



**Accreditation Council for  
Graduate Medical Education**

**ACGME  
Common Program Requirements  
Section VI  
with Background and Intent**

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## Common Program Requirements

Note: The term “resident” in this document refers to both specialty residents and subspecialty fellows. Once the Common Program Requirements are inserted into each set of specialty and subspecialty requirements, the terms “resident” and “fellow” will be used respectively.

Where applicable, text in italics describes the underlying philosophy of the requirements in that section. These philosophic statements are not program requirements and are therefore not citable. The Background and Intent text in the boxes below has been developed to provide greater detail regarding the intention behind specific requirements, as well as guidance on how to implement the requirements in a way that supports excellence in residency education.

Background and Intent: In developing the revised requirements, the Common Program Requirements Phase 1 Task Force considered all available information, including relevant literature, written comments received from the graduate medical education community and the public, and testimony provided during the ACGME Congress on the Resident Learning and Working Environment. Deliberations of the Task Force were guided by the need to develop requirements that: (1) emphasize that graduate medical education programs are designed to provide professional education rather than vocational training; (2) are based on the best available evidence; and (3) support the philosophy outlined below.

### VI. The Learning and Working Environment

*Residency education must occur in the context of a learning and working environment that emphasizes the following principles:*

- *Excellence in the safety and quality of care rendered to patients by residents today*
- *Excellence in the safety and quality of care rendered to patients by today’s residents in their future practice*
- *Excellence in professionalism through faculty modeling of:*
  - *the effacement of self-interest in a humanistic environment that supports the professional development of physicians*
  - *the joy of curiosity, problem-solving, intellectual rigor, and discovery*
- *Commitment to the well-being of the students, residents, faculty members, and all members of the health care team*

Background and Intent: The revised requirements are intended to provide greater flexibility within an established framework, allowing programs and residents more discretion to structure clinical education in a way that best supports the above principles of professional development. With this increased flexibility comes the responsibility for programs and residents to adhere to the 80-hour maximum weekly limit (unless a rotation-specific exception is granted by a Review Committee), and to utilize flexibility in a manner that optimizes patient safety, resident education, and resident well-being. The requirements are intended to support the development of a sense of professionalism by encouraging residents to make decisions based on patient needs and their own well-being, without fear of jeopardizing their program’s accreditation

status. In addition, the proposed requirements eliminate the burdensome documentation requirement for residents to justify clinical and educational work hour variations.

Clinical and educational work hours represent only one part of the larger issue of conditions of the learning and working environment, and Section VI has now been expanded to include greater attention to patient safety and resident and faculty member well-being. The requirements are intended to support programs and residents as they strive for excellence, while also ensuring ethical, humanistic training. Ensuring that flexibility is used in an appropriate manner is a shared responsibility of the program and residents. With this flexibility comes a responsibility for residents and faculty members to recognize the need to hand off care of a patient to another provider when a resident is too fatigued to provide safe, high quality care and for programs to ensure that residents remain within the 80-hour maximum weekly limit.

VI.A. Patient Safety, Quality Improvement, Supervision, and Accountability

VI.A.1. Patient Safety and Quality Improvement

*All physicians share responsibility for promoting patient safety and enhancing quality of patient care. Graduate medical education must prepare residents to provide the highest level of clinical care with continuous focus on the safety, individual needs, and humanity of their patients. It is the right of each patient to be cared for by residents who are appropriately supervised; possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities; understand the limits of their knowledge and experience; and seek assistance as required to provide optimal patient care.*

*Residents must demonstrate the ability to analyze the care they provide, understand their roles within health care teams, and play an active role in system improvement processes. Graduating residents will apply these skills to critique their future unsupervised practice and effect quality improvement measures.*

*It is necessary for residents and faculty members to consistently work in a well-coordinated manner with other health care professionals to achieve organizational patient safety goals.*

VI.A.1.a) Patient Safety

VI.A.1.a).(1) Culture of Safety

*A culture of safety requires continuous identification of vulnerabilities and a willingness to transparently deal with them. An effective organization has formal mechanisms to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of its personnel toward safety in order to identify areas for improvement.*

VI.A.1.a).(1).(a) The program, its faculty, residents, and fellows must actively participate in patient safety systems and contribute to a culture of safety. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(1).(b) The program must have a structure that promotes safe, interprofessional, team-based care. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(2) Education on Patient Safety

Programs must provide formal educational activities that promote patient safety-related goals, tools, and techniques. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: Optimal patient safety occurs in the setting of a coordinated interprofessional learning and working environment.
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VI.A.1.a).(3) Patient Safety Events

