SickKids | Garron Family Cancer Centre

GFCC Research Fellowship

Terms of Reference

1.0 Fellowship Overview

The Garron Family Cancer Centre (GFCC) offers unique fellowship opportunities for clinical fellows seeking to expand their research skill set in oncology. These fellowship opportunities aim to provide training through direct participation in basic science or clinical investigation under the supervision of world leaders in oncology research and clinical care. The goal is to promote career development in the clinician/investigator and clinician/scientist tracks.

1.1 Fellowship Requirements

Research undertaken must be cancer related, and fellows are required to participate in GFCC research seminars related to their research interests and as their schedules allow from the outset of their fellowship. As part of the fellowship, clinical fellows are required to commit 20% of their time per year to clinical activities during research training.

Recipients of the GFCC Research Fellowship must reside in Toronto for the duration of the fellowship. Recipients must also hold an appointment at the University of Toronto and meet all associated appointment requirements.

For Haematology/Oncology Fellows

Clinical coverage in the Division of Haematology/Oncology includes after-hours coverage or hospital call. Details will be provided by the Division upon commencement of the training. Out of hours call will be required at least one weekend per block. After-hours coverage or hospital calls include overnight coverage to: Oncology, BMT/CT, Hematology, Thrombosis services OR day hospital and oncology weekend day shifts.

If the fellow is in a different Division or Program, it is up to their home Division or Program to define clinical coverage requirements.

1.2 Term

2-year term starting July 1. Renewal for the second-year contingent on the submission of supervisor and fellow progress reports.

A 3rd year can be applied for if external funding is obtained in the fellow's first or second year of the GFCC Fellowship. Process to request a 3rd year of funding includes the submission of a progress report no later than November 15 of the second year of fellowship and a letter of request outlining why a 3rd year is required and indicate supervisor support and commitment to provide supervisor contribution for final year.

1.3 Fellowships Available

Two Fellowships are awarded per year.

1.4 Application Process

The GFCC Fellowship application is managed by the Research Training Centre (RTC) as part of the Clinician Scientist Training Program (CSTP). Applicants will apply through CSTP application and select the GFCC Fellowship.

1.5 Key Dates

- Deadline: Once per year in the fall as set by CSTP (changes per year)
- Notification: early December; GFCC Program Manager to provide award letters. Award letter copied to Haematology/Oncology Education office and RTC Program Manager. Fellowship contract to be provided by Division/Program Education office.
- Applicants who did not receive GFCC Fellowship will be considered for CSTP and will receive a notification from CSTP with the results of their application.

2.0 Fellowship Funding Breakdown

- The fellow's salary will be paid at the PGY level set by the Division or Program in which they are appointed.
- The GFCC Fellowship provides an award of $75,000.
- A supervisor contribution of $22,000 is required.
- For fellows appointed in the Division of Haematology/Oncology, the Division will cover the cost of benefits.
- For fellows appointed outside the Division of Haematology/Oncology, the supervisor must confirm with the relevant Division or Department Head that the fellow will be paid the PGY3 minimum salary, or the applicable PGY rate set by that Division or Department. If there is any salary shortfall based on the salary rate, the supervisor or Division/Department is responsible for covering this shortfall.
- An additional $2,000 travel award is provided each year by the named fellowship to support conference attendance where the fellow will present research conducted during the GFCC Fellowship.
- The GFCC Program Manager will provide a Fellowship Funding Agreement letter to the supervisor and copy the relevant Division or Department Education Office. The agreement will outline the funding sources and identify the cost centre for the supervisor contribution. The supervisor must provide the cost centre and sign the agreement.

2.1 External Funding

- The goal of seeking external funding is first to offset the supervisor contribution and, second, to enable the GFCC to reallocate designated fellowship funds to support future GFCC Fellows.

- Fellows are required to seek external funding such as the Hold'em for Life. If successful, this funding offsets the supervisor contribution first then the GFCC Award. No increase in the fellow's salary will result from an external funding award.
- External funding must be applied in full in the year it is received and cannot be carried forward to offset the supervisor contribution in a subsequent year of the fellowship term.
- If a fellow receives multiple awards whose combined value exceeds the PGY5 salary, the fellow will be required to decline the GFCC Fellowship or other overlapping award (e.g., Hold'em for Life), as the full salary amount is met.
- External salary awards must be applied exclusively to the fellow's salary and cannot be used for laboratory supplies or other project-related costs.
- GFCC fellows are not eligible for Clinician Scientist Training Program (CSTP) funding during the term of their GFCC fellowship; CSTP cannot be held concurrently with the GFCC fellowship award. However, GFCC fellows are eligible to apply for CSTP funding to support the term following the completion of their GFCC fellowship.

2.2 Fellowship Deferral

- Fellowship can be deferred up to 1 year; written request submitted to gfcc.fellowship@sickkids.ca. Request for deferral beyond 1 year may be considered on exceptional basis only.

3.0 Supervisor, Mentorship & Progress Review

3.1 Supervisor Eligibility

- Supervisors must have a Senior Scientist, Scientist, Senior Associate Scientist, or Associate Scientist appointment at the Research Institute.
- Project Investigators are eligible to serve as Co-Supervisors. The application must include a Co-Supervisor who has a Senior Scientist, Scientist, Senior Associate Scientist, or Associate Scientist appointment at the Research Institute.

3.2 Fellowship Oversight Committee

A formal Fellowship Oversight Committee (FOC) is to be established to mentor and guide each fellow in the first year. The FOC is composed of at least 3 individuals including fellowship supervisor, a mentor for the fellow's clinical and general career development, and a mentor with expertise in the area of research that is being pursued by the fellow. There may be additional mentors who are also members of FOC. The specific goals of FOC are:

- To meet with the fellow a minimum of 2 times per year to review fellows work to date and provide mentorship as needed.

3.3 Progress Review

- Fellow to complete Progress Report once during the first year of the fellowship to be submitted no later than December 31 of the fellows first year.
- Final Progress Report to be submitted before end of final year which will capture future plans after completion of fellowship and final deliverables from research project. Submitted no later than June 1 of final year of fellowship.

- Progress Report via REDCap; link provided by GFCC Program Manager.

4.0 Application Adjudication

- Effective 2025, applications are reviewed as part of the CSTP review process.
- The GFCC does not manage nor participate in review process.
- Up to two cancer focused clinician scientists will take part in the CSTP review panel.