The Collection of Groups Working Behind the Scenes to Develop and Launch EPAs

As the ABS prepares for the July 2023 launch of the 18 general surgery EPAs, a number of different groups have been involved in the development process.

ABS Board of Directors, ABS Specialty Boards, ABS Council Assessment and Education and Training Committees

These ABS governance structures approve, resource, and integrate across all ABS specialties the assessment tools and development strategies for EPA implementation.

Advisory Council

This Council involves representatives from key educational organizations including the ACGME, RRC, program director associations, and the ABS, and provides high-level oversight and integration of the EPA project as a national competency-based surgical education initiative.

Scope Council

This group defines the EPAs which form the foundation of each specialty that can be expected of all trainees in all programs, as framed by current training requirements, practice data, and demographic need.

Best Practices Working Group

This group gathers and evaluates input from pilot sites to inform ‘best practice’ strategies for EPA implementation in programs of varying types.

Revision Working Group

This group developed and later revised the initial five general surgery EPAs evaluated during the 2018-2020 pilot, including integrating them with the RRC-S General Surgery Milestones 2.0.

Writing Group

This group writes the full suite of EPAs as defined by the Scoping Council for each ABS specialty board, including mapping of the EPAs to ACGME milestones. There is a separate Writing Group for each ABS specialty area.

Development Task Force

This group defines and develops the compendium of materials that will be available to programs for faculty, resident, and program development to enable EPA implementation across the full spectrum of training programs.

Technology Platform Working Group

This group is involved in frequent and regular interfaces with the SIMPL Collaborative EPA app development team in designing the features of the mobile app that will be used for secure data collection and reporting dashboards.

Key Reactor Panel Reviews (including APDS, ARAS, EPA Program Champions, public comment)

Special reactor panel and reviewer groups, including evaluations for inclusion of appropriate DEI elements, medical writer review for consistency of language, and key constituent reactor panels, will join other the oversight groups in finalizing the EPAs once written for each specialty.

Medical Writer Review

DEI Oversight

Academic Product Oversight

This group oversees research and academic investigations of the project for assessment and improvement purposes, and will define and oversee ongoing critical evaluation of the project going forward.

For more information about Entrustable Professional Activities for general surgery, visit ABSurgery.org and click on the EPAs link.