

Programmatic Guidelines for the Cornell Clinical Fellows

Background

The goal of the Cornell Clinical Fellows program is to provide comprehensive research training for clinical specialists committed to an academic career. Research experience is gained under the mentorship of an established scientist who can oversee training in laboratory studies or in clinical investigation of hypotheses relevant to clinical disease. The program also provides opportunities for participants to develop their skills through participation in the clinical and diagnostic services. It is expected that Clinical Fellows, when working in CUHA, will receive mentorship from the senior faculty in that clinical section.

A. Expectations

Over the two-year program, the Clinical Fellow will gain significant background and technical skills appropriate for a career with a major research component. It is further expected that this research experience will involve a high level of independence to conduct one's individual research with appropriate mentoring. Research is expected to be conducted with an intensity and set of expectations similar to those of Ph.D. trainees. At the conclusion of the training program it is expected that the Clinical Fellow will have attained the ability to:

1. Define a testable research hypothesis;
2. Obtain a broad background in the relevant literature, supplemented by specific coursework as appropriate for the research project;
3. Develop a specific set of investigative skills requisite to the research question;
4. Write a research proposal suitable for submission to a national funding organization;
5. Present research results to various audiences including lab groups; interested groups of investigators; audiences at a seminar series or local or national meetings;
6. Publish the research results in a high impact journal for the field;
7. Be well acquainted with the challenges of obtaining funding, carving out time, recruiting personnel, utilizing equipment and attracting collaborators needed to be successful in research; and
8. Be willing and able to undertake specific research projects within the larger framework of future research and career goals

During the course of the two years the Clinical Fellow will take advantage of seminar series, grant writing workshops, course work (including ethics), meeting with invited speakers, taking opportunities for career counseling, and other enriching opportunities offered throughout the University. These would be arranged with the advice of the mentoring group, who are able to require certain appropriate activities.

B. The Fellow's committee and documentation of progress

Within one month of starting the Fellowship program, the Fellow will establish an advisory committee (see below, Section C) which will meet at least every six months. At the first meeting of the advisory committee, an initial discussion will focus on how these seven goals will be addressed. At this initial meeting, the schedule of clinical responsibilities of

the Fellow, and their impact on the research project, will also be discussed. The total clinical duty should not exceed 8-10 weeks per year.

For the second committee meeting at six months, the Fellow will prepare a detailed proposal of the research project, in the form of a grant submission (similar to what is required for an internal College grant).

At the end of Year 1 a progress report will document how the specific goals are being addressed, and provide plans for Year 2. Before the end of the two-year period the fellow is expected to, minimally, have submitted an abstract for presentation at an appropriate national meeting.

A final report will document the specific ways each of the eight goals has been addressed. A concluding seminar on the results of the research, which includes how the research project fits the Fellow's future research and career goals will be presented at the CVM. The venue will be determined by the Advisory Committee and will be advertised widely.

C. Guidelines for membership of special committee for clinical fellows.

A scientific advisory committee will be assigned to each clinical fellow to facilitate and monitor their progress. This committee will consist of (i) the scientific mentor, (ii) a representative of the fellow's clinical specialty, and (iii) an additional member to represent a laboratory-based scientific area related to the research project. The research mentor can represent the clinical specialty if they are qualified. In such cases, an additional member with either a closely related clinical specialty or laboratory-based discipline will be added. All of these members will be chosen by the Clinical fellow in consultation with the mentor.

The committee will include a member of the VRT advisory committee who will be chosen by that committee. When possible, the VRT member will have scientific interest aligned to that of the fellow.