

Summer 2008

Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) Annual Meeting

Darlene Metter, MD, RRC Chair and Missy Fleming, PhD, RRC Executive Director gave a presentation at the SNM Annual Meeting, which was held June 12-18, 2008 in New Orleans, LA. Their presentations are available on the Nuclear Medicine webpage under Program Resources:

http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/navPages/nav_200.asp

Preparing for a Site Visit

To help ensure a successful site visit, program directors are advised to prepare thoroughly. The ACGME Field Staff recommend that program directors should be aware of changes in requirements and the site visit process; the ACGME web site, DIO News, ACGME Bulletin, and the RRC/IRC Executive Director are good resources for the most current information. Program directors should also ensure that an internal review occurs at the mid-point between the last review and the next site visit date.

Further pre-planning for a site visit should ensure that the program director, Chair, DIO, key faculty members, and peer-selected residents (as a group) are available for interviews. Program directors should plan appropriately for the site visitor to review documents, tour the facility, and allow time for clarification and concluding the session. Site visitors expect that the

education and training competencies are aligned, and that goals and objectives for the program and for each rotation are sequenced in ACGME competency format.

Program directors are encouraged to invest time and effort to produce a consistent, fully completed, and accurate PIF.

“Red Flags” Help Programs Recognize Potential Issues

In the February 2008 issue of the [ACGME-Bulletin](#):

(http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/bulletin-e/e_bulletin02_08.pdf), an article entitled “*Nine ‘Red Flags’ in Accreditation Site Visits and Reviews*,” written by members of the ACGME Field Staff, provides observations that may raise questions about program quality and compliance with program and institutional requirements. This article may be of particular interest to programs preparing for upcoming site visits.

Internal Reviews

The sponsoring institution is required to conduct an internal review of each residency program under its purview at approximately the midpoint of the accreditation cycle (the time between the date of the most recent accreditation action and the next scheduled site visit). The institution assembles an internal review committee, which must include at least one faculty member and at least one resident, who cannot be from the program that is being reviewed. The process involves interviews with the program director, key faculty members, peer-selected residents

from each level of training, and other individuals, as appropriate. Frequently, it includes review of data, such as how the program has addressed the citations from the last accreditation survey.

The goal of the internal review is a thorough and candid assessment that identifies the program's strengths and opportunities for improvement, and allows resolution of any concerns or problems before the program's next accreditation site visit. The responsibility for timing and completion of the internal review lies with the sponsoring institution. At the same time, program directors and residents should be familiar with the process because they may be asked to participate in future internal reviews.

Neither the site visitor nor the RRC reviewer sees the data from the internal review, which is not included with the program information form (PIF). Verification of the internal review during the site visit covers the date, the participants, and the review which is presented to the institution's graduate medical education committee (GMEC). In order to ensure an unbiased assessment of program strengths and opportunities for improvement, site visitors verify that the internal review was completed in a timely manner, but they do not look at the results of the internal review.

Program Review

The RRC meets twice a year, usually in the spring and in the fall to review programs. These meetings are about six months apart. Before each meeting, two RRC members are assigned to review each program. The paperwork is distributed over a two to three month period prior to the RRC meeting, and RRC members are expected to complete their reviews within 30 days of receiving a program. All reviews must be received in the ACGME office eight weeks prior to the meeting to allow incorporation into the

reviewer book. The reviewer book is sent to the RRC members before the meeting so that RRC members may read all the reviews, and compare the two reviews for each program.

After the RRC meeting, the ACGME staff prepare the notification letters for the program directors regarding the accreditation decisions reached by the RRC. Before these are posted on ADS, however, the chair of the RRC has to review each communication and compare it with a worksheet generated during the RRC meeting, make corrections as necessary, and then certify the entire process by signature. This process is designed to ensure that program citations and final accreditation decisions reflect the intent of the RRC.

Due to the time required to complete this process, some site visits that occur in the month or so just before an RRC meeting will likely not be reviewed at that meeting. These program reviews will probably be delayed until the next RRC meeting six months later.

The RRC asks program directors to be mindful of this potentially lengthy interval between a site visit and the notification of a final accreditation decision.

ACGME Resident Survey

Every two years, all programs with four or more residents complete the ACGME Resident Survey. Results of this survey are made available to the program and the DIO for programs with a 70% or greater response rate. Programs with less than 70% response rates are resurveyed the following year.

The Resident Survey is used by the site visitor to spotlight key areas of concern as well as program strengths that the residents identified; the site visitor also uses the Resident Survey to help determine serious non-compliance with duty hour standards. Alternatively, compliance with duty hours, adequate supervision, and limiting excessive service are noted as key factors that contribute to a high-quality learning

environment for residents.

The RRC has requested that site visitors provide more detailed information regarding the verification of negative comments made in the numerical or comment sections of the Resident Survey, specifically, when the site visitor notes that a concern is “not an issue” or “could not be verified.”

