

Findings from the 2020 Training & Workforce Development Survey

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After the first ISCT training and employment survey [publication in 2019](#) we found a deep need to continue educating members of the cell and gene therapy field about the landscape of education and training requirements. Per continuing with our primary goal to disseminate important information on training and career development in 2020, ISCT joined forces with CellCAN to develop a concise survey that aimed to increase response rates from early-stage professionals, primarily in North America.

The survey was distributed to ISCT members and the CellCAN network, with a request for responses from those qualifying as early-stage professionals (within 10 years of their terminal degree or entry to the CGT field). The survey consisted of 19 questions and was focused on educational background, continuing education, current employment, and demographics.

We had a total of 61 respondents who answered some part of the survey, 42 (74%) of them from North America. As it was intended, but not limited to, 86% (49) of our responders are early-stage professionals in the cell and gene therapy field.

Most of our respondents (77%) had advanced degrees (Master's degree, PhD, MD, MD/PhD) and 31% (8) of them have an upper managerial role (Director, CEO). Almost half of this group were MD or PhD (26) and only 2 individuals holding doctorates classify their role as manufacturing related. Thirteen respondents had a bachelor's degree or high school diploma (1), of those, 62% (8) best classify their role as a Manufacturing/Manufacturing Science.

Generating data on salaries across the field is important to ensure that our workforce is appropriately compensated. The tremendous growth in regenerative medicine trials has led to a dearth of manufacturing facilities in both the academic and industry sectors. Individuals experienced in good manufacturing practices for biologics are a hot commodity. This is great for the field, but particularly challenging in the academic setting because few institutions can compete with industry salaries. In many cases, particularly in the US, salaries for employees in academic institutions are based on compensation comparators within the field. Lacking this

information, we set out to gain a basic understanding of salaries in the North America subset of respondents (42). Salaries (in USD) were grouped in ranges of <\$40,000, \$40,000 - \$70,000, \$70,000 - \$100,000, \$100,000 - \$150,000, and >\$150,000. The majority of respondents reported an annual salary of \$70,000 - \$100,000 (36%), with the \$40,000 - \$70,000 range following at a close second with 31%. The two highest salary ranges were reported by a similar percentage of respondents, with 12% reporting a salary between \$100,000 and \$150,000, and 16% earning more than \$150,000. The lowest earning bracket (<\$40,000) was also the least reported, with less than 5%. In general, our respondents (72%) think they were at least adequately prepared for their current role by their prior education. As we saw in the previous survey, the cell and gene therapy field includes individuals with diverse backgrounds who perform a variety of tasks, and in this edition of the survey, 47 respondents indicated they work with cells or blood in their typical workday and 78% currently work or have worked in a GMP environment. More than half (58%) of the people surveyed work in an Academic environment and the same number do not manage people.

Continuing education is required for professionals to stay current with the latest developments, new technologies and skills for their fields. This is especially important in the cell and gene therapy field to be in compliance with laws, remain licensed or certified, or maintain membership in an association or licensing body. In our survey we found that 81% (46) believe continuing education is necessary for their role, even though most of the participants answered that their education prepared them for their current role. Approximately 19% of those that pursue continuing education used licensing programs and advanced degrees. A majority of respondents (84%) reported that they can take time away from work to attend training courses relevant to their role but almost half of them (47%) feel that a training course offering a certification will positively impact their ability to take time away from work to attend.

The current epidemiological situation we are facing is causing many transformations in different areas of life, consequently, the integration of information technology in education has been accelerated and online education is becoming an integral component of continuing professional education. Survey respondents indicated that interactive learning was the most conducive training environment (56%). This is important as it aligns with the fact that 76% (43) of our respondents pursue continuing education at least quarterly, this being much easier in an interactive and online environment. Curiously, 18% (11) of our respondents answered they don't think continuous education is necessary for their role, almost half of these individuals classify their role as research and development or process development.

As we said in the previous publication and this continues to be true today, in the current market there is a great demand for cell and gene therapy services. Our vision is to provide this survey on an annual basis to generate a wealth of data that can become a resource for the Cell and Gene Therapy field. Over time, data from these continued surveys can be used to improve the

standardization of training programs, track trends in global training requirements, and build compensation standards at a regional level for the cell and gene therapy industry.

The next edition of the survey will be launched at ISCT 2021 Annual Meeting in May. Spread the word to your connections throughout the Cell and Gene Therapy field to boost our response rate and make this next version even more powerful!

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Keywords:

- Training
- ESPs
- Workforce Development
- Survey

Brief Summary:

Building on the first ISCT Job Market Survey conducted in 2019, ISCT joined forces with CellCAN to develop a concise survey that aimed to increase response rates from early-stage professionals, primarily in North America. Read about preliminary findings in preparation for the 2021 installment of the survey.