

**ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education  
in Congenital Cardiac Surgery  
Summary and Impact of Focused Requirement Revisions**

Requirement #: **Int.C.**

Requirement Revision (significant change only):

**The educational program in congenital cardiac surgery must be 12 or 24 months in length, preceded by completion of fellowship education as specified in III.A.1. (Core)**

1. Describe the Review Committee's rationale for this revision:  
**For the last two years, the Executive Committee of the Review Committee for Thoracic Surgery has engaged in discussions with the program directors' group (TSDA) about their desire to have a second educational track that allows for a 24-month format, with programs determining which track meets their needs based on program mission and operative and educational resources. The primary rationale for the second track included concerns about mastering some of the more complex required procedures in a single year of fellowship education. The need for more focused educational time, and in some programs, the low volume of complex operative procedures also contributed to this decision. Finally, there are some concerns regarding the ability to pass the Board exam with only one year of education and training. The American Board of Thoracic Surgery approved the 24-month format prior to this most recent academic year. Approximately half of programs moved to a 24-month format, offering one continuous accredited year of fellowship and one unaccredited year. The Review Committee discussed the request and determined that programs should be able to determine which educational format (12-month or 24-month) is appropriate for their resources and needs; that over half of the congenital cardiac surgery programs are already engaged in 24-month educational programs and are incorporating unaccredited time that provides for no accreditation oversight; and, that some programs and fellows will benefit from the additional time due to the availability of operative and educational resources.**
2. How will the proposed requirement or revision improve fellow education, patient safety, and/or patient care quality?  
**The rationale for the 24-month format in terms of providing a more optimal experience with regard to case volume and time for fellows to mature their thought processes around congenital heart surgery and their surgical skills should enhance fellow education, patient safety, and patient care.**
3. How will the proposed requirement or revision impact continuity of patient care?  
**The 24-month educational format may allow fellows to have a longer experience in the continuity of care for each patient, depending on the patient's condition.**
4. Will the proposed requirement or revision necessitate additional institutional resources (e.g., facilities, organization of other services, addition of faculty members, financial support; volume and variety of patients), if so, how?  
**The 24-month format is not expected to increase the institutional resources required. Programs whose resources do not allow for multiple fellows per year have already begun to voluntarily adjust their recruiting strategy from one fellow per year to one**

**fellow every other year. As new programs apply, the Review Committee will continue to assess the institutional and operative resources required for the number of fellows in a program.**

5. How will the proposed revision impact other accredited programs?

**N/A**