SURGEON SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Surgeon Scientist Training Program (SSTP) at the Department of Surgery, University of Toronto, is to provide excellent research training for surgical residents who wish to pursue a career in academic surgery. The focus is on excellent research training, not on a specific discipline or project, or on specific course work.

ELIGIBILITY

Candidates will be eligible if they have been accepted into the University of Toronto Postgraduate Training Program in Surgery and accepted in a THESIS-BASED graduate program. Candidates may enter the Surgeon Scientist Training Program prior to, during, or at the completion of their clinical training. All supervisors for the Surgeon Scientist Training Program trainee must be faculty members of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto. Candidates will be eligible from the following training programs: Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedics, Paediatric General Surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery. Selection of the research program is described below.

For surgical residents who wish to pursue a career in academic surgery, which includes training that does not require a formal thesis-based component, he/she must apply to the Scholarship in Surgery program.

PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING

Potential candidates must meet with the Vice Chair Research (Dr. Ben Alman) or Associate Vice Chair Research (Dr. Andras Kapus) prior to submitting application to Research Office and selecting a research supervisor, no later than September 15. Candidates should discuss their intentions with the Division Chair of the surgical specialty he/she has chosen for clinical training, the divisional residency Program Director and with the proposed supervisor of his/her research program. The trainee and the supervisor must submit separate application forms. Application forms are available from Val Cabral, Research Program Manager, Department of Surgery Research Office (101 College Street, TMDT/MaRS East Tower, 13th Floor, Room 707; tel 416-813-2178; fax 416-813-5252; email val.cabral@sickkids.ca) or on the website (http://www.surg.med.utoronto.ca/research.html).

Candidates must also apply for personal salary support each year they are in the Program until they are successful [from a granting agency such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)]. It is imperative that the institution/financial officer administering salary support funds on behalf of the agency is Office of Research Services, University of Toronto, 3rd Floor, McMurrich Bldg, 12 Queen’s Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON M5S 1AS. A copy of the application prepared for an external agency must be forwarded to the Research Office at the same time as submitting to the agency. Candidates who do not apply each year for external support or who are not successful at obtaining such support are not eligible for departmental salary support.
The deadline for receipt of applications is **October 15th**. Applications should be sent to Val Cabral. The curriculum vitae of the applicant and a letter of support from the Division Chair must accompany the application.

**DURATION OF PROGRAM**

The research program must be an approved graduate program that is **at least two years in length**.

**EXTERNAL FUNDING**

The SSTP trainee’s salary will be at the same level he/she would have received in the clinical stream at his/her current PGY classification for the duration of the Program.

Candidates MUST apply for personal salary support to at least two granting agency, such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), each year until successful. ALL residents entering the Surgeon Scientist Training Program MUST also apply to Post-Graduate Medical Education (PGME) for the Post-Graduate Medical Awards. Applicants who do not apply each year to at least two agencies for external salary support, or who are not successful at obtaining external salary support will not be able to continue in the program unless their salary support is guaranteed (in writing) by their supervisor or division head. External support is support from an agency that is not administered by the University of Toronto or one of its affiliated Hospitals.

**PLEASE NOTE:** to ensure uninterrupted salary support and eliminate unexpected double salary payment — all salary support (fellowships, studentships, scholarships) submitted to external agencies MUST indicate payee institution as University of Toronto: Office of Research Services, University of Toronto, 3rd Floor, McMurrich Bldg, 12 Queen’s Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON M5S 1AS.

**TUITION**

Tuition costs are covered by the home Division of the Surgeon Scientist. The method of payment may vary from Division to Division, but in general will be reimbursed to the Surgeon Scientist by the Division upon presentation of official University receipt of payment. Compliance with these principles is implied when the University Division Head signs the Surgeon Scientist’s application form.

**SELECTION OF RESEARCH PROGRAM AND SUPERVISOR**

Research programs may be pursued in the general areas of basic and clinical research, clinical epidemiology, medical education, medical bioethics, or health services research. There are several excellent graduate programs in these fields within the University and candidates are encouraged to select the best graduate training possible. Training outside the University of Toronto is generally not approved.

Assistance in the selection of a supervisor will be provided by the Vice Chair Research or the Associate Vice Chair Research. It is imperative that a meeting be arrange with one of these two individuals before selecting a supervisor. Such meetings should be arranged prior to **September 15**, the year preceding entering the Program. All supervisors for the Surgeon
Scientist Training Program trainee must be faculty members of the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto.

A candidate will select a supervisor who will provide the best research environment regardless of the surgical specialty in which he/she intends to train.

**APPLICATION TO SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

All those accepted into the Surgeon Scientist Training Program must apply to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto, and be accepted into a program leading to a MEd, MSc or PhD degree. It is the applicant’s responsibility to submit an application for entrance into the School of Graduate Studies – each Graduate Department adheres to its own deadlines. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Coordinator of Graduate Studies of the Graduate Department in which they plan to enroll (e.g., Institute of Medical Science 416-978-5012; Health Policy, Management & Evaluation [HPME] - 416-978-7721 or 946-3486; Laboratory Medicine & Pathobiology [LMP] – 416-978-8782; Medical Education – 416-340-3615 or 416-340-3646. Enrollment as a graduate student must be completed prior to starting the Surgeon Scientist Program.

**RELATIONSHIP OF SURGEON SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM TO CLINICIAN INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA**

All individuals entering the Surgeon Scientist Training Program must submit an application for the Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) of the Royal College. Information may be obtained from the CIP office by calling 416-978-7189 or email: uoft.cip@utoronto.ca (www.utoronto.ca/cip).

**CLINICAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

During the period of research training in the SSTP, trainees should not have regular clinical responsibilities. However, trainees are encouraged to maintain some contact with clinical activities by attendance at divisional, departmental and hospital rounds and formal teaching sessions. Trainees may also attend specialty clinics with direct relevance to their areas of research. Residents must conform to PAIRO guidelines in this regard.

**CLINICAL TRAINING**

Following completion of the SSTP, all trainees are expected to return to clinical training within the Postgraduate Training Program in Surgery at the University of Toronto. Where appropriate, some attempt will be made by the divisional residency Program Director and the Director of Postgraduate Education to provide the trainee with positions conducive to continuing his/her research from "bench to bedside" or to provide clinical exposure in the area of the trainee’s research topic.

**STUDENT COMMITTEE**

Each student will have a Student Committee to assist him/her during the time spent in the Surgeon Scientist Training Program. Each Student Committee will be formed in accordance with the rules of the School of Graduate Studies. Normally, the supervisor serves as Chair of the Student Committee, and the Committee meets at least twice yearly. Minutes of each meeting should be forwarded to the Vice Chair Research, the Division Chair and the Graduate Student Coordinator of the relevant graduate faculty. In-training evaluation forms for the CIP program should be obtained from the CIP office (MSB Room 2366 - 1 King's College Circle; email: uoft.cip@utoronto.ca) and returned after each committee meeting to the CIP office. These evaluation forms must be completed by the supervisor, viewed and signed by the student. A copy must be sent to the Director of Postgraduate Surgical Education.