2015 ACGME Conference Recap:
The ACGME Self Study: Key Roles for Program Coordinators

Adapted from original presentation by Ingrid Philibert, PhD, MBA
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ACC.15 – Training Administrator Sessions
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The ACGME Self-Study: Key Roles for Program Coordinators

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Disclosures and Objectives

Disclosures
• Employed by the ACGME; no other items requiring disclosure

Objectives
• Describe what is new about the self-study and the 10-year site visit
• Discuss the elements of the self-study
• Explore the concept of continuous improvement
• Describe the role of the program coordinator
• Offer practical suggestions for program coordinator involvement in self-Study preparation and process
The Next Accreditation System

• Annual data collection and review
• **A Self-Study and a site visit every 10 years**
• Increased focus on continuous improvement
  • Institutional oversight
  • **Ongoing assessment and improvement using the Annual Program Evaluation**
• Programs with a status of Continued Accreditation free to innovate
The Program Self-Study

- A comprehensive review of the program
  - Information on how the program creates an effective learning and working environment and how this leads to desired educational outcomes
  - Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and ongoing plans for improvement
- **12-18 months later:** the 10-year site visit
  - Time lag is by design to give programs time to make improvements
Rationale

• A self-study without a concurrent site visit allows for a frank and forthright review of the program

• 12 to 18-month time lag between self-study and 10-year visit allows programs to make improvements
  • Program communicates improvements to Review Committee before 10-year site visit, paired with observation on program aims and context from self-study summary
  • Program can provide addendum to summary document as needed

• Planned: Comprehensive assessment of the utility and benefits of the self-study approach
“The Scoop”: A Pilot of an Added Voluntary Visit after Completing the Self-Study

• The Self-Study Pilot Visit
  • Field staff with special added training review and offer feedback on the self-study to further progress toward improvement and meeting aspirational goals
  • Not an accreditation visit
  • Program volunteers for the visit

• Programs Eligible for the Pilot
  • Phase I programs with an initial 10-year site visit between April 2015 and July 2016
  • ACGME will await results from initial pilot before extending to other Phase I programs and/or Phase II programs
Aims

• Learn if a “non-accreditation” site visit with feedback accelerates program self-improvement
• Learn about effective approaches for conducting the self-study

Participation Process

• Completely voluntary; ACGME contacts eligible programs and asks if interested in participating

Concurrent

• Small delay for programs not identified as alpha programs (alpha programs have been notified)
• Other programs with an early 10-year visit also get a small delay in the start date for their self-study
• ACGME will communicate self-study start date
## A Time Line, Program with July 2015 10-Year Visit
(Voluntary segments in shown in red)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>ACGME</th>
<th>Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>DFA sends notice to begin self study</td>
<td>Conducts Self Study</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asks program to volunteer for self-study pilot visit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uploads self-study summary to ADS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug./Sept. 2015</td>
<td>If Yes: Self-study pilot visit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Team sends report to program</td>
<td>Program can update self-study summary if desired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Sends notice of 10-year site visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016 (12 days before 10-year visit)</td>
<td>Updates ADS data, uploads summary of improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>10-year site visit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter 2016/17 meeting</td>
<td>Review Committee reviews 10-year visit and self-study</td>
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After the Self Study: Program Prepares Self-Study Summary (All Programs)

• Brief (4 to 5 pages, ~ 2300 word) summary of key dimensions of the Self-Study
  • Aims
  • External environmental assessment (Opportunities and Threats)
  • Process of the Annual Program Evaluation and the Self-Study
  • Learning that occurred during the self-study (Optional!)
  • Information on areas for improvement identified in the self-study not included in the Summary
• Summary is uploaded into ADS

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The Self-Study Pilot Visit
(Only Programs that Volunteer)

• Visit is based on the program’s self-study summary
• Information on areas for improvement shared verbally only by program leaders during the site visit
• A specially trained team of 2 site visitors
  • Different team from the 10-year site visit
• Team offers verbal feedback
  • Dialogue on strengths and areas/suggestions for improvement the program identified in its self-study
• Team prepares written report and shares with program
  • Report is NOT shared with the Review Committee
• Program may update its self-study summary in response to the feedback

