



Fellowship Managed Time Policy

Approved January 2017

In addition to training fellows in all aspects of clinical care relevant to transplantation, transplant fellowship programs have a responsibility to ensure safe and responsible work habits. Such habits will lay the groundwork for routines that will form the foundation of a successful career as a transplant surgeon. We recognize that working to the point of exhaustion is both unhealthy for the fellow and unsafe for patients.

Efforts to establish work hour and/or schedule restrictions are rife with difficulties. Transplantation is often unpredictable with periods of heavy workload interspersed with slower work periods due to donor paucity. Lastly, there are often valuable clinical education or continuity of care opportunities that may exceed traditional work hour requirements but benefit fellowship training.

Despite these obstacles to creating responsible work hour practices, reliance on fellow self-reporting and self-recognition of fatigue does not meet the current standard of fellowship training. The ASTS believes that certain underlying principles below must be recognized in identifying responsible fellow workload practices:

- 1) Programs must be mindful of the workload they are placing on fellows with respect to all facets of their responsibilities (e.g., clinic, operating room, inpatient service, phone calls, etc.). The fellowship director is responsible for setting this expectation and monitoring the impact of the workload on the fellow.
- 2) The program's faculty must recognize it may be necessary to tell the fellow to rest. It is incumbent on the program's faculty to monitor the fellow's workload and outward signs of fatigue, in order to intervene appropriately in instances where the fellow does not recognize or acknowledge the need to rest.
- 3) The impact of activities which are neither educational nor require their level of experience needs to be scrutinized on an ongoing basis. Fellows are board eligible or certified in General Surgery or Urology or foreign equivalency and must be given responsibilities consistent with their level of expertise. While any caregiver may need to step in from time to time to help in any task related to patient care, it is not the fellow's role to routinely perform tasks that are appropriately delegated to a coordinator, resident, physician assistant, or advance nurse practitioner. To be effective in this role, the program must engage sufficient human resources to allow the fellow to function at the appropriate level.

Based on the three principles above, the following three structural elements are considered requirements of ASTS-approved fellowships:

1. **The ASTS fellowship training program must designate formal continuing medical education (CME) time for the fellows, including attendance to at least one regional/national meeting during their fellowship that does not count toward vacation time.**
 - a. Planning for the meeting is the joint responsibility of the fellow and the Program Director.
 - b. Certificates of attendance or registration must be submitted to ASTS at the completion of fellowship training.
 - c. Attendance at the ASTS Fellows Symposium does not fulfill this requirement as this is an additional requirement.

- 2. The fellow must be provided at least two weeks of vacation every year, excluding time for academic meetings.**
 - a. Each program must submit their vacation guidelines at the time of fellowship reaccreditation and provide documentation of fellow vacations on a yearly basis.
 - b. Proper adherence to fellow vacation guidelines will be assessed at the time of reaccreditation. Documentation of this is the program's responsibility.
 - c. All fellows will be asked at the end of the fellowship exit survey if they received the allotted time off.

- 3. The fellow must be off call and free from clinical responsibilities at least one weekend per month (48 hours) and at least two additional 24-hour periods every month exclusive of vacation time.**
 - a. Each program must submit their time-off guidelines at the time of reaccreditation.
 - b. Each fellow will be surveyed at the end of fellowship to confirm the time off occurred.

Providing the highest quality care to patients requires caregivers who are not impaired by fatigue, and who are not constrained by arbitrary restrictions regarding participation in a given patient's care. It is incumbent upon ASTS-approved fellowship training programs to responsibly manage these issues.

If at any time a fellow feels that the program is not adhering to the ASTS Fellowship Managed Time Policy, fellows may contact the ASTS Office. The name of the fellow will be kept anonymous and the program will only be contacted at the fellow's discretion.

If a program fails to adhere to the ASTS Managed Time Policy or is delinquent on submission of requested documentation, a written reminder will be sent followed by a written warning if delinquency is not resolved. In the event of non-adherence to policy, program must submit written verification of changes in fellowship necessary to bring program into compliance.

If a program does not respond to written warnings or does not produce requested documentation, a call will be scheduled with the program director and the members from the FTC. At this point a site visit may be indicated. Sanctions can range from written warnings, probation, to loss of fellowship accreditation.