*Reporting, investigation, and follow-up of adverse events, near misses, and unsafe conditions are pivotal mechanisms for improving patient safety, and are essential for the success of any patient safety program. Feedback and experiential learning are essential to developing true competence in the ability to identify causes and institute sustainable systems-based changes to ameliorate patient safety vulnerabilities.*

VI.A.1.a).(3).(a) Residents, fellows, faculty members, and other clinical staff members must:

VI.A.1.a).(3).(a).(i) know their responsibilities in reporting patient safety events at the clinical site; <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(3).(a).(ii) know how to report patient safety events, including near misses, at the clinical site; and, <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(3).(a).(iii) be provided with summary information of their institution's patient safety reports. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(3).(b) Residents must participate as team members in real and/or simulated interprofessional clinical patient safety activities, such as root cause analyses or other activities that include analysis, as well as formulation and implementation of actions. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.1.a).(4) Resident Education and Experience in Disclosure of Adverse Events

*Patient-centered care requires patients, and when appropriate families, to be apprised of clinical situations that affect them, including adverse events. This is an*

*important skill for faculty physicians to model, and for residents to develop and apply.*

VI.A.1.a).(4).(a) All residents must receive training in how to disclose adverse events to patients and families. (Core)

VI.A.1.a).(4).(b) Residents should have the opportunity to participate in the disclosure of patient safety events, real or simulated. (Detail)

VI.A.1.b) Quality Improvement

VI.A.1.b).(1) Education in Quality Improvement

*A cohesive model of health care includes quality-related goals, tools, and techniques that are necessary in order for health care professionals to achieve quality improvement goals.*

VI.A.1.b).(1).(a) Residents must receive training and experience in quality improvement processes, including an understanding of health care disparities. (Core)

VI.A.1.b).(2) Quality Metrics

*Access to data is essential to prioritizing activities for care improvement and evaluating success of improvement efforts.*

VI.A.1.b).(2).(a) Residents and faculty members must receive data on quality metrics and benchmarks related to their patient populations. (Core)

VI.A.1.b).(3) Engagement in Quality Improvement Activities

*Experiential learning is essential to developing the ability to identify and institute sustainable systems-based changes to improve patient care.*

VI.A.1.b).(3).(a) Residents must have the opportunity to participate in interprofessional quality improvement activities. (Core)

VI.A.1.b).(3).(a).(i) This should include activities aimed at reducing health care disparities. (Detail)

VI.A.2. Supervision and Accountability

VI.A.2.a) *Although the attending physician is ultimately responsible for the care of the patient, every physician shares in the responsibility*

*and accountability for their efforts in the provision of care. Effective programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, define, widely communicate, and monitor a structured chain of responsibility and accountability as it relates to the supervision of all patient care.*

*Supervision in the setting of graduate medical education provides safe and effective care to patients; ensures each resident's development of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to enter the unsupervised practice of medicine; and establishes a foundation for continued professional growth.*

- VI.A.2.a).(1) Each patient must have an identifiable and appropriately-credentialed and privileged attending physician (or licensed independent practitioner as specified by the applicable Review Committee) who is responsible and accountable for the patient's care. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.a).(1).(a) This information must be available to residents, faculty members, other members of the health care team, and patients. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.a).(1).(b) Residents and faculty members must inform each patient of their respective roles in that patient's care when providing direct patient care. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.b) *Supervision may be exercised through a variety of methods. For many aspects of patient care, the supervising physician may be a more advanced resident or fellow. Other portions of care provided by the resident can be adequately supervised by the immediate availability of the supervising faculty member, fellow, or senior resident physician, either on site or by means of telephonic and/or electronic modalities. Some activities require the physical presence of the supervising faculty member. In some circumstances, supervision may include post-hoc review of resident-delivered care with feedback.*
- VI.A.2.b).(1) The program must demonstrate that the appropriate level of supervision in place for all residents is based on each resident's level of training and ability, as well as patient complexity and acuity. Supervision may be exercised through a variety of methods, as appropriate to the situation. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- [The Review Committee may specify which activities require different levels of supervision.]
- VI.A.2.c) Levels of Supervision
- To promote oversight of resident supervision while providing for graded authority and responsibility, the program must use the

