Answers to Questions from the March 11, 2015 Webinar:
The Self-Study and 10-Year Site Visit Webinar for DIOs

The Program Self-Study

Is there a specific format/form for submission of the program self-study summary, and how soon will it be made available?

A new dedicated [self-study web page](#) provides instructions for completing the self-study, and the [template for the self-study summary](#) can be downloaded from this page.

Programs may use this information and the self-study summary template to begin their self-study.

What is the time interval between the e-mail to start the self-study and the e-mail to upload the self-study information to the website?

Programs will be given approximately six months to complete their self-study (programs may begin earlier if they wish). The ACGME will send a first notice that it is time to initiate the self-study. This is followed up four months later with a second notice that the program is expected to upload its self-study summary in the next 60 days. Programs with an initial 10-year site visit date between April-June 2015 were moved back to a July 2015 timeline, and have already been notified of this by the ACGME.

How will programs provide the completed self-study summary to the ACGME?

Programs will upload the completed summary template through the Accreditation Data System (ADS). The capability to upload the completed self-study summary through ADS will be made available in June 2015.

The 10-Year Site Visit

The Review Committee indicated that our first site visit date is October 2015. When will the actual 10-year visit occur?

The date initially set by the Review Committee for the site visit now is the date when the program is expected to upload the completed self-study summary. For a program with an October 2015 date, the last day the summary may be uploaded is October 31, 2015. The ACGME will send programs a letter via ADS that it is time to initiate the self-study, and a second letter approximately 60 days before the final date, to alert them that it is time to upload the completed self-study summary through ADS.

The ACGME will schedule the 10-year site visit 12 to 18 months after the program has uploaded its self-study summary. The interval between the self-study and the 10-year visit is intended to allow the program to make improvements in the areas that were identified during the self-study.

Does the 10-year site visit and review include an assessment of compliance with the Program and Institutional Requirements, and does it replace the individual specialty site visits?

The 10-year site visit is a full site visit that assesses the program's compliance with all applicable program and institutional requirements. As most programs scheduled for a 10-year site visit will be on full accreditation with measurement of outcomes, programs will need to demonstrate compliance only with the Core and Outcome requirements, and not with the Detail requirements in the specialty. The 10-year site visit will replace the scheduled site visit and Review Committee review that occurred in the prior accreditation system.

All programs will have a review of their annual data each year, including the year the program is scheduled for its 10-year site visit. If the review of the annual data identifies a potential problem that requires follow-up with a site visit, whenever possible, this visit will be coordinated with the self-study visit so the program only has one site visit.

For the 10-year site visit and review by the Review Committee, how are the previous annual reviews incorporated into the process?

It is important to keep in mind that the 10-year visit is a full accreditation site visit with a review of all applicable program and institutional requirements. Regarding the data from the annual reviews, the site visitor and the Review Committee have on-hand the longitudinal record of the program's annual reviews and whether it received any follow-up, such as a request for information, a request for a progress report, or a site visit, as well as the outcomes of these follow-up activities. If a prior review resulted in a citation, the program will be expected to update its response to the citation and this information will be verified during the site visit. For a program for which two reviews of the annual data did not identify any areas that require follow-up by the Review Committee, any remaining citations that resulted from decisions in the prior accreditation system will be removed.

Can you provide the timeline for the self-study and the 10-year site visit for a program that is not in the self-study pilot?

The timeline for completing the self-study, uploading the self-study summary, and the scheduling of the 10-year site visit is the same for programs that volunteer for the self-study pilot visit and those that do not. The only difference for programs that volunteer for the pilot is an added non-accreditation site visit that occurs two to three months after the program had uploaded its self-study summary.

Has the ACGME given consideration to not scheduling site visits during recruitment season for the programs?

Most 10-year site visits will be scheduled primarily between May and November of a given year. This moves these visits to dates largely outside of the recruitment season. The smaller number of site visits that result from the reviews of the annual data will need to be completed during the late fall and winter months to close out the review process prior to the end of the academic year.

Program Improvement

At this point, how should programs strategically put these requirements in place (forming the self-study group, conducting the Annual Program Evaluation)?

For programs with a self-study in the next 12 months, the focus should be on forming the self-study group and conducting the self-study. Programs with a date of July 2016 and beyond should focus on increasing the effectiveness of the Annual Program Evaluation and tracking data on improvement through successive Annual Program Evaluations. The information on the ACGME's self-study web page includes suggested templates for recording data from a single Annual Program Evaluation, and for aggregating data from multiple Annual Program Evaluations.

Programs may also use their existing committees, such as the Clinical Competency Committee, to provide input into the Annual Program Evaluation, potentially focusing on areas where the Milestone assessments suggest a need to enhance the curriculum or clinical experience of residents or fellows. Finally, while setting program aims, and exploring the context in which the program operates are explicit parts of the self-study, programs may begin discussing these elements during their Annual Program Evaluation to ensure they are being considered in ongoing work to assess and improve the program.

Volunteering for the Self-Study Pilot Visit

Our Phase I programs want to volunteer for the self-study pilot. Do they wait to receive an invitation from the ACGME, or can they opt in right away.

If a Phase I program with an initial 10-year site visit date between April 2015 and January 2017 wants to volunteer for the self-study pilot, and does not want to wait for its invitation notice, program leadership should send an e-mail to the self-study mailbox (self-study@acgme.org) to indicate interest.

Can we volunteer for a self-study pilot visit if the program's scheduled visit date is November 2016?

Yes. The ACGME extended the end-date for the current pilot to encompass all Phase I programs with an initial 10-year site visit between April 2015 and January 2017.

Will all programs that volunteer receive a pilot visit?

The current plans call for all programs that volunteer for the self-study pilot visit to receive a site visit.

Our program has a July 2015 10-year site visit, and was notified that it would be in an earlier ACGME pilot of having the site visit first, followed by its self-study. Is this pilot still active?

All earlier pilots for a smaller group of programs have been replaced with the current pilot for all Phase I programs with an initial site visit date between April 2015 and January 2017. The ACGME is contacting all qualifying programs with individual e-mail notices, inviting them to be part of the pilot.

The pilot entails an added non-accreditation site visit, scheduled one to three months after the program has uploaded its self-study summary. If a program chooses not to participate in the pilot, the only difference is that it will not experience this additional, voluntary self-study pilot visit.

Will Phase II programs be offered voluntary self-study pilot visits?

At present the pilot is limited to Phase I programs with an initial site visit date scheduled between April 2015 and January 2017. In early spring of 2016, the ACGME will use preliminary data from the pilot to make a decision regarding whether to extend the pilot to Phase I programs with a later site visit date, and/or to expand the pilot to Phase II programs.

Keeping the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) "In the Loop"

Will the DIO be copied on communication about the invitation to participate in the self-study pilot?

The e-mail notices inviting Phase I programs to participate in the self-study pilot always copy the DIO.

Is the DIO required to electronically sign the uploaded self-study as proof of oversight?

The ACGME and the IRC expect DIO oversight of programs and program improvement. The issue is whether the requiring documentation of "sign-off" is the best approach for ensuring oversight. The question of proof of DIO oversight of the self-study is currently under consideration.

Are all institutions able to see which programs at which institutions have signed up for the self-study pilot program?

At present there are no plans to publicize which programs volunteered for the pilot. At least one specialty, pediatrics, is planning to form a learning community around the self-study pilot and has asked the ACGME to share the names of programs participating in the pilot to allow them to communicate with each other. It is conceivable that other Phase I specialties are interested in forming similar learning communities.