

So, you want to be a C-L Psychiatry Fellow?

Congratulations! You're embarking on an exciting time in your career development – the pursuit of fellowship training. The following information may be helpful as you navigate the process of researching, applying, interviewing, and choosing a fellowship location.

The consultation-liaison psychiatry fellowship selection process operates as a match through the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP). You must research programs, apply to them individually, and interview with programs who offer you an interview day. After interviewing, you will submit your rank list to the NRMP.

To assist both fellowship applicants and fellowship programs, the Fellowship Education Subcommittee of the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry (ACLP) has developed a Common Application form which many programs are willing to accept (please see below under **“The Application Process”** for details).

Timeline

It is recommended that you start investigating fellowship opportunities at the end of your third year of residency. Similar to the residency selection process during medical school, people typically start applying in the summer (between third and fourth year), and interview in the fall of fourth year. Of course, you want to give yourself the best possible chance at interviewing at the programs of your choice – so don't delay!

Now is the time to ask your residency program how many days you can be gone for fellowship interviews. Ask if you can use educational days, or if you need to use vacation days. This will help you plan your interview schedule wisely.

How To Start

Decide what elements of fellowship are important to you. Issues may include:

- Geographical location
- Reputation of the psychiatry department and its residency training program

- Number of fellows per year
- ACGME accreditation status
- Program curriculum
- Available subspecialty clinical experiences (such as psycho-oncology, HIV psychiatry, reproductive psychiatry, for example)
- Research opportunities/academic project
- Specific faculty you'd like to work with

Of course, like the residency application process, getting input from friends/loved ones/spouses may help elucidate which elements are most important to consider.

Preparing to Apply

Begin researching programs to see which ones fit your criteria noted above!

A particularly helpful resource is the website for the Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry (www.clpsychiatry.org). This website has a list of current ACGME-accredited fellowship programs including numbers of fellows per year, stipend amount, clinical experiences, and so forth. The ACLP website allows you to access program information individually.

PLEASE NOTE: Some of the programs listed on the ACLP website may not have updated their information in a year or two. Don't be alarmed. If the program sounds interesting and you'd like further information, email the program contact person listed. Likewise, you may want to search for the particular institution's website and get more information that way.

The next page shows an example of a fellowship program entry on the ACLP website (<http://www.clpsychiatry.org/fellowships/>).

Peter Pfeifernan, MD, PhD
Director, C-L Service; Director, CLP Fellowship Program
Department of Psychiatry

[XYZ Community Hospital](#)
1234 W. Main Street, C-120
Hartford, Connecticut, 06555
555-555-5555

EMAIL PROGRAM CONTACT

Alternate Contact

Program Coordinator: Josephine Smith
XYZ Hospital, Bldg. 500, 5678 State Street
Hartford, CT 06556
555-555-5557

EMAIL ALTERNATE PROGRAM CONTACT

 Accepts the Common Application

Above and to the right:

The two parts to a program's description in ACLP's Directory of Match-Participating Fellowship Programs:

- Contact information (above)
- Program details (to the right), which display when you click the program's linked institution name on the Contact display.

General Information

Available positions:	3
Number of covered hospital beds:	650
Number of inpatient consults per year for service:	2000
Number of full-time faculty equivalents for service:	5.0
Annual salary:	\$81,201
J-1 Visa accepted:	Yes
H-1 Visa Accepted:	Yes

Experience (average hours/week)

Clinical Inpatient:	28
Clinical Outpatient:	8
Didactics and Seminars:	4
Academic project required?	No

Description of Program

This fellowship provides psychiatric consultation experience at XYZ Hospital, a tertiary care academic medical center with many specialized types of units. The program covers basic and advanced topics in consultation psychiatry, a methodology, case conferences, and service rounds with outside invited speakers. There is no emergency department coverage, and no night or weekend call (except moonlighting opportunities are available). Academic research projects are encouraged but not required.

Website

On the Web <http://www.xyz-hospital.edu/fellowships/clp>

FREIDA online (<https://freida.ama-assn.org/>) and the ACGME website (www.acgme.org) are also very useful sources of information. Other resources for fellowship information include the people at your own residency program. Faculty members or recent graduates may have ties to institutions with fellowship programs. Additional resources may include connections you've made through your local APA chapter, or through ACLP participation as a resident. Be sure to avail yourself of any assistance that these individuals can provide; this "inside information" may

prove to be helpful as you start your investigation into fellowships.

Now is a good time to start thinking about your personal statement. Yes, that pesky personal statement—the writing exercise you thought was far behind you after residency applications—is back again! Depending on the program, there may be short answer questions on the application, and/or there may

be a longer personal statement required. If you start working on this in advance, you won't be as stressed when it comes to filling out applications (see below).