following classification of supervision: <sup>(Core)</sup>

- VI.A.2.c).(1) Direct Supervision – the supervising physician is physically present with the resident and patient. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.c).(2) Indirect Supervision:
- VI.A.2.c).(2).(a) with Direct Supervision immediately available – the supervising physician is physically within the hospital or other site of patient care, and is immediately available to provide Direct Supervision. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.c).(2).(b) with Direct Supervision available – the supervising physician is not physically present within the hospital or other site of patient care, but is immediately available by means of telephonic and/or electronic modalities, and is available to provide Direct Supervision. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.c).(3) Oversight – the supervising physician is available to provide review of procedures/encounters with feedback provided after care is delivered. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.d) The privilege of progressive authority and responsibility, conditional independence, and a supervisory role in patient care delegated to each resident must be assigned by the program director and faculty members. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.d).(1) The program director must evaluate each resident's abilities based on specific criteria, guided by the Milestones. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.d).(2) Faculty members functioning as supervising physicians must delegate portions of care to residents based on the needs of the patient and the skills of each resident. <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.d).(3) Senior residents or fellows should serve in a supervisory role to junior residents in recognition of their progress toward independence, based on the needs of each patient and the skills of the individual resident or fellow. <sup>(Detail)</sup>
- VI.A.2.e) Programs must set guidelines for circumstances and events in which residents must communicate with the supervising faculty member(s). <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.A.2.e).(1) Each resident must know the limits of their scope of authority, and the circumstances under which the resident is permitted to act with conditional independence. <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

Background and Intent: The ACGME Glossary of Terms defines conditional independence as: Graded, progressive responsibility for patient care with defined oversight.

VI.A.2.e).(1).(a) Initially, PGY-1 residents must be supervised either directly, or indirectly with direct supervision immediately available. [Each Review Committee may describe the conditions and the achieved competencies under which PGY-1 residents progress to be supervised indirectly with direct supervision available.] <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.A.2.f) Faculty supervision assignments must be of sufficient duration to assess the knowledge and skills of each resident and to delegate to the resident the appropriate level of patient care authority and responsibility. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.B. Professionalism

VI.B.1. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must educate residents and faculty members concerning the professional responsibilities of physicians, including their obligation to be appropriately rested and fit to provide the care required by their patients. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.B.2. The learning objectives of the program must:

VI.B.2.a) be accomplished through an appropriate blend of supervised patient care responsibilities, clinical teaching, and didactic educational events; <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.B.2.b) be accomplished without excessive reliance on residents to fulfill non-physician obligations; and, <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: Routine reliance on residents to fulfill non-physician obligations increases work compression for residents and does not provide an optimal educational experience. Non-physician obligations are those duties which in most institutions are performed by nursing and allied health professionals, transport services, or clerical staff. Examples of such obligations include transport of patients from the wards or units for procedures elsewhere in the hospital; routine blood drawing for laboratory tests; routine monitoring of patients when off the ward; and clerical duties, such as scheduling. While it is understood that residents may be expected to do any of these things on occasion when the need arises, these activities should not be performed by residents routinely and must be kept to a minimum to optimize resident education.

VI.B.2.c) ensure manageable patient care responsibilities. <sup>(Core)</sup>

[As further specified by the Review Committee]

Background and Intent: The Common Program Requirements do not define “manageable patient care responsibilities” as this is variable by specialty and PGY level. Review Committees will provide further detail regarding patient care responsibilities in the applicable specialty-



specific Program Requirements and accompanying FAQs. However, all programs, regardless of specialty, should carefully assess how the assignment of patient care responsibilities can affect work compression, especially at the PGY-1 level.

VI.B.3. The program director, in partnership with the Sponsoring Institution, must provide a culture of professionalism that supports patient safety and personal responsibility. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.B.4. Residents and faculty members must demonstrate an understanding of their personal role in the:

VI.B.4.a) provision of patient- and family-centered care; <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.4.b) safety and welfare of patients entrusted to their care, including the ability to report unsafe conditions and adverse events; <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

Background and Intent: This requirement emphasizes that responsibility for reporting unsafe conditions and adverse events is shared by all members of the team and is not solely the responsibility of the resident.

VI.B.4.c) assurance of their fitness for work, including: <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

Background and Intent: This requirement emphasizes the professional responsibility of faculty members and residents to arrive for work adequately rested and ready to care for patients. It is also the responsibility of faculty members, residents, and other members of the care team to be observant, to intervene, and/or to escalate their concern about resident and faculty member fitness for work, depending on the situation, and in accordance with institutional policies.

