



Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)

DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY

Pathology Observership Program

Policies & Procedures 2025

INTRODUCTION

Program Purpose

The Pathology Observership Program is designed for medical students and medical graduates interested in exploring a career in pathology and learning more about the pathology training programs at Medical College of Wisconsin.

This policy document is intended to guide the candidate through the process that, following application, may lead to an Observership position on a temporary and restricted basis within the MCW Department of Pathology. Participants must meet the **Eligibility Criteria** described herein to qualify for application.

Program Framework

The Department welcomes qualified national and international medical scholars, namely **medical students or medical graduates**, to apply for Observership with MCW's Department of Pathology. Observers will spend one month participating in the routine service and learning activities of the department, including observing sign-out of cases, grossing, autopsies, and spending time in clinical pathology laboratories. Participants will be welcome to attend the daily Peer Review Conference at the multi-headed scope, and to attend lectures and interdisciplinary conferences.

The Pathology Observership Program is limited to one Observer per month, from September to May. Observership begins the first day of the month, or the next available business day, and concludes on the last business day of the month. Due to the high level of interest in the Program and the very limited numbers of spots, we regret that we cannot accept all applicants. The Program provides no compensation, stipend, or reimbursement. **All arrangements and expenses, including but not limited to travel, lodging, travel documents, immunizations, health insurance, and living costs will be the full responsibility of the Participant.**

Upon the end of a Participant's Observership, he/she will no longer be permitted to access MCW or its affiliate facilities.

An Observership is strictly a voluntary program and can be terminated at any time by either the Observer or MCW, with or without cause.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility Criteria & Application

1. Foreign nationals must apply for the proper visa and will be required to provide proof of passport and visa status to finalize admission to the Program.
2. **B-1 Business Visa & Visa Waiver Program (VWP) for Visitors (Designated Countries Only):** The B-1 Business Visa and VWP allow foreign nationals to enter the U.S. to participate in short-term training. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) is for visitors from specified exempt countries. Those utilizing the VWP must register and receive approval through their Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), prior to travel to the U.S. Those on the B-1 or VWP do not hold work authorization, are not allowed to perform any hands-on work, will not hold any appointment at MCW, and will not take part in research. The Participant is an Observer only.
3. **H-4 Dependent Spouse Visa with a valid Employee Authorization Document (EAD)**
4. **J-2 Visa Non-Immigrant Dependent Spouse with EAD**
5. **E-3D Dependent Spouses with an E-3 Visa**
6. **EAD with Green Card Pending**
7. **No other visa type will be accepted. Individuals interested in the Program who have been issued any other type of visa must agree to transfer their existing visa to a B-1 visa to participate in the MCW Pathology Observership Program.**
8. Applicants must be:
 - a. English-proficient
 - b. Financially able to participate in the program. MCW also does not offer a stipend.
 - c. Participants must have the resources to assume the financial burden of travel, housing, living, health insurance, immunizations, travel documents, and all other costs associated with taking part in the program. There is no tuition fee for Observership Program admission.
 - d. **To apply, individuals must complete the [MCW Pathology Observership Program Application](#) and provide all required application attachments, uploaded as PDFs as requested in the application.** Applications that do not provide all attachments, or that fail to use the online application as directed, will not be accepted. Due to the volume of requests, e-mailed content is not accepted.

Process

After successful application with required attachments, the Applicant's information will be advanced to the Observership Committee for review. The Pathology Observership Committee reviews applications in May each year. Applicants will be notified of their status by email

following the committee meeting. Due to the extreme level of interest in the Program for the limited numbers of spots, we regret that we cannot accept all applicants. If accepted, applicants will be provided with next steps.

Upon approval to participate in the Program, notification will be sent to the Candidate by email from the Program Coordinator via a Letter of Invitation (LOI), requesting the Observer to formally sign and return the LOI agreement to the Program Coordinator by a designated date, indicating acceptance of terms, and to proceed with placement in the Program. Once the Coordinator has received the signed acceptance, if received by the stated respond date, an email outlining the next requirements will be sent to the Candidate.

