

## **Surgery Milestones**

ACGME International, Inc. (ACGME-I)



Second Revision: March 2023 First Revision: May 2017

## Surgery Milestones

The Milestones are designed only for use in evaluation of residents and fellows in the context of their participation in ACGME-I-accredited residency and fellowship programs. The Milestones provide a framework for the assessment of the development of the resident or fellow in key dimensions of the elements of physician competence in a specialty or subspecialty. They neither represent the entirety of the dimensions of the six domains of physician competence, nor are they designed to be relevant in any other context.

## **Understanding Milestone Levels and Reporting**

This document presents the Milestones, which programs use in a semi-annual review of resident or fellow performance, and then report to the ACGME-I. Milestones are knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other attributes for each of the ACGME-I Competencies organized in a developmental framework. The narrative descriptions are targets for resident/fellow performance throughout the educational program.

Milestones are arranged into levels. Tracking from Level 1 to Level 5 is synonymous with moving from novice to expert resident or fellow in the specialty or subspecialty. For each reporting period, the Clinical Competency Committee will review the completed evaluations to select the milestone levels that best describe each learner's current performance, abilities, and attributes for each subcompetency.

These levels *do not* correspond with post-graduate year of education. Depending on previous experience, more junior residents/fellows may achieve higher levels early in their educational program just as more senior residents/fellows may be at a lower level later in their educational program. There is no predetermined timing for a resident or fellow to attain any particular level. Residents and fellows may also regress in achievement of their milestones. This may happen for many reasons, such as over-scoring in a previous review, a disjointed experience in a particular procedure, or a significant act by the resident/fellow.

Selection of a level implies the resident/fellow substantially demonstrates the milestones in that level, as well as those in lower levels (see the diagram on page v).

## **Additional Notes**

Level 4 is designed as a graduation *goal* but *does not* represent a graduation *requirement*. Making decisions about readiness for graduation and unsupervised practice is the purview of the program director. Furthermore, Milestones 2.0 include revisions and changes that preclude using the Milestones as a sole assessment in high-stakes decisions. Level 5 is designed to represent an expert resident or fellow whose achievements in a subcompetency are greater than the expectation. Milestones are primarily designed for formative, developmental purposes to support continuous quality improvement for individual learners, education programs, and the specialty. ACGME-I and its partners will continue to evaluate and perform research on the Milestones to assess their impact and value.

Examples are provided for some milestones within this document. Note: The examples are not the required element or outcome; they are provided as a way to share the intent of the element.

Some milestone descriptions include statements about performing independently. These activities must occur in conformance with ACGME-I supervision guidelines as described in the applicable Program Requirements, as well as with institutional and program policies. For example, a resident who performs a procedure independently must, at a minimum, be supervised through oversight.

A Supplemental Guide is also available to provide more context regarding the intent of each subcompetency, as well as examples for each level, assessment methods or tools, and other resources. The Supplemental Guide, like examples contained within the Milestones, is designed only to assist the program director and Clinical Competency Committee; it is not meant to demonstrate any required element or outcome.

The diagram below presents an example set of milestones for one subcompetency in the same format as the ACGME-I Report Worksheet. For each reporting period, a resident's/fellow's performance on the milestones within each subcompetency will be indicated by selecting the Milestones Level that best describes that individual's performance in relation to those milestones.

