

Taxonomy of Sponsoring Institutions and Participating Sites Frequently Asked Questions

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- Should all clinics residents could go to be listed?
- Do hospitals within the same system all need to be listed?
- What is the equivalent of a one-month block to determine when a participating site should be listed?
- How should sites be entered when residents rotate at different clinics on different days with different faculty members (e.g., at site A on Mondays working with physician X but with physician Y on Tuesdays at site B)?

Updating Participating Site and Sponsoring Institution Information

- What is the process for updating the applicable participating site and Sponsoring Institution information for this project?
- If a Sponsoring Institution uses a participating site more than any other program, and that site is also a Sponsoring Institution, will the first be responsible for updating the other Sponsoring Institution's information?
- What does the blue star next to a Sponsoring Institution's participating site mean?

Program Letters of Agreement (PLAs)

- Will PLAs be required for each new site within the health system?

- When current PLAs with health systems/consortia expire, do PLAs with each individual participating site need to be created?

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- Is GMEC approval or documentation for reclassifying participating sites within a health system required?
- Do programs need to revise their block diagrams to reflect changes in site name associated with breaking health systems and consortia into smaller participating sites?

Reports

- Will the new taxonomy be added to Sponsoring Institution reports?
- Is there a report that lists the sites a Sponsoring Institution’s programs have on their participating site list?

Participating Site Changes	
Question:	What is this project all about?
Answer:	The rural data enhancement (RDE) project is anchored in the ACGME Board-approved Framework for Rural and Underserved GME and was initiated in 2021 to improve the accuracy, reliability, and accessibility of GME location data. In its current state, the location of residents’ and fellows’ clinical and educational experiences is sometimes indiscernible for various reasons and has limited accessibility in data and formats for the numerous stakeholders who rely on ACGME data. Improvements to the accessibility, accuracy, and reliability of GME location data will allow stakeholders to understand the GME footprint and the impact that residents’/fellows’ learning experiences have on their future practice location and outcomes.
Question:	Why does this project involve splitting out health system/consortia sites into multiple sites?
Answer:	This project aims to have more accurate, reliable, and accessible data concerning the location of residents’/fellows’ GME experiences. This is not only important for accreditation data quality, but it also matters for the Review Committees that will benefit from having a more precise understanding of where and what GME experiences are happening. This is also important for other stakeholders who use public participating site data for purposes of discovery and workforce planning, among other public uses.
Question:	How will this project change the definition of participating sites?
Answer:	A participating site is defined in the ACGME Common Program Requirements as “an organization providing educational experiences or educational assignments/rotations for residents/fellows.” While this definition is not changing, this project introduces a new taxonomy for participating sites and Sponsoring Institutions, the data dictionary , which is available in the ADS Help Center . As part of this project, “health system,” “consortium,” and “non-medical school educational foundation/organization” are not types of participating sites, although they are types of Sponsoring Institutions. The instructions for entering participating sites have also been updated (see below).

Question:	Does this project just apply to rural participating sites or to all sites?
Answer:	While this project is called the rural data enhancement (RDE) project, with objectives to identify all rural and underserved GME experiences, much of this project will have applications to all participating sites, as it involves updating the participating site taxonomy and data infrastructure.
Question:	How was input from the GME community considered for these changes?
Answer:	Input was sought from the GME community on numerous occasions, including a session at the ACGME’s September 2022 National Learning Community of Sponsoring Institutions meeting; the ACGME Coordinator Advisory Group meeting in October 2022; three designated institutional official (DIO) work group meetings in December 2022; a focus group for DIOs, program directors, and institutional coordinators at the 2023 Annual Educational Conference; and a DIO and institutional coordinator work group meeting in April 2023.
Classification of Sponsoring Institutions and Participating Sites	
Question:	Can a Sponsoring Institution be classified as a consortium or health system?
Answer:	Yes, a Sponsoring Institution can continue to be classified as a consortium; and the new taxonomy for Sponsoring Institutions includes “health system” as an option. The data dictionary for the new taxonomy of Sponsoring Institutions and participating sites is available in the ADS Help Center .
Question:	If a participating site is part of a consortium, how should it be classified?
Answer:	In the new taxonomy for participating sites, a “consortium” is not an option for participating site classification. If a participating site is part of a consortium, it should be classified according to the type of organization that individual site represents (ambulatory care/community health center, ambulatory care/other, ambulatory surgery center, general hospital, etc.). The data dictionary containing all options for the new taxonomy of participating sites is available in the ADS Help Center .
Question:	What is the process for updating the classification of participating sites that are not Sponsoring Institutions?
Answer:	The DIO and institutional coordinator(s) from the Sponsoring Institution with the most accredited programs at a participating site should update the participating site type, ownership/control data, and CEO information as needed. Those participating sites are indicated with a blue star in the Sponsoring Institution’s list of participating sites.
Adding New Participating Sites	
Question:	Should both the hospital and clinic be listed when residents are going to different sites with the same attending physician (e.g., ambulatory surgery center at a hospital and the ambulatory clinic)?
Answer:	Programs should enter all participating sites that are physically located at different locations (e.g., two separate outpatient clinics within the same health system should be listed as two separate participating sites). However, if residents/fellows travel with a faculty member from a hospital to an outpatient

