

Scholarly Project

Links

- [Podcast Website](#)
- [Program Director Website](#)
- [A Ban By Any Other Name](#) (article mentioned around 15:00)
- [ACGME Specialty Specific Scholarly Project Requirements](#)

Question and Time

- When in your career did you first hear about scholarly projects? 01:28
- what types of scholarly projects are fellows or other trainees required to do? 02:18
- What counts as a scholarly activity? 03:03
- Do you find that it is hard to start original research and get it published within a year? 04:00
- Is there a required number of projects that every trainee must get during their time at the program? 05:14
- Do you find that a lot of your trainees come in motivated to start and complete these scholarly projects? 06:14
- How do you keep track of trainees completing their scholarly projects and keep them on track for completing it? 06:28
- Is your timeline you mention something that you created or the Department of Psychiatry or the ACGME recommends? 07:16
- How would you recommend that timeline to a program that maybe has 30/40 plus trainees? 07:38
- How do you identify a trainee that isn't making the progress that they should be in their scholarly project? 08:51
- How do you continue to help that struggling trainee progress through their project and timeline? 10:14
- What happens if you get to the end of a trainees training, and you find out that they did nothing on their scholarly activity? 11:12
- Have you had any experience with programs with 30/40 plus trainees and any recommendations on how to track their projects and progress through it? 12:27
- How do you set up the warm, calming environment so that the trainee feels comfortable coming to you with any issues, problems, or concerns they might have with their scholarly project? 14:27
- So, it sounds like you really foster this environment of the trainee coming up with their own idea and you're not pushing them into any idea? 17:02
- Do you have any recommendations for dealing with faculty and getting their scholarly projects? 17:55
- Is the form you use for tracking scholarly projects something you created it? 19:36
- Do you put all this information into ADS? Or do you have your program coordinator do it? How does that work? 19:55
- Is there anything that I missed? Or maybe you wanted to talk more about? 20:09

Logan 00:00

Welcome to the program director podcast with Logan. I'm your host Logan, a medical student, where I feature different graduate medical education leadership personnel to discuss all things program director related. This podcast is affiliated with the University of Minnesota Graduate Medical Education Office, the content and opinions discussed on this podcast are meant for informational purposes only. Thank you for listening today. On today's episode, I discussed all early projects, they were created by the ACGME and use to help review committees determined that a resident or fellow is in a scholarly environment. And it is an expectation from the ACGME that a program scholarship will reflect its mission and aims and the needs of the community it serves. Criteria for each specialty differs and exact requirements can be found on the ACGME website. residents, fellows, and faculty must participate in scholarly projects, scholarly projects must be entered in ACGME accreditation data system, here with us to discuss them more and hear how his program utilizes them. We have Dr. Gulrajani a forensic psychiatrist, board certified in forensic psychiatry, and the program director for the forensic psychiatry fellowship affiliated with the University of Minnesota Health System. Thank you, Dr. Gulrajani, for volunteering your time today to discuss scholarly projects,

Dr. Gulrajani 01:27

Of course, Thank you for having me.

Logan 01:28

Yeah, super glad to have you on the podcast. So, **when in your career did you first hear about scholarly projects?**

Dr. Gulrajani 01:35

You know, it's interesting, you asked me that, because I actually trained as a psychiatrist first in India before I moved to the US. And if you do a residency in India, then you are required to dedicate one year of your training to coming up with a scholarly project, which has to be research oriented. And you have to submit a thesis and defend it if you want to graduate from that. So, to answer your question, probably even before I migrated to the US.

Logan 02:00

Yeah, was it also a requirement to get published at all or was defending your thesis, okay?

Dr. Gulrajani 02:06

You know, the thesis itself was considered a peer reviewed publication. But of course, if your research was any good, then you did get it published. Eventually, mine was published more than once.

Logan 02:18

Yeah. Okay. So, **what types of scholarly projects are fellows or other trainees required to do?**

Dr. Gulrajani 02:25

You know, like you mentioned, the ACGME has a requirement. And of course, we are running training programs, we are academic centers. So, scholarship is an essential part of the training. And when we

get trainees, we get them at all levels. Some of them are fairly experienced with thoroughly projects, others are not. And first off, I don't like to approach it with a one size fits all approach. And what the end over is that every trainee, upon graduation from our program would be quite familiar with some basic exercises of scholarship.

Logan 03:03

Okay, so **what counts as a scholarly activity then?**

Dr. Gulrajani 03:06

You know, for me, a scholarly activity could be anything as simple as doing a literature review and coming up with a write up or an essay about it, right, or it could be doing a quick clinical research, doing a quick survey, some of these things, and I'm using the word quick, because it is a one year training program, we do want our fellows to get scholarship exposure, we want our fellows to learn what it feels like to write. And so, for them to have a few exercises. And then also, for those who are more interested to actually go through the whole publication process, see what the exercise is like. And if they enjoy it, then they can continue on. So, we also want to give them the tools for independent scholarship and publication that would ideally accompany them throughout their lives.