Systems-Based Practice	e 1: Patient Safety and Qual	ity Improvement		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates knowledge of common patient safety events	Identifies system factors that lead to patient safety events	Participates in analysis of patient safety events (simulated or actual)	Conducts analysis of patient safety events and offers error prevention strategies (simulated or actual)	Actively engages teams and processes to modify systems to prevent patient safety events
Demonstrates knowledge of how to report patient safety events	Reports patient safety events through institutional reporting systems (simulated or actual)	Participates in disclosure of patient safety events to patients and their families (simulated or actual)	Discloses patient safety events to patients and their families (simulated or actual)	Role models or mentors others in the disclosure of patient safety events
Demonstrates knowledge of basic quality improvement methodologies and metrics	Describes local quality improvement initiatives (e.g., community vaccination rate, infection rate, smoking cessation)	Participates in local quality improvement initiatives	Demonstrates the skills required to identify, develop, implement, and analyze a quality improvement project	Creates, implements, and assesses quality improvement initiatives at the institutional or community level
Comments:				
Not Yet Completed Level 1				Completed Level 1
Selecting a response box in the middle of a level implies that milestones in that level and in lower levels have been substantially demonstrated.		Selecting a response to between levels indicate in lower levels have be demonstrated as well a milestones in the higher	es that milestones en substantially as <b>some</b>	

Patient Care 1: Patient Evaluation and Decision Making				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Gathers necessary information and develops a differential diagnosis for patients in all clinical settings	Evaluates patients; orders and interprets diagnostic testing	Develops a plan to manage healthy patients with straightforward conditions (e.g., colon cancer, breast cancer)	Develops a plan to manage patients with complex conditions (e.g., patient with multiple comorbidities) and conditions (e.g., hemorrhagic shock)	Develops a clinical pathway or guideline for the management of patients with complex conditions
	Manages non-operative patients with straightforward conditions (e.g., bowel obstruction, diverticulitis)	Adapts management plan for changing clinical situation (e.g., drainage of diverticular abscess)	Manages non-operative patients with complex conditions (e.g., severe pancreatitis)	
Comments:				t Completed Level 1

Patient Care 2: Intra-Operative Patient Care – Performance of Open Procedures				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates basic skills (e.g., knot tying, suturing)	Performs bedside procedures (e.g., central line, chest tube)	Performs simple open operations (e.g., hernia, cholecystectomy, appendectomy)	Performs complex open operations (e.g., low anterior resection, paraesophageal hernia, abdominal wall reconstruction)	Performs uncommon complex operations (e.g., Whipple, esophagectomy)
	Teaches basic skills to medical students and junior residents	Teaches bedside operations to junior residents	Teaches common operations to junior residents	Teaches complex operations to junior residents
Comments:			Not Yet C Not Yet R	ompleted Level 1 otated

Patient Care 3: Intra-Operative Patient Care – Performance of Minimally Invasive Procedures				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates basic skills (e.g., positioning, draping, docking, and undocking)	Assists during minimally invasive procedures (e.g., port placement, bedside assistant)	Performs simple portions of the procedure	Performs critical (complex) portions of the procedure	Performs advanced minimally invasive procedures
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1  Not Yet Rotated				

Patient Care 4: Intra-Operative Patient Care – Technical Skills				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates limited tissue-handling skills	Inconsistently demonstrates careful tissue handling	Consistently demonstrates careful tissue handling	Adapts tissue handling based on tissue quality	Identifies innovative operative techniques, instrumentation, operative approaches, or significant improvement in established techniques
Requires prompting to identify appropriate tissue plane	Identifies appropriate plane but requires redirection to maintain dissection in the optimal tissue plane	Visualizes tissue plane, identifies and dissects relevant normal anatomy	Visualizes tissue plane, identifies and dissects relevant abnormal anatomy	
Moves forward in the	Moves forward in the	Moves fluidly through the	Adapts to unexpected	
operation only with active	operation but requires	course of the operation	findings and events	
direction	prompting to complete the operation	and anticipates next steps	during the course of the operation	
Comments:			Not Yet	Completed Level 1
			Not Yet	•

