

Resident & Fellow Section

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ACGME Self-Study: What Program Directors Need to Know

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Resident & Fellow Education Committee

The self-study is a new requirement of the ten-year review cycle for ACGME training program accreditation. ACGME accredited fellowships usually participate in this activity at the same time as the core neurology residency program. As a rule, the CNP fellowship program director should coordinate their effort with the core program and other fellowships in the same core. Program directors will receive notification from the ACGME at least six months before the analysis needs to be completed. Once scheduled, the dates for the submission of the self-study and for the ten year site visit will appear in the "Important Dates" sidebar of the ACGME accreditation data system (ADS) or can be found under the "Annual Update Status."

The heart of the self-study analysis is an analysis of your program by surveying stakeholders on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). In order to obtain this data, most programs are conducting surveys for current trainees, fellows who have graduated from the program, and faculty. CNP programs may also want to consider surveying technicians, patients, or referring providers. Getting these surveys out early enough so that you receive them in time to complete the analysis is probably the most important thing you can do to make sure the process goes smoothly. Educating the survey takers about the self-study process and how the survey will be used can help to obtain meaningful information. Guralnick et al. have provided some examples of surveys and guidelines for the focus groups, which can be adapted to your program. Once you have the survey results, it is best to form a committee compris-

ing representative staff and fellows to complete the necessary self-study form.

On the self-study form, programs are asked to provide specifics as to their self-study process, and program opportunities, threats, and plans for the future. The committee should obtain stakeholder consensus across the entire current program on 3-4 goals to work on over the ensuing 12-18 months. Selected goals should be aspirational but attainable in that time frame. Fellowships of less than four trainees may use the short form for the self-study summary, which can be found on the ADS. This form is uploaded to the ADS and can be revised until the due date. It is recommended that review of your aims and SWOT analysis becomes part of the annual program review, which can help ensure follow up on the action plan. While this is a new process, which requires planning and time, it does allow fellowship directors an opportunity to evaluate our programs with objective data and may allow for clinical neurophysiology educators to find some new approaches for the future.

Resources:

1. Guralnick, S., Hernandez, T., Corapi, M., Yedowitz-Freeman, J., Klek, S., Rodriguez, J., Wade, L. (2015). The ACGME Self-Study—An Opportunity, Not a Burden. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 7(3), 502–505. <http://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-15-00241.1>
2. A quick guide to the SWOT analysis: https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PDFs/SelfStudy/SS_SWOTGuide.pdf