RACP
Specialists. Together
EDUCATE ADVOCATE INNOVATE

Advanced Training Committee in Clinical Genetics

Criteria for Accreditation of Advanced Training Sites

Background

Accreditation of advanced training sites was approved as an activity of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) in September 1999.

Advanced training in clinical genetics is supervised by the Advanced Training Committee (ATC) in Clinical Genetics of the RACP. Training is undertaken prospectively under guidance of supervisors who provide formative and summative assessments of the trainee's program content and performance. In order to facilitate approval of training programs submitted by trainees each year, the ATC will accredit the training sites and then periodically review the accreditation of sites, in order to ensure that they are of acceptable quality.

Purpose of Accreditation of Sites

1. To facilitate approval of training programs
2. To determine:
    i) the appropriateness of supervision for advanced training;
    ii) the sufficiency of clinical experience;
    iii) opportunities for continuing education and research during advanced training;
    iv) the suitability of infrastructure for advanced training;
    v) recommendations for improving training at the sites.
3. To assist trainees to select a site suitable to their current training needs.

General Guidelines

1. Sites accredited for advanced training in clinical genetics will have demonstrated to the ATC that they have suitable staff, work and case load facilities to permit advanced training. There are six criteria applied by the ATC to decide if each standard has been achieved.
2. Documentation for each criterion will be required. The number of criteria achieved will determine whether a site is accredited for 12, 24 or 36 months advanced training.
3. The site should preferably be affiliated with a university teaching hospital.
4. In general a site must be able to provide at least 12 months of training in order to be accredited.
5. Accredited sites must notify the ATC of any substantial change of circumstances which might impair their ability to meet the minimum criteria for accreditation, within a month after the change in circumstances.

6. Visits could lead to recommendations for improving training at the site.
7. Sites will be visited at least once every 5 years.
8. Accreditation applies only to the training positions in place at the time of the site visit. New positions created between site visits may need separate interim accreditation. This would particularly apply when a new subspeciality training position is created at a site which previously did not have positions dedicated to that subspeciality. It is thus important for training sites to advise the ATC when new positions are created so that a decision can be made as to whether the new site falls within the original accreditation. If not, separate provisional accreditation will be required for that position.

Accreditation Criteria

The following criteria will be considered in accreditation of a site.

Criterion 1

The site will have adequate staff to provide supervision of advanced training.

1.1 A clinical geneticist who is a fellow of the RACP or equivalent, or is recognised as a clinical geneticist by the Human Genetics Society of Australasia (HGSA), will be available to act as supervisor.

1.2 Trainees can have one or more supervisors, including clinical geneticists whose appointments combine to make a full time appointment. Wherever practicable a trainee should have a minimum of two supervisors.

1.3 The clinical geneticist nominated as supervisor must work directly with the advanced trainee and be present to observe direct patient care.

1.4 Usually there should be a maximum of two trainees per supervisor.

Criterion 2

There will be sufficient patients and families for advanced training.

2.1 The workload of the site will encompass some or all of the range of topics required for advanced training in clinical genetics.

a) Inpatient consultations

b) Ambulatory clinics

c) Clinical experience over the three years of advanced training should include the following: dysmorphology including fetal dysmorphology, prenatal or pre-conception counselling, biochemical genetics and adult onset conditions e.g. neurogenetic clinics, cancer genetics clinics, potential teratogen exposure, conditions identified by population screening programs, skeletal dysplasia.

2.2 The site will have an active clinical or basic research program, or will have access to one, in which the trainee can participate sufficiently to obtain experience in research methodology.

2.3 The variety of clinical exposure referred to in 2.1(c) above will determine whether the site is accredited for 12, 24 or 36 months of training.

Criterion 3

Formal training is available in clinical genetics.

3.1 The site will provide a lecture program, journal club, grand rounds, seminars, case presentations, X-ray conferences, clinicopathological conferences to provide teaching for the advanced trainee.

3.2 The site will encourage the trainee to teach clinical genetics to junior colleagues, undergraduates and other health professions.

3.3 The site will provide the opportunity for advanced trainees to attend the annual scientific meeting of the HGSA annually and encourage trainees to attend other educational activities within the state or country.

3.4 The extent of formal training available to advanced trainees will contribute to accreditation for 12, 24 or 36 months advanced training.

Criterion 4

There are adequate resources for advanced trainees.

4.1 Access to a medical library with current and relevant texts, journals, computer retrieval and search facilities.

4.2 Typing and secretarial facilities, desk, access to a computer.

Criterion 5

Quality assurance programs include:

5.1 Regular Interdisciplinary meetings

5.2 Regular consultations with the supervisor

5.3 Other quality assurance activities could include intake meetings, clinical review meetings, perinatal morbidity and mortality meetings, prenatal diagnosis clinic meetings

Criterion 6

Laboratory experience includes:

6.1 Access to bench experience in molecular and cytogenetics laboratories

6.2 Regular meetings between laboratory and clinical staff

6.3 Liaison between laboratory and referring clinicians

6.4 Interpretation of results and writing of reports

Reporting Process

Departments will need to complete and return a survey report to the ATC for initial consideration of accreditation and for review of the accreditation status every five years. Site visits are also undertaken every five years. Sites are also required to report to the ATC on any important changes during the five year cycle, particularly relating to creation of new training positions (see point (8) in the “General Guidelines” section).

The report is considered by the ATC and the accreditation decision conveyed to the sites as soon as possible.

Provisional Accreditation

Provisional accreditation may be granted to sites which are awaiting review and accreditation by the ATC through the normal accreditation process. This is to ensure that existing trainees at the site are not disadvantaged.

Accreditation Cycle

Sites are reviewed every five years. The ATC may also undertake to review a site at its discretion before the end of the cycle. Visits of previously accredited sites will be at least once every five years and other times as necessary.

Removal or revision of site accreditation will not threaten accreditation of the training programs of those already training at the site.

Accreditation of Overseas Advanced Training Sites

Training obtained overseas is acceptable, provided the proposed training site meets the accreditation criteria. Overseas training sites will be assessed and approved based on information provided by the trainee's supervisor/Head of Department in the form of a letter and completion of survey forms. The supervisor will also receive the RACP handbook Requirements for Physician Training which includes the requirements of advanced training in clinical genetics for information. If a local supervisor has recent knowledge of the facilities provided by an overseas training site, this will also be considered in the accreditation process. A site visit will not be considered.

Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process

If a site does not gain accreditation or reaccreditation or is not satisfied with the decision or the accreditation process, then it has the right to request that the ATC reconsider its decision. Further information regarding the Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process can be found on the RACP website.

If you have any accreditation queries, please contact the Education Officer at ClinicalGenetics@racp.edu.au.