CLINICAL INVESTIGATION, PHD

Clinical investigation is a field in which teams of health care professionals, biostatisticians, and others imagine, design, and conduct clinical research, and then take discoveries to human or animal patient populations in the health care system or in communities.

The focus of the PhD in Clinical Investigation is to enable translational competency among team leaders. In other words, the graduate program trains students to help move research toward solutions for patient populations more quickly. The PhD is one of fewer than 10 offered in the country with this focus.

Applicants ideally will have a health professional degree (MD, DVM, PharmD, PhD, BSN, BSE, MPT, DPT). Clinical Investigation students are unique among UW–Madison graduate students because they enter the program with a terminal degree (with exceptions) and they are seeking training to directly apply their work with patients.

The graduate program in clinical investigation (GPCI) that offers the PhD is housed in the UW Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) and is designed in response to a need for clinical research training programs. The ICTR Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) facilitates UW–Madison's ability to offer a spectrum of graduate programs in clinical research. This applied, clinical, and translational graduate program complements the areas of clinical research training by the population health sciences, nursing, and other graduate programs.

Representatives from the Schools of Medicine and Public Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, Education, and Veterinary Medicine, and the College of Engineering met as a task force in 2006 to design the program. All ICTR academic partners are represented in the curriculum. They are joined by partner Marshfield Clinic as members of the faculty executive committee that guides the program.

The curriculum draws from existing courses in the partner schools and includes new courses developed exclusively for the GPCI. Coursework provides a solid foundation in research methods and analysis, including biostatistics, study design, and ethical conduct. Through electives and a research requirement, students pursue their own areas of specialization in patient-oriented clinical research.

The knowledge and skills acquired while earning a degree in clinical investigation can be applied to jobs in academic institutions; private industry, including pharmaceutical companies, insurers, and managed care organizations; government agencies; non-profit organizations; and a range of local to international organizations.