Clinical and Translational Science

Degrees Offered

• Certificate
• Master of Science
• Doctor of Philosophy
• Joint Doctor of Medicine and Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical and Translational Science is a high priority for the National Institute of Health (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 (WVCTSI) which is funded in part from the NIH Institutional Development Award Program for Clinical & Translational Research (IDeA-CTR). The WVCTSI, 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 (WVU) and the strategic plan of the WVU Health Sciences Center. An overview of recent projects undertaken by the WVCTSI is available at the following web site: http://wvctsi.org/.

As part of the WVCTSI, educational programs at the graduate level prepare trainees to participate in clinical and translational research. WVU offers a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Masters of Science (M.S.), and Certificate in Clinical and Translational Science which is designed to develop the next generation of clinical and translational scientists through education and mentored research training.

PH.D. IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

The goal of the Ph.D. program is to develop biomedical researchers who can integrate findings, information, and observations across basic, population, and clinical sciences, to accelerate and transform how we improve the health of individuals and populations. By the completion of this degree, students will be able to:

1. Design, implement, conduct, analyze and interpret research projects using the techniques unique to basic science, clinical research, and population science research
2. Demonstrate mastery of research in a focused area as evidenced by academic and scientific presentations and publications
3. Read, understand and critique the scientific literature of the basic, clinical, and population sciences
4. Work effectively with and create collaborative, productive research partnerships with clinicians, population scientists, and basic / laboratory scientists
5. Be able to communicate with and understand the research challenges and perspectives of each of the three branches of clinical and translational science (basic, clinical, and population sciences)
6. Work with communities to translate scientific findings into programs and policies that improve the health of individuals and populations.

The Ph.D. program is suitable for students with:

• An undergraduate degree
• Already completed graduate work (at the master or doctoral level)
• Medical students in the MD/PhD program
• Practicing clinicians
• Other biomedical professionals seeking expertise in and preparation for careers in clinical and translational research.

Information on the Ph.D. degree may be found at the program web http://wvctsi.org/programs/education-mentoring-career-development/phd-in-clinical-translational-science/

MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

Typically, M.S. trainees 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. The M.S. degree expands upon Certificate coursework in biostatistics and epidemiology to provide mentored, research training with required and elective courses, the latter to complement research needs and interests. The degree emphasizes a research project(s) that can be clinical (study of medications, devices, diagnostic products, and treatments; may include clinical trials) and/or translational research (defined as research with human subjects or with populations or with direct application to human health). Completion of the M.S. degree requires a written grant proposal or thesis defended orally to three graduate faculty members. The degree can be completed in three semesters, although typically clinical trainees are part-time and complete the program in two to three years. Information on the M.S. degree may be found at the program website: http://wvctsi.org/programs/education-mentoring-career-development/ms-in-clinical-translational-science/
Application and Admission

PH.D. IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

For the Ph.D. in Clinical and Translational Science, the minimum requirements for admission consideration are as follows:

- Completed undergraduate degree with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher
- GRE score of 300 (total; minimum of 150 verbal and 150 quantitative) or MCAT of 28 (total). In the instances where the applicant is a clinician, successful completion of the USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 board exams may be accepted in lieu of the GRE or MCAT scores.
- TOEFL score where applicable (minimum score requirement depends upon the test taken; standards established by the WVU Office of Admissions, International Graduate Students)
- Significant undergraduate coursework in the physical or biological sciences is strongly recommended (1 year of biology, 1 year of math, 1 year of chemistry, and 1 year of social sciences) as is research experience

Students must submit an application that includes:

- A personal statement that addresses their desire to complete a doctoral program in clinical and translational science, a career in biomedical research, and how their background, including their research experiences, have prepared them for this doctoral program
- A résumé or CV that indicates relevant experience and the years and location (institution) of completion of undergraduate degrees and any graduate or professional coursework or degrees
- Three letters of recommendation from professional and/or academic referees, in which the referees clarify how long and in what capacity they have known the applicant and their assessment of the student’s likelihood of success in doctoral-level work.

Applications to this program will be reviewed by a program-specific admissions committee comprised of representatives from the WVU HSC Interdisciplinary Research Centers (Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Center for Cardiovascular and Respiratory Sciences, Center for Neuroscience, and the WV Stroke Center), the WV-CTSI, and the WVU HSC Office of Research and Graduate Education. A senior student in the program will be a representative on the committee.

It is anticipated that admission to this program will be competitive; meeting the minimum admission requirements will not assure acceptance to this program.

MASTERS OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE

The M.S. in Clinical and Translational Science is targeted to clinician and scientists with health-related professional degrees, those seeking a dual degree (such as MD/MS), or health professional students.

Students must submit an application that includes:

- 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
- A Curriculum Vitae or resume

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 trainees interested in one of the above programs 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.

**Master of Science**

**MAJOR REQUIREMENTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>BIOS 601</td>
<td>Applied Biostatistics 1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOS 602</td>
<td>Applied Biostatistics Lab</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS 700</td>
<td>Scientific Integrity</td>
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<td>SBHS 711</td>
<td>Research Translation for Health</td>
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<td>BMS 720</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHAR 758</td>
<td>Ethical and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Research</td>
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<td>Independent Study</td>
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<td>Grant Proposal Defense or Thesis Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
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**Grant Proposal Defense or Thesis Defense**

The degree culminates with a written grant proposal or thesis defended orally to three graduate faculty members. Satisfactory performance in the oral defense will result in recommendation for granting of the M.S. degree.

