

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DESIGNATED INSTITUTIONAL  
OFFICIAL POSITION IN GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

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The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accredits nearly 7,800 allopathic residencies in the US. The purpose of accreditation is to monitor and ensure quality Graduate Medical Education (GME). In 1998, the ACGME added the stipulation each institution have a Designated Institutional Official (DIO) with authority and responsibility for oversight and administration of GME programs (residencies).

The current study was a cross-sectional survey designed to provide descriptive data about DIOs not yet available. The following mixed-mode survey delivery strategy was used to collect data between January 10, 2004 and March 6, 2004: prenotice letter; survey with cover letter and self-addressed, stamped return envelope; thank you/reminder postcard; replacement survey with new cover letter and self-addressed, stamped return envelope; and telephone contacts of nonresponders. The population for this study consisted of all 363 DIOs listed by the ACGME. Completed surveys were received from 231 subjects (63.64%).

The current study provided valuable descriptive data relevant to DIOs. It demonstrated wide ranges in DIO titles, reporting relationships, time spent accomplishing DIO responsibilities, DIO-specific salaries, credentials and additional training, institutional definition of the role, Graduate Medical Education Committee reporting arrangements, and adequacy of financial support and support staff. This

variability supported the primary thesis the DIO role is underdeveloped. In addition, the failure to find any statistically significant results for the secondary hypotheses further supported the underdeveloped nature of the DIO role. It appeared accreditation status was not linked, in important ways, to the DIO-specific and institution-specific characteristics measured by the current study.

This study also established reliability and validity of the DIO Responsibility Scale, which now may be used in future research of the DIO role. Finally, the data from this study may be used by DIOs and institutions to develop the role further, improve DIO performance, create job descriptions, and by national organizations to create targeted educational programs relevant to DIO needs.