



CAAHEP 2020 Standards

Proficiency vs. Competency

In the 2020 Standards, the curricular requirements specify the required sonographic examinations to be performed in the clinical setting and are termed Clinical Competencies. For some concentrations, there is a curricular statement listing required Proficiencies. During the development of the Standards, surveys were conducted to determine examinations that were frequently performed versus infrequently performed in the programs' clinical affiliates. The exams that were infrequently performed were created to be proficiencies.

To help programs have a better understanding of the difference, the following information is presented.

Proficiency requirements were created to provide students instruction and foundation on how to perform the examination for sonographic examinations that are either not performed in particular geographic regions or are lower in volume in the clinical setting. The purpose is to provide a foundation for the examinations with the need for further education or experience either while within the program or upon employment that skill is required.

Proficiency – a pre-clinical application used for students to demonstrate skills for which there are limited or no clinical resources for developing competence. It may be used as a pre-clinical competency technique or tool to assure the student is prepared for clinical experiences.

Proficiencies can be performed in the simulated lab or clinical setting if your clinical affiliates offer the examinations.

The expectations are:

- The student has been provided the didactic or theory content in advance
- The student knows the expected protocol for that examination
- Patient preparation, education, and any contraindications
- Performance of 2-D imaging, Doppler (as applicable), measurements (as applicable), and diagnostic criteria (normal from abnormal)
- Document evaluation or assessment to include, but not limited to:
 - Image optimization
 - Acquisition of anatomy
 - Doppler, measurements, special maneuvers, etc.
 - Other as applicable to the exam or workflow in a clinical setting (worksheet, preliminary sonographer findings, etc.)
- The evaluation or assessment document for each student is maintained by the program.

Clinical Competency or **Clinical Competent** – is the demonstration of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes that meet minimum requirements for the performance of specific patient-focused exams or procedures accomplished within the clinical setting based on medically requested examinations.

The list of clinical competencies is the required examinations to be performed independently (under supervision) by the student in the clinical setting on a patient referred for the medical examination. The clinical competency curricular statement for each concentration lists the minimal expectations on the parameters that are to be evaluated and documented in the evaluation.

Example:

- 1) Identification of anatomical and relational structures
- 2) Differentiation of normal from pathological/disease process
- 3) Image optimization techniques in grayscale
- 4) Image optimization techniques in Doppler (where applicable)
- 5) Measurement techniques

Specific to Adult Cardiac Concentration

Proficiency of stress or contrast-enhanced echocardiography – the expectation aligns with the information on proficiencies. In the simulated lab, there is no expectation to induce cardiac stress through exercise, inject contrast or use any pharmaceuticals. The expectation is for the student to know the indications and contraindications, protocols, special functions on the equipment to be used, and simulate the protocol of the examination for pre-and post-imaging without the maneuvers (stress exercise, contrast, etc.).

Clinical Competency

Contrast-enhanced echocardiogram (observed) - The JRC-DMS recognizes not all clinical affiliates will permit students to participate in the scanning, or some geographic areas do not perform a high volume of contrast-enhanced echocardiography (same is true of stress echocardiography); therefore, the minimum expectation is for students to be assigned to a facility in which they can observe a contrast-enhanced echocardiogram. The documented evaluation is program prerogative; however, it should be reflective of the knowledge required of the student that aligns with the special considerations of contrast imaging.