**Suggested Plan of Study**

**First Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Fall Hours</th>
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<tr>
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<td>BIOS 602</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMS 700</td>
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<tr>
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<td>PHAR 758</td>
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<td>EPID 601</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMS 797</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Total credit hours: 34

NOTE: The graduate curriculum is finalized with a plan of study once the mentor and laboratory have been selected in the first year. The plan of study is developed by the graduate committee in consultation with the student. The courses listed above include the required and elective coursework necessary for the student to finalize his/her plan of study.
Doctor of Philosophy

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Core Courses

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>BMS 700</td>
<td>Scientific Integrity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMS 720</td>
<td>Scientific Writing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTS 791</td>
<td>Advanced Topics (Foundations and Theory in Clinical and Translational Science Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSIO 750</td>
<td>Graduate Physiology and Pharmacology 1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIOC 531</td>
<td>General Biochemistry</td>
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<td>Applied Biostatistics 1</td>
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<td>Concepts and Methods of Epidemiology</td>
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<td>PHAR 757</td>
<td>Patient Reported Outcomes</td>
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<td>PUBH 662</td>
<td>Clinical Research Methods and Practices</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHAR 758</td>
<td>Ethical and Regulatory Aspects of Clinical Research</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Specialization Courses

Complete additional courses from at least 2 of three branches of clinical and translational science* 15

Research Experiences

Complete at least 4 credit hours of research experiences in each of the T1, T2, and T3 research areas.* 12

CTS Journal Club

Students must complete a minimum of 6 credit hours, 1 credit hour in 6 different semesters, in a journal club specific to their program. Participation in the CTS Research Journal Club is required for every semester the student is in residence.

Examinations

Candidacy Examination
Comprehensive Examination

Dissertation Research

Complete 6 full-time semesters of dissertation research. 38

Peer-Reviewed Publication

Total Hours 99

Program Description

For matriculating students who have successfully completed graduate-level coursework at the master, doctoral, or professional (clinical) level: these students will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and some of the Core Courses, and / or Specializations Courses may be waived with demonstrable evidence that students have successfully completed equivalent coursework and that waiving that curriculum component will not jeopardize the student’s ability to successfully complete the remainder of the program (comprehensive and candidacy examinations, dissertation).

Coursework is organized around the three main branches of clinical and translational science: Basic/Laboratory Science, Population Science, and Clinical Science. Research experiences are organized around the three translational (T) research domains:

- **T1 research** expedites the movement between basic research and patient-oriented research that leads to new or improved scientific understanding or standards of care
- **T2 research** facilitates the movement between patient-oriented research and population-based research that leads to better patient outcomes, the implementation of best practices, and improved health status in communities
- **T3 research** promotes interaction between laboratory-based research and population-based research to stimulate a robust scientific understanding of human health and disease

Journal Club

Students are required to enroll in Journal Club each semester. The course involves the presentation and discussion of current research papers and will help acquaint students with the variety of methods used in scientific research.

Doctoral Research

Students will conduct research with a dissertation mentor during time in the program. Students register for research credits each semester, and their performance is graded by their dissertation mentor.

Qualifying and Dissertation Proposal/Ph.D. Candidacy
The written qualifying exam is given typically at the end of the second year of study. The dissertation proposal is completed in the third year of study. Admission to Ph.D. candidacy occurs following the successful defense of the dissertation proposal.

**Dissertation Defense and First-Author Paper Requirement**

Students are allowed to defend their dissertation when a minimum of one manuscript with the student as first author, based on dissertation research, is accepted in a peer-reviewed journal. The final examination for the Ph.D. degree consists of orally defending a written dissertation in a public seminar and then in private to the dissertation committee. Satisfactory performance in the oral defense will result in recommendation for granting of the PhD.

**Peer-Reviewed Publication**

Consistent with existing standards at the Health Sciences Center, all students in this program must have one first-authored, peer-reviewed, original research publication relevant to their dissertation research accepted for publication (“in press”) before they may defend their dissertation. This manuscript must represent original research; a review article, even a systematic review, will not fulfill this requirement.

**Major Learning Goals**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PH.D.) IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE**

The goal of the Ph.D. program is to develop biomedical researchers who can integrate findings, information, and observations across basic, population, and clinical sciences, to accelerate and transform how we improve the health of individuals and populations.

By the completion of this degree, students will be able to:

- Design, implement, conduct, analyze and interpret research projects using the techniques unique to basic science, clinical research, and population science research
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**MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) IN CLINICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL SCIENCE**

This program is designed to develop the next generation of clinical and translational scientists through education and mentored research training. The degree emphasizes a research project(s) that can be clinical (study of medications, devices, diagnostic products and treatments; may include clinical trials) and/or translational research (defined as research with human subjects or with populations or with direct application to human health). The degree culminates with a written grant proposal or thesis defended orally to three graduate faculty members.

Students will:

- Apply theories, methodologies, and knowledge to address questions in specific clinical and/or translational science
- Design and conduct research in clinical and/or translational science
- Engage with other students, faculty, and mentors to demonstrate teamwork
- Develop scientific writing skills and knowledge to develop a grant proposal

**Certificate in Clinical and Translational Science**

**CERTIFICATE CODE - CG28**


Mentored research opportunities exist with faculty in the Health Sciences schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health. The WVCTSI facilitates the recruitment and support of physician-scientists, who may serve as faculty mentors to students.

**Required Courses**

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<tr>
<td>WVCTSI Research Seminar Series</td>
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