

Responsibility Matrix



Responsibility Area



Responsible Organization
Who Handles It



GME Accreditation Role
Scope Defined



Medical School

✓ LCME (MD) / COCA (DO)

Separate accreditation system



Residency Program Standards

✓ GME Accrediting Body

✓ Sets standards, evaluates compliance, makes decisions



Resident Placement

✓ NRMP (The Match)

No role



Number of Residency Positions

✓ Congress · CMS · Teaching Institutions

✓ Approves the number of residents/ fellows a program can have based on faculty, clinical experiences, supervision, and other resources needed to support high-quality education



Resident Employment

✓ Hospitals and Sponsoring Institutions

No role



Daily Scheduling and Operations

✓ Hospitals and Sponsoring Institutions

Standards guide education, not daily operations



Medical Licensure

✓ State Medical Boards

Separate responsibility



Board Certification

✓ Specialty Boards

Separate responsibility



Federal GME Funding

✓ CMS · HHS · Congress

No role

Who Does What

The seven entities that govern physician education and training — and where accountability actually sits

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) is the independent body that sets education and training standards and verifies that graduate medical education (GME) programs and institutions across the United States meet them. This national accreditation framework supports consistency in education and training quality. The ACGME is not the entity that hires, pays, schedules, or places residents/fellows, and it does not determine the number of residency/fellowship positions or where they exist.

Entity	Role and Scope
ACGME Accredits: GME residency/fellowship programs and Sponsoring Institutions	The ACGME is the independent, national body that accredits residency and fellowship education and training programs — not individual physicians. It sets the educational and clinical training standards that programs, and the institutions that sponsor them, must meet. It develops those standards through Review Committees comprised of practicing physicians, including resident/fellow members, and public representatives, develop those standards, which are posted for public comment before they take effect. The ACGME reviews every accredited program and Sponsoring Institution each year, conducts site visits, issues citations, requires corrective action when standards are not met, and can place programs on probation or withdraw accreditation. This national accreditation framework supports consistency in education and training quality. The ACGME does not hire, pay, schedule, or place residents/fellows. It does not run the Match, issue licenses, grant certifications, or fund training. It is independent of the federal government and of the institutions and programs it reviews and accredits.
LCME/COCA Accredits: MD-granting medical schools (LCME) and DO-granting medical schools (COCA)	The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accredits MD-degree granting programs; the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (COCA) accredits Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)-degree granting programs. These bodies evaluate medical school curricula, learning environments, faculty members, and institutional capacity. Their authority ends at medical school graduation — the ACGME takes over when graduate education and training begin.
NRMP/Matching Services Administers: Residency/fellowship applicants and programs that participate in the Match	The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) administers the Main Residency Match and other placement processes that pair applicants with residency and fellowship positions. The NRMP sets Match rules and governs the process; it does not set educational standards for training programs. Some specialty-specific matches (e.g., the San Francisco Match for fellowships) operate separately. The ACGME has no role in operating matching services.
Sponsoring Institutions/Employers Employs and funds:	Teaching hospitals, health systems, the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), and other Sponsoring Institutions are the employers of residents and fellow physicians. They set compensation, benefits, scheduling, staffing models, and

<i>Residents and fellows employed at that institution</i>	operational workflows. They are also the primary recipients of federal graduate medical education (GME) funding through Medicare and Medicaid. The ACGME sets standards for the educational environment; institutions implement and operate education and training day-to-day within those standards.
State Medical Boards Licenses: <i>Individual physicians practicing in that state</i>	State medical boards license physicians to practice medicine within their jurisdiction. Licensure is a legal permission to practice; it is separate from accreditation and board certification. A physician must hold a valid state license regardless of where they trained or whether they are board certified. State medical boards also investigate complaints and impose discipline on individual physicians. The ACGME has no authority over individual physicians.
ABMS Member Boards Certifies: <i>Individual physicians seeking specialty recognition</i>	The 24 member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) certify physicians who have completed accredited GME programs and passed specialty or subspecialty examinations. Certification is separate from accreditation: ABMS boards credential individual physicians; the ACGME accredits the educational programs. Completing an ACGME-accredited residency/fellowship makes a physician eligible to sit for relevant board exams — it does not confer certification.
AOA Member Boards	The American Osteopathic Association’s Department of Certifying Board Services administers the processes of board certification and osteopathic continuous certification for 15 specialty certifying boards, offering certifications in 24 primary specialties and 48 subspecialties. The AOA Department of Certifying Board Services credential individual physicians; the ACGME accredits the educational programs. Completing an ACGME-accredited residency/fellowship makes a physician eligible to sit for relevant board exams — it does not confer certification.
CMS/Congress Funds: <i>Teaching hospitals (recipients of Medicare GME payments)</i>	The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) funds GME through Medicare Direct Medical Education (DME) and Indirect Medical Education (IME) payments to teaching hospitals — not to the ACGME and not to residents/fellows directly. Congress sets GME funding policy, including the caps on funded resident/fellow positions established in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. No federal agency accredits residency/fellowship programs; that function belongs to the ACGME independently. Some individual states also provide funding for GME.