Logan 04:00

Okay, so **do you find that it is pretty hard to start original research and get it published within a year?**

Dr. Gulrajani 04:08

You know, the publication piece can happen right after fellowship also, but we get started pretty early in the fellowship. I want to tell you a few unique things about our fellowship first. Yeah, our fellowship, like most other fellowship programs around the country has a tie up with the Journal of the American Academy of psychiatry and the law and there is one exercise that is meant for fellows. So, all programs who subscribe to that exercise their fellows are required to summarize one legal opinion of precedential value in the form of a legal brief, which is basically the summary of a legal opinion all in one page. And so, the journal assigns us one legal opinion per fellow and for the first three months of their training the fellows actually spent how to write a legal brief how to summarize a legal opinion and then how to format it in a manner The Journal would expect to print it. So that's one guaranteed scholarly project that all of our fellows have. And they complete within the first few months of their fellowship. And they graduate from the fellowship with one peer reviewed publication to their name.

Logan 05:14

Awesome. I know every specialty is different. But **is there a required number of projects that every fellow or trainee must get during their time at the program?**

Dr. Gulrajani 05:24

There is not. But obviously, you know, we don't want to meet the minimum, we want to go far beyond. And so also during the fellowship, all of our fellows are required to start a research project. And the beginning always happens by researching a subject that they're interested in forensic psychiatry has a lot of overlap with law, society, social justice, ethics, a lot of issues that are relevant to society today.

And I have found that most of my trainees have some burning issue that pertains to society at large. And so right at the outset, I encourage them to read more and explore that burning issue, and to see if that were something that they would like to write about during their training years. So, a lot of our scholarship projects begin that way.

Logan 06:14

Yeah. And so, **do you find that a lot of your trainees come in motivated to start and complete these scholarly projects?**

Dr. Gulrajani 06:20

Well, so one of the requirements in the project is that they have to do quick research and at the very least presented internally within the division.

Logan 06:28

Yeah. So **how do you keep track of fellows and trainees completing scholarly projects and keep them on track for completing it?**

Logan 06:36

So, if I'm being honest, and that is easy for me, because I have only two trainees every year, and we have very defined timelines. So, between October to December, they complete their legal digest work that I told you about. And then January onwards, they start working on their research project, their scholarly project, which they're required to present internally, around April. And then if they have the opportunity, and scholarly work meets a certain academic standard, then they also get opportunities to present it system wide sometimes for other organizations, and for local and national conferences.

Logan 07:16

Okay, so then these defined timelines, **are these something that you created, or the Department of Psychiatry or the ACGME recommends?**

Dr. Gulrajani 07:25

Now, this is something that I've created. And the idea being that what I started with this as an academic program, and we want to foster scholarship, right, and if we don't set aside the time and effort to do it, it won't happen.

Logan 07:38

Yeah. Okay. So, it sounds like you have pretty good success with the structure of your timeline. **How would you recommend that timeline to a program that maybe has 30/40 plus trainees?**

Dr. Gulrajani 07:50

Yeah, for a bigger program, like I said, first, you have to dedicate the time and resources towards that you have to make sure that all trainees have appropriate mentorship available in my program, when my trainees are researching and engaged in their scholarly project, then the weeks in which I will meet them every week to go over what progress they've made. We have brainstorming sessions where the whole division is involved, you know, what are some of the directions that the scholarship could take?

What are some of the things that we want to explore not, there needs to be an environment and the time available to do that. And I would go as far as to say that that needs to be scripted into the manual itself. But I understand that different programs have different priorities. And not every program has either the resources or the luxury to be at least as structured as we are because of a small program. But at the very least, even if it's unstructured, there should be enough time and resources available.

Logan 08:51

Yeah. So **how do you identify a trainee that isn't making the progress that they should be in their scholarly project?**

Dr. Gulrajani 08:59

You know, typically, I will meet all of my trainees at least once a week and briefly touch base about how their scholarly project is going. That's the most unstructured way of keeping tabs on it. For the more complicated projects. We also define a timeline at the outset. So, for example, if the goal is to research a subject, and come up with a paper by four months, right at the outset, in the first few sessions, we do two exercises. First, we catch out the skeletal framework of the paper itself. So, an outline of the paper and we sketch out the timeline. And you know, now in the virtual world, we actually just embed that in our calendar invite. Yeah, so and, you know, it's very easy to just refer to the calendar invite and say, hey, we were going to complete the literature review in the first eight weeks. We haven't gotten there. Do you want to change the timeline a little bit or attached or what thoughts do you have about that?

