

ACGME Announces its Next Accreditation System

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On February 22, 2012, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) announced the roll-out of its “Next Accreditation System” (NAS) for all graduate medical education (residency and fellowship) programs that hold ACGME accreditation. The ACGME, the accrediting agency for approximately 9,000 residency programs in 133 specialties and subspecialties across the country, anticipates that the NAS will significantly transform the existing accreditation system into a more outcomes-focused and less administratively burdensome process.

According to the ACGME, the NAS will:

- replace the process of site visits and program evaluations every several years with periodic data submissions to the ACGME that include the reporting of outcomes through the educational milestones, the resident survey, a new faculty survey, and operative/case log data;
- require RRCs to evaluate trends in key performance measures annually, and extend the maximum accreditation cycle from 5 years to 10 years;
- eliminate the Program Information Form (PIF), which will be replaced with a “self-study” or “self-evaluation” to be completed before the 10-year site visit; and
- place greater emphasis on the responsibility of the sponsoring institution for the quality and safety of the teaching and patient care environment, which will be monitored through periodic institutional site visits.

The educational milestones referenced above are essentially the next step in what started as the ACGME’s outcomes project, which created the 6 general competencies that have been part of the ACGME framework for more than 10 years. The “milestones project” represents the specialty-specific achievements that residents and fellows will be expected to demonstrate at various points throughout their training. In this regard, the ACGME has continued its shift in emphasis from having programs state in their PIFs what they will teach their trainees to do, to requiring that programs demonstrate that their trainees have actually achieved competence in those areas.

The announcement and more details about the NAS can be found on the newly created [ACGME NAS microsite](#) and in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) article entitled “The Next GME Accreditation System – Rationale and Benefits,” by Thomas J. Nasca, M.D., M.A.C.P. (ACGME CEO), et al., published on February 22, 2012.