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Geriatric Neurology
Program Requirements

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Institutional Support	3
	A. Sponsoring Institution	3
	B. Primary Institution	4
	C. Participating Institution	4
III.	Facilities and Resources	4
IV.	Faculty	5
	A. Program Director Qualifications	5
	B. Program Director Responsibilities	5
	C. Core Faculty Qualifications	6
	D. Core Faculty Responsibilities	6
	E. Other Faculty	6
V.	Fellow Appointment	6
	A. Duration of Training	6
	B. Eligibility Criteria	6
	C. Minimum Number of Fellows and Fellow Complement	7
VI.	Educational Program	7
	A. Role of Program Director and Faculty	7
	B. Competencies	7
	C. Didactic Components	7
	D. Clinical Components	8
	E. Scholarly Activities	8
	F. Duty Hours, Working Environment, and On-Call Activities	8
VII.	Evaluation	9
	A. Fellow Evaluation	9
	B. Faculty Evaluation	9
	C. Program Evaluation	10

Geriatric Neurology Program Requirements

The common program requirements are standards required of accredited programs in all UCNS subspecialties. They are shown in **bold** typeface below. Requirements in regular typeface are defined by each subspecialty.

I. Introduction

- A. Geriatric Neurology is defined by its expertise in the diagnosis, treatment, and care of neurological conditions that affect older individuals and by its unique body of knowledge regarding the aging nervous system, its vulnerability to specific neurological disorders, and its influence on the prevalence and expression of neurological disease. Neurologists are called with increasing frequency to provide care for older adults. As the number of elderly in the population increases, there will be a concomitant increase in the prevalence of acute and chronic neurological disorders associated with advancing age. Through training fellowships, the neurological community will endeavor to master, codify, and transfer the knowledge and skills to effectively care for the elderly with neurological disorders.
- B. Maximizing success in clinical care of the elderly requires specialized expertise in Geriatric Neurology. This includes the ability to work and communicate effectively with other health care providers and an understanding of current research regarding the clinical and scientific basis of aging and age-related neurological dysfunction. The goal of a fellowship program in Geriatric Neurology is the training of neurologists equipped with the knowledge, skills, and clinical competence to diagnose, treat, manage, and rehabilitate aged persons with neurological dysfunction. The Geriatric Neurology knowledge base and skill set build upon the foundation provided by general neurology residency training.

The overall objective for subspecialty training in Geriatric Neurology is to provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes most conducive to meet the following goals. To:

1. provide high-quality clinical care suited to the special needs of the elderly with neurological disorders, including screening, diagnostic cognitive and functional evaluation, treatment, management, supportive counseling, psycho-social intervention, and appropriate end-of-life care,
2. work effectively with multi/interdisciplinary teams oriented to the care of the elderly, and
3. become leaders in clinical, educational, academic, and research arenas in Geriatric Neurology.

II. Institutional Support

There are three types of institutions that may comprise a program: 1) the sponsoring institution, which assumes ultimate responsibility for the program and is required of all programs, 2) the primary institution, which is the primary clinical training site and may or may not be the sponsoring institution, and 3) the participating institution, which provides required experience that cannot be obtained at the primary or sponsoring institutions.

A. Sponsoring Institution

1. **The sponsoring institution must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), and meet the current ACGME Institutional Requirements. This responsibility extends to fellow assignments at all participating institutions. The sponsoring institution must be appropriately organized for the conduct of graduate medical education (GME) in a scholarly**

environment and must be committed to excellence in both medical education and patient care.

2. A letter demonstrating the sponsoring institution's responsibility for the program must be submitted. Such a letter must:
 - a. confirm sponsorship of the training program,
 - b. state the sponsoring institution's commitment to training and education, and
 - c. be signed by the designated institution official of the institution as defined by ACGME.

B. Primary Institution

1. Assignments at the primary institution must be of sufficient duration to ensure a quality educational experience and must provide sufficient opportunity for continuity of care. The primary institution must demonstrate the ability to promote the overall program goals and support educational and peer activities.
2. A letter from the appropriate department chair(s) at the primary institution must be submitted. Such a letter must:
 - a. confirm the relationship of the primary institution to the program,
 - b. state the primary institution's commitment to training and education, and
 - c. list specific activities that will be undertaken, supported, and supervised at the primary institution.

