

Answering basic questions about the IR Residency plan

By M. Victoria Marx, MD, FSIR

On Sept. 28, 2014, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) approved the program requirements for the IR Residency. The following FAQs address the most common questions SIR has received about this new training path. A regularly updated version of the FAQs can be found on sirweb.org/clinical/IR_DR_cert.shtml.

Can I see the IR residency program requirements?

The approved IR residency program requirements are posted on the ACGME website acgme.org/acgme/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/415_interventional_radiology_09282014.pdf.

How can I apply for the IR Residency?

There are no accredited IR residencies yet. Current applicants wishing to pursue IR should go through the existing training path: Diagnostic radiology residency followed by an IR fellowship.

Why aren't any IR residencies up and running yet?

ACGME approval of program requirements was just the first step. Programs cannot begin to recruit residents until they achieve ACGME approval, which takes time. In order to become an ACGME-accredited residency program, each program must submit an application to

ACGME describing the details of how they meet the ACGME program requirements. ACGME must do a site visit of each newly proposed program, then must evaluate the data prior to approving the program. It is anticipated that programs will gain ACGME accreditation gradually over several years for complete transition of all training programs to the IR Residency model.

How can I find out what programs are approved and recruiting residents?

SIR will post a list of approved residencies on this website as they come on line. The ACGME also has a list of approved programs in their database that can be searched by specialty. As the new IR residencies are approved, they will be listed in the database at acgme.org/ads/public/programs/search.

How does the IR Residency work?

There are two main pathways:

Integrated IR Residency: The integrated residency is an advanced five-year program that takes place after an ACGME-accredited PGY1 internship. The PGY2-PGY4 years are identical to the PGY2-PGY4 years of a diagnostic radiology (DR) residency. As with diagnostic radiology, residents take the American Board of Radiology core exam at the end of the PGY4 year. Within a single institution, it will be possible to transfer between the IR



and DR residencies during the PGY2-PGY4 years. The PGY5-PGY6 years are devoted to interventional radiology and include procedural rotations, an ICU rotation and clinical care experience (in-patient care, consult service and outpatient clinic). It will be possible to do DR rotations to meet regulatory requirements during these years. This program will fill via a National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) match process.

Independent IR Residency: The independent residency is a two-year program (PGY6-PGY7) that takes place after completion of DR residency. It includes the components of IR residency (procedural experience and patient care experience that includes ICU, inpatient service, consult service and outpatient clinic) that take place in the PGY5-PGY6 years of the Integrated program. The independent residency experience may take place at an institution other than the one where the DR residency was completed. This program will fill via an

NRMP match process. It will be possible to enter the Independent Residency at an advanced level if the resident qualifies for early specialization in interventional radiology (ESIR):

ACGME has stipulated that residents may enter the Independent program at the advanced (PGY7) level if they did their DR residency in a program qualified to provide experience during the DR residency that qualifies them for this advanced placement. The details of implementation of this option have not been fully defined. Method of application /entry has not yet been defined.

What is next for IR Residency development?

Beginning in 2015, ACGME will accept applications for individual programs. The application/approval process takes time. It is likely that only a small number of IR Residency programs will participate in the 2016 match.

When will a large number of IR Residency programs be available to choose from?

Full nationwide implementation of the IR Residency is likely to ramp up over a seven-year period (2015–2022).

What happens to IR training during this transition period between the current training path (four years DR, one year IR) and the new training path (IR Residency—Integrated, Independent)?

The exact transition path will vary from institution to institution. For the seven-year transition period, some departments will fill IR Residency spots through the match (Integrated, Independent) and/or through internal transfer (Integrated). The exact method to fill PGY7 ESIR spots has not yet been determined. Until a program has advanced spots filled with residents, they will continue to recruit fellows.

Huh? I'm really confused!

The bottom line is that the transition from the IR fellowship training model to the IR Residency training model is complicated and will evolve over time. For the 2016 match, the dominant training path will still be to do a DR residency first. During the time period of this DR residency (2017–2021), more and more IR residencies will come on line. Options for training in IR for students matching in 2016 will include the current fellowship model, transfer into an Integrated IR Residency and application to an Independent IR Residency after completion of residency in Diagnostic Radiology.

The new IR residency is a new development in graduate medical education. It has been designed to be flexible in implementation. Congratulations on being part of this exciting change! 



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