1. **What is the academic track for internship?**

The academic track is a new initiative for internship in Ireland and will be launched in July 2017. It is a national comprehensive programme based between the six Irish Medical Schools and their partner teaching hospitals and is intended to complement the Wellcome - HRB Irish Clinical Academic Training Programme. At its core is a 1-year academic internship programme providing supported and mentored academic and clinical training targeted at the inception of graduate practice and within the context of acquiring full registration. The broad aims of the programme are:

- To provide an opportunity for doctors at the beginning of their clinical careers to develop or continue to develop research, teaching and leadership skills
- To promote scientific discovery and sustained academic development
- To retain medical talent

Interns on the academic track will have protected time within the working week to pursue a project of their choosing with the support of an academic supervisor. Their protected time will likely take place during one three-month rotation and will be disposed as 2.5 to 3 days per week. We estimate no more than 36 days in total. The remainder of the week will be spent in clinical work, there will also be an on call commitment.

2. **What is required of an intern on the academic track?**

Interns on the academic track will be required to achieve the same clinical competencies as all other interns, and will be required to complete the same mandatory elements of intern training. In addition, they will have academic goals to fulfil. Interns on the academic track can chose to participate in a project in one of the following areas:

- Clinical research
- Medical education
- Healthcare leadership and management

Outcomes for the academic placement will be agreed upon with their supervisor at the beginning of the placement. Places on the academic track will be offered in February/March 2017 and from that point onwards, successful candidates will be encouraged to contact their allocated supervisor and begin planning for the project. The project must be something which is practical and achievable within the short time frame available to interns and bearing in mind they will have training and clinical commitments as well. Suggested outcomes for interns on the academic track would include:

**Clinical Research:**

- Identify a research question
- Draft a research proposal
Apply for ethical approval

Conduct or participate in a study/experiment (a lab-based study, a study that uses patient/human volunteers or a population based study)

Write up a study/experiment for publication

Present findings at a local/national/international meeting

**Medical Education**

Develop a new course or module in the undergraduate or postgraduate medical curriculum

Develop and use an assessment programme to test knowledge, skills and attitudes

Complete a piece of medical education research

Deliver bedside tutorials and lectures to undergraduate medical students

Participate in Problem Based Learning tutorials

**Healthcare Leadership and Management**

Identify an area for quality or safety improvement in the hospital environment

Produce a plan for improving quality or safety and engage with key stakeholders including staff members and patient representatives if appropriate

Evaluate the effectiveness of the project and develop recommendations for the future to further improve patient care

Present and disseminate learning from the improvement project

An intern on the academic track may achieve some or all of the above suggested competencies for their project, other additional competencies might be agreed upon depending on the nature of the project.

3. **What is required of the academic supervisor?**

As an academic supervisor for an intern on the academic track, you will be asked to mentor and support the intern in their proposed project. The intern should meet with you prior to starting work in July and discuss their project. You should agree on competencies to be achieved at this stage.

The intern’s academic rotation may take place from July to October 2017, October to January 2018, January to April 2018 or April to July 2018. Therefore you would need to be available at the time the intern is undertaking the academic part of their rotation. You will be contacted in February or March
with an invitation to take on the role of academic supervisor and you will be informed of the timing of the intern's rotation at this stage, prior to your accepting the role.

We would ask that during the academic rotation, you meet regularly with the intern, check their progress and offer advice and support. It is likely that, given the short time frame, most interns will be keen to progress their project outside of their three month academic time frame, and will need to do so outside of working hours. They may require support and guidance during this time period also, which could be provided via email or phone communication, depending on the nature of the project.

4. I would like to take on the role of academic supervisor, what should I do next?

Once the academic track posts have been allocated (February/March 2017), the prospective interns will contact potential supervisors and invite them to take on the role. Who the supervisors are will depend on the projects proposed by each of the four successful candidates, as they will need a supervisor with expertise in their area of interest. You will provided with details of the intern’s rotations and when their academic rotation will take place. If you are available and are happy to take on the role, the intern will be assigned to you. From then on it is up to the intern to contact you to meet with, discuss and agree upon a project proposal and outcomes for the academic rotation.

5. I have already been approached by final year medical students asking me to be their supervisor. How should I respond?

If you have been approached by a student about the academic track already, and you would consider taking the role of the academic supervisor for this particular student, you can discuss potential projects with them. You may wish to offer your advice on developing a draft research proposal. However the student may not be successful in their application for the academic track, or if they are offered a place, it may not be in the TCD network and therefore it might not be practicable for you to be their supervisor. It is also worth bearing in mind the limited time an academic track intern will have to complete their project (no more than 36 days), so any proposed projects should be achievable within this short timeframe.

Thank you for your interest in the Academic Track for Internship

If you have any further queries, please contact Dr Elaine Burke, Lecturer/Registrar in Intern Education and Training on burkee11@tcd.ie