C. Participating Institutions

1. Assignments to participating institutions must be based on a clear educational rationale, must have clearly stated learning objectives and activities, and should provide resources not otherwise available to the program. When multiple participating institutions are used, there should be assurance of the continuity of the educational experience.
2. Assignments at participating institutions must be of sufficient duration to ensure a quality educational experience and should provide sufficient opportunity for continuity of care. All participating institutions must demonstrate the ability to promote the overall program goals and support educational and peer activities.
3. If a participating institution is used, a participating institution letter must be submitted. Such a letter must:
 - a. confirm the relationship of the participating institution to the program,
 - b. state the participating institution's commitment to training and education,
 - c. list specific activities that will be undertaken, supported, and supervised at the participating institution, and
 - d. be signed by the department chair or center director of the participating institution.

III. Facilities and Resources

A. Each program must demonstrate that it possesses the facilities and resources necessary to support a quality educational experience.

1. There must be adequate support of trainees for all clinical activities including:
 - a. inpatient and outpatient facilities,
 - b. examination rooms,
 - c. documentation areas,
 - d. laboratory facilities including clinical-pathological, electrophysiological, and imaging.
2. There must be adequate support of fellows for all scholarly activities including:
 - a. research guidance,
 - b. technical support,
 - c. library and internet availability,

- d. statistical consultation,
- e. computer resources,
- f. laboratory space, equipment, and time.

IV. Faculty

The faculty of accredited programs consists of: 1) the program director, 2) core faculty, and 3) other faculty. Core faculty are physicians who oversee clinical training in the subspecialty. The program director is considered a core faculty member for the purpose of determining the fellow complement. Other faculty are physicians and other professionals determined by the Subspecialty to be necessary in order to deliver the program curriculum. The program director and faculty are responsible for the general administration of the program and for the establishment and maintenance of a stable educational environment. Adequate durations of appointments for the program director and core faculty members are essential for maintaining such an environment. The duration of appointment for the program director must provide for continuity of leadership.

A. Program Director Qualifications

- 1. There must be a single program director responsible for the program. The person designated with this authority is accountable for the operation of the program and he or she should be a member of the faculty or medical staff of the primary institution.**
- 2. The program director must:**
 - a. possess requisite specialty expertise as well as documented educational and administrative abilities and experience in his or her field,**
 - b. be certified in neurology by the ABMS or RCPSC,**
 - c. possess a current, valid, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in the state or province of the program, and**
 - d. be certified, and maintain certification, in Geriatric Neurology by the UCNS ¹.**

B. Program Director Responsibilities

- 1. The program director must:**
 - a. oversee and organize the activities of the educational program in all institutions participating in the program including selecting and supervising the faculty and other program personnel at each participating institution, and monitoring appropriate fellow supervision and evaluation at all participating institutions,**
 - b. prepare an accurate statistical and narrative description of the program as requested by the UCNS as well as update the program and fellow records annually,**
 - c. ensure the implementation of fair policies and procedures, as established by the sponsoring institution, to address fellow grievances and due process in compliance with the institutional requirements,**
 - d. monitor fellow stress, including mental or emotional conditions inhibiting performance or learning, and drug- or alcohol-related dysfunction,**
 - e. obtain prior approval of the UCNS for changes in the program that may significantly alter the educational experience of the fellows. Upon review of a proposal for a program change, the UCNS may determine that additional oversight or a site visit is necessary. Examples of changes that must be reported include:**

¹ This requirement will not be imposed until after the expiration of the subspecialty's practice track.

- 1) **change in the program director,**
 - 2) **the addition or deletion of sponsoring, primary, or participating institution(s),**
 - 3) **change in the number of approved fellows, and**
 - 4) **change in the format of the educational program, and**
- f. ensure that the clinical experience meets the minimum curriculum guidelines of the fellowship and maintain accurate program and fellowship records.

