

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH MOCK RRC SITE VISIT QUESTIONS AND GUIDELINES

(This is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather to highlight key areas of site reviewers' focus.)

Questions to ask Fellows

RRC review and PIF

- What are the previous program citations? How have they been addressed?
- Have you seen the PIF and PIF addendum? Are you familiar with their contents?

Goals and objectives

- What are the goals and objectives for each rotation? NOTE: this includes all training - dialysis, transplant, general nephrology and applies for the questions on this topic to the Key Faculty and TPD.
- Are they reviewed at the start of each rotation?
- What is a rotation?
- How are the goals and objectives progressive (i.e. how does the program differentiate between first year and later year fellows in terms of their goals, objectives and responsibilities)? What are the expectations? Who reviews with you?
- How are the 6 core competencies taught and evaluated?

Evaluations

- How and when do you evaluate faculty? Is your anonymity protected?
- How and when do you evaluate the program? Who do you review this with?
- How and when are you evaluated? By whom? Who reviews with you and when? What if there are problems?
- Describe self-evaluations.
- Do you have a portfolio? What is in it? Do you look at it regularly? Do you have free access to it? What is its purpose?

Working conditions

- Describe your inpatient and outpatient experiences.
- Describe any duty hour issues. What is the call system?
- Do you have back-up? Is fatigue an issue? What if it was?
- Where are the policies and procedures? What do they cover? Do you know where you can go for information about these?
- Do you ever feel you are functioning to meet service, not educational, needs? How often? On any particular rotations or experiences?
- Do other fellows from other specialties compete with you for cases?
- Describe when you are not supervised and how these criteria are developed?
- Do you have access to journals, key textbooks and search engines that are readily available?

Conferences

- Describe all conferences. What if you do not attend? Is attendance taken? What is considered adequate attendance?
- Describe didactic conferences in terms of what material is covered.
- What is the value to you of all these conferences?
- Do you present at conferences? How often? What type?

Research

- Describe CQI activities.
- Describe research project.

Continuity Clinics

- Describe the continuity clinics.
- How many patients do you average per clinic?
- What are the demographics and spectrum of diseases?

Procedures

- What procedures are you required to do? How many? How is this documented? How do faculty confirm their performance and validity?
- How are you taught to perform procedures (simulation, direct teaching)?

Program administration

- What is your role in the fellowship program review committee? Who sits on this? Where are the minutes? Are action plans developed and acted upon?

Other issues

- Describe challenges with the program.
- If there any issues you are uncomfortable discussing now, contact me (the mock site visitor) privately.

Questions to ask Key Faculty

Key faculty role

- Are you key faculty?
- What are key faculty? What are your responsibilities?
- What is your role in the fellowship program review committee? Who sits on this? Where are the minutes? Are action plans developed and acted upon?
- How are you trained to be better teachers?

RRC review and PIF

- What are the previous program citations? How have they been addressed?
- Have you seen the PIF and PIF addendum? Are you familiar with their contents?

Goals and objectives

- What are goals and objectives?
- Are they reviewed at the start of each rotation?
- What is a rotation?
- How are the goals and objectives progressive? What are the expectations? Who reviews with the fellows?
- How are the core competencies taught and evaluated?
- Describe how the curriculum is competency-based. Were you involved in developing it? How?
- How are the core competencies taught?
- Describe overall training in general nephrology, dialysis and transplant.

Evaluations

- How and when do you evaluate fellows? What is done with this information?
- How and when do you evaluate the program? Who do you review this with?

- How and when are you evaluated? By whom? Who reviews with you and when? What if there are problems?

Working conditions

- How are duty hours monitored? What if there is a violation? Have there been any violations?
- Where are the program policies and procedures? What are in these?
- When is a fellow not supervised and how are these criteria developed?
- How do you know fellows are practicing safely?
- How does the program monitor for fatigue?

Conferences

- What is your involvement in conferences and didactic sessions? Is attendance taken?
- How is the quality of conferences assessed and improved?

Research

- How are you involved in supervising fellows in research?
- How are you involved in supervising fellows in CQI projects?
- Is there a formal mentoring program for fellows?

Procedures

- What are the requirements for procedures? How are they monitored and documented?
- How is competency determined?

Other issues

- Describe challenges with the program.

Questions to ask the Program Director

TPD role

- Do you have sufficient covered time, division support and authority as TPD?
- What are key faculty? What are their responsibilities?
- What is your role in the fellowship program review committee? Who sits on this? Where are the minutes? Are action plans developed and acted upon?
- How do you interact with the core internal medicine program?