Patient Care 5: Post-Operative Patient Care				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Evaluates simple post- operative problems (e.g., fever, bleeding, hypotension, oliguria)	Evaluates complex post- operative problems (e.g., sepsis, anastomotic leak)	Evaluates complex post- operative problems in patient with complex conditions (e.g., renal failure, congestive heart failure, cirrhosis)	Anticipates and mitigates post-operative problems in patient with complex conditions	Develops a clinical pathway or guideline for management of complex post-operative problems
Manages routine post- operative course for a common operation (e.g., hernia, cholecystectomy, appendectomy)	Manages simple post- operative problems	Manages routine post- operative course for a complex operation (e.g., Whipple, esophagectomy)	Manages complex post- operative problems	
Comments:			Not Yet I	Completed Level 1

Medical Knowledge 1: Pathophysiology and Treatment				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates knowledge of pathophysiology and treatments of patients with common surgical conditions	Demonstrates knowledge of pathophysiology and treatments of patients with complex surgical conditions	Demonstrates knowledge of the impact of patient factors on pathophysiology and the treatment of patients with surgical conditions	Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the varying patterns of disease presentation and alternative and adjuvant treatments of patients with surgical conditions	Contributes to peer- reviewed literature on the varying patterns of disease presentation, and alternative and adjuvant treatments of patients with surgical conditions
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1  Not Yet Rotated				

Medical Knowledge 2: Anatomy				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Identifies normal anatomy (e.g., inguinal canal) during common operations	Identifies variations in anatomy (e.g., bile duct anatomic variations) during common operations	Identifies normal anatomy (e.g., gastric blood supply) during complex operations	Identifies variations in anatomy (e.g., replaced right hepatic artery) during complex operations	Develops simulation models for teaching anatomy and operations
Articulates the steps of common operations	Articulates the implications of varying anatomy on the steps of common operations	Articulates the steps of complex operations	Articulates the implications of varying anatomy on the steps of complex operations	Leads anatomy instruction for students and coresidents
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1  Not Yet Rotated				