VI.B.4.c).(1) management of their time before, during, and after clinical assignments; and, <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.4.c).(2) recognition of impairment, including from illness, fatigue, and substance use, in themselves, their peers, and other members of the health care team. <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.4.d) commitment to lifelong learning; <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.4.e) monitoring of their patient care performance improvement indicators; and, <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.4.f) accurate reporting of clinical and educational work hours, patient outcomes, and clinical experience data. <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.5. All residents and faculty members must demonstrate responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest. This includes the recognition that under certain circumstances, the best interests of the patient may be served by transitioning that patient's care to another qualified and rested provider. <sup>(Outcome)</sup>

VI.B.6. Programs must provide a professional, respectful, and civil environment

that is free from mistreatment, abuse, or coercion of students, residents, faculty, and staff. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, should have a process for education of residents and faculty regarding unprofessional behavior and a confidential process for reporting, investigating, and addressing such concerns. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.C. Well-Being

*In the current health care environment, residents and faculty members are at increased risk for burnout and depression. Psychological, emotional, and physical well-being are critical in the development of the competent, caring, and resilient physician. Self-care is an important component of professionalism; it is also a skill that must be learned and nurtured in the context of other aspects of residency training. Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, have the same responsibility to address well-being as they do to evaluate other aspects of resident competence.*

Background and Intent: The ACGME is committed to addressing physician well-being for individuals and as it relates to the learning and working environment. The creation of a learning and working environment with a culture of respect and accountability for physician well-being is crucial to physicians' ability to deliver the safest, best possible care to patients. The ACGME is leveraging its resources in four key areas to support the ongoing focus on physician well-being: education, influence, research, and collaboration. Information regarding the ACGME's ongoing efforts in this area is available on the ACGME website.

As these efforts evolve, information will be shared with programs seeking to develop and/or strengthen their own well-being initiatives. In addition, there are many activities that programs can utilize now to assess and support physician well-being. These include culture of safety surveys, ensuring the availability of counseling services, and attention to the safety of the entire health care team.

VI.C.1. This responsibility must include:

- VI.C.1.a) efforts to enhance the meaning that each resident finds in the experience of being a physician, including protecting time with patients, minimizing non-physician obligations, providing administrative support, promoting progressive autonomy and flexibility, and enhancing professional relationships; <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.C.1.b) attention to scheduling, work intensity, and work compression that impacts resident well-being; <sup>(Core)</sup>
- VI.C.1.c) evaluating workplace safety data and addressing the safety of residents and faculty members; <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: This requirement emphasizes the responsibility shared by the Sponsoring Institution and its programs to gather information and utilize systems that monitor and enhance resident and faculty member safety, including physical safety. Issues to be addressed include, but are not limited to, monitoring of workplace injuries, physical or emotional violence, vehicle collisions, and emotional well-being after adverse events.

VI.C.1.d) policies and programs that encourage optimal resident and faculty member well-being; and, <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: Well-being includes having time away from work to engage with family and friends, as well as to attend to personal needs and to one's own health, including adequate rest, healthy diet, and regular exercise.

VI.C.1.d).(1) Residents must be given the opportunity to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, including those scheduled during their working hours. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: The intent of this requirement is to ensure that residents have the opportunity to access medical and dental care, including mental health care, at times that are appropriate to their individual circumstances. Residents must be provided with time away from the program as needed to access care, including appointments scheduled during their working hours.

VI.C.1.e) attention to resident and faculty member burnout, depression, and substance abuse. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must educate faculty members and residents in identification of the symptoms of burnout, depression, and substance abuse, including means to assist those who experience these conditions. Residents and faculty members must also be educated to recognize those symptoms in themselves and how to seek appropriate care. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must: <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: Programs and Sponsoring Institutions are encouraged to review materials in order to create systems for identification of burnout, depression, and substance abuse. Materials and more information are available on the Physician Well-being section of the ACGME website (<http://www.acgme.org/What-We-Do/Initiatives/Physician-Well-Being>).

VI.C.1.e).(1) encourage residents and faculty members to alert the program director or other designated personnel or programs when they are concerned that another resident, fellow, or faculty member may be displaying signs of burnout, depression, substance abuse, suicidal ideation, or potential for violence; <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: Individuals experiencing burnout, depression, substance abuse, and/or suicidal ideation are often reluctant to reach out for help due to the stigma associated with these conditions, and are concerned that seeking help may have a negative impact on their career. Recognizing that physicians are at increased risk in these areas, it is essential that residents and faculty members are able to report their concerns when another resident or faculty member displays signs of any of these conditions, so that the program director or other designated personnel, such as the department chair, may assess the situation and intervene as necessary to facilitate access to appropriate care. Residents and faculty members must know which personnel, in addition to the program director, have been designated with this responsibility; those personnel and the program director should be familiar with the institution's

impaired physician policy and any employee health, employee assistance, and/or wellness programs within the institution. In cases of physician impairment, the program director or designated personnel should follow the policies of their institution for reporting.

