

Geriatric Fellowship - Academic Phase

This document will summarize the Purpose, Description and Policies, and related Forms used by the Geriatrics Fellowship program at the University of Pittsburgh in support of the Academic Phase of the training program.

Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Phase of the Geriatrics Fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh is to prepare the trainee for a career as faculty member in an academic geriatrics program, often in a school of medicine. This role is likely to involve some mix of leadership roles in education and/or research related to aging. For all trainees, the program is designed to support the development of skills in relevant methodologies, communications techniques, planning and time management skills, team work and group process, as well as depth of knowledge in content areas specified by the trainee. All trainees have a primary mentor, and may have a mentoring team.

1. Description and Policies

Duration

The academic program will last a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 36 months. In certain cases, the academic program may be integrated with the clinical training program, after approval by both the Clinical and Academic Fellowship Directors.

Eligibility

Trainees may enter the Academic Geriatric Fellowship Program from the Clinical Geriatrics Fellowship or from other Clinical Fellowships. In certain cases, the candidate may enter the Academic Fellowship after completing an approved residency program but prior to completing a clinical fellowship. Such cases must be approved by the Director of the Academic Fellowship.

Program Direction

The Academic Fellowship will be directed by a member of the Division of Geriatrics at the University of Pittsburgh. The Director of the Academic Program will be appointed by the Division Chief with input from the Fellowship Director and other participating faculty. The Director is expected to coordinate planning with the Fellowship Director, the Division Chief and participating faculty.

Planning for the Academic Phase

In order to make the best use of the Academic phase, specific planning must take place prior to entry into the program. Each candidate should complete an Academic Career Planning Form and discuss it with the Director of the Academic Program. For Clinical Fellows who are planning an Academic Phase, a discussion and review of the planning process should start in the first six months of the clinical year. For candidates from other fellowships or alternate pathways, the Academic Career Planning Form must be completed prior to acceptance into the program. The Academic Career Planning Form identifies career goals and expected roles, primary mentor and possible co-mentors, priority content areas of interest, methods and skills needed, and other academic career competencies (see attached Academic Career Planning Form). The form will be used to plan the activities and timelines of the individual Academic Training Program.

2. The Academic Phase

Most activities of the Academic Phase will be individualized, based on the trainee's career goals and needs.

Academic Career Implementation Plan

In the first 90 days in the Program, the Trainee and mentor should develop a set of timelines and milestones based on the Career Plan that can be used to assess progress.

Coursework

Most trainees are expected to be pursuing some didactic activities, perhaps toward a formal degree in such programs as the Clinical Research Training Program or the Clinical Education Training Program. Plans for coursework and degrees should be included in the Academic Career Plan and progress should be tracked according to Milestones from the Career Implementation Plan.

Academic Project

All trainees will be pursuing an Academic Project under the supervision of their mentor. This project may be related to education, basic research, clinical research, health systems research, quality improvement or health policy. All Projects must be based on written proposals. An abstract of the proposed project must be completed, approved by the primary mentor and presented to the Program Director prior to entering the program as a part of the Academic Career Planning Form. A full written proposal for the Academic Project should be completed prior to implementing the Project and should be a defined Milestone in the Career Implementation Plan. Progress on the project should be tracked based on Milestones in the Career Implementation Plan.

Clinical Activities during the Academic Phase

All trainees in the Academic Phase are expected to spend 75% of their time pursuing activities related to their Career Plan. Most are expected to maintain some clinical activity, especially in areas related to career interests. Clinical activities should be implemented and evaluated by the Clinical Fellowship Director in coordination with the Academic Fellowship Director.

Additional Training Program Component

All trainees are expected to participate in Divisional activities such as weekly conferences. All trainees are expected to participate in career development seminars and peer group sessions sponsored by the Division, which may include sessions related to written and oral communications, career decision making, time management, information systems and other mutually agreed upon topics.

3. Evaluation

Formal evaluations will occur biannually and will be based on the trainee's Academic Career Plan. Both the trainee and the Mentor should complete a semi-annual evaluation and should meet to discuss progress and plans. A final summary and plan should be submitted to the Academic Program Director by 30 days after the semi-annual evaluation.

4. Policies Related to Unsatisfactory Progress

Most trainees are expected to make satisfactory to superior progress based on these semi-annual reports. In the unusual case of disagreements or concerns between the trainee and the mentor, the Academic Program Director and other appropriate faculty members proposed by the trainee and mentor will assist with resolution of the issue. In the unusual case where the trainee does not meet satisfactory standards for progress, a written plan to improve progress will be prepared and submitted by 30 days after the completed evaluation. This plan could include revised goals, supplementary resources to accomplish goals, plans for revised time management or other solutions. In the very unusual case where a trainee repeatedly fails to achieve goals, a formal meeting with the trainee, mentor and Academic Program Director will be held and a document acknowledging risk of inadequate performance will be prepared and signed. A trainee cannot be released from the training program without due warning and efforts to help the trainee succeed as documented by a minimum of two separate evaluations with unsatisfactory progress according to the primary mentor and an additional document acknowledging unsatisfactory progress based on the formal meeting with the trainee, mentor and Program Director. In most all cases, unsatisfactory progress would result in failure to renew the annual appointment to the Academic Program.