Systems-Based Practice 1: Patient Safety and Quality Improvement				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates knowledge of common patient safety events	Identifies system factors that lead to patient safety events	Participates in analysis of patient safety events (simulated or actual)	Conducts analysis of patient safety events and offers error prevention strategies (simulated or actual)	Actively engages teams and processes to modify systems to prevent patient safety events
Demonstrates knowledge of how to report patient safety events	Reports patient safety events through institutional reporting systems (simulated or actual)	Participates in disclosure of patient safety events to patients and their families (simulated or actual)	Discloses patient safety events to patients and their families (simulated or actual)	Role models or mentors others in the disclosure of patient safety events
Demonstrates knowledge of basic quality improvement methodologies and metrics	Describes local quality improvement initiatives (e.g., community vaccination rate, infection rate, smoking cessation)	Participates in local quality improvement initiatives	Demonstrates the skills required to identify, develop, implement, and analyze a quality improvement project	Creates, implements, and assesses quality improvement initiatives at the institutional or community level
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Systems-Based Practice 2: System Navigation for Patient-Centered Care				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates knowledge of care coordination	Coordinates care of patients in routine clinical situations, effectively utilizing the roles of the interprofessional teams	Coordinates care of patients in complex clinical situations, effectively utilizing the roles of the interprofessional teams	Role models effective coordination of patient- centered care among different disciplines and specialties	Analyzes the process of care coordination and leads in the design and implementation of improvements
Identifies key elements for safe and effective transitions of care and hand-offs	Performs safe and effective transitions of care/hand-offs in routine clinical situations	Performs safe and effective transitions of care/hand-offs in complex clinical situations	Role models and advocates for safe and effective transitions of care/hand-offs within and across health care delivery systems, including outpatient settings	Improves quality of transitions of care within and across health care delivery systems to optimize patient outcomes
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Systems-Based Practice 3: Physician Role in Health Care Systems				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Identifies key components of the complex health care system (e.g., hospital, skilled nursing facility, finance, personnel, technology)	Describes how components of a complex health care system are interrelated, and how this impacts patient care	Discusses how individual practice affects the broader system (e.g., length of stay, readmission rates, clinical efficiency)	Manages various components of the complex health care system to provide efficient and effective patient care and transition of care	Advocates for or leads systems change that enhances high value, efficient, and effective patient care and transition of care
Describes the principles of cost-effective care	Delivers care with consideration of each patient's payment model	Engages with patients in shared decision making, informed by cost-effective care principles	Advocates for patient care needs (e.g., community resources, patient assistance resources) regardless of ability to pay	Participates in health policy advocacy activities
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement 1: Evidence-Based and Informed Practice				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Demonstrates how to access and use available evidence, and incorporate patient preferences and values in order to take care of a routine patient	Articulates clinical questions and elicits patient preferences and values in order to guide evidence-based care	Locates and applies the best available evidence, integrated with patient preference, to the care of complex patients	Critically appraises and applies evidence, even in the face of uncertainty and conflicting evidence, to guide care tailored to the individual patient	Coaches others to critically appraise and apply evidence for complex patients, and/or participates in the development of guidelines
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement 2: Reflective Practice and Commitment to Personal Growth				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Accepts responsibility for personal and professional development by establishing goals	Demonstrates openness to performance data (feedback and other input) in order to inform goals	Seeks performance data episodically, with adaptability and humility	Intentionally seeks performance data consistently, with adaptability and humility	Role models consistently seeking performance data with adaptability and humility
Identifies the factors which contribute to gap(s) between expectations and actual performance	Analyzes and reflects on the factors which contribute to gap(s) between expectations and actual performance	Analyzes, reflects on, and institutes behavioral change(s) to narrow the gap(s) between expectations and actual performance	Challenges assumptions and considers alternatives in narrowing the gap(s) between expectations and actual performance	Coaches others on reflective practice
Actively seeks opportunities to improve	Designs and implements a learning plan, with prompting	Independently creates and implements a learning plan	Uses performance data to measure the effectiveness of the learning plan and, when necessary, improves it	Facilitates the design and implementation of learning plans for others
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Identifies and describes potential triggers for professionalism lapses	Demonstrates insight into professional behavior in routine situations	Demonstrates professional behavior in complex or stressful situations	Recognizes situations that may trigger professionalism lapses and intervenes to prevent lapses in self and others	Coaches others when their behavior fails to meet professional expectations
Describes when and how to appropriately report professionalism lapses, including strategies for addressing common barriers	Takes responsibility for own professionalism lapses	Recognizes need to seek help in managing and resolving complex ethical situations	Recognizes and utilizes appropriate resources for managing and resolving ethical dilemmas as needed (e.g., ethics consultations, literature	Identifies and seeks to address system-level factors that induce or exacerbate ethical problems or impede their
Demonstrates knowledge of the ethical principles underlying informed consent, surrogate decision making, advance directives, confidentiality, error disclosure, stewardship of limited resources, and related topics	Analyzes straightforward situations using ethical principles	Analyzes complex situations using ethical principles	review, risk management/legal consultation)	resolution

