

& Patient Safety

The US Veterans Affairs Quality Scholars (VAQS) program

Overview

The University of Toronto Centre for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (CQuIPS) is currently accepting applications to begin a fellowship in quality improvement (QI) through the US Veterans Affairs Quality Scholars (VAQS) program. Established in the late 1990s, VAQS is recognized as one of the most complete QI training programs of its kind. It provides the unique opportunity to collaborate and network with and develop expertise from internationally recognized leaders in the field of healthcare OI.

The VAQS program is designed as a 'hub and spoke' model - with a coordinating center at the Houston Center for Innovations in Quality, Effectiveness, and Safety (IQuESt) at the Houston VA and Baylor College of Medicine. Faculty run the program and work in direct partnership with the VA Office of Academic Affiliations, which oversees all VA Advanced Fellowship Programs. There are nine other sites (spokes) across the United States. Toronto is the tenth and only non-American site for the VAQS program.

Who is VAQS for?

The program runs for two years and is designed to nurture fellows, junior faculty graduates in other healthcare disciplines and allow them to develop a career in QI and health services scholarship, or in QI within the framework of a leadership position in medical administration, education or clinical practice. This program is intended for healthcare professionals in advanced stages of training or junior faculty who would like to pursue careers in QI.

Key dates

- April 25, 2025 Application deadline
- July 11, 2025 First program session

Interested individuals may contact VAQS

program directors:

- Dr. Sonal Gandhi (sonal.gandhi@sunnybrook.ca)
- Nely Amaral (Nely.Amaral@sinaihealth.ca)
- Dr. Chaim Bell (Chaim.Bell@sinaihealth.ca)

For more information. visit www.vaqs.org

Funding

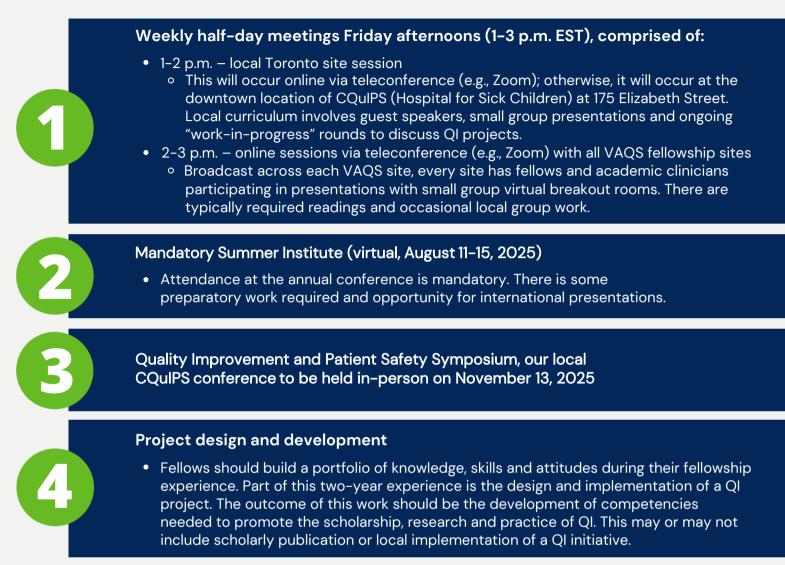
The cost for one year is \$4,000. This will cover incidentals such as required textbooks, QI Macros packages, speaker honoraria and videoconference fees. This fee does not cover travel, lodging, or registration costs for mandatory conferences, which may be held in person or virtually. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding for these expenses through their departments or external sources, such as professional association awards.

Expectations

Fellows are expected to attend all classes and meetings, including the program's annual conference, Summer Institute. Successful graduation is, in part, dependent upon a minimum of 75% attendance and participation. Fellows are strongly encouraged to submit scientific abstracts for presentation at any of the meetings they attend. Fellows are expected to present their initial plans of work (first year) and work in progress (second vear) at the Summer Institute.

Program format

The two-year VAQS fellowship is comprised of four components:



Application

The Toronto site of the VAQS is now open to applicants from fields other than medicine (e.g., Department of Nursing or Department of Pharmacy). It is expected that applicants will maintain an active clinical role throughout the duration of the program. Attendance at the videoconference sessions is mandatory and protected time must be ensured prior to application submission.

Applicants must commit to a two-year cycle and attend all external meetings as well as a minimum of 75% of project meetings, videoconference and in-person sessions.

Completed applications must be emailed to lisha.lo@sickkids.ca by April 25, 2025 and should include:

- CV (4 pages max)
- Letter of intent including a brief project concept/proposal
- Two reference letters (one must be from a Department Chair or equivalent in support of the candidate that explicitly states that the applicant will receive protected time from clinical duty for all components of the curriculum)

Space is limited to 3-5 fellows per year. There is a required interview process.