Breast Fellowship Program Policies

Breast Fellowship Program Director Requirements

The fellowship must have a single program director with authority and accountability for the operation of the training program. The program director must be a surgeon qualified to supervise and educate trainees and must meet requirements similar to those for ACGME-accredited surgical training programs.

All changes in program director must be submitted to and approved by the SSO Training Committee no later than 30 days after appointment on institution letterhead by the current Program Director or senior member of the department. Consideration should be given to the new program director's administrative time and experience. The Training Committee recommends considering Program Directors who are at least two years out of fellowship training.

The current program director should continue in his or her position for a length of time adequate to maintain continuity of leadership and program stability.

Although there is no specific requirement for length of service as Program Director, frequent changes in Program Director will be looked at closely by the SSO Training Committee and may trigger a mandatory site visit to assure continuity of educational programs. A minimum requirement of 3 years tenure as Program Director is recommended to ensure stability and commitment to the educational program.

It is also critical that the Program Director demonstrate sufficient time in independent practice and leadership experience before assuming the Program Director role. Leading a program requires knowledge and skills that begin in residency and subsequently further develop in independent practice. The time period from completion of residency until assuming the role of program director allows the individual to cultivate leadership abilities while becoming professionally established. The three-year period is intended for the individual's professional maturation. In certain circumstances, the program and Sponsoring Institution may propose and the Training Committee may accept a candidate for program director who fulfills these goals but does not meet the three-year minimum.

Qualifications of the program director must include:

1. A minimum of 10% dedicated time to program leadership and administration. This should be adjusted up as needed to be commensurate with program size
2. Specialty expertise in breast surgery (such as formal training in an accredited breast surgery/surgical oncology fellowship or extensive practice in the field of breast surgery) and documented educational and administrative experience acceptable to the Training Committee.
   a. Training Committee may request specific documentation.
3. Current certification in the specialty by the American Board of Surgery or subspecialty qualifications acceptable to the SSO Training Committee
4. Current medical licensure and medical staff appointment at the primary institution of the breast fellowship program

5. Current scholarly activity in the area of breast diseases including but not limited to publication in a peer-reviewed journal or presentation at a national or regional meeting. Participation in national committees or serving as the institutional PI for a national clinical trial may be considered an equivalent scholarly activity. Scholarly activity must be demonstrated within the previous 2 years.

6. Participation in relevant professional societies (e.g., ASBrS, SSO) focused on breast care.

7. Current membership with the Society of Surgical Oncology and the American Society of Breast Surgeons and participation on the Breast Program Directors Subcommittee, which meets bi-annually at SSO’s Annual Cancer Symposium and American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress.

The program director must administer and maintain an educational environment conducive to educating the breast surgery fellows in all areas described by the Program Information Database (PID).

The program director must:
1. Prepare and submit all information required and requested by the SSO Training Committee
2. Be familiar with and oversee compliance with the policies of the SSO Training Committee
3. Notify the SSO Training Committee in writing if:
   a. changes in program leadership occur (including changes in program director)
   b. requesting an increase in fellow complement
   c. making major changes to the program structure or length of training
   d. voluntarily withdrawing the fellowship from SSO certification
   e. requesting changes in the program that would have significant impact, including financial, on the program or institution
4. Develop and implement lines of authority specifying expected reporting relationships for fellows and faculty members to maximize quality care and patient safety
5. Establish and maintain an environment of inquiry and scholarship with active research opportunities for the breast fellows
6. Oversee and ensure the quality of didactic and clinical education in all sites that participate in the program, including fellows’ participation in conferences and other educational activities, and oversight of implementation of the fellowship curriculum
7. Approve a local director at each participating site who is accountable for fellow education
8. Monitor fellow supervision and education at all participating sites
9. Organize and supervise fellows’ interaction with general surgery residents at the educational, research, administrative, and patient care levels
To submit a change in either Program Director or Associate Program Director, your program must submit a letter on institutional letterhead outlining the change in Program Director or Associate Program Director. Contact information and their Curriculum Vitae (CV) must be included.

The Training Committee will review your change in Program Director or Associate Program Director at their quarterly meeting and a decision letter will be issued to the program after Training Committee review.

For all Program Director changes, a Progress Report will be due one year after the change. Associate Program Director changes do not trigger a Progress Report.

Breast Surgical Oncology Program Directors are not allowed to serve on the Training Committee.

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