

CResT (Clinician Researcher Track) Curriculum Guidelines

General Psychiatry Residency Program

Background

The Clinician-Researcher Track (CResT) is a direct-entry stream within the psychiatry residency program at the University of Toronto that embeds an intensive research experience into a competency-based psychiatry residency to address the well-documented decline in psychiatry residents' research engagement over the course of their training ([Tsai et al., 2013](#)). CResT residents will have an individualized training experience that will optimize time for research or scholarship throughout residency, while meeting General Psychiatry Residency Program curriculum requirements. By integrating research training through dedicated research blocks and longitudinal half days, CResT provides the protected time and mentorship from renowned faculty necessary for residents to maintain momentum from prior intensive research backgrounds, produce peer-reviewed research outputs, and compete for early-career investigator grants. This residency track addresses national calls to expose trainees to research early in the residency program to preserve research careers ([Laliberté et al., 2016](#)), while ensuring Royal College clinical requirements are met through clinical rotations.

CResT leverages the University of Toronto's world-leading psychiatry and neuroscience resources, offering access to more than 900 faculty members, advanced research institutes, and relevant seminars through the Clinician Scientist and Clinician Scholar Programs. Graduates finish the program as skilled psychiatrists with competitive research skills who are well-prepared for research and clinical leadership roles. The CResT also strengthens the program's clinician-researcher training pipeline, enhancing research productivity, improving clinical care through innovation, and maintaining international leadership in psychiatry training.

General Principles

1. Residents in CResT must meet:
 - a. Minimum requirements for training as per the RCPSC Psychiatry Training Experiences.
 - b. Competencies as defined in the RCPSC Psychiatry Competencies and incorporated into the General Psychiatry Residency Program's Program of Assessment.
2. Any modifications in training for residents in CResT must consider residency program guidelines and principles alongside operational feasibility at training sites.

3. Enhanced support plans - Residents in CResT who require enhanced support plans either at the residency program's Resident Assessment and Support Subcommittee (RASC) and/or the Board of Examiners-Postgraduate (BOE-PG) may be asked to pause their involvement in CResT until the remediation is completed. RASC review and approval from the Program Director will be required before a resident is permitted to resume their involvement in RASC.
4. Accommodations - Residents in CResT who have accommodations as per the Office of Learner Affairs (OLA) that impact time on rotations needed to meet rotation-specific competencies and other residency program requirements may require adjustment of protected time for research.
5. Every ePort will be made to align the rotation site and/or supervisor, if operationally and educationally feasible, with a resident's area of research. Given the complexity of residency program operations, however, this may not always be possible.
6. Residents will have opportunities to have additional research time in PGY2-4, provided they meet rotation-specific competencies and are in good academic standing in the residency program.

Specific CResT Requirements

1. PLEX (Personalized Learning Experience) time in PGY1, 4, and 5 must be used for research.
2. PGY1 residents will identify a project supervisor with an academic appointment within the School of Graduate Studies and Department of Psychiatry, select advisory committee members or co-supervisors, develop research or scholarly project aims, and identify funding and resource needs to support their project. CResT residents will have one block in PGY1, during their Personalized Learning Experience (PLEX) rotation, that will be protected for research.
3. PGY2 residents will be fully integrated into their research/scholarly environment and begin intensive primary research and scholarly activities. Residents will work toward developing research proposals and protocols, ethics submissions, and data collection. Residents will also work towards publishing their work in peer-reviewed journals and presenting at local, national, and international research meetings. Residents pursuing a graduate degree will begin the application process.
4. PGY3 residents will write manuscripts and present their work at local, national, or international meetings. They will also be encouraged to apply to internal grant opportunities.
5. PGY4 residents will continue their research project, publications, and presentations, or graduate programs. Residents not pursuing graduate degrees will

also plan for post-residency fellowship, clinician-scientist, or academic psychiatry positions.

6. PGY5 residents will apply for early career investigator grants/awards, continue research activities, perform clinical electives pertinent to their career goals, and work towards obtaining clinician scientist/scholar positions or fellowships.
7. CResT residents are expected to present their research annually at the Department of Psychiatry Research Day.
8. In PGY1-5, attend six annual CResT seminars

Psychotherapy Training Requirements PGY2-4

Psychotherapy training for CResT residents will be individualized in collaboration with the assistant CResT director, residency director, and psychotherapy director. Although this curriculum may vary from the general psychiatry program, it will fulfill the Royal College of Psychiatry Training requirements and align with experiences from the general psychiatry training program. Residents will be trained in modalities such as cognitive behavioural therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, interpersonal therapy, group therapy, family therapy, dialectical behavioural therapy, and motivational interviewing.

Other psychotherapy training requirements include attendance at PGY2 CBT and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Seminars, which are small-group sessions held at the base/home site. Completion of a PGY3 Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Case Report.

Protected Time for Research

1. PGY1, 4, 5 PLEX blocks (16 blocks or months).
2. PGY1 – During the 4 core psychiatry clinical blocks (i.e., Addiction, CL, Emergency Psychiatry x2), residents will have a half-day per week available for research activities to initiate research projects.
3. PGY2-4
 - ½ day longitudinally protected for research (residents must maintain a minimum of 3-3.5 days of attendance per week on their core rotations)
 - PGY2 and 3 – Should a resident meet rotation-specific competencies prior to the time allotted for the rotation, they may be granted additional block(s)/month(s) of protected time for research.
 - PGY4 – 1 additional PLEX block for research in lieu of U/MPS rotation

4. Funding

- Have access to funds (up to \$1500) annually to support travel to present their research/scholarship work while in the CResT (for 5 years)
- Are eligible to apply for early career research funding via local grants, such as the Labatt Family Discovery Program of the Labatt Family Network for Research on the Biology of Depression (up to \$40,000 over 2 years)

Created by: Program Director and Assistant Program Director, CResT with input from rotation coordinators

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