Logan 10:04

Okay. Yeah. So, kind of more along those lines. You mentioned a little bit about it. **How do you continue to help that struggling trainee progress through their project and timeline?**

Dr. Gulrajani 10:16

every training comes from a different place. And they are at a different level in terms of scholarship. So, the idea is not to pressurize anybody, this exercise is for their own good. And there is complete understanding that not everybody wants to write papers, right? Not everybody wants to devote that much of their energy in doing research or scholarship exercises. So, to answer your question, if somebody is not meeting their timelines, right, you really want to know first? Is the project right for them? Or is there something about the project that's holding them back with a different project be a better fit for them, and generally try to get feedback from them as to why they feel that the timelines are not being met. Right. On the occasion, a trainee might tell you that they are having difficulty managing it with their clinical work, in which case the handover would be to reduce the clinical work, not cut down the project.

Logan 11:12

Yeah. So, **what happens if all of a sudden you get to the end of a trainees training, and you find out that they did nothing on their scholarly activity?**

Dr. Gulrajani 11:21

You know, so the way we are structured that almost never happens, because like I said, the floor is that you have to submit the publication to the journal, the summary of the legal opinions. So, if even that is not happening, and if I'm being honest, that's actually not happened so far with us. Again, within that exercise, there are trainees who grasp it very, very quickly. You know, some of it involves law, which is an independent profession and has its own set of guidelines and parameters, and to some trainees are able to grasp that very, very quickly. Others are not. But so far, we have fortunately not had any trainees who could not finish their project. There are many reasons why trainees may not be able to finish their project. I feel like only a small minority, if any of those reasons are related to a person's competency, that's at least my core belief, like I said, we're a fairly, you know, easygoing division as far as it comes to these projects. We only want our trainees to do what they're interested in do.

Logan 12:27

Yeah, yeah. So, I can see maybe how having two trainees makes it pretty easy to track and follow their progress. **Have you had any experience with programs with 30/40 plus trainees and any recommendations on how to track their projects and progress through it?**

Dr. Gulrajani 12:47

I can tell you about my own experience. So, my fellows are not the only trainees for whom we run scholarly project I have in the past. And currently, I have several residents who are involved in scholarship with me, even though we are a subspecialty division. And what I have seen in our department is, at least for me, I will go in announce the whole fast that if anybody's interested in exploring forensic psychiatry or an offshoot or wants to do scholarly work with me, they're just welcome to reach out to me. And I've had trainees as early as first year of residency reach out in the past, one of our current fellows started academic projects with the back when she was a first-year resident here in the department, as she is our fellow. When she was in the third year, she submitted a publication The first one, and she has at least three or four, but also across a broad array of topics. And for her commitment and interest in forensic psychiatry. In the fourth year, she was awarded the highest honor in forensic psychiatry, which is the Rappaport Fellowship Award. So, I'm just giving you a timeline of how this works. This works if you focus on what the trainee is interested in, and you're willing to provide the time and mentorship and have the patience to develop that bond that would encourage their scholarship. I think every year we get an amazing group of trainees, they are energetic, they are committed, they have a burning desire, to do good and to write and to be good doctors and to be good academic. And so, you really need to harness that energy. And after that it's not work for a mentor.

Logan 14:27

Yeah, yeah. So, when you first meet the trainee, **how do you set up the warm, calming environment so that the trainee feels comfortable coming to you with any issues or problems or concerns they might have with maybe not meeting their timeline feeling that the scholarly project is too much, etc.?**

Dr. Gulrajani 14:50

You know, so the last couple years have been unique in that they have been largely virtual in terms of meeting with trainees, so I'll shy away from saying I have an open-door policy. I have an open zoom policy so to speak. Yeah. And so, when trainees first come, it's a very open-ended discussion, you

know, what are some of the things that you're interested in. Just to give you an example, one of them was Muslim America extremely perturbed about some of the, you know, anti-Islamic sentiment that we saw a few years ago. And in the beginning, a discussion didn't start as an academic project. There was a time if you remember, not so long ago, there was a lot of anti-Islamic sentiment coming from a lot of areas. The trainee in particular was a Muslim, who was bicultural, born in the US, raised in the Mideast, came back to the US and was very distressed about everything, especially when there was a Muslim ban. It really started as him and I talking about it, and about the fact that he was visibly distressed about what was going on. And ended exercise, which was maybe three months later, it ended up as a really powerful editorial piece in a leading journal, it's called A Ban by Any Other Name. And other trainee was really interested in forensics and is really interested in the public sector psychiatry fits perfectly in the systemic mental health care delivery to developmentally disabled individuals who are frequently overlooked in our society, we started that discussion, because she had read a newspaper thing about a class action lawsuit that happened in Minnesota and had to do with residential treatment for intellectually disabled. And there were some problems in some Minnesota residential treatment centers, we started reading about a class action lawsuit. And that led to another fantastic piece, which was driven by the trainee. And in those scenarios, like I said, you know, the trainee is so passionate about it, that my input is really minimal. So, I just tell them, okay, search this, read this, let's do this. And you know, it's really more suggestion than any.

