs affected by a disaster must complete a form found on the ACGME website. Upon request, the ACGME will give information from the form to affected programs and residents. Subject to authorization by an offering institution, the ACGME will post information from the form on its website.

The ACGME will expedite the processing of requests for increases in resident complement from non-disaster affected programs to accommodate resident transfers from disaster affected programs. The Residency Review Committees will expeditiously review applications, and make and communicate decisions.

8. Changes in Participating Sites and Resident Compliment

The ACGME will establish a fast track process for reviewing (and approving or not approving) submissions by programs relating to program changes to address disaster effects, including, without limitation:

- a) the addition or deletion of a participating site;
- b) change in the format of the educational program; and,
- c) change in the approved resident complement.

9. Temporary Resident Transfer

At the outset of a temporary resident/fellow transfer, a program must inform each transferred resident of the minimum duration and the estimated actual duration of his/her temporary transfer, and continue to keep each resident informed of such durations. If and when a program decides that a temporary transfer will continue to and/or through the end of a residency fellowship year, it must so inform each such transferred resident/fellow.

10. Site Visits

Once information concerning a disaster-affected program's condition is received, ACGME may determine that one or more site visits is required. Prior to the visits, the designated institutional official(s) will receive notification of the information that will be required. This information, as well as information received by ACGME during these site visits, may be used for accreditation purposes. Site visits that were scheduled prior to a disaster may be postponed.

ACGME Approved: 6/22/1993; ACGME Approved: 2/15/1994; ACGME Approved: 6/18/1996; ACGME Approved: 9/28/1999; ACGME Approved: 2/14/2000; ACGME Approved: 9/26/2000; ACGME Approved: 9/11/2001; ACGME Approved: 9/10/2002; ACGME Approved: 6/27/06

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of these *ACGME Policies and Procedures*, and of any further revisions, is the last date printed on the title page. All ACGME activities, including those of its Review Committees, subsequent to the effective date shall be guided by the document as published.

AMENDMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

The *ACGME Policies, and Procedures*, may be amended at any time by the ACGME Board of Directors.

The Bylaws and Policies Committee shall review these *Policies and Procedures* at least once every two years, or as requested by the ACGME Board of Directors, and make recommendations to the ACGME Board regarding revisions to the *Policies and Procedures*.

A Review Committee may recommend changes to these *Policies and Procedures* to improve the accreditation process. Such recommendations shall be evaluated by the Bylaws and Policies Committee.

A Review Committee may request from the ACGME authority to deviate from these *Policies and Procedures* when it can be demonstrated that such exceptions will improve the process of accreditation for that area of graduate medical education. Such policies and procedures shall be published in conjunction with the Requirements for the Review Committee.

ACGME Approved: 6/1992
ACGME Approved: 9/2000
ACGME Approved: 9/2001
ACGME Approved: 9/2002
ACGME Approved: 6/28/2005
ACGME Approved: 2/14/2006
ACGME Approved: 6/27/2006
ACGME Approved: 9/12/2006
ACGME Approved: 6/12/2007
ACGME Approved: 2/12/2008