VI.C.1.e).(2) provide access to appropriate tools for self-screening; and,  
(Core)

VI.C.1.e).(3) provide access to confidential, affordable mental health assessment, counseling, and treatment, including access to urgent and emergent care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Core)

Background and Intent: The intent of this requirement is to ensure that residents have immediate access at all times to a mental health professional (psychiatrist, psychologist, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Primary Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, or Licensed Professional Counselor) for urgent or emergent mental health issues. In-person, telemedicine, or telephonic means may be utilized to satisfy this requirement. Care in the Emergency Department may be necessary in some cases, but not as the primary or sole means to meet the requirement.

The reference to affordable counseling is intended to require that financial cost not be a barrier to obtaining care.

VI.C.2. There are circumstances in which residents may be unable to attend work, including but not limited to fatigue, illness, and family emergencies. Each program must have policies and procedures in place that ensure coverage of patient care in the event that a resident may be unable to perform their patient care responsibilities. These policies must be implemented without fear of negative consequences for the resident who is unable to provide the clinical work. (Core)

VI.D. Fatigue Mitigation

VI.D.1. Programs must:

VI.D.1.a) educate all faculty members and residents to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation; (Core)

VI.D.1.b) educate all faculty members and residents in alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes; and, (Core)

VI.D.1.c) encourage residents to use fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care and learning. (Detail)

Background and Intent: Providing medical care to patients is physically and mentally demanding. Night shifts, even for those who have had enough rest, cause fatigue. Experiencing fatigue in a supervised environment during training prepares residents for managing fatigue in practice. It is expected that programs adopt fatigue mitigation processes

and ensure that there are no negative consequences and/or stigma for using fatigue mitigation strategies.

This requirement emphasizes the importance of adequate rest before and after clinical responsibilities. Strategies that may be used include, but are not limited to, strategic napping; the judicious use of caffeine; availability of other caregivers; time management to maximize sleep off-duty; learning to recognize the signs of fatigue, and self-monitoring performance and/or asking others to monitor performance; remaining active to promote alertness; maintaining a healthy diet; using relaxation techniques to fall asleep; maintaining a consistent sleep routine; exercising regularly; increasing sleep time before and after call; and ensuring sufficient sleep recovery periods.

VI.D.2. Each program must ensure continuity of patient care, consistent with the program's policies and procedures referenced in VI.C.2, in the event that a resident may be unable to perform their patient care responsibilities due to excessive fatigue. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.D.3. The program, in partnership with its Sponsoring Institution, must ensure adequate sleep facilities and safe transportation options for residents who may be too fatigued to safely return home. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.E. Clinical Responsibilities, Teamwork, and Transitions of Care

VI.E.1. Clinical Responsibilities

The clinical responsibilities for each resident must be based on PGY level, patient safety, resident ability, severity and complexity of patient illness/condition, and available support services. <sup>(Core)</sup>

[Optimal clinical workload may be further specified by each Review Committee.]

Background and Intent: The changing clinical care environment of medicine has meant that work compression due to high complexity has increased stress on residents. Faculty members and program directors need to make sure residents function in an environment that has safe patient care and a sense of resident well-being. Some Review Committees have addressed this by setting limits on patient admissions, and it is an essential responsibility of the program director to monitor resident workload. Workload should be distributed among the resident team and interdisciplinary teams to minimize work compression.

VI.E.2. Teamwork

Residents must care for patients in an environment that maximizes communication. This must include the opportunity to work as a member of effective interprofessional teams that are appropriate to the delivery of care in the specialty and larger health system. <sup>(Core)</sup>

[Each Review Committee will define the elements that must be present in each specialty.]

VI.E.3. Transitions of Care

- VI.E.3.a) Programs must design clinical assignments to optimize transitions in patient care, including their safety, frequency, and structure. (Core)
- VI.E.3.b) Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must ensure and monitor effective, structured hand-over processes to facilitate both continuity of care and patient safety. (Core)
- VI.E.3.c) Programs must ensure that residents are competent in communicating with team members in the hand-over process. (Outcome)
- VI.E.3.d) Programs and clinical sites must maintain and communicate schedules of attending physicians and residents currently responsible for care. (Core)
- VI.E.3.e) Each program must ensure continuity of patient care, consistent with the program's policies and procedures referenced in VI.C.2, in the event that a resident may be unable to perform their patient care responsibilities due to excessive fatigue or illness, or family emergency. (Core)

VI.F. Clinical Experience and Education

*Programs, in partnership with their Sponsoring Institutions, must design an effective program structure that is configured to provide residents with educational and clinical experience opportunities, as well as reasonable opportunities for rest and personal activities.*

Background and Intent: In the new requirements, the terms "clinical experience and education," "clinical and educational work," and "clinical and educational work hours" replace the terms "duty hours," "duty periods," and "duty." These changes have been made in response to concerns that the previous use of the term "duty" in reference to number of hours worked may have led some to conclude that residents' duty to "clock out" on time superseded their duty to their patients.