Professionalism 2: Accountability/Conscientiousness				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Takes responsibility for failure to complete tasks and responsibilities, identifies potential contributing factors, and describes strategies for ensuring timely task completion in the future  Responds promptly to	Performs tasks and responsibilities in a timely manner with appropriate attention to detail in routine situations  Recognizes situations that	Performs tasks and responsibilities in a timely manner with appropriate attention to detail in complex or stressful situations  Proactively implements	Recognizes situations that may impact others' ability to complete tasks and responsibilities in a timely manner	Takes ownership of system outcomes
requests or reminders to complete tasks and responsibilities	may impact own ability to complete tasks and responsibilities in a timely manner	strategies to ensure that the needs of patients, teams, and systems are met		
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Professionalism 3: Self-Awareness and Help-Seeking				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Recognizes status of personal and professional well-being, with assistance	Independently recognizes status of personal and professional well-being	With assistance, proposes a plan to optimize personal and professional well-being	Independently develops a plan to optimize personal and professional well-being	Coaches others when emotional responses or limitations in knowledge/ skills do not meet professional expectations
Recognizes limits in the knowledge/skills of self or team, with assistance	Independently recognizes limits in the knowledge/ skills of self or team and demonstrates appropriate help-seeking behaviors	With assistance, proposes a plan to remediate or improve limits in the knowledge/skills of self or team	Independently develops a plan to remediate or improve limits in the knowledge/skills of self or team	
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Interpersonal and Communication Skills 1: Patient and Family-Centered Communication				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Uses language and nonverbal behavior to demonstrate respect and establish rapport	Establishes a therapeutic relationship in straightforward encounters using active listening and clear language	Establishes a therapeutic relationship in challenging patient encounters	Easily establishes therapeutic relationships, with attention to patient/ family concerns and context, regardless of complexity	Mentors others in situational awareness and critical self-reflection to consistently develop positive therapeutic relationships
Identifies common barriers to effective communication (e.g., language, disability) while accurately communicating own role within the health care system	Identifies complex barriers to effective communication (e.g., health literacy, cultural)	When prompted, reflects on personal biases while attempting to minimize communication barriers	Independently recognizes personal biases while attempting to proactively minimize communication barriers	Role models self- awareness while identifying a contextual approach to minimize communication barriers
Identifies the need to adjust communication strategies based on assessment of patient/ family expectations and understanding of their health status and treatment options	Organizes and initiates communication with patient/family by introducing stakeholders, setting the agenda, clarifying expectations, and verifying understanding of the clinical situation	With guidance, sensitively and compassionately delivers medical information, elicits patient/family values, goals, and preferences, and acknowledges uncertainty and conflict	Independently, uses shared decision making to align patient/family values, goals, and preferences with treatment options to make a personalized care plan	Role models shared decision making in patient/family communication, including those with a high degree of uncertainty/conflict
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Interpersonal and Communication Skills 2: Interprofessional and Team Communication				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Respectfully requests a consultation	Clearly and concisely requests a consultation	Checks own understanding of consultant recommendations	Coordinates recommendations from different members of the health care team to optimize patient care	Role models flexible communication strategies that value input from all health care team members, resolving conflict when needed
Respectfully receives a consultation request	Clearly and concisely responds to a consultation request	Checks understanding of recommendations when providing consultation		
Uses language that values all members of the health care team	Communicates information effectively with all health care team members	Uses active listening to adapt communication style to fit team needs		
	Solicits feedback on performance as a member of the health care team	Communicates concerns and provides feedback to peers and learners	Communicates feedback and constructive criticism to superiors	Facilitates regular health care team-based feedback in complex situations
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				

Interpersonal and Communication Skills 3: Communication within Health Care Systems				
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Accurately records information in the patient record	Demonstrates organized diagnostic and therapeutic reasoning through notes in the patient record	Concisely reports diagnostic and therapeutic reasoning in the patient record	Communicates clearly, concisely, timely, and in an organized written form, including anticipatory guidance	Models feedback to improve others' written communication
Safeguards patient personal health information	Demonstrates accurate, timely, and appropriate use of documentation shortcuts  Documents required data in formats specified by institutional policy	Appropriately selects direct (e.g., telephone, inperson) and indirect (e.g., progress notes, text messages) forms of communication based on context	Achieves written or verbal communication (e.g., patient notes, email) that serves as an example for others to follow	Guides departmental or institutional communication around policies and procedures
Communicates through appropriate channels as required by institutional policy (e.g., patient safety reports, cell phone/pager usage)	Respectfully communicates concerns about the system	Uses appropriate channels to offer clear and constructive suggestions to improve the system	Initiates difficult conversations with appropriate stakeholders to improve the system	Facilitates dialogue regarding systems issues among larger community stakeholders (institution, health care system, field)
Comments:  Not Yet Completed Level 1				