

# Scholarly Activity: What the ACGME's RRC is Looking for from Faculty & from Fellows

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## Objectives

1. At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will be able to describe the RRC expectations for scholarship for Anesthesiology faculty.
2. At the conclusion of this presentation, attendees will be able to describe the RRC expectations for scholarship for Anesthesiology fellows.

## Disclosures

Andrew J. Patterson, M.D., Ph.D. is a member of the ACGME RRC for Anesthesiology. He is a former Fellowship Program Director for Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine at Stanford University. He is currently the Executive Vice-Chair and Larson Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

## The Rules: Faculty Expectations

### Core Programs

II.B.5 The faculty must establish and maintain an environment of inquiry and scholarship with an active research component.

5a. The faculty must regularly participate in organized clinical discussions, rounds, journal clubs, and conferences.

5b. Some members of the faculty should also demonstrate scholarship by one or more of the following:

- (1) Peer-reviewed funding.
- (2) Publication of original research or review articles in peer reviewed journals or chapters in textbooks.
- (3) Publication or presentation of case reports or clinical series at local, regional, or national professional and scientific society meetings.
- (4) Participation in national committees or educational organizations.

5e. If the program is unable to fulfill one aspect of this requirement, the curriculum must include educational activities for the residents in the deficient component.<sup>1</sup>

### Fellowship Programs

Program requirement variations do exist, but the intent is similar for all Anesthesiology fellowship programs.

#### Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

II.B.6. Each faculty member participating in the fellowship must demonstrate ongoing academic achievements appropriate to anesthesiology critical care medicine, including publications, the development of the educational program, or the conduct of research.<sup>2</sup>

#### Obstetric Anesthesiology

II.B.5. Physician faculty members must demonstrate ongoing academic achievements appropriate to the subspecialty, including at least one of the following: publications, the development of education programs, or the conduct of research.<sup>3</sup>

#### Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology

II.B.9. Faculty members must maintain an active role in scholarly pursuits pertaining to cardiothoracic anesthesiology, as evidenced by involvement in education and scholarship that pertains to the care of adult cardiothoracic patients.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Rules: Fellow Expectations**

Program requirement variations do exist, but the intent is similar for all Anesthesiology fellowship programs.

#### Anesthesiology Critical Care Medicine

IV.B.1. The program must provide instruction in the fundamentals of research design and conduct, and the implementation and presentation of data.

IV.B.2. During the program, fellows must participate in at least one clinical or other research project related to critical care medicine.

- a. Results of each project must be disseminated through publication or presentation at local, regional, national, or international meetings.<sup>2</sup>

#### Obstetric Anesthesiology

IV.B.1. Each fellow should conduct or be substantially involved in a scholarly project related to the subspecialty which leads to both presentation at a national meeting and publication.

- a. Fellows must have a faculty mentor overseeing the project.<sup>3</sup>

#### Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology

IV.B.1. All fellows must complete a scholarly project.

- a. The results of such projects must be disseminated through a variety of means, including publication or presentation at local, regional, national, or international meetings.<sup>4</sup>

**The Reality: Citations related to scholarly activity are the most common citations from the ACGME's RRC for Anesthesiology.**

**The Reality: Finding Faculty to Mentor One Year Clinical Fellows for Substantive Scholarly Projects is Challenging.**

1. Clinical demands at many institutions limit the amount of time faculty are provided for scholarly activities.
2. Clinical productivity is sometimes financially rewarded more than academic productivity.
3. Junior faculty are sometimes saddled with considerable debt from college and medical school and are sometimes under pressure to focus on resolution of financial obligations rather than scholarly work, especially in areas of the country where the cost of living is high.
4. The types of projects that are rewarded with grants (particularly NIH grants) and high profile publications frequently are not the types of projects that one year fellows can participate in due to time limitations, call obligations, and lack of technical training or facility with data analysis and scientific writing. Consequently, faculty who include one year fellows in substantive projects may put themselves at risk for moving their projects along too slowly. Faculty may also anger post docs and other research personnel who perform much of the "heavy lifting" for their projects by allowing clinical fellows to present data at meetings or including them on manuscripts for which these individuals have played minor roles.
5. Some institutions that have or are seeking fellowship training programs do not have the infrastructure for substantive scholarly projects.
6. Effective faculty mentors for scholarly projects are sometimes difficult to find, particularly for small subspecialty groups and divisions

**The Reality: One Year Clinical Fellowships present unique challenges.**

1. Substantive scholarly projects often take more than one year to complete (let alone present and/or publish).
2. One year clinical fellows have a short time to master the clinical skills germane to their Anesthesiology subspecialties. Some fellows need to focus more than others on clinical elements in order to master them.
3. In some cases, fellows must prepare for ABA subspecialty board examinations or an NBE examination. Preparing for these examinations is time consuming.
4. Fellows have to find jobs during their one year of fellowship training, which necessitates travel and days off for interviews.
5. One year clinical fellows in the Anesthesiology subspecialties are pulled in many directions simultaneously and may find it difficult to engage in a scholarly project in meaningful ways.

## Suggestions

1. Band together. Take advantage of economies of scale by creating **consortia** that allow fellows and faculty in all the member programs to meet the ACGME requirements.
2. Develop scholarly **programs** that fellows can participate in sequentially rather than having each fellow invent a new project from scratch.
3. Focus fellows on short, “doable” elements of scholarly endeavor rather than encouraging them to take on ambitious stand-alone projects.
4. Contact your ACGME RRC Executive Director (Anne Gravel Sullivan, Ph.D.) to discuss your plans and your concerns.
5. Get the information for your fellows’ scholarly projects into the ACGME Accreditation Data System (ADS) by June 28<sup>th</sup> so the information is available to the RRC reviewers during the fall reviews.

## References

<sup>1</sup> Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Anesthesiology. Effective: July 1, 2016.

[https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/040\\_anesthesiology\\_2016.pdf](https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/040_anesthesiology_2016.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Anesthesiology Critical Care. Effective: July 1, 2016.

[https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/045\\_critical\\_care\\_anes\\_2016\\_1-YR.pdf](https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/045_critical_care_anes_2016_1-YR.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Obstetric Anesthesiology. Effective: July 1, 2016.

[https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/043\\_obstetric\\_anesth\\_2016\\_1-YR.pdf](https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/043_obstetric_anesth_2016_1-YR.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Adult Cardiothoracic Anesthesiology. Effective: July 1, 2016.

[https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/041\\_adult\\_cardiothoracic\\_anes\\_2016\\_1-YR.pdf](https://www.acgme.org/Portals/0/PFAssets/ProgramRequirements/041_adult_cardiothoracic_anes_2016_1-YR.pdf)