

The Houston Methodist Research Institute (HMRI) offers a variety of resources and tools to solidify and support the research experiences of our graduate and postdoctoral trainees. The Office of Graduate Studies and Trainee affairs (OGSTA) strives to facilitate and engage trainees in opportunities that will enhance their research learning experience at all levels of their educational careers.

### **OGSTA – Individual Development Plan**

In doing so, the Office of Graduate Studies and Trainee affairs has created an Individual Development Plan document (IDP) as a tool that trainees can use to set goals, track their success, and pioneer their professional growth while training at Houston Methodist. Its primary purpose is to help trainees reach short and long-term career goals, as well as strengthen their current performance by providing a structured approach. IDP's demonstrate intentional learning that is aligned with specific competencies needed in your field as well as mission, goals and objectives of their department. With goal setting at its heart, a professional development plan organizes our trainee's ideas into a cohesive plan with defined timeframes and expected results. The OGSTA IDP form is structured in such a way that will prompt you to identify learning activities that are experiential, social and workshop-focused so that your development is well rounded. As a mandatory process for our joint programs, it is also highly encouraged that all trainees use this tool as a recourse for success. Trainees and mentors decide on how frequent the IDP is reviewed and evaluated however it serves as a communication tool to encourage open dialogue about expectations and objectives.

### **Professional & Career Development**

While providing a purposeful foundation of intentional learning, we also offer various career and professional development courses, as well as a support environment for all trainees. From the career development perspective, we offer a variety of resources. Many of our resources are led by our Trainee Association, a Trainee-led body of postdocs and trainees that represent the trainee body as key stakeholders in education initiatives. This group of officers sets an annual calendar to assist the Office of Education in providing resources to our trainees. They lead many activities, such as an annual symposium where leading speakers in translational research are brought in to speak, and all trainees are invited to share their research with the institution. They also offer bi-annual scientific writing workshops to international trainees who need alternative means of pursuing funding, as well as any trainee who needs assistance in their scientific writing. Our Trainee Association is also a partnership Postdoctoral Association of the Texas Medical Center, a multi-institution collaboration of postdoctoral trainees within the largest medical complex in the world. Additionally, the Trainee Association provides professional development workshops, including resume and CV building, team building in mentor-mentee relationships, offering career panels of people from multiple fields, including academic, consulting, diagnostics, and start-up, and

resources on how to network, negotiate, and collaborate amongst their peers in their institutional environment.

### **Trainee Association**

The Methodist Association of Professional and Trainee Affairs (MAPTA) was established to provide career and professional development, networking opportunities, and research development for all trainees at the Houston Methodist Research Institute. The strategic monthly workshops such as grant writing, branding/marketing your research, culture training, organizational communication, and Academia vs Industry vs Consulting offer the development a trainee needs to grow into an experienced professional. Development is tracked through attendance, surveys, and certifications. The Office of Graduate Studies and Trainees Affairs (OGSTA) uses Cvent, an extensive event coordination software that is designed to track an attendees selected workshops throughout the calendar year as well as request feedback. A certificate of development is given to trainees who attend 90% of the workshops and completes a comprehensive survey of the value of our programs. In addition to workshops we offer a certification with Texas A&M University that gives our trainees a chance to take a free course, Responsible Conduct of Research, a course that is required by the National Institute of Health. Although interdisciplinary networking can be achieved through our workshops we strive for our trainees to network outside of our institute and sponsor events with institutions within the Texas Medical Center as well as sitting on the Texas Medical Student Affairs Council. This council offers collaborations and shared opportunities for our trainees here at Houston Methodist Research Institute. Development does not stop at workshops and networking events but continues with professional exposure. Apart of our development philosophy is having our Trainees attend conferences in their discipline as well as present their publications. Travel awards are granted to trainees that attend development workshops as well as trainees that showcase their publications at our Winter Science symposium, an event that also serves as a trainee appreciation ceremony. Together, workshops, networking, and trainee events create a bi-weekly opportunity for trainees to engage in professional and career development.

### **Educational & Professional Networking**

In addition to the Trainee Association, the Office of Education also works to best ensure that our trainees are kept aware and up-to-date on the latest translational research, we regularly offer seminars and host conferences so that trainees not only have exposure to cutting edge research, they also get to be kept up to date on the latest clinical developments. Additionally, we also have an affiliate membership with the National Postdoctoral Association, allowing every postdoctoral trainee additional professional and career development, as well as networking opportunities. The Office of Education has many opportunities for upper predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees to gain mentorship roles, as we often have visiting students as well as an annual summer internship that allows our trainees to mentor undergraduates and visitors in innovating



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and directing research projects. The Office of Education also offers the opportunity for collaboration with other universities, as many of our predoctoral trainees come from many of our partner institutions nationally and internationally, including: Weill Cornell University (New York), Texas A&M University, Swansea University (United Kingdom), Monterey Tech (Mexico), and Xiangya School of Medicine (China). Therefore, we offer many opportunities for education, enhancement, and collaboration beyond the departments of research.