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The 10-Year Accreditation Site Visit (All Programs)

- The 12- to 18-month period is by design to allow programs implement improvements

- Different team of site visitors

- A “PIF-Less” Visit
  - Program update their self-study summary and provides information ONLY on the improvements that were realized from their self-study
    - No request for information on areas that have not been resolved
  - Team provides verbal feedback
    - Key strengths and suggestions for improvement
  - Team prepares a written report for the Review Committee
Review Committee Review of the 10-Year Visit (All Programs)

- Available to the Review Committee
  - ADS Data
  - The program’s summary from the self-study 12 to 18 months earlier
  - The program’s summary of improvements achieved as a result of the self-study
  - No data collected on areas still in need of improvement
  - The site visitors’ report from the 10-year site visit (a full accreditation visit)

- Review of program aims, context and the improvements from the self-study allows the RC to assess the effectiveness of the self-study, with data on the improvements achieved as 1 measure of effectiveness
Review Committee Actions (All Programs)

- Review Committee provides a Letter of Notification from the Full Accreditation Site Visit
  - Citations
  - Areas for improvement
- Review Committee provides feedback on the Self-Study taking into consideration
  - Program aims and context
  - Improvements reported and verified during the 10-year visit
  - Effectiveness of the self-study, based on the improvements the program reported it made as a result of its self-study
- No accreditation impact for initial feedback on the self-study

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Self-Study Elements
Self-Study Scope

• Assesses current performance and ongoing improvement effort

• **Initial period: since the program’s last accreditation review**
  • Ultimately, a 10-year interval

• Reviews improvement activities, successes achieved, and areas in need of improvement
  • Uses data from successive Annual Program Evaluations, ACGME data, other relevant information
Self-Study Objectives

• **Assess** compliance and improvement using data from prior Annual Program Evaluations and data collected/aggregated for the self-study

• **Focus on**
  • Program Strengths
  • Program Areas for Improvement

• **Consider**
  • Program Aims
  • The program’s external environment
    • Environmental Opportunities
    • Environmental Threats

• **Track** ongoing improvements and the success of actions taken
New Areas: Program Aims and Opportunities and Threats

• Program aims
  • Should be realistic
  • Evaluate effectiveness in meeting aims
  • Assess relevant initiatives and their outcomes

• Opportunities and Threats
  • Assess how factors and contexts external to the program (eg, institutional, local, regional and national) that affect the program
  • Opportunities: Factors that favor the program, that the program may take advantage of
  • Threats: Factors that pose risks

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Defining Program Aims

- Set aims as part of the annual program evaluation

- Relevant considerations
  - Who are our residents/fellows?
  - What do we prepare them for?
    - Fellowship
    - Academic practice
    - Leadership and other roles
  - Who are the patients/populations we care for?
Strengths and Areas for Improvements

- Strengths and Areas for Improvements identified by:
  - Citations, areas for improvement and other information from ACGME
  - The Annual Program Evaluation
  - Other program/institutional data sources
- Data on improvements should pertain to the period since the program’s last accreditation review
Enhancing the Definition of “Areas for Improvement”

- Negative aspects that **detract from the value of the program or place it at a disadvantage**.
  - What factors within your control detract from the ability to maintain a high-performing program?
  - What areas need improvement to accomplish objectives or enhance or supplement your existing strengths?
  - What does your program lack (expertise in a certain subspecialty, a type of technology, access to a particular patient population, faculty with interest and skill in research)?
  - Is there a lack of some types of resources; is the institution constrained in its capacity to provide support?
Defining “Opportunities”

• Opportunities are external attractive factors that, if acted upon, will contribute to the program flourishing.

• What are your capabilities for further evolving the program; how can you capitalize on them?

• Has there been recent change in your immediate context that that creates an opportunity for your program?