	clinical location on the same campus or within 30 minutes of road travel time, the location should be considered part of the hospital participating site.
Question:	How does an institution assess whether participating sites are within a 30-minute road travel time when it could vary depending on traffic and time of day?
Answer:	Free online mapping services have settings that will provide drive time based on average traffic for a particular time of day.
Question:	Should all clinics residents could go to be listed?
Answer:	Per Common Program Requirement 1.6., programs should list the participating sites that routinely provide an educational experience, required for all residents/fellows, of one month or more. Refer to the specialty-specific Program Requirements for further specification. Programs should enter all participating sites that are physically located at different locations (e.g., two separate outpatient clinics within the same health system should be listed as two separate participating sites). However, if residents/fellows travel with a faculty member from a hospital to an outpatient clinical location on the same campus or within 30 minutes of road travel time, the location should be considered part of the hospital participating site.
Question:	Do all hospitals within the same system need to be listed?
Answer:	If residents/fellows spend more than one month at each hospital as a required experience for each program resident/fellow (per Common Program Requirement 1.6.), then each hospital should be listed (even if within the same health system).
Question:	What is the equivalent of a one-month block to determine when a participating site should be listed?
Answer:	If the participating site is required for all residents/fellows for at least one month or more (28 days or 56 half days) over the course of their residency/fellowship program, it should be listed. Contact the applicable Review Committee staff for more specificity. Contact information may be found on the relevant specialty section of the ACGME website .
Question:	How should sites be entered when residents rotate at different clinics on different days with different faculty members (e.g., at site A on Mondays working with physician X but with physician Y on Tuesdays at site B)?
Answer:	Programs should enter all participating sites that are physically located at different locations (e.g., two separate outpatient clinics within the same health system should be listed as two separate participating sites). However, if residents/fellows travel with a faculty member from a hospital to an outpatient clinical location on the same campus or within 30 minutes of road travel time, the location should be considered part of the hospital participating site. If the faculty members are part of the same group and the sites are within 30 minutes road travel time, they can be listed under the same site.
Updating Participating Site and Sponsoring Institution Information	
Question:	What is the process for updating the applicable participating site and Sponsoring Institution information for this project?

Answer:	Each Sponsoring Institution's DIO and institutional coordinator(s) are responsible for updating their Sponsoring Institution's type and ownership/control data. The DIO and institutional coordinator(s) from the Sponsoring Institution with the most accredited programs at a participating site should update the participating site type, ownership/control data, and CEO information as needed. Those participating sites are indicated with a blue star in the Sponsoring Institution's list of participating sites. Programs will be responsible for updating their participating site information.
Question:	If a Sponsoring Institution uses a participating site more than any other program, and that site is also a Sponsoring Institution, will the first Sponsoring Institution be responsible for updating the other Sponsoring Institution's information?
Answer:	No, only the DIO and institutional coordinator(s) of a Sponsoring Institution can update their own Sponsoring Institution's information. For this reason, Sponsoring Institutions will not have a blue star indicator next to them in the list of participating sites.
Question:	What does the blue star next to a Sponsoring Institution's participating site mean?
Answer:	A blue star next to a participating site indicates that the Sponsoring Institution has more programs at that site than any other Sponsoring Institution. These are the participating sites for which the Sponsoring Institution's DIO and institutional coordinator(s) are responsible for updating the participating site type, ownership/control data, and CEO information as needed.
Program Letters of Agreement (PLAs)	
Question:	Will PLAs be required for each new site within the health system or consortium?
Answer:	No, new PLAs are not required for each new site within the health system or consortium at this time. The existing PLA with the health system/consortium will suffice. Once the current PLAs with health systems/consortia expire, separate PLAs with each individual participating site should be available, if a PLA is required.
Question:	When current PLAs with health systems/consortia expire, do PLAs with each individual participating site need to be created?
Answer:	Once the current PLAs with health systems/consortia expire, separate PLAs with each individual participating site should be available, if a PLA is required. Refer to the Common Program Requirements FAQs (available under "Additional Resources" on this page) for more guidance on when a PLA is required.
Institutional and Program Accreditation Requirements	
Question:	Is GMC approval or documentation for reclassifying participating sites within a health system required?
Answer:	GMC approval is not needed when reclassifying participating sites as part of this project.

Question:	Do programs need to revise their block diagrams to reflect changes in site name associated with breaking health systems and consortia into smaller participating sites?
Answer:	Yes, the order and names of the participating sites listed should be consistent in ADS and on block diagrams.
Reports	
Question:	Will the new taxonomy be added to Sponsoring Institution reports?
Answer:	Yes, the new taxonomy of Sponsoring Institutions and participating sites will be added to Sponsoring Institution reports and data downloads once the fields are required, as of July 2024.
Question:	Is there a report that lists the sites a Sponsoring Institution’s programs have on their participating site list?
Answer:	A Sponsoring Institution’s “List of Institutions and Programs Affiliated with this Institution” report shows the sponsored programs that list a particular participating site, with programs grouped by participating site.