

TOP 10 Tips to Be Learned From the Common PIF



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

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The Common PIF format is a new challenge to be mastered in achieving optimum accreditation results. However, the Common PIF serves another important purpose: it teaches us important realities about our programs and GME in the 21st century. The structure and contents of the Common PIF, especially when compared with survey forms from a decade ago, provide us with some important tips related to residency program design and leadership:

1. History will regard July 1, 2007 as a pivotal date for GME.

All specialties and subspecialties were united under a common set of Institutional and Common Program Requirements, with a clear foundation in the principles of competency-based GME that were first outlined in the Outcome Project.

2. Residency programs in the different specialties and subspecialties are more alike than different.

The Common PIF's questions about the process of the residents' education apply equally to all.

3. The Common PIF underscores the physician's essential attributes,

regardless of medical specialty. Professionalism and patient advocacy within the overall health system are skills to be mastered and applied by the pathologist, as well as by the pediatrician.

4. Program directors and faculty must become experts at competency-based GME.

Without a thorough understanding of the spirit, the teaching methods, and the tools for evaluating the six general competencies, one cannot design and operate a competency-based residency program. Not up to speed with the ACGME general competencies? That will become quickly apparent in the new Common PIF!

5. Our concept of "outcomes" is changing. The revised Common Program Requirements are based on ACGME's emphasis on the outcomes produced by your residency program, not simply its structure. But "outcome" is defined in overall educational terms—and constitutes far more than simply Board scores. If you still believe a high Board pass rate is all that is needed to keep your program accredited, you are in for a rude awakening!

6. Process and structure still count! Programs must devise curriculum, recruit faculty, and develop learning activities in each of the six general competencies that enable the resident to master the knowledge, skills, and behavior required of an entry level physician in his/her chosen specialty. The new Common PIF gives you an opportunity to describe the process and structure that you have implemented.

7. ACGME wants you to succeed! Why else would they invest the time, effort and thought necessary to produce the Program Director Guide to the Common Program Requirements? In one easy-to-follow document, programs are

provided with clarification of the requirements that you will address as you write the Common PIF.

8. The Common PIF is an excellent benchmarking tool for the program to use between accreditation surveys.

By compiling the elements of competency-based learning activities and evaluation tools in one document, each program director is able to maintain an ongoing log of the program's educational development. Have you considered using the Common PIF format as an assessment tool in your annual program review?

9. The Common PIF has provided the GMEC with a new monitoring tool.

By comparing identical Common PIF questions across all programs, the GMEC is better able to identify aspects of teaching and evaluation in which individual programs would benefit from assistance, and "best practices" to be shared with all.

10. The new Common PIF enables better Internal Reviews.

In the past, the Internal Review process tended to be superficial if the members of the review panel were unfamiliar with the requirements of the medical specialty being examined. The Common PIF questions apply to all programs. The specific responses in each program may differ, but the intent of the standards is clear. The Common PIF provides a common denominator of GME knowledge to be mastered by all who participate in Internal Reviews.

The days of "updating" the PIF from your last survey to use again are long gone!

ACGME's program accreditation survey requires a thoughtful assessment of the structure and process of learning activities and evaluation methods that you have implemented, as measured by the outcomes demonstrated by your residents and graduates. Many find first-time completion of the Common PIF challenging, but the questions provide you with important tips for development of an effective residency education.



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