• Are these opportunities ongoing, or is there a narrow window for them? How critical is the timing?
Defining “Threats”

• Threats include external factors that affect the program.

• While the program cannot control them, beneficial to have plans to address them if they occur.
  • What factors beyond your control place your program at risk? What are changes in residents’ specialty choice, regulation, or other factors that may affect the future success of your program?

• Are there challenges or unfavorable trends in your immediate context that may affect your program?
  • E.g. faculty burdened with heavy clinical load that prevents effective teaching and mentorship
Benefits of a Focus on Program Aims

• Suggests a relevant dimension of the program:
  • What kinds of graduates do we produce for what kinds of practice settings and roles?

• Allows for a more “tailored” approach to creating a learning environment
  • Focus on specific aims can produce highly desirable “graduates” that match patient and healthcare system needs\(^1\)

• Enhances the focus on functional capabilities of graduating residents
  • Fits with a milestones-based approach to assessment


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Benefit of a Focus on Environmental Context

• Facilitates assessment of the program’s performance in its local environment

• What are program strengths?
  • What should definitely be continued (important question in an environment of limited resources)

• What are areas for improvement?
  • Prioritize by relevance to program aims, compliance, importance to stakeholders

• Useful for all programs, particularly high-performing programs: “What will take our program to the next level?”
The Self-Study Process
Who Should Organize and Conduct the Self-Study?

• Not defined by ACGME

• **Members of the Program Evaluation Committee are the logical choice**
  • Natural extension of improvement process through the Annual Program Evaluation

• PEC requirements¹
  • The PEC must be composed of at least 2 faculty members and at least 1 resident\(^{(\text{core})}\);
  • must have a written description of responsibilities\(^{(\text{core})}\)

• **PEC Membership may be expanded for the Self-Study**

¹ ACGME Common Program Requirements, Effective July 2013
The Program Evaluation Committee

a) must be composed of at least two program faculty members and should include at least one resident; (Core)

b) have a written description....; and

c) participate actively in:
   • should participate actively in:
   • planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating educational activities of the program; (Detail)
   • reviewing and making recommendations for revision of competency-based curriculum goals and objectives; (Detail)
   • addressing areas of non-compliance with ACGME standards; and, (Detail)
   • reviewing the program annually using evaluations of faculty, residents, and others, as specified below. (Detail)

Yes resident members

Interface with CCC

Citations and actions to address
Self-Study Data Gathering

- Annual Program Evaluation data, ACGME Resident and Faculty Survey data, other program and institutional data

- Focus on data gathering as a learning exercise

- Evaluate strengths and areas for improvement

- Explore opportunities and threats

- Reflect stakeholder (residents, faculty, and relevant others) participation, input and perspective

- Data provide evidence to support conclusions
Self-Study Data Gathering (2)

• Interviews
  • Verify and validate data
  • Identify areas that have been resolved and areas and priorities for improvement
  • Identify program strengths
  • Review and revise program aims
  • Assess and validate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
Range of Potential Annual Evaluation and Self-Study Inputs

- End of rotation evaluations
- Narrative input from interviews, focus groups
- Curriculum
- Faculty Survey
- Resident Survey
- Milestone Data
- ITE
- Board Performance
- Citations and Responses
- Case Logs
- If done, Special Review and other GMEC Reviews

Program Evaluation Committee

Program Performance and Improvement

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The Shewhart PDSA Cycle

- PLAN – prepare the change
- DO – implement the change
- STUDY – monitor and analyze impact of change
- ACT – revise and standardize the change
Identifying Areas for Improvement

- Based on data and facts
- Focus on learners, patients and other stakeholders
  - Prioritize (cannot improve everything at once)
- Systems Thinking
  - Program and institutional systems relevant to resident education and the area needing improvement
- Process Thinking
  - Processes: sets of related tasks used to accomplish something
  - Processes are focal areas for improvement
Tracking Improvements

