

Training for Excellence in Clinical Research: 5 Years of Growth

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1. Background

A training program was established in February 2019 to provide standardized onboarding to research coordinators. The structure was designed with a monthly rotating curriculum of 33 modules to introduce new caregivers to data and regulatory during live training sessions. The modules are enriched by connecting the new hire with a mentor and increasing supervisor engagement. This model was the springboard for future enhancements.

2. Goals

- Maintain positive morale
- Implement a competency log for the new hire to take ownership of their growth, assist the mentor with task delegation, and show the supervisor areas of success and where improvement is needed
- Add interactive polls to enhance discussion during live training sessions
- Launch MyLearning Assessments to provide metrics on retention and development

3. Solutions and Methods

The feedback revealed that new hires desired hands-on experience outside of the six (one-hour) weekly training sessions. The trainer designed one of the weekly sessions to be collaborative for research coordinators to ask questions, provide demonstrations, share experiences, and discuss current tasks. Additionally, the mentorship involvement increased to scheduling standing meetings once or twice a week, instead of an as needed basis. Initiating a routine, released the burden of new hires feeling like they were constantly “bothering” their mentor(s), peer(s), supervisor, and/or trainer. A new attendance requirement for the rotating curricula was set to two rounds instead of one, to strengthen knowledge of tasks and responsibilities.

4. Outcomes

Currently, 104 research coordinators have completed the training program. A continuous improvement team of new hires was created in November 2021 to enhance the tools and resources available during onboarding. In February 2022, a committee was created to review and update the Clinical Trial Management Tool (CTMT) in real time, offloading this responsibility from one individual to a self-sustaining working group. In 2019, “I get the training I need to do a good job” was listed as a concern on the Press Ganey Survey with a score below the national health care average. Most recent survey results (2022) to the equivalent question, “I get the tools and resources I need to provide the best care/service for our patients” was a strength, scoring above the national average.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

- Introduce improvements to the multifaceted training
 - Collaborate with the clinical research trainer to provide mandatory education sessions each quarter to both clinical and non-clinical team members
 - Offer quarterly quality assurance (QA) training to all research coordinators
 - Standing weekly new hire/mentor discussions to review competency log
 - Interactive polls highlight key tasks while adding valuable engagement

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- Dedicate one training session a week to collaborative review of new hires experience
 - Require two rounds of attendance to reinforce awareness of responsibilities
- Supervisor engagement remains vital to the success of the program
 - Trainer provides feedback to the supervisor for 90 day review
- Trainer shifted to the Quality Assurance Team to ensure findings are incorporated (preventative measures) in the educational material
- Scheduled to launch MyLearning Assessments in April 2023 for each module to confirm retention of key information
- Future development of standing support meetings for trainer/mentor touch base