

ACGME Milestone Project

The Milestone Project is a major step forward in the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) evolution toward outcomes-based methods for evaluating resident performance and the accreditation of graduate medical education (GME) programs, which began with the articulation of the “Outcome Project” in 1998. The Milestone Project aims to define the specific behaviors, attributes, and outcomes within the 6 general competency domains (patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice) to be demonstrated by residents at particular points during their education. This set of expectations is known as “milestones.”

The milestones provide specific, progressive benchmarks against which performance can be measured and compared throughout the residency training period. One of the ACGME’s most important goals for this approach is to ensure that residents entering practice have demonstrated the expected educational outcomes and proficiencies to promote patient safety and high-quality care. Nuclear medicine programs will be expected to submit composite data every 6 months to document resident performance in meeting the benchmarks.

The primary stakeholders in the Milestone Project are ACGME, residency programs, certification boards, and residents, with potential benefits to each group illustrated in Table 1. The guiding principle for milestone development is to achieve a balance among feasibility, quality, and standardized reporting. Feasibility involves the identification of a manageable number of milestones with a balance of costs and benefits. Quality efforts require that the milestones be meaningful and substantive and that achievements can be measured. Standardized reporting requires specialty-wide use of a common reporting form, creation of program-level metrics, and a central repository to document milestone performance.

Milestones are developed collaboratively by bringing together wide representation from the community involved in GME. The Nuclear Medicine Milestone Working Group members have been drawn from the ACGME Nuclear Medicine Residency Review Committee, the American Board of Nuclear Medicine, the SNM Academic Council/Program Directors Association, and resident representatives. Members include Lorraine Fig, MD, MPH, chair; Joanna Fair, MD, PhD; Erin Cook Grady, MD; Darlene Metter, MD; Lynne Meyer, PhD, MPH; Janis O’Malley,

TABLE 1
ACGME Milestone Project: Primary Stakeholders and Benefits

Stakeholder	Benefit
Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education	Accreditation—continuous monitoring of programs; lengthening of site visit cycles Public accountability—report at a national level on competency outcomes Community of practice for evaluation and research, with focus on continuous improvement
Certification boards	Potential use—ascertain whether individuals have demonstrated qualifications needed to sit for board exams
Residency program	Guide curriculum development More explicit expectations of residents Support better assessment Enhanced opportunities for early identification of under-performers
Residents	Increased transparency of performance requirements Encourage resident self-assessment and self-directed learning Better feedback to residents

MD; Christopher Palestro, MD; Henry Royal, MD; and David Shelton, MD. In addition, an advisory group of nuclear medicine leaders will provide feedback to the working group and assist in establishing support for the milestones.

The working group held its initial planning meeting in February 2012 and is currently drafting the ACGME nuclear medicine milestones. By the end of this year a preliminary version of the milestones will be available for public comment and pilot testing. An update on the project with a preview of selected draft milestones will be provided at the Academic Council/Program Directors Association meeting at the SNM Annual Meeting in June 2012 and periodically thereafter.

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