

SURGEON SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Surgeon Scientist Training Program (SSTP) in 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 in a **THESIS-BASED graduate program**. Candidates may enter the SSTP during their clinical training. All supervisors for the SSTP trainee must hold an appointment with the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) of the University of Toronto. Candidates from the following training programs will be eligible: 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.

PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING

Potential candidates must meet with the Vice Chair Research (Dr. Michael G. Fehlings) or Associate Vice Chair Research (Dr. Andras Kapus) prior to submitting application to the Department of Surgery Research Office and selecting a research supervisor, no later than **April 15th**. Candidates should discuss their intentions with their respective Division Chair of the surgical specialty, the Division 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 (tel 416-978-8909; email val.cabral@sickkids.ca) or on the website <http://www.surg.med.utoronto.ca/research.html>.

The deadline for receipt of complete applications is **May 15th**. Applications should be emailed or sent to Val Cabral. The curriculum vitae of the applicant and a letter of support from the Division Chair and Division Program Director must accompany the application.

DURATION OF PROGRAM

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

SALARY SUPPORT - EXTERNAL FUNDING

Salary support for SSTP Residents is based on a shared funding model with contributions from the Resident's Supervisor, the Department of Surgery, granting and award agencies, and the Ministry of Health, which provides one year of salary and benefits to Residents in General Surgery, Neurosurgery and Cardiac Surgery. The MOH does not provide salary support for SSTP Residents in Orthopaedic Surgery, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Urology and Vascular Surgery.

Department of Surgery salary support for SSTP Residents is limited to 2 years for those in a Masters program and 4 years for those pursuing a PhD.

Supervisors of ALL SSTP Residents, from ALL surgical divisions are expected to contribute up to \$30,000 of salary support per year, beginning in the Resident's first year in the SSTP. Supervisors must agree to this prior to a resident being considered for entrance into the SSTP. The Supervisor's contribution can be reduced through support from the Resident's division and/or funding from granting or award agencies.

Therefore, candidates MUST apply for personal salary support to at least two granting agencies, such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Heart & Stroke Foundation, and the Canadian Cancer Society, each year until successful. ALL Residents entering the SSTP MUST also apply to Post MD Education (PGME) for the Postgraduate Research 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 SSTP unless their salary support is guaranteed (in writing) by their Supervisor or Division Head. External support is defined as funding 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 the payee institution as University of Toronto: Director, Research Financial Reporting & Audit, University of Toronto, 2nd Floor, McMurrich Bldg, 12 Queen’s Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON M5S 1S8.

TUITION

The SSTP Resident is responsible for paying graduate school tuition fees. In some instances these tuition expenses may be recovered by the Resident from their Division or Supervisor. However, these arrangements are unique to each Division and Supervisor. Compliance with these principles is implied when the University Division Head signs the SSTP Trainee’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 NOT APPROVED.

Assistance in the selection of a Supervisor will be provided by the Vice Chair Research (Dr. Michael Fehlings) or the Associate Vice Chair Research (Dr. Andras Kapus). It is imperative that a meeting be arranged with one of these two individuals **before** selecting a supervisor. Such meetings should be arranged prior to **April 15th**, the year preceding entering the Program. All Supervisors for the SSTP Trainee must be faculty members of the School of Graduate Studies, 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 trainees accepted to the SSTP must apply to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto, and be accepted into a program leading to a MASc, MEd, MSc or PhD degree. It is the Trainee’s responsibility to submit an application for entrance into the School of Graduate Studies [SGS] – 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; Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation [IH PME] - 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 SSTP.

RELATIONSHIP OF SURGEON SCIENTIST TRAINING PROGRAM (SSTP) TO CLINICIAN INVESTIGATOR PROGRAM (CIP) OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA

First year SSTP Residents from Orthopaedics, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Urology, and Vascular Surgery must submit application to the Clinician Investigator Program (CIP) for CIP-MOH salary support. Residents in Cardiac Surgery, General Surgery, and Neurosurgery should **NOT** apply to CIP in their first year, but must instead apply to CIP in their 2nd year. 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 **MUST 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 PARO guidelines in this regard. If a Trainee in the SSTP is to provide clinical duties, then such arrangement should not exceed four (4) hours a week, as per the terms of the PARO-CAHO Agreement Article 1,B.

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 Post MD 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 trainee must have Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings to assist him/her during the time spent in the SSTP. The purpose of these meetings is to review the Trainee's research and graduate program progress. Each PAC will be formed in accordance with the rules of the SGS. The Supervisor serves as Chair of the PAC, and the PAC 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 CIP should be obtained from the CIP office (MSB Room 2366 - 1 King's College Circle; email: uoft.cip@utoronto.ca) and returned after each PAC to the CIP office. These evaluations must be completed by the Supervisor, viewed and signed by the Trainee. A copy must be sent to the Director of Postgraduate Surgical Education.