Clinical and Translational Science

Overview

Clinical and Translational Science is a high priority for the National Institute of Health, otherwise known as NIH. Clinical research encompasses the following research areas: 1) research with human subjects that attempts to determine disease mechanisms, therapies, clinical trials and new techniques; 2) Epidemiology & Behavioral research and 3) Outcomes research. Translational research, sometimes referred to as “bench to bedside to community” is a concept beginning in the laboratory developing and testing interventions impacting human health, taking that information into trial studies on human subjects and finally, determining best practices for community health. West Virginia University has a Clinical and Translational Science Institute (WC-CTSI) which is funded in part from the NIH Institutional Development Award Program for Clinical & Translational Research (IDeA-CTR). The CTSI, in partnership with other institutions, has a mission to focus on research that will address the health issues of individuals and communities specifically as they affect West Virginia and the Appalachian region. The mission of this institute is in alignment with the land grant mission of West Virginia University and the strategic plan of the WVU Health Sciences Center. An overview of recent projects undertaken by the WV-CTSI is available at the following web site: http://www.wvctsi.org/Pages/.

As part of the CTSI, educational programs at the graduate level prepare students to participate in clinical and translational research. WVU offers a M.S. in Clinical & Translational Science which is designed to develop the next generation of clinical and translational scientists through education and mentored research training. Typically, students have an undergraduate degree in a health care discipline, or a field of study complementary to research in health. The master’s degree may also be considered as part of a dual degree program, such as MD/MS. Mentored research opportunities exist with faculty in the Health Sciences schools (Pharmacy, Nursing, Dentistry, Medicine & Public Health). The School of Medicine has a new department of Clinical and Translational Science to facilitate the recruitment and support of physician-scientists, who may serve as faculty mentors to students. Information on the master’s degree may be found at the program web site: http://www.wvctsi.org/pages/Programs/Clinical-Research-Education-Mentoring-Career-Devel/M-S-in-Clinical-Translational-Science.

A 15 credit graduate certificate in Clinical & Translational Science is also available (see http://www.wvctsi.org/pages/Programs/Clinical-Research-Education-Mentoring-Career-Devel/Certificate-in-Clinical-Translational-Science). Certificate coursework may be applied to the master’s degree should the student wish to apply and be accepted for the M.S. degree program after certificate completion.

Application and Admission

Priority for the master’s degree is given to faculty, clinicians, and health professional students at the WVU Health Sciences Center. The application requires a personal statement outlining past accomplishments (with an emphasis on research, future research interests, and a clear career vision of how becoming a clinical/translational researcher is part of a long-term career plan), three letters of recommendation that evaluate potential as a clinician scientist, a list of potential research mentors, and a Curriculum Vitae. For faculty applicants, a support letter from the Department Chairperson is required stating how research activities integrate with other responsibilities. For clinicians, support letters from the department Chair and fellowship or residency director (if applicable) are required. Student applicants must be in good academic and professional standing. Any other interested applicants should follow the WVU requirements for application to graduate programs as described below.

Prospective graduate students are urged to initiate application for admission as early as possible. The first step of a student interested in a degree program should be to ask for information from the department, division, school, or college offering the program desired; the reply to such an inquiry will include instructions for applying to the particular program.

Application for admission to graduate study must be made online or on standard forms provided online at http://grad.wvu.edu/admissions. If using a paper application, the completed form may be returned to the Office of Admissions, PO Box 6009, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506, and must be accompanied by payment of a nonrefundable special service fee of $60. Applicants who have attended another institution, other than WVU, must request that the registrar or records office of the college(s) attended send an official transcript directly to the Office of Admissions. No one is admitted to graduate study that does not hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.

If the applicant meets the minimum admission requirements of WVU, a copy of the application is forwarded to the faculty of the program of interest. Any graduate degree program is permitted to set admission requirements which go beyond the minimum admission standards of the University. No one can pursue an advanced degree at WVU unless admitted to the appropriate degree program.