This also may be a good time to obtain updated professional photographs, either by getting passport or professional photos taken or producing something similar with a smartphone camera. Some applications will ask for pictures; some won't.

Program Application Requirements

The next step is to research the application requirements on each individual program's website. Ensure you understand what is required for each program in terms of application form, CV, personal statement, letters of recommendation, and other supporting documents. If you have specific questions about a program's application process, email the program coordinator or program director for clarification.

The Application Process

As with researching, don't delay applying to programs in which you are very interested. Be prepared that it may take you a while to complete applications, depending on the number of programs to which you apply and depending on how detailed each application is. The ACLP is allowing fellowship programs to use ERAS (Electronic Residency Application System) starting with the 2023-2024 recruitment season. Fellowship programs will decide for themselves whether to accept applications via ERAS, email, or both, so make sure to check the [ACLP web program listings](#) as well as individual fellowship websites to confirm.

The following table lists important dates and deadlines in the 2024 ERAS Fellowship application timeline (For more details on applying to CL Fellowship using ERAS, review the AAMC website linked [HERE](#)):

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
June 7, 2023	ERAS 2024 season begins at 9 a.m. ET.
June 8, 2023	EFDO will release tokens to fellowship applicants.
July 5, 2023	July-cycle fellowship applicants may begin submitting applications to programs at 9 a.m. ET.
July 19, 2023	July-cycle fellowship programs may begin reviewing applications at 9 a.m. ET.
May 31, 2024	ERAS 2024 season ends at 5 p.m. ET.

Programs accepting applications via email may require the use of a Common Application designed by the ACLP Fellowship Education Subcommittee, available on the [ACLP website](#). Due to institutional constraints, however, not every program can accept this form and instead will have their own application form. Even the

programs accepting the Common Application Form may require additional information (for instance, there might be a graduate medical education office form as well as a specific C-L psychiatry application form). So once again, start early and keep a checklist of what each program requires.

Enlist the help of your friends/colleagues/loved ones with particular talents for editing and ask them to look over your applications for clarity, content, and format. You also may want to ask a trusted faculty member to review your CV to ensure that it is clear and professional.

When filling out application forms, be sure that they are done in a legible fashion. Typing may be your best option, particularly if your handwriting is difficult to decipher. Be sure to submit applications, along with any other pertinent items the programs have requested, in a timely fashion. When in doubt about an application requirement, contact the programs individually for clarification.

The Waiting Game

- After submitting your applications, you can sit back and breathe a sigh of relief – but don't relax too much! You are now entering the "Waiting Game," when you're eagerly awaiting offers of interviews.
- Create a list of questions you may want to ask during your interview.

Should you find that you haven't had any replies several weeks after submitting your application, contact the program director (or the program coordinator) to be sure that your application was received and didn't get lost. Assuming the application made it to its destination, all you can do is be patient and wait.

The Interview

ACLP recommends that all CL fellowship interviews remain virtual only. Evidence suggests that virtual interviewing reduces barriers to fellowship application and thus improves equity in the selection process. ACLP also recommends that all interviews occur within a single calendar day, preserving the traditional "interview day" format, allowing for exceptions in which technological or other limitations require rescheduling. ACLP will continue to re-evaluate the underlying factors and make recommendations regarding virtual versus in-person interviews for subsequent interview cycles. ACLP strongly encourages programs that choose to offer or require in-person interviews to incorporate the equity-promoting [policies and procedures promoted by the AAMC](#).

During the interview day, be yourself and enjoy the experience. This is your chance to tell programs about

yourself and your interests, and it's the interviewers' chance to tell you what their program has to offer. Be sure to get your questions answered and talk to any available current fellows to get their impressions. It is wise, as you likely did for residency interviews, to write down the names of all the people you meet. When dressing for your interviews, it is a good idea to err on the side of formality. Suits are the accepted attire for interview days. Never assume that the virtual format or "casual" reputation of the program justifies unprofessional attire.

Regarding recruitment activities outside the interview day, the ACLP recommends that programs not initiate post-interview contact unless further information is required from the applicant to complete their application. These limitations on post-interview day contact are meant to reduce undue pressure on applicants. Of course, emails or hand-written thank-you notes to faculty, and emails to residents or fellows, are always appreciated and will demonstrate your communication and social skills. It is also wise to extend thanks to any program coordinators that assisted in your interview scheduling. It is acceptable for programs to respond to post-interview thank-you notes from the applicant as a formality, but no further communication should be solicited from the applicant in those communications. It is understood that incidental contact with applicants in the course of normal institutional or organizational activity is common and need not be avoided e.g., shared participation by an applicant and recruiting faculty member on an ACLP Special Interest Group, or participation in a shared institutional or departmental group activity. However, extra activity that is specifically targeted towards recruitment goals (e.g., program faculty taking a prospective applicant out to dinner at the ACLP annual meeting for the purposes of recruitment) should be avoided. One exception is the accommodation of candidate requests for an in-person "second look" post-interview, as long as such visits occur subsequent to the [NRMP Match Rank Order List certification deadline](#); this timing limits potential selection bias in candidate ranking.

