



CSCC Award for Education Excellence

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Dr. Cynthia Balion

Dr. Cynthia Balion is the recipient of the 2025 CSCC Award for Education Excellence. This award is presented to an individual or group as a mark of recognition of outstanding contribution to education in the field of clinical chemistry.

Dr. Balion is a Clinical Biochemist at Hamilton Health Sciences and the Program Director for the Clinical Biochemistry program at McMaster University. She is an Associate Professor, Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, and an Associate Member, Department of Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact, Faculty of Health Science at McMaster University. She is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Clinical Biochemistry. She has made exceptional contributions to the education of Clinical Biochemistry fellows at McMaster University.

Dr. Balion has significantly contributed to the learning environment and the fellowship experience for clinical biochemistry fellows. She worked tirelessly to increase the salary for McMaster Clinical Biochemistry Fellows, advocating for better recognition of the fellows' efforts in healthcare services. Furthermore, Dr. Balion addressed long-standing issues with the McMaster Clinical Biochemistry Diploma that did not accurately reflect the degree earned. She also ensured that fellows had access to dedicated study rooms in each of the four hospitals for rotations to create an ideal environment for learning.

Many clinical biochemists have had the pleasure of training with and being mentored by Dr. Balion. She encourages learners to engage in hands-on research projects and practical experiences, takes immense amounts of time to teach complex topics to both learners and lab staff, and engages in seeking feedback for opportunities to improve training. She fosters an open environment to discuss academic and personal challenges that leads to continuous improvement opportunities. Despite her demanding

schedule, she always makes herself available for support, offering guidance to learners and lab staff whenever needed.

Dr. Balion has left an ineradicable mark on the professional development of fellows, through her exceptional dedication or education. Her kind approach and ability to be nurturing while providing an inclusive learning environment is commendable. Her commitment to fostering growth and confidence in her trainees is unparalleled. Through her value in engaging with current literature and practice guidelines to critically appraising and challenging current standards, she is able to instill the value and direction for process and quality improvements. Teaching future clinical biochemists is no small task, and Dr. Balion continues to do so this with grace, positive vision and kindness to support very successful careers.

Dr. Balion's mentor and education role extends to sharing her insights and knowledge in publications, at conferences, and through other collaborative opportunities with colleagues. She has held numerous roles with the Canadian Society of Clinical Chemists (CSCC), Canadian Academy of Clinical Biochemistry (CACB) and the Ontario Society of Clinical Chemists (OSCC) to enable further mentorship, and has shared her knowledge through numerous lectures and supervisorship at the undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level at McMaster University.