

The Characteristics and Purpose of Resident Scholarship

Experts may present a variety of arguments to justify scholarship requirements. Yet all would agree on the central tenet that successful scholarship breeds successful physicians. In that spirit, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education should revise common resident scholarship requirements to establish a set of criteria defining scholarship, which would allow a broad range of activities while providing boundaries for learners and educators to reference.

Although Glassick’s criteria¹ address overarching features of all scholarship, we suggest a modification of those criteria to more specifically address the critical features of scholarship for residents. The TABLE summarizes 5 essential elements of scholarship that are of educational value for residents. Resident scholarship should begin with a focused, scholarly question, followed by a systematic search for existing knowledge on the topic. This should include a thorough search of the medical literature but may also include consultations with experts or collaboration with a medical librarian. The data-gathering process may differ depending on the type of scholarly project. Data may be from clinical or laboratory research projects, it may include published studies, or it could be expert opinion about a specific clinical conundrum. The resident will then analyze the accumulated data and synthesize an answer to the original question. Finally, no scholarship is complete

until it is presented to peers in an appropriate, high-quality format.

Although these criteria can be applied to Boyer’s 4 types of scholarship² (the scholarship of teaching was added to the TABLE for illustration), we suggest that resident scholarship should focus on the scholarship of discovery. Discovery is the foundation on which the other types of scholarship is built. By participating in the scholarship of discovery, residents learn the necessary skills to critically read medical literature, determine the relevance of new knowledge, and appropriately apply that knowledge.

Not only does a resident project need to meet the scholarship requirements but the end result of the resident’s participation should also make him or her a better physician. The purpose of resident scholarship is, first and foremost, to teach the skills of critical analysis and application of medical evidence to patient care. A resident who only gathers data through a short survey fielded to a group of ambulatory patients has participated in research but has not learned skills that make him or her a better clinician. We encourage collaboration among residents to spread the work and encourage conversations about the process. However, overdilution of the experience should be avoided. Each resident must be an active member of the scholarly team and come away a better clinician. For resident scholarship to achieve its goal, each resident must gain tacit understanding of most, if not all, of the elements of scholarship.

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TABLE	THE 5 CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOLARSHIP THAT ARE EDUCATIONALLY VALUABLE FOR RESIDENTS			
	Case Report	Research	Performance Improvement Project	Scholarship of Teaching
Begin with a scholarly question	What does this case add to the existing literature?	How are these variables related?	Can “X” outcome be improved by making “Y” change?	What is the evidence-based way to treat this condition?
Conduct a systematic search for existing knowledge	Literature search, discussions with experts	Literature search focused on prior research in the area	Literature search, discussions with peers, existing best practices	Literature search prioritizing systematic reviews and guidelines
Gather data	Collate previous cases, comparing and contrasting	Outcomes data generated through scientific method	Outcomes data generated through scientific method	Collate data, comparing strength of evidence
Analyze and synthesize the data	Generate lessons learned, advice for other providers	Statistical analysis of relationship between variables	Analysis (may not be statistical) of relationship between variables	Determine best evidence-based answer and strength of recommendation
Present findings	Published article, poster, or oral presentation	Published article, poster, or oral presentation	Presentation, could result in publication	Presentation to learner audience of choice

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References

- 1 Glassick CE, Huber MT, Maeroff GI. *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; 1997.
- 2 Boyer EL. *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; 1990.