

# Assessment of Competence



## The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education/Residency Review Committee Perspective

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### KEYWORDS

- Competencies • Outcomes project • Milestones
- Clinical Learning Environment Review • Competency-based resident education

### KEY POINTS

- Competence is an individual trait that is task-specific and inconstant.
- The ACGME does not define or evaluate individual competence but has, in the past 15 years, promulgated several initiatives to help programs assess competence in their residents and fellows.
- In the near future, the ACGME will implement an initiative by which programs can develop and study the results of competency-based residency curricula.

### THE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION COMPETENCIES

What are frequently referred to as the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) competencies were actually the product of a combined effort by the ACGME and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). That work began in earnest in 1999 and, for the ACGME, was central to the rollout of The Outcomes Project in 2000 to 2001. The brief descriptors of those six competencies are discussed next.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Patient Care*

Residents must be able to provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health.

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Residents must be able to competently perform all medical, diagnostic, and surgical procedures considered essential for the area of practice.

### ***Medical Knowledge***

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Residents must demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiologic, and social-behavioral sciences, and the application of this knowledge to patient care.

### ***Practice-Based Learning and Improvement***

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Residents must demonstrate the ability to investigate and evaluate their care of patients, to appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning. Residents are expected to develop skills and habits to be able to meet the following goals: identify strengths, deficiencies, and limits in one's knowledge and expertise; set learning and improvement goals; identify and perform appropriate learning activities; systematically analyze practice using quality improvement methods, and implement changes with the goal of practice improvement and incorporate formative evaluation feedback into daily practice; locate, appraise, and assimilate evidence from scientific studies related to their patients' health problems; use information technology to optimize learning; and participate in the education of patients, families, students, residents, and other health professionals.

### ***Interpersonal and Communication Skills***

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Residents must demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals. Residents are expected to communicate effectively with patients, families, and the public, as appropriate, across a broad range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds; communicate effectively with physicians, other health professionals, and health-related agencies; work effectively as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group; act in a consultative role to other physicians and health professionals; and maintain comprehensive, timely, and legible medical records, if applicable.

### ***Professionalism***

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Residents must demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles. Residents are expected to demonstrate compassion, integrity, and respect for others; responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest; respect for patient privacy and autonomy; accountability to patients, society, and the profession; and sensitivity and responsiveness to a diverse patient population, including but not limited to diversity in gender, age, culture, race, religion, disabilities, and sexual orientation.

### ***Systems-Based Practice***

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Residents must demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care, and the ability to call effectively on other resources in the system to provide optimal health care. Residents are expected to work effectively in various health care delivery settings and systems relevant to their clinical specialty, coordinate patient care within the health care system relevant to their clinical specialty, incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk-benefit analysis in patient and/or population-based care as appropriate, advocate for quality patient care and optimal patient care systems, work in interprofessional teams to enhance

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