

# Enhancing Workforce Readiness and Growth: A Comprehensive Orientation and Professional Development Strategy at The University of Kansas Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office

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## Background

The University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC) Clinical Trials Office (CTO) achieved NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center status in summer 2022. 178 new staff members were then hired. To address the growing demand for additional resources and staff support, the KUCC CTO Training, Education, and Quality (TEQ) team created a structured onboarding program for new hires and developed a professional development program for existing staff.

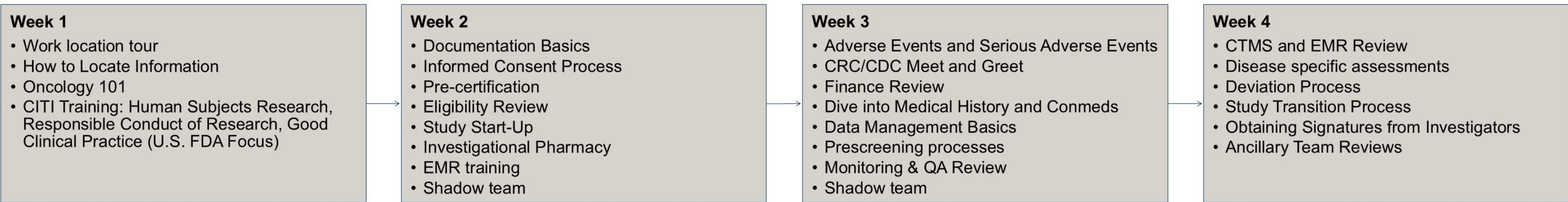
## Goals

- With the goal of assisting staff by providing essential information beginning on their start date, TEQ strived to create and improve high-quality programming to keep staff informed of industry and organizational updates.
- We also worked to increase the availability of professional development opportunities to offer the CTO workforce continued professional evolution.

## Solutions and Methods

- To assist new staff:
  - We implemented a four-week orientation program consisting of flipped classroom models, various simulations and gamification activities, and mentoring and shadowing opportunities to provide teaching on topics such as clinical trial and oncology foundations, operational processes, and procedures.
  - Content is provided through a series of presentations on the company learning management system followed by Q&A session to cover content highlights and address questions.
  - After each Q&A, staff are provided exercises such as consenting practice and an online adverse event escape room.
    - See Figure 1 for an orientation schedule example.
- To provide staff opportunities for professional development:
  - We partnered with various departments in The University of Kansas Medical Center to supply staff the opportunity to complete Clifton Strengths training and to attend Clinical Trial Regulations Lunch and Learns (CTRLL).
  - We also started monthly newsletters to highlight professional development topics, reinforce process and procedure updates, and provide staff with space to recognize each other.

Figure 1



## Outcomes

- Results from surveyed staff indicated a greater sense of preparedness and professional growth, reinforcing the value of our orientation and development strategies.
- TEQ spent 364 hours in 2023 and 299 hours in 2024 in orientation (Figure 2).
- 31 CTO staff members were SOCRA certified/recertified in 2023 and 15 in 2024 (Figure 3).
- An average of 60 staff attended each CTRLL session, which also included non-CTO staff. These programs equip staff with the knowledge, skills and resources to contribute effectively to the mission of the CTO.

Figure 2



Figure 3



## Lessons Learned and Future Directions:

- We provided networking opportunities, additional continuing education, and professional development offerings.
- Future initiatives include development of a staff investigator-led educational series, recorded training sessions for real-time staff access, and a robust manager training curriculum.
- TEQ is working to establish metrics to quantify initiative results in employee satisfaction.
- A well-defined orientation and professional development program is critical for the success of clinical research staff and serves as a framework to ensure a competent and involved workforce, driving excellence in KUCC clinical trials and patient care.