

## **Remote Clinical Research Mentoring (RCRM) Program 2021 FAQs**

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### **1. Eligibility**

#### **1.1 Who is eligible as a Mentee in the RCRM program ?**

All Indian citizens working in an academic or research institution or Hospital in India are eligible.

- They can be from any of the following backgrounds – Medical, Pharmacy, Dental and Nursing.
- They must be working in an institution or hospital and must be either already pursuing or keen to start off a career in clinical research.

#### **1.2 I am interested in molecular biology and genetics. Can I apply for the RCRM program ?**

People in the health sciences with varying interests but undertaking clinical research will be eligible for this program. If you are interested in molecular biology, genetics or any other laboratory based research project you are welcome to apply as long as there is sufficient clinical research component. This means that you must interact and involve patients or normal volunteers in your clinical research project.

#### **1.3 I have very little knowledge and experience in research. Can I apply for the mentorship program?**

It does not matter if you are just starting up on research. You can still apply as long as you are serious and keen on undertaking a clinical research project in the very near future, that is within the next six months.

#### **1.4 Is there any fees to be paid for the RCRM program ?**

There is no fee in this program. Neither will you be paid by ISCR / ACCRI for being a part of this program.

#### **1.5 Is there any funding available to undertake my research project ?**

ISCR or ACCRI will not directly provide funding. However, we will direct you to sources of funding for your project.

### **2. Application and selection**

#### **2.1 What will this “mentorship program” offer me? Why should I apply?**

Having a mentor by your side is going to provide you with opportunities to hone skills in clinical research, giving you that much needed impetus for professional growth. You are free to make a new beginning under any of the domains of clinical research and pursue your own individual goals. A mentor can help you think right, impart knowledge and competence that goes a long way in making your research activity productive and effective. The 2 year mentorship is being offered to provide you with a committed, congenial and exciting stint that can add value to your career and reform your outlook.

#### **2.2 What are the processes for application and selection for the RCRM program ?**

Following your application, candidates will be shortlisted, and additional documents will be requested from you. After submission of these documents, an online interview will be held to make a final selection. Once you are selected you will be given a prefinal letter of selection. After this you will have to provide a commitment for a minimum of two years as well as an undertaking from your institution for you to be part of this program after which your selection will be confirmed

### **3. Mentorship**

#### **3.1 What is the process of Mentorship ?**

The selection and operations committee will match you with an appropriate mentor who will be from anywhere in India. The RCRM core committee will also facilitate periodic meetings between you and your mentor (eg: Online meeting link, template to capture key discussion points, etc). There will be an evaluation and feedback process both for the mentor and the mentee on a regular basis. Continuation of the mentorship will depend on adequate progress being shown by the mentee.

#### **3.2 How much of time will I have to spend on the mentorship program ?**

This totally depends on you the mentee. The program mandates a minimum of half an hour online video interaction with the mentor initially twice a month and thereafter at least once a month. Therefore the total time that you will spend on this program is entirely up to you and also will depend on your research experience.

#### **3.3 Is there any suggested frequency of meeting/discussions between Mentee and Mentor, can any change to the schedule be made?**

The RCRM Program recommends that Mentor and Mentee meet on two occasions virtually every month (online platform, with telephone being alternate only when online is not possible), with interaction of 30 minutes or longer on each occasion. We recognise that at times, due to exceptional situations (professional or personal) for either mentor or mentee on occasions this regular schedule may not be possible. The mentor and mentee should try to stick to their scheduled online meetings as much as possible through the entire mentorship period.

#### **3.4 Can I discontinue from the program at any time ?**

You should only apply if you are reasonably sure of being part of the program for a minimum of 2 years and undertaking different activities of a clinical research project in this period. We acknowledge that unanticipated events can occur which may force you to discontinue. We

will provide as much support as possible to try and not discontinue and if you absolutely need to discontinue for a short period, this may be permitted but we will expect you to make all efforts to get back to the mentorship program as soon as possible.

### **3.5 Can I change my institution during the mentorship program ?**

You can change your Institution and still be part of the mentorship program as long as you are committed to the different activities of the mentorship program including continuing your clinical research project.

### **3.6 In addition to the mentor allotted to me can I get additional help in specialized areas ?**

Yes, you are welcome to get additional help from your institution or other institutions or you can even contact the RCRM core committee for additional help. It is always advisable to discuss these issues openly with your mentor. Your mentor may be the best person to recommend additional help as well.

### **3.7 Does the mentor have to be included as a co-investigator for the study or project undertaken by me?**

One is not obligated to include the mentor as an investigator or author. However, if the mentor has contributed to the research activity of the mentee in a significant way, authorship or a co-investigator's role may be deemed appropriate based on mutual discussions.

### **3.8 What if I am not happy with my mentor ?**

We are making the best efforts possible to get mentors who are accomplished in their respective fields as well as in research. In addition, they are also experienced mentors who will be able to help and support the mentee. If however the mentorship for whatever reason is not going well for specific mentee(s), you can bring this up during the feedback process. The RCRM core committee will look into these issues and have a discussion with your mentor as well. In the event that the mentorship is not going well and there is sufficient reason to change the mentor this can be considered in extremely rare situations.

### **3.9 What if I am not able to fulfil the requirements of the mentorship process ?**

The RCRM core committee will do their best to support the mentee to be able to fulfil the requirements of this mentorship program. If however after best efforts from all parties you are not able to fulfil the requirements, then in extremely rare situations the mentorship for specific mentee(s) may be discontinued.

### **3.10 Can I start another project which is not related to the project that I am working on in the current mentorship program ?**

This is generally not encouraged as we would expect you to focus both on the mentorship program as well as the project at hand. Two years is a relatively short period by which you could complete the mentorship program as well as the project and then take on new projects. If however, a good opportunity comes by and you along with your mentor decide that you can do justice to another project in discussion with the mentor and the RCRM core committee, you are welcome to take up another project.

### **3.11 Can I take up another course – short term or long term or a fellowship during the mentorship program ?**

This again is left up to you and your mentor to discuss and take a decision. As long as the course / fellowship is not interfering much with the ongoing mentorship program, you are welcome to consider additional training during the mentorship program.

### **3.12 What happens at the end of the mentorship period ?**

At the end of the mentorship program there will be a formal 360 degree evaluation (by the mentor and the mentee). Furthermore, the mentee will be asked for a structured completion report and a certificate of mentorship program will be provided thereafter.

The most important outcome expected is that you as a mentee have experienced and cherished a good research mentorship. In addition to gaining knowledge and skills in different aspects of clinical research, you would have also gained important insights for a fruitful research career such as problem solving, negotiation, time management and prioritizing and other important human skills.