C. Core Faculty Qualifications

1. **Each core faculty member must:**
 - a. **possess requisite specialty expertise as well as documented educational and administrative abilities and experience in his or her field,**
 - b. **be currently certified in neurology by the ABMS or RCPSC,**
 - c. **possess a current, valid, unrestricted, and unqualified license to practice medicine in the state or province of the program, and**
 - d. **be appointed in good standing to the faculty of an institution participating in the program.**
2. **The core faculty must include at least one neurologist. The neurologist may also be the program director.**

D. Core Faculty Responsibilities

1. **There must be a sufficient number of core faculty members with documented qualifications at each institution participating in the program to instruct and adequately supervise all fellows in the program.**
2. **Core Faculty members must:**
 - a. **devote sufficient time to the educational program to fulfill their supervisory and teaching responsibilities,**
 - b. **evaluate the fellows whom they supervise in a timely manner, and**
 - c. **demonstrate a strong interest in the education of fellows, demonstrate competence in both clinical care and teaching abilities, support the goals and objectives of the educational program, and demonstrate commitment to their own continuing medical education by participating in scholarly activities.**

E. Other Faculty

1. **Non-neurology faculty and non-physician faculty must be appropriately qualified in their fields and possess appropriate institutional appointments.**
2. **The sponsoring/primary/participating institutions must provide additional professional, technical, and administrative personnel to adequately support the fellowship training program in attaining its educational and administrative goals.**

V. Fellow Appointment

A. Duration of Training

1. **Fellowship training in Geriatric Neurology must be comprised of at least 12 months (and not exceed 36 months) of education subsequent to satisfactory completion of an ACGME- or RCPSC-accredited residency.**

B. Eligibility Criteria

1. **The fellow must possess a current valid and unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States or Canada or its territories.**
2. **The fellow must be a graduate of a residency program in neurology accredited by the ACGME or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).**

3. The fellow must be board certified or eligible for neurology certification by ABMS or RCPS.

C. Minimum Number of Fellows and Fellow Complement

1. The minimum number of fellows to be trained is one.
2. The fellow complement is the number of fellows allowed to be enrolled in the program. There must be at least 1 core faculty member for every 2 fellows.

VI. Educational Program

A. Role of the Program Director and Faculty

1. The program director, with assistance of the faculty, is responsible for developing and implementing the academic and clinical program of fellow education by:
 - a. preparing a written statement to be distributed to fellows and faculty and reviewed with fellows prior to assignment, which outlines the educational goals and objectives of the program with respect to the knowledge, skills, and other attributes to be demonstrated by fellows for the entire fellowship and on each major assignment and each level of the program,
 - b. preparing and implementing a comprehensive, well-organized, and effective curriculum, both academic and clinical, which includes the presentation of core specialty knowledge supplemented by the addition of current information, and
 - c. providing fellows with direct experience in progressive responsibility for patient management.

B. Competencies

1. A fellowship program must require that its fellows obtain competence in the AGCME Competencies to the level expected of a new practitioner in the subspecialty. Programs must define the specific and unique learning objectives in the area including the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes required and provide educational experiences as needed in order for their fellows to demonstrate the following:
 - a. *patient care* that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health,
 - b. *medical knowledge* about established and evolving biomedical, clinical, and basic sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care,
 - c. *practice-based learning and improvement* that involves investigation and evaluation of their own patient care, appraisal and assimilation of scientific evidence, and improvements in patient care,
 - d. *interpersonal and communication skills* that result in effective information exchange and collaboration with patients, their families, and other health professionals,
 - e. *professionalism*, as manifested through a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to a diverse patient population, and
 - f. *systems-based practice*, as manifested by actions that demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value.

C. Didactic Components

1. The educational program will be based upon the approved *Geriatric Neurology Core Content*. The core content must be included in all training programs; however, each

center may offer additional experiences consistent with their unique settings and opportunities.

2. The program must include structured educational experiences such as rounds, conferences, case presentations, lectures and seminars that complement the clinical and self-directed educational opportunities. Together, various educational experiences must facilitate the fellow's mastery of the core content areas and foster the competencies as described above.
3. The program director, in consultation with the faculty, will assist the fellow in self-learning activities by recommending types and content of supplemental educational materials, such as textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant web-based training.
4. The program director must provide details of the educational methods by which the *Geriatric Neurology Core Content* will be delivered.

