


Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education 

## PD Guide to the Accreditation Cycle: Part 2, The Site Visit

New Program Directors Pre-Course  
2008 ACGME Annual Educational Conference  
Grapevine, Texas

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### Session Overview:

- The ACGME and the site visit
- Preparing for the site visit
- Practical advice for preparation and the day of the visit
- The Site Visitor's perspective
- A sense of what's to come

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### Program and Institutional Overview

- 45% of programs undergo review each year (2,000 of these preceded by a site visit)
- 3.6 year average between reviews
- 5,500 citations annually
- 12,000 residents interviewed annually as part of the site visit




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### Program and Institutional Overview (cont.)

- ❑ 2004 to 2006, ACGME surveyed all residents/fellows in accredited programs
- ❑ 2007 new resident survey format, programs are surveyed every two years
- ❑ Programs with fewer than four residents are exempted (Site Visitors ask the survey questions during the site visit)
- ❑ 10 million procedures in the ACGME procedure logs

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### Site Visit to Site Visit – An Ideal Time Line

- ❑ On-going
  - Know changes in requirements and the site visit process
  - Sources: ACGME web site, DIO News, ACGME Bulletin, RC/IRC Staff, Field Activities Staff
- ❑ Internal Review at mid-point between last review and next visit date
  - Involves broad, representative group
  - Candidly explores strengths and weaknesses
  - Identifies areas for improvement (addressed by the time of the next visit)

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### Site Visit to Site Visit – An Ideal Time Line

- ❑ 6 to 18 months before the visit
  - Residents complete ACGME resident survey (all programs with 4 or more, surveyed every two years)
  - ACGME expects programs to reach a 70% level of total responses
  - Aggregated results are ONLY available to program and DIO with 70% response rate
  - Intent: (1) focus resident interview; (2) identify serious non-compliance with duty hour standards for RC follow-up

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## Site Visit to Site Visit – An Ideal Time Line

- ❑ DIO involvement is important
  - Requests for changes in the site visit date
  - PIF review
  - Actions that require DIO approval (new programs, complement changes, requests for voluntary withdrawal)

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## Visit to Visit An Ideal Time Line

- ❑ 110-120 days before the visit electronic communication will be sent to the Program Director, announcing the site visit date, Site Visitor assigned and their contact information
- ❑ A copy of this communication will also be sent to the DIO
- ❑ The full, hard copy announcement letter will arrive via US MAIL

**Begin PIF preparation**

- You can start earlier; but be sure to use the “current version”
- If you're part of an Internal Medicine Program you are still required to submit the PIF via their instructions

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## Requests for Changes in the Site Visit Date or the Site Visitor

1. Program staff should contact Field Activities staff within 14 days of receiving the site visit notification blast email
2. Date change policy seeks to be fair to all programs
3. First seek stand-in or work it out within the week or sequence
4. For dependent subspecialties, date changes are coordinated by the office of the core program director
5. Call Ingrid Philibert if you think the Site Visitor may have a conflict of interest
6. Late requests, DIO approval a must, fee may be assessed

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### Additional Hints....

- Have assistants available
- Have requested documentation available
- Resident's participation
  - *Must be peer selected or all depending on program size*
  - *No beepers if at all possible*
  - *No post residency chiefs*
  - *Not "prepared" to answer question – Site Visitor can tell*

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### PIF Hints

- Filling Out the PIF
  - *Answer questions clearly, briefly, directly*
  - *Paginated correctly*
  - *No extra attachments*
  - *No binders, staples, or large clips*
  - *Check for grammar and spelling errors*

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### Additional PIF Hints...

- Ask several people to read the PIF and help you fix internal inconsistencies
- Common inconsistencies Site Visitors have seen:
  - *# residents in the program*
  - *Block diagrams*
  - *# months on rotation vs narrative*
  - *# procedures/resident vs program totals*
  - *Faculty lists and CV's*
  - *Narrative should agree with data/blocks*
  - *Be direct and to the point when answering questions!*

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## What Happens on the Visit Day? The Site Visitor Will...

- Explain the survey process to PD, residents, & others
- Clarify, confirm, verify, and sometimes help correct PIF - it needs to be accurate!
- Meet with:
  - Program Director, residents, faculty, administrators
- At times: Tour areas of the facilities




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## Who Are the Field Staff?

Made up of...

- 30 individuals
- 6 PhDs, 23 MDs, 1 DMD
- Significant years of experience (most senior 21 years, 7 more with 10 or more years, 6 more with over 5 years)
- All are employed by the ACGME

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## Field Staff- Past (1982)




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## 2007 Field Staff- Present




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## Day in the Life... Of a Site Visitor

- Contact program to set up the day's agenda
- Reviews program requirements/PIF (note areas for clarification or correction)
- Travel to your city and conduct the visit
- Write and submit the report
- Contact next set of programs
- Review for next programs (2-3 a week)




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## What Goes Into the Site Visit Report?

- Review of program history
- Review of previous citations & actions taken to correct them
- Review of institutional issues/citations
- Clarification/verification of the PIF (based on interviews with faculty, residents, program director and others)
- Clarification of resident complaints if any have been submitted to the ACGME Complaint Officer
- Clarification of residents' response to ACGME survey

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## Another Take on the Competencies Professionalism: Ours

- ACGME Expectations for the Site Visit
  - Conducted in accord with established policies
  - Provide accurate, meaningful data
  - Verify/clarify information in the PIF
  - Address all relevant aspects of the program
  - Contain no recommendation for RRC action
  - Are educational and non-adversarial
  - Inform RRC accreditation decisions

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## Professionalism: Yours

- Continuously demonstrated
  - Shows on the day of the visit
- PIF accurately reflects the program
  - No embellishing - Site Visitors can tell
- Don't ask, "How did we do?"
  - Site visitor cannot answer, he/she is not the decision-maker
- Don't "prepare" your residents before the visit
  - Site visitors find out
- Don't grill them after the visit

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## Feedback, We Depend on it

- Feedback critical to improving ACGME field staff performance
- Feedback is collected via on-line survey
- Surveys are aggregated, comments are scanned and, if warranted, receive phone follow-up
- If the experience with the Site Visitor did not go well or was wonderful please let the Department of Field Activities know

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## Despite Best Intentions, There are Times When Things Just Go Wrong!

- Have staff available for:
  - Last-minute corrections
  - Additional information needed
  - Calling faculty, residents, others in case of schedule changes, delays
- Be flexible
- Stay calm



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## After the Site Visit

- Congratulate yourself and your entire team!



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