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**VA Advanced Fellowship in Women’s Health (AFWH) Core Competencies**

**April 21, 2016**

**Introduction**

The VA Advanced Fellowships in Women’s Health (AFWH) were designed to provide fellows with the skills and knowledge to emerge as experts in a variety of areas including the field of clinical women’s health; clinical research; evaluation and program improvement; scholarship; teaching and mentoring; and leading and managing. Each individual fellowship experience however, will be different due to the fellows’ interests and site-specific expertise. To guide fellows during their experience, seven competency areas are described and could form the core of the 2-year fellowship experience:

* Providing High Quality Clinical Care
* Conducting Research and Evaluating Programs
* Teaching and Educational Program Development
* Mentoring and Continuous Professional Development
* Advancing Scholarship and Securing Funding
* Assuming Leadership (Informal)
* Managing Organizations (Formal)

**References**

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|  | **Providing High Quality Clinical Care** | | | | | | |
| 1. Acknowledge gender-related issues and advocate for practices that improve the health of women in general, and female Veterans 2. Provide Veteran-centric care to women in clinical settings 3. Remain current in physical and mental health issues common to female Veteran populations 4. Practice interprofessional or team-based care to provide a holistic experience for patients 5. Identify cultural biases and acknowledge their influence in practice and clinical care 6. Practice ethical behavior by relying on codes of conduct, current laws, and professional standards of behavior 7. Provide consultation to providers and others about women’s health and Veteran care | | | | | | | |
| **Activity** | | **Date** | **Objectives Met** | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Participate in formal women’s health curriculum * Attend women’s health conferences * Participate in journal club about women’s health * Attend VA’s mini-residency * Facilitate a workshop, seminar or other educational opportunity about women’s health * Work in clinical setting(s) * Participate in treatment teams * Observe/shadow other providers * Apply for licensure in your field * Participate in monthly women’s health conference call * SCAN ECHO * Mentored practice (i.e. work with senior women’s health practitioners) * Precept residents in women’s health clinic | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Conducting Research and Evaluating Programs** | | | | | | |
| 1. Gain content knowledge by understanding terminology, theoretical constructs and previous research specific to the area of investigation 2. Develop skills to conduct research through training in research methods and/or experientially 3. Define research question and identify appropriate methods to answer question(s) 4. Analyze data using techniques consistent with the research/evaluation design 5. Conduct study using culturally sensitive methods, analyses and reporting 6. Maintain ethical standards of research by receiving IRB approval and assuring confidentiality of data 7. Articulate the study and its relevance to the effects on the health of women 8. Form interprofessional teams to create robust study questions to address the complex healthcare challenges facing the delivery of high quality care for female Veterans | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Complete formal coursework – Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Methods, Research Methodology * Perform primary (design study, collect data, analyze data) or secondary (analyze existing data) research * Present/disseminate research results (presentations, publications) * Meet with a librarian for training in databases and set up automatic searches in area of interest * Attend national research meeting in one’s area * Participate in relevant local workshops (mixed methods short course, professional development series) * Consult a biostatistician or statistician for study design and analyses   Give “job talk” or professional presentation to learn how to convey research and/or receive feedback on research professional development.  Attend online VA HSR&D cyberseminar on study design   * Peer review articles for a journal in one’s area | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Teaching** **and Educational Program Development** | | | | | | |
| 1. Learn about current educational and content-related teaching practices 2. Assess learner’s abilities and tailor teaching and communication styles to facilitate their learning 3. Create curriculum and programs specific to the learning environment, content area, and learner population, specifically in regards to the health of women 4. Promote sensitivity and responsiveness to learner diversity 5. Evaluate teaching to ensure learners are achieving intended objectives 6. Use “discipline-based education research” or the “scholarship of teaching and learning” as models to conduct research 7. Seek and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to conduct educational research 8. Develop teaching skills that reach beyond the fellows primary profession (e.g., teaching to diverse professional audiences) 9. Learn how to give effective feedback 10. Learn how to evaluate and remediate student learning challenges | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Take a class about adult learning theory, cognitive sciences, or education generally * Co-teach a course * Have someone observe and evaluate your teaching * Attend a workshop/course on educational research * Develop a teaching portfolio * Present a workshop on teaching methods * Teach at the mini-residency | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Mentoring and Professional Development** | | | | | | |
| 1. Actively seek out mentoring, assemble a mentor team (if possible), and actively engage as a good mentee 2. Meet with your mentor(s) or mentor team regularly (monthly, quarterly) 3. Learn how to mentor others using knowledge and current best practice in “what works” 4. Build network of mentors and collaborators – cutting across professions where possible to obtain diverse feedback and professional development opportunities. 5. Maintain a current CV 6. Develop an individual or career development plan and update it quarterly | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Participate in mentor training * Participate in relevant professional development workshops * Participate in VA AFWH online Seminar Series – Overview of VA Women’s Health and Update on VA Women’s Health Services * Seek out a mentor * Become a mentor to others * Attend conferences to network | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Advancing Scholarship and Securing Funding** | | | | | | |
| 1. Write well organized and logical abstracts, manuscripts, research proposals and grant applications 2. Analyze and communicate findings to be able to present at professional conferences, workshops and in clinical settings 3. Complete the process from pre-submission to published manuscript 4. Seek potential funding sources to conduct future projects (grants, foundations) 5. Identify components of successful grant proposals 6. Remain current in research/content field of interest 7. Identify others for future collaborations | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Serve on a grant review panel * Review and provide feedback to other’s proposals * Attend a grant-writing course * Seek feedback from an editor * Seek feedback about your grant proposal * Participate in research “works in progress,” journal club, or other groups to critically review scholarship and/or research * Submit and present independent research | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Assuming Leadership (Informal)** | | | | | | |
| 1. Commit to the values and principles of women’s health and Veteran care 2. Communicate the value of women’s health research, education and clinical care 3. Include others in problem solving, collaboration and inter-professional practice 4. Serve as a model and mentor for others, regardless of position 5. Demonstrate qualities of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior 6. Treat others equitably, without bias, and with cultural sensitivity 7. Advocate for high-quality clinical care for female Veterans 8. Understand your own leadership style and how to facilitate it 9. Identify barriers to women in leadership and practice strategies to overcome them | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Take a leadership development course or workshop * Participate in a quality improvement project, or patient care * Understand the organizational structure and identify stakeholders * Take coursework/directed readings about the barriers to women in leadership | | | | | | | |

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|  | **Managing Organizations (Formal)** | | | | | | |
| 1. Gain skills and knowledge about technical, financial, regulatory, and personnel aspects of organizations 2. Demonstrate ability to supervise others and lead with effective and context-appropriate styles 3. Create a positive organizational climate through recognizing others and their contributions, providing professional support, addressing unprofessional behaviors and promoting inclusion 4. Inspire and motivate others to share the organization’s mission and goals 5. Demonstrate personal qualities of focus, perseverance, integrity, and ethical behavior | | | | | | | |
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| **Examples of Professional Development Activities:**   * Shadow and be mentored by a formal leader * Take a VA (or non-VA) leadership course * Take a leadership role in a project—a QI, cost effective, or patient care * Supervise others in clinical or other setting * Run a meeting that is observed by a mentor; request feedback | | | | | | | |