D. Clinical Components

1. **Approximately 80% of the fellow's clinical time must be spent in supervised activities related to the care of patients with aging and age related neurological function. Clinical experiences may include all training relevant to Geriatric Neurology, including lectures and individual didactic experiences and journal clubs emphasizing clinical matters. Programs with flexible fellowship terms must assure that equivalent time is spent in clinical training.**
2. Due to the diverse clinical needs of patients, the Geriatric Neurology training program must also provide a diverse clinical setting for instruction. These settings may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. outpatient consultative and continuity clinics,
 - b. inpatient acute or subacute/chronic care experiences and consultation,
 - c. emergency room experiences, and
 - d. home care.
3. The selection of the types and combination of clinical care settings is at the discretion of the director of the training program, the sponsoring facility, and participating institutions.
4. The program director must have educational rationale for all clinical experiences. Specifically, rationale must address how rotations meet the requirements as they relate to the interdisciplinary nature of the subspecialty.

E. Scholarly Activities

1. **The responsibility for establishing and maintaining an environment of inquiry and scholarship rests with the faculty. Both faculty and fellows must participate actively in some form of scholarly activity. Scholarship is defined as activities unrelated to the specific care of patients, which includes scholarship pertaining to research, writing review papers, giving research-based lectures and participating in research-oriented journal clubs.**
2. **There must be adequate resources for scholarly activities for faculty and fellows, e.g., sufficient laboratory space, equipment, computer services for data analysis, and statistical consultation services.**

F. Duty Hours, Working Environment, and On-Call Activities

Providing fellows with a sound academic and clinical education must be carefully planned and balanced with concerns for patient safety and fellow well-being. Each program must ensure that the learning objectives of the program are not compromised by excessive reliance on fellows to fulfill service obligations. Didactic and clinical education defined by the program requirements must have priority in the allotment of a fellow's time and energy.

1. **Supervision of Fellows**
 - a. **All patient care required by the program requirements must be supervised by qualified faculty. The program director must ensure, direct, and document adequate supervision of fellows at all times. Fellows must be provided with rapid, reliable systems for communicating with supervising faculty.**
 - b. **Faculty schedules must be structured to provide fellows with continuous supervision and consultation.**
 - c. **Faculty and fellows must be educated to recognize the signs of fatigue and adopt and apply policies to prevent and counteract the potential negative effects.**
2. **Duty hours assignments must recognize that the faculty and fellows collectively have responsibility for the safety and welfare of patients. Fellow duty hours and work environment must comply with the current ACGME program requirements.**
3. **The objective of on-call activities is to provide fellows with continuity of patient care experiences throughout a 24-hour period. *In-house call* is defined as those duty hours beyond the normal work day when fellows are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution. Fellow on-call activities must be consistent with the current ACGME program requirements.**

VII. Evaluation

A. Fellow Evaluation

1. **Fellow evaluation by faculty must:**
 - a. **take place at least semi-annually and areas of weakness and strength must be communicated to the fellow,**
 - b. **records must be maintained documenting fellow experience and performance, and**
 - c. **include the fellow's demonstration of learning objectives and mastery of the core competencies (see VI.B).**
2. **The summary and final evaluation of the fellow must be prepared by the program director and should reflect the input of faculty.**
3. **The evaluation forms may vary from program-to-program, but must address the core competencies.**
4. **Each supervisor must complete the evaluation form after every major rotation. Evaluations from other health professionals should also be expressly sought.**
5. **The results of the evaluations must be communicated to the fellow every six months with a face-to-face meeting with the program director; a written summary must also be shared with the fellow and made part of the fellow's file.**
6. **Issues of unacceptable performance must be addressed in a timely fashion and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the sponsoring institution.**

B. Faculty Evaluation

1. **The performance of faculty must be evaluated by the program director on an annual basis.**
2. **The evaluations must include a review of their teaching abilities, commitment to the educational program, clinical knowledge, and scholarly activities.**
3. **These evaluations must include annual written evaluations by fellows.**

C. Program Evaluation

- 1. The effectiveness of a program must be evaluated in a systematic manner. In particular, the quality of the curriculum and the extent to which the educational goals have been met must be assessed.**
- 2. Confidential written evaluations by fellows must be utilized in this process.**
- 3. Performance by fellows on the UCNS certification exam may also be used to measure the quality of the training program.**