VI.F.1. Maximum Hours of Clinical and Educational Work per Week

Clinical and educational work hours must be limited to no more than 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of all in-house clinical and educational activities, clinical work done from home, and all moonlighting. (Core)

Background and Intent: Programs and residents have a shared responsibility to ensure that the 80-hour maximum weekly limit is not exceeded. While the requirement has been written with the intent of allowing residents to remain beyond their scheduled work periods to care for a patient or participate in an educational activity, these additional hours must be accounted for in the allocated 80 hours when averaged over four weeks.

### *Scheduling*

While the ACGME acknowledges that, on rare occasions, a resident may work in excess of 80 hours in a given week, all programs and residents utilizing this flexibility will be required to adhere to the 80-hour maximum weekly limit when averaged over a four-week period.

Programs that regularly schedule residents to work 80 hours per week and still permit residents to remain beyond their scheduled work period are likely to exceed the 80-hour maximum, which would not be in substantial compliance with the requirement. These programs should adjust schedules so that residents are scheduled to work fewer than 80 hours per week, which would allow residents to remain beyond their scheduled work period when needed without violating the 80-hour requirement. Programs may wish to consider using night float and/or making adjustments to the frequency of in-house call to ensure compliance with the 80-hour maximum weekly limit.

### *Oversight*

With increased flexibility introduced into the Requirements, programs permitting this flexibility will need to account for the potential for residents to remain beyond their assigned work periods when developing schedules, to avoid exceeding the 80-hour maximum weekly limit, averaged over four weeks. The ACGME Review Committees will strictly monitor and enforce compliance with the 80-hour requirement. Where violations of the 80-hour requirement are identified, programs will be subject to citation and at risk for an adverse accreditation action.

### *Work from Home*

While the requirement specifies that clinical work done from home must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit, the expectation remains that scheduling be structured so that residents are able to complete most work on site during scheduled clinical work hours without requiring them to take work home. The new requirements acknowledge the changing landscape of medicine, including electronic health records, and the resulting increase in the amount of work residents choose to do from home. The requirement provides flexibility for residents to do this while ensuring that the time spent by residents completing clinical work from home is accomplished within the 80-hour weekly maximum. Types of work from home that must be counted include using an electronic health record and taking calls from home. Reading done in preparation for the following day's cases, studying, and research done from home do not count toward the 80 hours. Resident decisions to leave the hospital before their clinical work has been completed and to finish that work later from home should be made in consultation with the resident's supervisor. In such circumstances, residents should be mindful of their professional responsibility to complete work in a timely manner and to maintain patient confidentiality.

During the public comment period many individuals raised questions and concerns related to this change. Some questioned whether minute by minute tracking would be required; in other words, if a resident spends three minutes on a phone call and then a few hours later spends two minutes on another call, will the resident need to report that time. Others raised concerns related to the ability of programs and institutions to verify the accuracy of the information reported by residents. The new requirements are not an attempt to micromanage this process. Residents are to track the time they spend on clinical work from home and to report that time to the program. Decisions regarding whether to report infrequent phone calls of very short duration will be left to the individual resident. Programs will need to factor in time residents are spending on clinical work at home when schedules are developed to ensure that residents are not working in excess of 80 hours per week, averaged over four weeks. There is no requirement that programs assume responsibility for documenting this time. Rather, the

program's responsibility is ensuring that residents report their time from home and that schedules are structured to ensure that residents are not working in excess of 80 hours per week, averaged over four weeks.

*PGY-1 and PGY-2 Residents*

PGY-1 and PGY-2 residents may not have the experience to make decisions about when it is appropriate to utilize flexibility or may feel pressured to use it when unnecessary. Programs are responsible for ensuring that residents are provided with manageable workloads that can be accomplished during scheduled work hours. This includes ensuring that a resident's assigned direct patient load is manageable, that residents have appropriate support from their clinical teams, and that residents are not overburdened with clerical work and/or other non-physician duties.

VI.F.2. Mandatory Time Free of Clinical Work and Education

VI.F.2.a) The program must design an effective program structure that is configured to provide residents with educational opportunities, as well as reasonable opportunities for rest and personal well-being. (Core)

VI.F.2.b) Residents should have eight hours off between scheduled clinical work and education periods. (Detail)

VI.F.2.b).(1) There may be circumstances when residents choose to stay to care for their patients or return to the hospital with fewer than eight hours free of clinical experience and education. This must occur within the context of the 80-hour and the one-day-off-in-seven requirements. (Detail)

Background and Intent: While it is expected that resident schedules will be structured to ensure that residents are provided with a minimum of eight hours off between scheduled work periods, it is recognized that residents may choose to remain beyond their scheduled time, or return to the clinical site during this time-off period, to care for a patient. The requirement preserves the flexibility for residents to make those choices. It is also noted that the 80-hour weekly limit (averaged over four weeks) is a deterrent for scheduling fewer than eight hours off between clinical and education work periods, as it would be difficult for a program to design a schedule that provides fewer than eight hours off without violating the 80-hour rule.