- Design and Implement solutions
  - Identify individual or group that will be responsible
  - Identify and secure resources
  - Timeline
- Follow-up is key: ensure all issues addressed
- Documentation to facilitate ongoing tracking
  - Example: A simple spreadsheet recording improvements achieved and ongoing priorities
  - Record over multiple years of improvement
# Sample Improvement Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area for Improvement</th>
<th>Issue(s)</th>
<th>Improvement Plan</th>
<th>Group Responsible</th>
<th>Target Completion Date</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Dissemination of Goals and Objectives | • Posted on Intranet (5 clicks to reach)  
• Not accessed  
• Not known how or how much this is used by residents and faculty | • Educate residents and faculty  
• More prominent placement on Intranet (1-click)  
• Make accessible/viewable in every setting  
• Integrate with resident formative evaluations | 2 residents and 1 faculty member (names) – give them credit for work | June XXXX for implementation at start of new academic year | Quarterly survey regarding effectiveness of new approach  
• Spot check |
Components of an Effective Self-Study

- Fits the nature of the program and its aims
- Ensures effective evaluation of entire program with positive impact
- Engages program leaders and others
  - Faculty, residents, fellows, coordinators, staff
  - Potentially: graduates, institutions hiring them
- Is efficient in its execution
- Reporting focused on
  - Improvements achieved
  - Tracking of action items for future improvement

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Resident Participation in the Self-Study

- Resident participation critical:
  - They are the beneficiaries of the educational program
  - They have first hand knowledge of areas that need improvement

- Double benefit:
  - Residents help improve their own education
  - Resident participation in “educational QI effort” can be used to meet the requirement for resident involvement in quality and safety improvement
Coordinated Self-Study for Core and Subspecialty Programs

- Coordination of curriculum and program resources
  - Needs of core and subspecialty programs taken into account
  - Subspecialties can access to core resources
  - Core oversight of fellowships
- Assess common strengths, areas for improvement
  - Action plans for areas for improvement
- Increase efficiency
  - Less time and resources spent, coordinated collection and review of data
Organizing the Self-Study for a Core Program and its Dependent Subspecialty Programs

• Effective: Individuals with interest and the most knowledge about improvement efforts

• Efficient: Linking the Self-Study to existing structure for identifying and prioritizing areas for improvement, and tracking action plans and success

• Coordinated: Identifying common areas for improvement across programs that can be considered and addressed collectively to conserve resources and maximize impact
The Self-Study Summary

- A brief document prepared by the program
- ~5-7 pages for core program, less for subspecialties
- Focus: key Self-Study dimensions
  - Aims
  - Opportunities and Threats
  - Self-study process
    - Who was involved, how were date collected and interpreted
    - Evidence of ongoing improvement through sequential Annual Program Evaluations
Key Roles for the Program Coordinator
Key Roles for the Program Coordinator

- Ensure regular, accurate ADS Updates
- Record/aggregate data and improvement realized via the Annual Program Evaluation
  - Participate in the annual program evaluation
  - Provide input from the coordinator’s perspective
  - Track action plans for areas for improvement
- Maintain a multi-year record of improvements and areas still being worked on
- Coordinate self-study data collection processes, including surveys, interview, focus groups
Key Roles for the Program Coordinator (con’t)

• Maintain self-study data
• Provide input into self-study
• Coordinate self-study
• Coordinate planning the 10-year site visit with the assigned lead field representative
• Coordinate activities on the site visit day
• Provide input on the site visit day
I've always wondered why you decided to be a dog...

I was fooled by the job description...
Information and Education Plan

- Self-Study Sessions at AEC
  - Appointment time at AEC for programs with an early self-study (IP and Field Staff with Self-Study pilot experience)
- Planned Webinars:
  - New approach to Self-Study and 10-Year Site Visit, Self-Study Basics, PDSA, program evaluation
  - Article on rationale for approach in June issue of JGME
  - Self-study web page to go live in March
- “Self-Study” mailbox for questions and feedback (ACGME monitors)

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Questions?