

TOP 10 Questions About Preparing Your PIF



An educational resource brought to you by Margie Kleppick, President & CEO

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ACGME requirements and forms change regularly. But programs continue to ask us the same basic questions. Here's our top 10 questions...with answers!

1 When should I start my PIF? The day after your previous survey! Debrief your staff – “What should we do differently next time?” Then, at the mid-cycle Internal Review begin to make revisions in policy, curriculum, and/or processes before the ACGME notice arrives – so that you will have a compliant program to describe in your PIF!

2 But what if the survey is later than the ACGME target date? If the ACGME site visit is delayed well after the target date, and you begin preparations early (as you should!), forms, active residents, and/or program requirements **might** change – **and you might need to edit your draft PIF**. That inconvenience outweighs ACGME arriving months **earlier** than you expected, leaving little time for preparation. Besides, most of your information about program structure and learning activities will not change dramatically.

3 Who should write the PIF? Choose an author with good writing skills. The description of your program needs to be clear and concise, so that it is easily understood and your program's compliance readily identified. Whether you assign the task to one individual, or the PIF becomes a committee effort, the **Program Director** is responsible. His or her active involvement is essential!

4 How do I approach this? Writing a PIF is a BIG JOB!! Organization is the key. First, educate yourself about the process. Gather source documents. Identify key individuals to assist, and establish a work plan. Be certain that one person is tracking the details of the process from the beginning.

5 Can I just keep updating my current PIF? Then I won't have to write another one! Some programs use that method, which is a good way to **monitor** your program's compliance; however, **each site survey deserves its own, fresh PIF**. Forms change. Program requirements change. Editing the previous document seldom produces a vibrant, relevant product.

6 My friend is a PD in my specialty and they got 5 years with no citations. Why can't I copy his? Because the PIF provides information about the program-specific techniques that you have used to fulfill the ACGME requirements in your unique environment. A “generic” PIF is **ineffective** – and will not stand up to the site visitor's scrutiny, as he/she seeks to verify its accuracy!

7 All this paperwork – it is such a waste of time! Right?? Wrong! Your PIF tells your story to the RRC – and serves a major role in determining your

program's future. The PIF doubles in value when the program uses its development as a **self-assessment tool**. Most program directors admit (reluctantly) that their program improved as a result of preparing for the ACGME survey.

8 Why do I need to write down all the details – I can explain them to the surveyor. The ACGME site visitor's role is to **verify and clarify** the information that you provide in the PIF – **not to write the PIF for you**. The surveyor's report, your PIF, and documents such as the ACGME online survey and past correspondence provide the picture of your program to the RRC for their deliberations. **The PIF is the only element under your total control.**

9 Who in my institution should read the PIF? As the writing progresses, share portions with faculty and selected residents – to validate that it is accurate and includes important examples. Share narratives with a colleague who does not know your program well – to test the PIF for clarity. Provide copies to faculty members and residents who will be interviewed by the site surveyor, to familiarize them with the “jargon”. Finally, provide your DIO with sufficient time to read your PIF thoughtfully before signing.

10 Should I get a consultant to write the PIF for me? A lawyer?? Seldom is it necessary or appropriate to engage an outside author. Your PIF should be the work of your program, but it is often appropriate to engage a Partners® GME expert as your PIF Coach to facilitate and give you targeted solutions to your unique needs.



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