Results of resident surveys can be used as heuristic tools by program directors to improve the quality of residency education. National averages of resident surveys can be viewed on the ACGME website www.acgme.org, within the ADS section, and should be reviewed by individual programs during annual and mid-cycle internal reviews so that resident issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

Program Evaluation by
Fellows:

Keeping Responses Confidential When There is Only One Fellow

The ACGME requirement that fellows provide confidential evaluations of their program can be a challenge for programs with fewer than two fellows. Across specialties, program directors have arrived at creative methods to maintain confidentiality. Fellow evaluations may be collected over a period of a few years and grouped data can then be reported every two to three years. The program director's challenge is to balance the program's need for feedback in order to make necessary program improvements versus fellow confidentiality that can result in delays of valuable feedback. Alternatively, the program coordinator or DIO (not directly involved in fellow education), may solicit feedback from the fellows and residents who rotate on the service, and collate and report general findings to the program director.

“Program Director Guide to the Common Program Requirements”

To help clarify the meaning and expectations of the common program requirements, the ACGME has developed the “Program Director Guide to the Common Program Requirements” which is available on www.acgme.org. The guide has been very helpful to both new and experienced program directors. Please email comments and suggestions to: Guide@acgme.org.

Accreditation Data System

The ACGME's online Accreditation Data System (ADS) alerts the RRC to changes in programs. Program directors should update ADS to:

- Notify the RRC of any changes in their program (i.e., new program director or adding or deleting a site)
- Request a change which needs RRC approval (i.e., an increase in resident complement). The request for a permanent increase in the resident complement must include a copy of the institutional data for all participating sites. Only one academic or one calendar year of data is necessary.
- Submit the academic year “Annual Update” (ADS staff will e-mail the deadline for updating faculty and resident rosters)
- Prepare for an upcoming site visit (ADS will populate many sections of the PIF with the data entered)

Send your questions or concerns to the ADS representative for Nuclear Medicine, Timothy Goldberg at tgoldberg@acgme.org.

Description of a DIO

DIO refers to your institution's Designated Institutional Official. This individual has the

authority and responsibility for all ACGME-accredited GME programs. The DIO signs the PIF and also receives a copy of the letter of notification that includes a program's accreditation status. The DIO is required to co-sign most correspondence between the institution and the ACGME.

Voluntary Withdrawal Requests

Programs must now enter requests to voluntarily withdraw accreditation (VW) using ADS only.

Programs initiate the request by answering a series of questions, including the proposed effective date, the reason for program closure, and presenting a plan to place any active residents in other programs. The request is emailed to the DIO for approval. After the DIO/GMEC approves the request, the RRC staff designee is emailed. After the program receives official notification from the RRC and the accreditation status is changed to VW, the request will automatically be removed from the report.

CI Pilot Projects

The Committee on Innovation (CI) announced a set of duty hour and competency pilots in Fall 2007. Ingrid Philibert, PhD, Senior Vice President, Department of Field Activities, quoted from the first formal report of the committee, which was approved at the September 2007, meeting of the ACGME Board of Directors: "The ultimate aim of these pilots is to test proposed revisions to the common duty hour standards and refinements to the approaches for teaching and assessing the general competencies to ensure they are based on valid and 'actionable' evidence of their effectiveness."

More information regarding the pilot projects is available on the ACGME website under Innovation/CI. Nuclear Medicine programs

are encouraged to apply to participate in the CI Pilot projects. For questions, contact Mary Joyce Johnston in the Department of Field Activities at 312/755-5013.

ACGME Learning Portfolio

A number of resources are available for programs that want to become more familiar with the ACGME Learning Portfolio (ALP). http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/portfolio/cbpac_faqs.pdf: The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (updated April 2008) include a description of the portfolio and its benefits to both residents and program directors, in addition to common concerns about using an online portfolio system. An updated timeline for development provides additional information on the alpha and beta testing phases. http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/portfolio/cbpac_revisedtimeline.pdf. A narrated demonstration of the portfolio can be found at <http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/portfolio/AlphaDemonstration.wmv>.

More information is available on the ACGME Learning Portfolio website: http://www.acgme.org/acwebsite/portfolio/learn_cbpac.asp

Innovation and Experimentation at the Program Level

Program directors may wish to implement an innovative project. The [Program Experimentation and Innovative Projects Proposal Form](#) (<http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/navpages/ProgramExperimentationInnovativeProjectsProposalForm.doc>) is located on the Nuclear Medicine website. The DIO must sign the proposal indicating review and approval of the sponsoring institution's Graduate Medical Education Committee. Proposals should not exceed five pages in length; attach additional documents as numbered appendices.

ACGME Educational Conference 2008 Recap

Each year, the ACGME Annual Educational Conference provides a venue for graduate medical educators to learn more about the accreditation process and ways to enhance residency program quality related to ACGME initiatives, including general competencies, educational outcome assessment, and duty hours. This year's conference theme "Building Community, Improving Quality" emphasized how better education and better patient care can occur when individuals in diverse roles work together toward shared goals.

Post-conference information is available at:
http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/meetings/me_EducConf_08.asp

Save the date for the 2009 ACGME Annual Educational Conference, March 5-8, in Grapevine, TX.

RRC Meeting and Agenda Closing Date

Meeting: Nov 14, 2008
Agenda Closing: Oct 3, 2008

Meeting: May 2, 2009
Agenda Closing: Apr 4, 2008

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