RRC review and PIF

- Have you reviewed previous citations and the response with all faculty and fellows?
- Have you shown the PIF and PIF addendum to all faculty and fellows?
- What have been the changes in the program since the last site visit?
- How many ACGME approved fellows do you have? How many fellows do you have doing clinical? If more than approved, why?

Goals and objectives

- What are goals and objectives? Who was involved in developing them? How often are they re-evaluated?
- Are they reviewed at the start of each rotation?
- What is a rotation?
- How are the goals and objectives progressive? What are the expectations? Who reviews with the fellows?

- How are the core competencies taught and evaluated?
- Demonstrate how the curriculum is competency-based.
- Describe methods and timetable for evaluating each of the 6 core competencies
- Describe overall training in general nephrology, dialysis and transplant.

Evaluations

- Describe fellow and faculty evaluations and how these are handled. How often are the evaluations for each conducted?
- How is achievement of goals and objectives documented?
- How and when do you evaluate fellows? What is done with this information? How are problems handled?
- How and when do you evaluate the program? Who do you review this with?
- How and when do you evaluate faculty?
- Describe the 360 and Mini-CEX (or equivalent).
- Describe any outcomes projects that you may have performed
- Describe the final summative evaluation.
- How is fellow confidentiality maintained?
- How does the program use information on fellow performance to improve fellows and the program?
- How do you educate faculty to be better teachers? How do you evaluate faculty in this regard?
- How do you survey program graduates? What is done with this information?
- What is the board performance of program graduates?
- Show me the fellow portfolio.

Working conditions

- How are duty hours monitored? What if there is a violation? Have there been any violations? How were they addressed? Are they resolved?
- Where are the program policies and procedures? What are in these? What are they re autopsies, moonlighting, supervision, etc.?
- When is a fellow not supervised and how are these criteria developed?
- How do you know fellows are practicing safely?
- How do you monitor for fatigue?

Conferences

- Describe all conferences.
- Describe didactics.
- How do you keep track of conference and didactic conference attendance? What if fellow misses? How good is faculty attendance?
- What is considered satisfactory fellow attendance and participation in conferences?
- How is conference quality ascertained and improved.

Research

- How are you and the faculty involved in supervising fellows in research?
- How are you and the faculty involved in supervising fellows in CQI projects?
- Demonstrate that the fellows have achieved the required level of research and CQI.

Clinics

- Describe the continuity clinics.
- How many patients do the fellows average per clinic? How is this documented?
- What are the demographics and spectrum of diseases?

- Describe the continuity experience for transplantation?

Procedures

- What are the requirements for procedures? How are they monitored and documented? How is competency determined?
- Show me the procedure logs.

Other issues

- Describe challenges with the program.
- Have you visited all the training sites? Where are they?
- Show me the procedures and policies

SOME KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Review everything with all fellows and all faculty who will participate in the site visit over, and over, and over again. Be sure faculty and fellows are saying the same things. If they aren't, you have a problem with your program.
- Do a mock site visit, ideally led by someone outside the division. Do this at least 6 months before the site visit. The sooner, the better.
- Review each and every question that the fellows submit in the ACGME questionnaire with all fellows (questionnaire is typically done at the time of PIF preparation). You can't tell them what to say, but you can clarify the question's meaning. In some cases, the questions are ambiguous.
- Don't complain to the site visitor about things that don't impact the fellowship program. If you complain about something, realize it may well cause a citation. If that is your intent, then so be it. But if you don't want to be cited and you don't think it is a significant problem, don't say anything. There is the temptation to tell site visitors things when they ask open-ended questions - tell the truth, but resist bringing up non-issues.
- Make sure all documents are available and readily accessible. This includes everything - conference logs, attendance sheets by fellows and faculty, evaluations, portfolios, etc. Be sure everything is labeled for quick identification. The site visitor can ask for documentation to prove any statement you make - be prepared for this.
- Answer the site visitor's questions with focused responses that clearly answer the question. They can readily sense waffling or disorganization.
- If there is something particularly great about your program, brag about it.
- Make sure your program is doing things correctly long before the site visit - don't wait until the last minute.
- Use the same language as the ACGME - do not make up terms that can be misinterpreted by the site visitor.
- Make sure you know the RRC regulations thoroughly and that your program addresses them completely.
- For new TPDs, there are courses given by the ACGME and the Association of Specialty Professors/AAIM that last a couple of days and can be very helpful.
- Use your institution for help - the DIO, Internal Medicine Program Director, other IM sub program directors, people in the GME office, etc. Don't wait for them to come to you.
- Visit the ACGME website, ACGME Bulletin, RRC-IM FAQs to be certain of the requirements and any updates
- Make sure your PIF and PIF addendum are accurate!