

# Hand Therapy Fellowship Program

## Introduction

Therapists often have the desire to expand their knowledge, scope of practice, and gain expertise in a particular field or specialty practice area. One such area developed from the traditional physical dysfunction role is hand and upper extremity rehabilitation. The advent of the Hand Therapy Certification, which is granted by the Hand Therapy Certification Commission USA, has strengthened the practice of hand therapy as it has become recognized as a specialty area. In order to gain expertise within hand therapy, therapists require significant continuing post-graduate education. Recognizing this the Roth McFarlane Hand and Upper Limb Centre (Roth McFarlane Centre) at St. Joseph's Health Care London (St. Joseph's) has developed a Hand Therapy Fellowship Program for interested and motivated occupational or physical therapists who have a keen interest in developing the necessary skillset to be proficient in providing hand therapy.

## Program Description

St. Joseph's Hand Therapy Fellowship Program offers a comprehensive 600 hour hand and upper extremity rehabilitation fellowship designed for both entry level or experienced occupational or physical therapists who have a minimum of one year of direct clinic experience and desire additional theoretical and clinical hand and upper extremity rehabilitation expertise.

This learning can be achieved on a full time basis over four months or part time (no less than three days per week). A fellow will be assigned to a mentor (occupational or physical therapist) who will facilitate learning and evaluate progress.

Emphasis is placed on learning anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, pathology, functional utilization of the upper extremity and research methodology. The fellow will be given the opportunity to utilize various Roth McFarlane Centre learning resources such as cadaveric video demonstrations of elbow, wrist, and hand pathologies, observe various live upper extremity surgical procedures, participate in Roth McFarlane Centre teaching rounds and journal club meetings. The fellow will also work in collaboration with plastic and orthopaedic surgery residents and fellows within our facility. Significant priority is placed upon hands-on clinical training which includes patient evaluation and examination, treatment program implementation, hands-on orthotic fabrication (which will include static, dynamic, and static progressive designs), and

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problem-solve through the various complications seen with hand therapy practice. Furthermore, support for research initiation and implementation is provided.

### **Hand Therapy Fellowship Requirements**

Once the fellowship start date is confirmed the fellow must:

1. Link with the professional practice leader to ensure requirements of the Sponsored Students Policy are met (which includes proof of health requirements, and health screen).
2. Provide a post-dated check (dated for the start) of \$1500.00 Canadian made payable to St. Joseph's Hospital, Hand Therapy.
3. Obtain personal professional liability insurance, purchased at their own expense.
4. Register with the relevant Ontario regulatory body. The fellow is responsible to complete this process and assume the financial costs for registration.

### **Hand Therapy Fellowship Goals**

Upon completion of The Hand Therapy Fellowship Program, it is our objective at The Roth McFarlane Centre that the fellow will have attained the following goals:

- An in-depth knowledge of upper extremity anatomy, physiology and biomechanics.
- An in-depth knowledge base of the pathology involved in various upper extremity diagnoses.
- Clinically sound competence and expertise in completing an upper extremity assessment.
- Clinically sound competence and expertise in independently analyzing data from an initial assessment and developing and implementing treatment plans for patients with common upper extremity injuries.
- A strong knowledge base of both theoretical and clinical applications in treatment modalities, procedures and practice guidelines.
- Increased appreciation for work hardening and returning the injured patient back to a productive life-style.
- As appropriate, participate in research related activities.
- Network and make contacts with other therapists within South Western Ontario that will assist the Fellow during their career. These contacts may prove to be useful throughout their career to discuss practice guidelines, treatment approaches, and managing complications.

## **Scope of Teaching/Learning**

### **Required**

1. Attend and participate in relevant upper extremity conferences/rounds.
2. Attend and participate in relevant Orthopaedic and Plastic Surgery Grand Rounds.
3. Attend assigned clinics.
4. Observe relevant surgeries
5. Participate in at least one basic science, clinical research project. The caliber of this work should be at a level whereby it could be submitted for review at a national or international hand therapy conference. The work of this manuscript should be of publishable quality.