Logan 17:02

Yeah, great. **So, it sounds like you really foster this environment of the trainee coming up with their own idea and you're not pushing them into any idea?**

Dr. Gulrajani 17:12

Yeah, apart from that Legal Brief, which we are committed to nothing else is mandatory, nothing else is obligatory, there's time available. And they're allowed to use that time at their own pace at their own convenience. And as they see fit. If they come in saying I want to get published in the leading journal, I tell them, okay, these are the things that you're going to need to do. If they say, hey, I'm pretty okay, just researching this very small area. And I don't want to go beyond that. I don't have academic ambitions, application ambitions. Sometimes they don't tell you, sometimes their body language will tell you. It's up to them, you know, nothing is mandatory here. And expectation is we want you to experience this as part of your training.

Logan 17:55

Yeah. So, on the other end of the spectrum, faculty scholarly projects, and being in an academic environment, I'm sure you have no problem getting faculty scholarly projects. **But do you have any recommendations for dealing with faculty and getting their scholarly projects?**

Dr. Gulrajani 18:12

You're required as part of your annual reporting to report all of your scholarly activities. So ACGME gives us a really good template that all of our faculty members are required to fill in. And that does not only include information about publications, but it also includes information about presentations, for example, at local, regional, and national conferences, in a non-peer reviewed academic exercise, quality improvement projects. So, there's a lot of information that you can include there. And so, you're

right, we have a fairly diverse faculty in fairly diverse work settings, not all of them are doing what you would call formal academic publishing as part of their scholarship work, but many of them are doing several quality improvements projects, for the organizations they are involved with. That involves a lot of research that is all about dashboard metrics, right? Numbers, numbers, numbers are all they do. And it's very, very easy for them to present that and many of them do. So, to answer your question that is almost like a standard operating procedure now, and it's an ACGME requirement. The interesting thing about it is that because we send out that form, and then we started to say, but we do nag them about filling out the form a few times, it also offers really good feedback, because if I'm a faculty member, and I'm seeing that all my boxes are empty, I'm like, hmm, I need to do more scholarship work, you know, right.

Logan 19:36

And so, **is this form something that you created?**

Dr. Gulrajani 19:38

Now, this is a template that comes from the ACGME itself, and then I believe that it is internally adapted by the department, but any division can use it. So, the form I'm telling you about probably goes to every faculty member in every division aggregate their own data out of it, so

Logan 19:55

yeah, and so **do you put all this information into ADS? Or do you have Have your program coordinator do it, or how does that work?**

Dr. Gulrajani 20:03

Yeah, so the program coordinator will typically enter all the information into ADS.

Logan 20:09

So, is there anything that I missed? Or maybe you wanted to talk more about?

Dr. Gulrajani 20:14

Yes, you know, what I really want to emphasize is that not all scholarship has to be research based. And even within research, it does not always have to be quantitative research. Not every trainee is meant for quantitative research. There are several other avenues today for academic exercise in medicine, medical humanities are a well-developed specialty now that is on the forefront of medical literature. Quantitative research is a pillar of research these days. And it's really important that we, we really get to know our trainees enough to know what might drive them if it's not quantitative research. And if we don't do that, we'll miss out on a lot of untapped potential.

Logan 20:58

Yeah. And so also what you were saying is that scholarly projects can be case presentations, presenting at Grand Rounds, they don't always have to end in a publication.

Dr. Gulrajani 21:09

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. So internally, we have a weekly case conference and our fellows presented by rotation. Each fellow before they graduate have to present panel Grand Rounds within the division at least once before they graduate. There are a lot of avenues. And like I said, it works best if you listen to what your training is telling you.

Logan 21:28

Yeah, and I feel like you definitely mentioned that multiple times. So, I feel like that is an important thing to emphasize is meet with the trainee early at their time with the program and really find out what they like and what they want to do. Well, thank you Dr. Gulrajani, for meeting with us today and talking with me about this. scholarly project information for all specialties can be found on the ACGME website, how to enter scholarly projects and frequently asked questions can be found on the ACGME website and in the program director handbook. Thank you again, Dr. Gulrajani for taking your time and discussing scholarly projects with me. For additional information on scholarly projects, please visit the ACGME website and the ACGME has program director handbook. The Links can be found in the description below. Thank you for listening today. This podcast was produced by Logan. For more episodes, and other program director related content, visit z.umn.edu/programdirector.