**ACGME**

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Introduction

Program directors must work closely with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in order to ensure that their programs are compliant with requirements and meeting standards for accreditation. This chapter provides an overview of how the ACGME interacts with programs to monitor curriculum, resident milestones, and the clinical work environment and helps program directors keep track of important tasks related to accreditation. The [ACGME website](https://www.acgme.org/) should be your first resource for further questions about this material.

ADS Updates

The [Accreditation Data System (ADS)](https://apps.acgme.org/connect/login?ReturnUrl=%252fconnect%252f), commonly referred to as WebADS, is a data collection tool that the ACGME uses to collect and organize the information required for accreditation purposes. It contains information on the residents and faculty in the program, information about training sites, resident milestone evaluations, etc. All programs are required to provide an annual update in the ACGME ADS system during the Annual Update window (usually July through August, due the end of August). It can, however, be updated and edited throughout the academic year, and there is no need to wait for the annual update window.

The program director and program coordinators should work together to complete the ADS update. Much of the information can be collected and uploaded by coordinators. Information required for upload includes the program’s block diagram using the ACGME’s pediatric template, faculty and resident scholarly activity, and information related to each clinical site.

For program directors, an area of particular interest is the “Major Changes and Other Updates” section. This section provides an opportunity for program directors to showcase changes made to address potential issues identified in ACGME survey results and to proactively demonstrate to the review committee the steps being taken to improve the program. Program directors can also highlight changes in leadership and rotations along with any innovations implemented throughout the academic year. Program directors are encouraged to provide context for major changes that are described and to express the outcomes seen after major changes are implemented. Program directors should also respond to any existing citations in the ADS each year.

Finally, the ACGME ADS website is also where each resident’s milestone evaluation scores need to be reported semiannually after Clinical Competency Committee meetings.

Review Committees

There are three types of Review Committees:

1. Specialty Review Committee
2. Transitional Year Review Committee
3. Institutional Review Committee

This section will focus on the Specialty Review Committee (RC).

RCs are specialty-specific groups of volunteer physicians including a resident/fellow representative as well as a non-physician public member. Essentially, they are “peer-reviewing” residency programs and providing feedback as it relates to their compliance with the pediatric requirements.

RCs are responsible for the following tasks 1 :

* Establishing and updating requirements for their specialty and sponsoring institutions
* Regularly reviewing program and institution compliance with the requirements
* Making accreditation decisions
* Educating program directors and institutional leaders

Surveys

The ACGME Resident/Fellow and Faculty Surveys are sent annually, generally February through April, to monitor the education and training environment within the program and to monitor for potential non-compliance with accreditation requirements. In general, the resident survey has questions related to education within the program, duty hour compliance, scholarly activity opportunities, faculty engagement, and resident wellness efforts. The faculty survey often has questions related to perceived time for teaching, duty hour compliance among residents, faculty well-being and the education within the program. The surveys are sent directly from ACGME to each trainee in the program and all faculty listed as core faculty on the program’s ADS roster, though coordinators and/or program directors must “push” the survey out. The surveys are confidential and the Program Director does not receive the survey. More information and content areas are available [here](https://www.acgme.org/data-systems-technical-support/resident-fellow-and-faculty-surveys/).

A 70% completion rate for each survey is required. Program staff can track completion by individual (but not responses) through the ADS website, and they should monitor throughout the survey period, encouraging completion. Programs that meet the response rate and have ≥4 residents will receive aggregated, anonymized survey data several weeks later. Programs with fewer than 4 residents may receive aggregated data in the future, using multiple years of data such that responses cannot be linked with current trainees to protect anonymity. Programs not meeting the 70% response threshold are flagged as out of compliance and reviewed by the RC. Survey results are reviewed by the RRC and negative trends and concerning responses may be an impetus for an ACGME site visit.

It is important that residents and faculty understand the purpose of the ACGME survey and take it seriously. It is a good idea for programs to review ACGME requirements, rules, and definitions with residents on an ongoing basis so they are best equipped to provide accurate responses.

Self-Study and Accreditation Site Visits

Traditionally, a “self-study” is a longitudinal program review completed every ten years. Using annual program evaluations as a basis, the self-study is a comprehensive evaluation of the program, especially strengths and self-identified areas for improvement (as opposed to areas for improvement identified by the RC during annual accreditation reviews). It was two-pronged in that programs were expected to determine their aims and assess the institutional, local, and regional environments to determine opportunities and threats. The Self-Study was to be submitted and completed prior to the 10-Year Accreditation Site Visit.

