

Top 10 Things to Know About the ACGME Survey

Heidi Kromrei, PhD & Amber Lebowski, MHA

What you need to know:

1. The ACGME Survey is a KEY PERFORMANCE indicator that is one of the most important data sources used to determine your program's ACGME Accreditation Status as well as potential adverse accreditation outcomes.
2. Repeated reported non-compliance can lead to adverse actions such as citations, "warning" or "probation" accreditation status, and unexpected site visits.
3. There are many things you can do to improve your survey performance and avoid adverse actions; the ACGME doesn't want to put your program on probation!
4. Most residents and many faculty don't know anything about the ACGME and ACGME Residency Review Committees and, thus, underestimate the potential impact of this important survey.
5. Educating your residents and faculty about the ACGME Survey is an important responsibility of the Program Director.

What you need to do:

6. Learn to analyze your ACGME Survey results and use them in conjunction with other program evaluation tools (i.e., end of rotation evaluations by residents, internal program evaluation surveys, Resident Operations Committee meeting notes, etc.) to understand program performance.
7. Use all of the results provided in the ACGME Survey to examine your program's performance....overall rating, individual item results, section mean 3-year trends, 3-year % compliance trends, and section mean scores. This is what the ACGME RRC will do at your annual program review.
8. Use the ACGME Resident and Faculty Survey results in your Annual Program Evaluation and Self-Study activities. If your program has multiple areas of significant non-compliance prioritize your efforts based on feedback from your Program Evaluation Committee. The Program Evaluation Committee should be regularly monitoring all of your evaluation results, including the ACGME Survey Reports.
9. Talk to your residents and faculty about the ACGME Survey results and your plans for improving program performance frequently. Good places to do so are Resident Monthly & Resident Operations Committee Meetings, Faculty Meetings, Annual Program Evaluation Meetings, and Program Retreats. Use multiple modes of communication to communicate results, action plans, and progress updates (e.g., email updated progress reports, put the survey results and action plan on meeting agendas, discuss in multiple meetings and conferences, talk to residents/faculty about action plans to hear their impressions of how things are going from their perspective, etc.). Do not only talk about the ACGME Survey once per year.
10. Use the "Major Changes" section of your ACGME Annual Update to communicate with the RRC regarding any areas of ACGME Survey non-compliance that have not yet resulted in a citation. Use the following structure to do so:
 - a. Acknowledge the area of non-compliance and include the survey compliance metrics
 - b. Describe the process you used to determine the cause of non-compliance
 - c. Describe who was involved in the analyses and discussions about the problem and in development of the action plan for improvement (often this is the PEC)
 - d. Describe your planned or implemented action to improve compliance in this area
 - e. Report on your progress and stakeholder perceptions of the success of your improvement plan
 - f. If your survey results have improved in the past year, provide the metrics to make it easier for the RRC to see your improved results (e.g., survey compliance on this item improved from 33% in 2017 to 75% in 2018)