After the interview process is completed and you've sent your thank-you notes, you can begin the process of ranking programs where you interviewed. This is a good time to think about the programs you visited, what impression you got from each place, and in which locations you would like to live for your fellowship year. How you rank these programs will depend on you as an individual and what the programs had to offer. Weigh the pros/cons of each program in order to help make your rank list. Again, input of friends/family can be helpful during this time. Remember, however, that only *you* can make the ultimate decisions regarding fellowship ranking.

Match Process

The match is administered by the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP), and will be similar to the process which you used to match for psychiatry residency. You will need to register for the psychiatry fellowship match. The NRMP website (www.nrmp.org) has information about the match and has links for you to register. You will need your USMLE/ECFMG number. There is an \$80 fee.

Check the NRMP website for the current match calendar. *NOTE: It is important that you register in advance of the rank-order list deadline, as programs cannot rank you unless you are registered.* You should rank programs in order of your preference, not based on where you think you might match (the NRMP website contains more information about the match algorithm).

Once You Are Matched to a Position

Congratulations—you have matched to a position! You are now an incoming fellow in consultation- liaison psychiatry for the next academic year. Be sure to inform your current residency program of any pertinent timelines. Most fellowships start on July 1, but if you need a few days off to move or for orientation, be sure to check with your residency program about this.

There are many issues to be clarified prior to starting fellowship, most of which can be clarified by the individual fellowship program. You should find out which permanent licenses you will need prior to starting your fellowship (individual states, District of Columbia). You also need to know if it is mandatory that you get a permanent DEA number prior to starting fellowship. If you need to get licenses and/or a DEA number, *act quickly*. Some processes may take months to be completed, and you don't want to jeopardize your fellowship by not being fully accredited. Check the website for the Federation of State Medical Boards (www.fsmb.org) and go to the "Public Services" tab. There you will find a link to all state medical boards, and their individual contact information. If you need to get your own DEA number, check the website for the DEA (www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov) to get specific information.

You may have chosen to stay at your home institution (where you did your residency) for fellowship. You may have decided to move to a new location. The following are things to think about if you are planning to relocate for fellowship.

Housing — For a one-year position, housing can be a tricky decision. Should you buy, or rent, or live with friends/family? If you think that you'd like to remain in the area after fellowship, you may want to consider purchasing a home. If you are undecided or think you might like to

move after fellowship, renting or living with friends/family may be a wiser financial decision. Several things to consider regarding housing include location (distance to work locations, distance to public transportation systems like subway or metro, how long you should anticipate being in traffic each day), traffic patterns (will you be heading into terrible traffic every rush-hour?), price, other amenities (does the apartment complex include a gym, laundry facilities, etc.?). In this process, it will be important to investigate various moving company options to facilitate your relocation.

Banking — Again, if you're moving for only one year, should you change all your financial holdings? Or, just get a new bank for checking account/direct deposit purposes?

Benefits, such as health insurance — Your fellowship program should be able to supply this information to you. You likely will have a chance to sign up for benefits during a formal orientation session. Check with your residency institution to verify how long your residency benefits last after graduation or, if necessary, inquire about a COBRA plan to extend benefits if there is a lapse between residency and fellowship insurance plans.

Other issues — If you need to find childcare or employment for a spouse or significant other, ask your fellowship program if they know of resources or of others with similar experiences who may provide guidance. If you are in the US on a visa and need assistance with renewal from your fellowship, be proactive in obtaining the required documentation so as to complete the process in a timely manner. Finally, ensure you understand your program's requirements for on-boarding, including documents and required training. Some of these may require your physical presence at the program before the beginning of the academic year.

Wrapping Up

We hope this guide has been useful to those of you contemplating fellowship training. There may be aspects of the application process that we have omitted in this brief guide, but hopefully we have armed you with some of the tools you need to start the process with confidence. Overall, we hope you remember the following:

- Be prompt throughout this process: in researching fellowships, contacting programs for information, applying, interviewing, and responding to offers.
- Be open and polite in all facets of communication with fellowship program coordinators, interviewers, and active fellows. Be thorough in your investigating, and be clear in your drive to pursue the best possible fellowship

program match for your particular interests.

- Be yourself, and you will succeed!