

Policy: Program Director and Assistant/Associate Program Director Qualifications, FTE, Appointment & Approval Policy		
Original Approval: March 18, 2013	Revision Dates: March 10, 2021 (editorial) April 21, 2021 September 22, 2021 April 12, 2023 (Editorial) September 27, 2023 (Editorial)	January 15, 2025 May 21, 2025 Nov. 19, 2025

Purpose:

To ensure that individuals possess appropriate credentials as well as knowledge about ACGME and University of Colorado School of Medicine Graduate Medical Education (CUGME) policies and procedures to serve effectively in the role of Program Director (PD) and Assistant/Associate Program Director (APD).

Policy:

There must be one faculty member appointed as Program Director with authority and accountability for the overall program, including compliance with all applicable requirements. CUGME does not recognize 'co-program directors.'

The CUGME does not distinguish between the use of Assistant Program Director and Associate Program Director. Determination of which term to use is at the discretion of the Department. Any correspondence from CUGME with reference to APD applies equally to Assistant PD and Associate PD. The CU GMEC does not review and approve other program leadership or advisors to the Program Director, such as Site Director, Curriculum Director, Didactic Coordinator, QI/PS Director, Director of Resident/Fellow Research, or Simulation Education Lead.

Prior to GMEC review and approval, programs requesting approval for individuals serving in the role of Program Director or Assistant/Associate Program Director must ensure the following conditions are met:

1. Program Director (PD) Qualifications & Eligibility (ACGME and non-ACGME):

- a. Possess an active Colorado medical licensure
- b. Possess a clinical appointment at one of the program's participating sites.
- c. Hold a University of Colorado faculty appointment of at least an assistant professor role, with associate professor or higher preferred
- d. Hold an academic appointment for a minimum of 3 years

- e. Possess at least 3 years of documented educational and/or administrative experience
- f. Demonstrate proof of scholarly activities within the last 5 years
- g. Possess the requisite specialty expertise and evidence of continued clinical practice in the specialty
- h. Possess board certification and maintenance of certification by a board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) where available *
- i. For ACGME programs, any additional specialty-specific requirements must be met.

2. Assistant/Associate Program Director (APD) Qualifications & Eligibility (ACGME and non-ACGME):

- a. Possess an active Colorado medical licensure
- b. Possess a clinical appointment at one of the program's participating sites.
- c. Hold a University of Colorado faculty appointment, with assistant professor or higher preferred
- d. Prefer at least 1 year as a faculty member/in an academic appointment
- e. Possess the requisite specialty expertise and evidence of continued clinical practice in the specialty
- f. Possess at least 1 year of documented educational and/or administrative experience,
- g. Possess board certification and maintenance of certification by a board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) or American Osteopathic Association (AOA) where available *
- h. For ACGME programs, any additional specialty-specific requirements must be met.

* In lieu of ABMS or AOA board certification, the following alternate qualifications may be deemed acceptable to GMEC:

ACGME Program (PD and APD):

- Written proof of ACGME Review Committee acceptance of credentials

Non-ACGME Program (PD and APD):

- Certification by a board other than ABMS or AOA
- Demonstrated leadership expertise
- Ongoing academic achievements in the specialty including peer-reviewed publications, development of educational programs, or the conduct of research
- National or international reputation in the specific field/specialty including participation in national specialty organizations
- Completion of training in the clinical domain of the program

3. CU SOM minimum FTE for PD/APD non-clinical time for administration of the program:

	PD	APD
ACGME program	Consult ACGME specialty-specific requirements for required FTE	Consult ACGME specialty-specific requirements for required FTE .
Non-ACGME program	0.1 FTE or equivalent support (time, salary, or equivalent departmental support that allows time to carry out the responsibilities of the program director)	0.1 FTE or equivalent support (time, salary, or equivalent departmental support that allows time to meet the educational goals of the program)

It is important to note that the dedicated time and support requirement is a *minimum*, recognizing that, depending on the unique needs of the program, additional support may be warranted.

4. ACGME Program Directors:

It is expected that Department Chairs or Division Heads will provide protected time for the new Program Director to attend the ACGME Annual Education Conference during the first or second year of appointment. The Office of Graduate Medical Education will cover usual expenses, e.g., transportation, hotel, registration cost, consistent with state fiscal rules up to a maximum of \$1,000. (Note: The ACGME Annual Conference normally occurs during late February or early March. The meeting begins on Thursday with pre-conference workshops and concludes on Sunday morning.) Program Directors

may request funding for a sub/specialty conference provided there is an ACGME speaker or topic on the agenda. Funding for sub/specialty conferences is a one-time only award of up \$1,000.

Process:

1. The program must submit a letter of recommendation by the applicable Department Chair or Division Head addressed to the Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education and Chair of the GMEC, which describes the nominated individual's abilities to serve in the role of Program Director. Each element of eligibility (as noted above) must be confirmed, and a mentorship plan provided (if applicable), with a copy of the individual's CV attached.
2. Program Directors for non-ACGME-accredited programs must provide proof of board certification in their specialty or alternate qualifications acceptable to GMEC (listed above).
3. Approval of the new Program Director and of Assistant/Associate Program Director's appointment must be approved by the GMEC.
4. Confirmation of GMEC approval will be provided to the new Program Director, Assistant/Associate Program Director, Department Chair or Division Head, and the Program Coordinator.
5. For ACGME programs: Confirmation with ACGME will be completed via ADS by GME.