Approval to Observe

If accepted into the program, the Candidate, before participating in Program activities, must:

1. Complete and return all documentation and forms provided by the Coordinator, MCW and its affiliates.
 2. Comply with federal, state, and local privacy, health, and regulatory requirements.
 3. Sign and return Letter of Invitation by deadline given.
 4. Provide proof of US citizenship (birth certificate, U.S. passport, certificate of citizenship, or naturalization certificate), permanent resident status (permanent or conditional resident card/Green Card), or visa.
 5. Complete and return the MCW Human Resources (HR) forms. MCW HR will advise the Coordinator once Candidate has passed the background check and credentials are verified. If the Candidate does not pass the background check, or if credentials cannot be verified, the invitation to participate in the Program will be withdrawn.
 6. Complete and return Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Job Shadow/Observer Form Appendix A and Agreement Appendix B.
 7. Provide documentation of negative TB skin test (dated within 12 months of observation start date), negative QuantiFERON-TB Gold Blood test (IGRA) (dated within 12 months of observation start date), or TB-negative chest x-ray result (dated within 6 months of observation start date).
 8. Provide documentation of 2 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccines or a positive Rubella titer and a positive Rubeola (measles) titer.
 9. Provide medical documentation* of full, completed vaccination COVID-19 series, including Booster if received, with a vaccine granted Emergency Use Authorization by World Health Organization (WHO) and listed among [WHO's Vaccines Granted Emergency Use Listing \(EUL\)](#). (Must provide one of the following: documentation from Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) OR signed letter from the healthcare provider who administered the vaccine identifying the manufacturer, lot number and date of administration).
- *COVID Vaccine Card is not acceptable proof of vaccination status
10. Obtain and provide proof of flu vaccination; September – March.
 11. Complete and return Confidentiality and Observer Agreements from Froedtert Hospital and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, as applicable, prior to the first day of beginning the Observership.

12. Obtain, maintain, and provide proof of adequate health insurance that is valid in the U.S. for the duration of the Program. Such insurance coverage must include pre-existing conditions.
13. Secure housing and travel arrangements. The Department is not responsible for obtaining or aiding in obtaining housing or making travel arrangements.
14. Provide details about air arrival (if applicable), housing, and contact information for duration of Observership.
15. Review Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and attest to review.
16. Review all other documentation as required.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DETAILS

Educational Objectives

Given the subspecialty nature of clinical practice in the MCW Department of Pathology, the educational objectives that have been established to meet the Program goals include:

1. Gain broad exposure to and knowledge of the practice of pathology including pathologic specimen processing, pathology workflow, gross examination, and basics of histopathology.
2. Distinguish the histopathologic features of common pathologic diagnoses and their differential diagnoses through attending pathology sign-out sessions, didactic lectures, and multi-disciplinary conferences.
3. Gain an understanding of what a career in pathology entails.
4. Interact with resident and fellow physicians in their daily activities to explore the benefits of Pathology residency training at MCW.

Curriculum

Given the observational nature of the practice of pathology, most of the curriculum will be based strictly on the observation of the routine daily work conducted in the various subspecialty disciplines. Observers will:

1. Participate in all didactic conferences for the residents, Pathology Grand Rounds, Journal Club, interdepartmental conferences and other educational activities.
2. Be physically present in the Department during regular work hours and may be excused on occasion under special circumstances with prior approval of the Observership Director.
3. Comply with additional requirements which may include but not be limited to:
 - a) Reviewing and agreeing to abide by applicable laws, rules, regulations, and funding requirements, and MCW policies.
 - b) Review specific MCW requirements about data and intellectual property ownership, which can be found in the MCW Patent and Copyright Policy (RS.GN.060). This will help to avoid misunderstandings about intellectual property ownership, and/or possible regulatory reporting requirements on the part of MCW in the future.
4. Be issued a letter of completion at the end of the Observership period.

Responsibilities of Observers

1. Follow the instructions of the Faculty member and do not spend time in the clinical, hospital, or private practice areas unless scheduled and approved by the Faculty member, Director, or Coordinator.
2. Only act as an observer, and do not perform any patient care activities.
3. Accept no compensation.
4. Follow the rules and regulations of the hospital, clinic, or private practice at all times.
5. Adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.
6. Participate in prerequisite training (e.g., HIPAA and OSHA).
7. Pay for actual costs of administrative or prerequisite items (ECMFG certification, passport, visa, immunizations, MCW ID badge, etc.).
8. Arrange own transportation, meals and lodging.
9. Confirm schedule and responsibilities with assigned Faculty member regularly.

Privileges Denied to Observers

Observers will **not** be permitted to:

1. Administer treatment or render services to patients (including a primary medical examination, history, or physical).
2. Be involved in obtaining patient consent for clinical or research procedures.
3. Participate in decisions concerning patient management; write orders or notes in patient charts; or give orders verbally or otherwise.
4. Accept telephone calls regarding clinical matters on behalf of their Faculty supervisor or other physicians.

Disclaimer: As this program requires independent, professional, proactive learners dedicated to increasing their knowledge of pathology and its subspecialties, any Participant who does not display continued compliance with the foregoing requirements will be terminated from the Program and asked not to return.

Observership Program Contacts**Pathology Observership Program****Kelly Simarski**

Observership Coordinator, Department of Pathology

ksimarski@mcw.edu

Alexander J. Gallan, MD

Observership Director, Department of Pathology