At this time, program self-study requirements have been suspended as the ACGME is revising this process, but programs are encouraged to continue these types of activities during their Annual Program Evaluation process. Effective October 2023, the ACGME has officially discontinued 10-Year Accreditation Site Visits for programs. Updated information regarding the Self-Study process will be coming in spring 2024.

Resources regarding the steps of the Self-Study process can be found at <https://www.acgme.org/programs-and-institutions/programs/self-study/>

Preparing for a Site Visit

Historically, there have been two types of site visits: Full and Focused. Full site visits have been discontinued as noted above. Focused site visits, however, remain in effect. Focused site visits occur when the RC identifies an issue either through mechanisms such as survey results, down- trending board pass rates, complaints made directly to the ACGME, etc. In addition, 1-2% of programs with continued accreditation will be randomly chosen annually for a site visit.

The ACGME will inform programs that a site visit is happening by email directly to the program coordinators, program director, and Designated Institutional Official (DIO). A timeline for the visit will be given as well as the opportunity to provide blackout dates during which the program requests the visit not occur (this may be due to unavailability of key program faculty/leaders, residents, institutional leaders, etc). Site reviewers will be assigned for the visit and, with ACGME personnel, will guide programs through the preparation process.

Preparation for a site visit requires collaboration between program coordinators, the PD and APDs, DIO, and institutional representatives. A list of required documents will be sent by the ACGME. It is important that documents are updated and in the requested format. Templates (for block diagrams, etc.) are available on the ACGME website. Resident and faculty representatives will be requested to meet with site visitors and must be identified in advance. Those individuals will need to be available at the time they are requested once the schedule is sent by the site visitors. Resident representatives must be selected by their peers. If available through the institutional GME office, it can be helpful for programs to host a mock site visit to prepare for the day so participants know what to expect.

CLER Visit

The Clinical Learning Environment Review (CLER) Program is designed to evaluate clinical settings affiliated with ACGME-accredited institutions and provide feedback regarding six focus areas: Patient Safety, Health Care Quality, Teaming, Supervision, Well-being, and Professionalism. The goal is to ensure residents are being appropriately instructed in the delivery of safe, high quality patient care in a professional environment. In order to achieve this, the ACGME schedules intermittent CLER site visits to clinical settings in accredited institutions.

CLER site visits are scheduled on short notice through the institution’s DIO. Generally, only one of the program’s participating sites is included in a CLER visit. Blackout dates can be submitted, similar to the site visits. Required participants include the DIO, CEO of the participating site, leaders in patient safety, quality, and well-being, groups of residents, fellows and faculty members, GME leaders, and program directors. Site visitors will meet with participants and visit various clinical spaces. At the conclusion of the site visit, feedback is provided to the DIO and CEO.

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| SELECTED RESOURCES FOR PROGRAM DIRECTORS | |
| ADS | * [Updating ADS](https://www.acgme.org/globalassets/pdfs/field-activities/updatingads.pdf) * [FAQs](https://acgmehelp.acgme.org/hc/en-us/categories/360003129153-Accreditation-Data-System-ADS-) |
| Self-Study | * [Self-Study Information and Steps](https://www.acgme.org/programs-and-institutions/programs/self-study/) |
| Guide | * [Overview for Program Directors and Coordinators](https://www.acgme.org/archived-web-pages/program-directors-and-coordinators/welcome/) |
| Surveys | * [Survey Information](https://www.acgme.org/data-systems-technical-support/resident-fellow-and-faculty-surveys/) |
| Site Visits | * [Overview](https://www.acgme.org/programs-and-institutions/programs/site-visit/) * Individual Institutional Guides   + [University of Texas](https://www.utrgv.edu/som/gme/_files/documents/how_to_have_a_successful_acgme_site_visit.pdf), 2016   + [Indiana University](https://education.aaaai.org/sites/default/files/Vitalpur.pdf), presented at 2021 AAAAI Meeting |
| CLER | * [Overview](https://www.acgme.org/initiatives/clinical-learning-environment-review-cler/) |

Selected Resources

1. <https://www.acgme.org/globalassets/PFAssets/ProgramResources/THReviewCommitteeStructureandResponsibilities.pdf>
2. <https://www.acgme.org/data-systems-technical-support/resident-fellow-and-faculty-surveys/>
3. <https://www.acgme.org/initiatives/clinical-learning-environment-review-cler/cler-site-visit/>