

Frequently Asked Questions: Accreditation of Combined Programs

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Topic | |
| How and when can combined programs opt in to the accreditation process? | The opt-in window for programs currently listed as unaccredited combined programs in the Accreditation Data System (ADS) opened on October 1, 2024, and will close on June 30, 2025. Instructions on how to opt in have been sent to the program director and designated institutional official (DIO) for unaccredited combined programs listed in ADS. Programs that opt in will receive a status of Initial Accreditation effective July 1, 2025. |
| What are the implications for an unaccredited combined program currently listed in ADS that decides not to opt in to the ACGME accreditation process? | <p>Residents or fellows who enter an unaccredited combined program on or after July 1, 2026 will not be considered to be enrolled in an ACGME-accredited program, even if each of the participating programs is ACGME accredited. Residents who complete an unaccredited combined residency program and seek to enter an ACGME-accredited fellowship program will not be considered to have met the eligibility requirements specified in Common Program Requirement (Fellowship) III.A.1. These residents <i>may</i> be eligible for appointment to an ACGME-accredited fellowship program under the eligibility exception requirements in section III.A.1.c), if exceptions are permitted for the subspecialty.</p> <p>In addition, combined programs that choose to remain unaccredited after July 1, 2025 should consult with the relevant certifying board(s) regarding the board eligibility status for their graduates who began training on or after July 1, 2026.</p> <p>Residents who entered an unaccredited combined program listed in ADS before July 1, 2026, will, upon program completion, be considered graduates of an ACGME-accredited program.</p> <p>The listing of unaccredited combined programs will be removed from the ACGME Accreditation Data System effective July 1, 2025. After this date, unaccredited combined programs will not have access to ADS and will not participate in related processes such as the ACGME Resident and Faculty Survey, the ADS Annual Update, etc.</p> |
| Should a program planning a novel combined format that will be offered only | No. The ACGME will accredit only programs that plan to offer an ongoing combined program. Programs interested in designing a combined program format for a single |

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| one time or infrequently submit an application for accreditation? | resident/fellow, or a format that will not be offered every year, should contact the applicable certifying board(s) to ensure that the resident/fellow meets the board's eligibility requirements for certification. |
| Will combined programs be assessed accreditation-related fees? | <p>The application process and fees will be waived for existing combined programs that opt in to ACGME accreditation by June 30, 2025. All new combined programs must submit an application and will be assessed an application fee. All combined programs that achieve ACGME accreditation effective July 1, 2025 and beyond will be required to pay the ACGME annual accreditation fee, which will be due starting in 2026. Information regarding the current fee structure is available here.</p> <p>The ACGME periodically reviews the accreditation fee structure and plans to conduct such a review over the next several months. If needed, updated information regarding the accreditation fee structure will be shared as it becomes available.</p> |
| Which Review Committee will accredit and be responsible for communicating with a combined program on accreditation-related matters? | The ACGME will assign existing and future combined program formats listed in ADS that pursue accreditation to one of the specialty Review Committees offering the combined format. A list of combined formats and the corresponding Review Committee assignments appears on the Combined Programs page of the ACGME website. |
| When a combined program uses the same participating sites as the participating programs with which it is affiliated, are separate program letters of agreement (PLAs) required for the combined program? | No; the PLAs in place for the participating specialty/subspecialty programs are sufficient and combined program-specific PLAs are not needed if program sites are the same as those used in the participating programs. |
| Do applications for accreditation of a combined program require a site visit? | Because applications for accreditation of residency programs require a site visit, an application for a combined program that includes one or more residency program(s) will require a site visit. If the combined program includes a fellowship in a subspecialty for which a site visit is required for new applications, a site visit for the combined program application will be required. If the combined program's participating programs are fellowships in subspecialties that do not require a site visit , the combined program application will not require a site visit. |

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| | Information on the ACGME program application process is available here . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Are combined programs participating in Advancing Innovation in Residency Education (AIRE) pilots eligible for accreditation? | Combined programs participating in an AIRE pilot will not be eligible for accreditation. Once the AIRE pilot ends and the Review Committee and certifying board(s) approve the combined experience, an application can be submitted for accreditation. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| What will happen to the ACGME-approved complement of the participating programs and the combined program? | <p>Participating programs will retain their existing approved complement. Fractional FTE from the combined program will no longer be added to the participating programs. Residents from the combined program should only be listed in ADS for the combined program and will only count toward the approved complement for the combined program.</p> <p>Below are examples of what is currently displayed in ADS for a participating program, and how it will change on July 1, 2025.</p> <p>Before:</p> <div data-bbox="779 824 1892 1146" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Core Positions: 87 Combined Positions (.5 per resident) ⓘ: 11 Total Approved Resident Positions: 98 Total Filled Resident Positions*: 82</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="6">Complement Breakdown: Approved</th> <th colspan="6">Complement Breakdown: Filled</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Years:</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Years:</th> <th>1</th> <th>2</th> <th>3</th> <th>4</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Approved:</td> <td>12.0</td> <td>25.0</td> <td>25.0</td> <td>25.0</td> <td>87.0</td> <td>Filled:</td> <td>28.0</td> <td>25.0</td> <td>29.0</td> <td>0.0</td> <td>82.0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><small>*The Total Filled Positions field will reflect the previous academic year information and will automatically update after the current Annual Update is submitted. Totals may vary due to off cycle residents. Combined residents are not included in this total and should not be listed in this program. These residents should be entered in the combined program.</small></p> </div> <p>After:</p> | Complement Breakdown: Approved | | | | | | Complement Breakdown: Filled | | | | | | Years: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Total | Years: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Total | Approved: | 12.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | 87.0 | Filled: | 28.0 | 25.0 | 29.0 | 0.0 | 82.0 |
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| <p data-bbox="191 613 743 738">For combined programs that will not be seeking ACGME accreditation, what steps need to be taken to archive/export the existing data?</p> | <p data-bbox="762 613 1843 711">ADS access will be disabled for existing combined programs that do not opt in to accreditation before June 30, 2025. Program directors and DIOs are encouraged to make local copies of any data that they deem necessary.</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Additional questions may be submitted to accreditation@acgme.org.