

# TOP 10 Strategies For Successful Site Visits

An educational resource brought to you by  
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The PIF or IRD, plus the site visitor's report, form the basis of the RRC's/IRC's review and accreditation decision. It goes without saying that the site visitor's report is very powerful because the site visit not only confirms the details of your documentation, but, demonstrates how well your program or institution has prepared.

Through involvement in countless site visits, I have found that the following 10 strategies offer you the greatest opportunity to ensure you have properly presented yourself.

## **Strategy 1: Begin Early**

Begin to prepare for your next site visit as soon as you receive the ACGME report about your last site visit while the problems and missed opportunities are still fresh in your mind. Now is when you have time to make corrections and document the results.

## **Strategy 2: Continuously Monitor Compliance**

Assess performance with Institutional and Program Standards all year, every year. Requirements do change and so do programs. New expectations can be slow to assimilate, making frequent adjustments more effective than major course corrections.

## **Strategy 3: Insist on a Thorough Internal Review Process**

"Being nice" isn't if it means not identifying all deficiencies. A thorough review is your best preparation for a successful next site survey and the GMEC's best documentation of effective monitoring.

## **Strategy 4: Review Evaluations by Resident and Faculty Annually**

Perform meaningful evaluations and take them seriously. Make appropriate improvements and respond to all concerns, especially suggestions that can not be implemented.

## **Strategy 5: Address and Correct Any Weaknesses and Concerns**

"We need to deal with this someday" is the opening line to many sad stories! Keep an ongoing list of proactive and reactive changes in the program and institution.

## **Strategy 6: Involve GMEC, Faculty and Residents in the Document**

Solicit and use their input when writing the PIF or the IRD. They will remember excellent examples you have forgotten. Ask them to review the final document for errors, misleading statements and general knowledge. Reading the PIF/IRD will familiarize them with accreditation language and concerns that they will encounter on site visit day.

## **Strategy 7: Have an Excellent PIF/IRD**

The document should speak for itself. Less is more. *Less clarification on survey day that is!* Assemble back-up documentation for each page in your "reference" copy. Organized documents reduce your stress when responding to the surveyor's requests.

## **Strategy 8: Conduct Educational Sessions Prior to the Site Visit**

Whether organized by a GME expert in your institution or an outside source, educational sessions to "prepare the troops" are invaluable. Educate all who will be involved about what to expect. Knowledge reduces fear and increases confidence!

## **Strategy 9: Welcome Your Guest!**

Prepare for the "big day" as if you are welcoming an important guest because you are! Schedule the rooms, services and interviews early. Provide the surveyor with a comfortable place to work and conduct interviews, including a conference room with a large table, a plug for a laptop computer, internet access, if possible, a secure place for valuables and directions to nearby bathrooms.

## **Strategy 10: Have a Great Program!**

There is nothing that will prepare you better for a successful site visit than having a great program. Be proud of your institution, your program, your faculty and your residents. Relay that to the site visitor!

*Utilize these strategies as a team, or with outside assistance, and you can put your best foot forward on site visit day.*