### **Available Resources**

1. Use of Western University Medical Library and its facilities.
2. Use of medical library at St. Joseph's.
3. Access to media services at St. Joseph's.
4. Use of departmental computers.
5. Upon receiving patient consent, fellows are encouraged to photograph hand surgery and therapy cases for their projects.

### **Research Labs**

The fellow will have opportunity to engage/participate in research labs that are part of the Roth MacFarlane Hand & Upper Limb Centre. These include:

#### **Biomechanics:**

In-house biomechanics testing facility- projects involve collaborations between surgeons and engineers - in-vitro simulators used to mimic joint motion, development and testing of surgical procedures and new implant systems.

#### **Cell Biology:**

In-house cell and molecular biology laboratory projects involve collaborations between surgeons, microbiologists, engineers, molecular biologists and other basic scientists. Research on wound healing, wound infection and proteomics of musculoskeletal diseases

#### **Clinical Outcome Measures:**

Randomized clinical trials, development of patient based outcome scores, computerized upper extremity testing using NK and LIDO systems

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## **Fellow Evaluation**

The fellow will determine and document specific and individualized learning objectives based on their learning needs and desires. Progress towards achieving those goals will be evaluated collaboratively with the mentor. (Please refer to the hand therapy fellow evaluation document for more details)

St. Joseph's reserves the right to terminate the fellowship agreement without notice if the mentor/professional practice leader/program coordinator determines the fellow's performance is believed to be unethical, unprofessional or poses a risk to patients we are servicing.

## **Fellowship Program Evaluation**

To assure quality assurance within the hand therapy fellowship program, the fellow will be required to complete a program evaluation.

Learn more about the [Roth McFarlane Hand and Upper Limb Centre](#) and [hand therapy](#) at Roth McFarlane Centre.

**The following table lists the Roth McFarlane Centre surgeons  
who have academic standing with Western University**

SURGEON	CLINICAL INTERESTS	RESEARCH INTERESTS
KING, G. (Orthopedic) Medical Director	Elbow, Wrist, Hand	Elbow & Wrist Biomechanics
DROSDOWECH, D (Orthopedic)	Shoulder, Elbow	Shoulder Biomechanics, Clinical Outcomes
FABER, K. (Orthopedic)	Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist	Medical Education, shoulder & elbow Biomechanics
GAN, B (Plastics)	Hand, Wrist, Microsurgery, Wound Healing	Dupuytren's, Wound Healing, Wound Infection, Proteomics Based Research
LABELLE, E M. (Orthopedic)	Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist	Shoulder Instabilities
RICHARDS, R (Plastics)	Hand, Wrist, Tumours, Cosmetics	Scaphoid Fractures, Prognostic Factors for Surgical Outcomes

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ROSS, D.C. (Plastics)	Hand, Wrist, Microsurgery, Peripheral Nerve, Congenital Hand	Nerve, Tendon Biomechanics and Clinical Outcomes
ATHWAL G. (Orthopedic)	Shoulder, Elbow	Shoulder, Elbow Outcome
GREWAL R. (Orthopedic)	Elbow, Wrist and Hand	Elbow, Wrist and Hand Outcome

The following table outlines the hand therapy staff and qualifications.

<u>THERAPISTS</u>	<u>QUALIFICATIONS</u>
Shrikant Chinchalkar	BScOT, M. Th. O, OT Reg. (Ont.), OTR, CHT
Lesley von Dehn	BScPT
Joanne Rooney	BScPT
Mike Szekeres	PhD Candidate, BScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT
Leslie Rizo	BScOT OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT
David Kaminski	BScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.)
Shanley Pitts	MScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT
Emily Seeley	BScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT
Joey Pipicelli	MScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT
Sarah Baier	MScOT, OT Reg. (Ont.), CHT

CHT = Certified Hand Therapist

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