VI.F.2.c) Residents must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work and education after 24 hours of in-house call. (Core)

Background and Intent: Residents have a responsibility to return to work rested, and thus are expected to use this time away from work to get adequate rest. In support of this goal, residents are encouraged to prioritize sleep over other discretionary activities.

VI.F.2.d) Residents must be scheduled for a minimum of one day in seven free of clinical work and required education (when averaged over four weeks). At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days. (Core)



Background and Intent: The requirement provides flexibility for programs to distribute days off in a manner that meets program and resident needs. It is strongly recommended that residents' preference regarding how their days off are distributed be considered as schedules are developed. It is desirable that days off be distributed throughout the month, but some residents may prefer to group their days off to have a "golden weekend," meaning a consecutive Saturday and Sunday free from work. The requirement for one free day in seven should not be interpreted as precluding a golden weekend. Where feasible, schedules may be designed to provide residents with a weekend, or two consecutive days, free of work. The applicable Review Committee will evaluate the number of consecutive days of work and determine whether they meet educational objectives. Programs are encouraged to distribute days off in a fashion that optimizes resident well-being, and educational and personal goals. It is noted that a day off is defined in the ACGME Glossary of Terms as "one (1) continuous 24-hour period free from all administrative, clinical, and educational activities."

VI.F.3. Maximum Clinical Work and Education Period Length

VI.F.3.a) Clinical and educational work periods for residents must not exceed 24 hours of continuous scheduled clinical assignments.  
(Core)

Background and Intent: The Task Force examined the question of "consecutive time on task." It examined the research supporting the current limit of 16 consecutive hours of time on task for PGY-1 residents; the range of often conflicting impacts of this requirement on patient safety, clinical care, and continuity of care by resident teams; and resident learning found in the literature. Finally, it heard a uniform request by the specialty societies, certifying boards, membership societies and organizations, and senior residents to repeal this requirement. It heard conflicting perspectives from resident unions, a medical student association, and a number of public advocacy groups, some arguing for continuation of the requirement, others arguing for extension of the requirement to all residents.

Of greatest concern to the Task Force were the observations of disruption of team care and patient care continuity brought about with residents beyond the PGY-1 level adhering to differing requirements. The graduate medical education community uniformly requested that the Task Force remove this requirement. The most frequently-cited reason for this request was the complete disruption of the team, separating the PGY-1 from supervisory faculty members and residents who were best able to judge the ability of the resident and customize the supervision of patient care for each PGY-1. Cited nearly as frequently was the separation of the PGY-1 from the team, delaying maturation of clinical skills, and threatening to create a "shift" mentality in disciplines where overnight availability to patients is essential in delivery of care.

The Task Force examined the impact of the request to consider 16-consecutive-hour limits for all residents, and rejected the proposition. It found that model incompatible with the actual practice of medicine and surgery in many specialties, excessively limiting in configuration of clinical services in many disciplines, and potentially disruptive of the inculcation of responsibility and professional commitment to altruism and placing the needs of patients above those of the physician.

After careful consideration of the information available, the testimony and position of all parties submitting information, and presentations to the Task Force, the Task Force removed the 16-

hour-consecutive-time-on-task requirement for PGY-1 residents. It remains crucial that programs ensure that PGY-1 residents are supervised in compliance with the applicable Program Requirements, and that resident well-being is prioritized as described in Section VI.C. of these requirements.

VI.F.3.a).(1) Up to four hours of additional time may be used for activities related to patient safety, such as providing effective transitions of care, and/or resident education. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.3.a).(1).(a) Additional patient care responsibilities must not be assigned to a resident during this time. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: The additional time referenced in VI.F.3.a).(1) should not be used for the care of new patients. It is essential that the resident continue to function as a member of the team in an environment where other members of the team can assess resident fatigue, and that supervision for post-call residents is provided. This 24 hours and up to an additional four hours must occur within the context of 80-hour weekly limit, averaged over four weeks.

