

Program Performance Evaluation Standard Process at a Research University Medical School

Project Outcomes. Reduced number of accreditation citations, improved medical program performance, and improved organizational and leadership competence with performance evaluation and improvement by working with various medical programs and key leadership to conduct a needs assessment and subsequently design, develop and implement a program performance evaluation system for program leaders and administrators in decision-making and external audit and accreditation process.

Project Context. Educating physicians is a complex and crucial practice that is highly regulated and closely monitored in the United States. Institutions engaged in undergraduate and graduate medical education must consistently measure and monitor performance at multiple levels, institutional, program, and individual. Annual program evaluation is one of the numerous regulatory requirements for graduate medical education programs (residency and fellowships).

Accreditation of residency programs governed by the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) includes evaluation by the ACGME RRC, resulting in a determination of program accreditation status (e.g., initial accreditation, probationary accreditation, and maintenance of accreditation) with commendations for exceptional compliance, and citations for substantial lack of compliance. Programs with a significant number of citations for non-compliance are required to submit additional progress reports and may be subject to additional documentation requirements and/or a "focused site visit" (assessment of selected program aspects conducted by ACGME field representatives). Repeated citations may lead to a reduction in resident complaints, program probationary accreditation status, or withdrawal of program accreditation.

One such residency program accreditation requirement relates to program evaluation and improvement. Accrediting bodies require that residency program directors ensure that the educational program is evaluated at least annually, and both provide further evaluation specifications.

Technical Approach. In collaboration with the organization's Graduate Medical Education Leadership and the sponsoring medical center, we implemented Dr. Guerra-Lopez's Impact Evaluation Process (Guerra-López, 2007; 2008) to develop a performance monitoring and evaluation system to continuously track key performance indicators and improvement initiatives that were directly aligned to regulatory requirements and organizational objectives. This process included the following steps:

1. Identification of key stakeholders, expectations, and approach
2. Define the management and decision-making needs
3. Define and align specific monitoring and evaluation questions to be addressed with the measurement system through participatory approaches
4. Design evaluation plan, methods, and tools
 - a. Align key decisions to performance objectives
 - b. Define and align measurable performance indicators
5. Develop data collection methods and tools
6. Develop data analysis, storage and usage procedures
 - a. Improvement Plans
7. Implementation of systems
 - a. Pilots
 - b. Revisions
 - c. Policies for guidance and monitoring