

## Oral Examinations as a Tool to Evaluate the ACGME Competencies

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**Learner Audience:** Medical Educators, Residents

**Background:** The ACGME requires training programs to educate residents in six general core competencies and to provide methods of assessing residents' attainment of these competencies. The oral examination (OE) is a type of performance assessment using realistic patient scenarios and is a useful tool for resident education, the assessment of resident performance, and to provide resident familiarity with the ABA oral examination (ABA-OE).

**Hypothesis:** To determine faculty and resident opinions as to the ability of the ABA-OE model to be used to evaluate all six ACGME competencies including the newer domains of practice-based learning, systems-based practice, and professionalism.

**Method Design:** Thirty faculty examiners and 45 examinees participated in our routine mock oral examination process. Five different guided examinations were used. At the end of each examination, examiners and residents were asked to complete a survey and rate whether the ABA-OE provided information to evaluate the resident performance within each of the six ACGME competencies. Surveys were de-identified and analyzed using Student's t-test and ANOVA.

**Outcome:** Eighty-eight examiner surveys (99%) and 41 examinee surveys (91%) were returned. Examiners rated the ABA-OE format significantly better for the assessment of the competencies in patient care, knowledge, and interpersonal and communication skills as compared to the competencies in practice-based learning and improvement, professionalism, and systems-based practice ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 1). There were no significant differences in ratings between examiners and examinees with the exception of the competencies in medical knowledge, which was rated higher by the faculty, and professionalism, which was rated higher by the examinees.

Our results indicate that the ABA model may be a better tool for the assessment of the ACGME competencies in patient care, medical knowledge, and interpersonal and communication skills, compared to the newer domains of practice-based learning and improvement, systems-based practice, and professionalism. Future work will include modification of the ABA-OE format to improve assessment of the newer domains.

**Appendix A**  
**Oral Examinations and ACGME Competencies Survey**

Please rate whether Oral Examination provided information (Level of Inference) to evaluate the resident performance within each of the six ACGME competencies (irrespective of the resident's actual performance)

ACGME Competencies	Definition	Level of Inference				
		None	Some	Definite		
Patient Care	Ability to provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health	0	1	2	3	4
Medical Knowledge	Demonstration of knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological and social-behavioral sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care	0	1	2	3	4
Practice-Based Learning and Improvement	Ability to investigate and evaluate their care of patients, to appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning	0	1	2	3	4
Interpersonal and Communication Skills	Demonstration of interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals	0	1	2	3	4
Professionalism	Demonstration of a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles	0	1	2	3	4
System-Based Practice	Demonstration of an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care, as well as the ability to call effectively on other resources in the system to provide optimal health care	0	1	2	3	4

Table 1

**ABA-OE Survey Results**

	Patient Care	Knowledge	Practice-Based Learning	Interpersonal & Communication Skills	Professionalism	System-Based Practice
Faculty Examiner	3.0 ± 0.9	3.5 ± 0.7	2.6 ± 1.0	3.2 ± 1.1	2.3 ± 1.2	2.3 ± 1.1
Examinee	2.8 ± 1.1	3.3 ± 0.8*	2.7 ± 1.1	3.1 ± 1.1	2.7 ± 1.3*	2.5 ± 1.1

\*p < 0.05 vs. faculty examiner