#### VI.F.4. Clinical and Educational Work Hour Exceptions

VI.F.4.a) In rare circumstances, after handing off all other responsibilities, a resident, on their own initiative, may elect to remain or return to the clinical site in the following circumstances:

VI.F.4.a).(1) to continue to provide care to a single severely ill or unstable patient; <sup>(Detail)</sup>

VI.F.4.a).(2) humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or family; or, <sup>(Detail)</sup>

VI.F.4.a).(3) to attend unique educational events. <sup>(Detail)</sup>

VI.F.4.b) These additional hours of care or education will be counted toward the 80-hour weekly limit. <sup>(Detail)</sup>

This requirement is intended to provide residents with some control over their schedules by providing the flexibility to voluntarily remain beyond the scheduled responsibilities under the circumstances described above. It is important to note that a resident may remain to attend a conference, or return for a conference later in the day, only if the decision is made voluntarily. Residents must not be required to stay. Programs allowing residents to remain or return beyond the scheduled work and clinical education period must ensure that the decision to remain is initiated by the resident and that residents are not coerced. This additional time must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit.

VI.F.4.c) A Review Committee may grant rotation-specific exceptions for up to 10 percent or a maximum of 88 clinical and educational work hours to individual programs based on a sound educational rationale.

VI.F.4.c).(1) In preparing a request for an exception, the program

director must follow the clinical and educational work hour exception policy from the *ACGME Manual of Policies and Procedures*. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.4.c).(2)

Prior to submitting the request to the Review Committee, the program director must obtain approval from the Sponsoring Institution's GMEC and DIO. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: The provision for exceptions for up to 88 hours per week has been modified to specify that exceptions may be granted for specific rotations if the program can justify the increase based on criteria specified by the Review Committee. As in the past, Review Committees may opt not to permit exceptions. The underlying philosophy for this requirement is that while it is expected that all residents should be able to train within an 80-hour work week, it is recognized that some programs may include rotations with alternate structures based on the nature of the specialty. DIO/GMEC approval is required before the request will be considered by the Review Committee.

VI.F.5. Moonlighting

VI.F.5.a) Moonlighting must not interfere with the ability of the resident to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational program, and must not interfere with the resident's fitness for work nor compromise patient safety. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.5.b) Time spent by residents in internal and external moonlighting (as defined in the ACGME Glossary of Terms) must be counted toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.5.c) PGY-1 residents are not permitted to moonlight. <sup>(Core)</sup>

Background and Intent: For additional clarification of the expectations related to moonlighting, please refer to the Common Program Requirement FAQs (available at <http://www.acgme.org/What-We-Do/Accreditation/Common-Program-Requirements>).

VI.F.6. In-House Night Float

Night float must occur within the context of the 80-hour and one-day-off-in-seven requirements. <sup>(Core)</sup>

[The maximum number of consecutive weeks of night float, and maximum number of months of night float per year may be further specified by the Review Committee.]

Background and Intent: The requirement for no more than six consecutive nights of night float was removed to provide programs with increased flexibility in scheduling.

VI.F.7. Maximum In-House On-Call Frequency

Residents must be scheduled for in-house call no more frequently than every third night (when averaged over a four-week period). <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.8. At-Home Call

VI.F.8.a) Time spent on patient care activities by residents on at-home call must count toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. The frequency of at-home call is not subject to the every-third-night limitation, but must satisfy the requirement for one day in seven free of clinical work and education, when averaged over four weeks. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.8.a).(1) At-home call must not be so frequent or taxing as to preclude rest or reasonable personal time for each resident. <sup>(Core)</sup>

VI.F.8.b) Residents are permitted to return to the hospital while on at-home call to provide direct care for new or established patients. These hours of inpatient patient care must be included in the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. <sup>(Detail)</sup>

Background and Intent: This requirement has been modified to specify that clinical work done from home when a resident is taking at-home call must count toward the 80-hour maximum weekly limit. This change acknowledges the often significant amount of time residents devote to clinical activities when taking at-home call, and ensures that taking at-home call does not result in residents routinely working more than 80 hours per week. At-home call activities that must be counted include responding to phone calls and other forms of communication, as well as documentation, such as entering notes in an electronic health record. Activities such as reading about the next day's case, studying, or research activities do not count toward the 80-hour weekly limit.

In their evaluation of residency/fellowship programs, Review Committees will look at the overall impact of at-home call on resident/fellow rest and personal time.

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**\*Core Requirements:** Statements that define structure, resource, or process elements essential to every graduate medical educational program.

**Detail Requirements:** Statements that describe a specific structure, resource, or process, for achieving compliance with a Core Requirement. Programs and sponsoring institutions in substantial compliance with the Outcome Requirements may utilize alternative or innovative approaches to meet Core Requirements.

**Outcome Requirements:** Statements that specify expected measurable or observable attributes (knowledge, abilities, skills, or attitudes) of residents or fellows at key stages of their graduate medical education.