

PROFESSIONAL STAFF OBSERVERSHIP GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE ORIGIN: Academic and Medical Affairs

DATE: May 1, 2014

BACKGROUND:

Medical Learners play an integral role in creating a culture of continuous learning and are essential to advance our strategic direction, Accelerate Teaching & Research. While it is important for Medical Learners to receive a quality learning experience, appropriate measures must be in place to ensure that safety is a promise for all patients, families, physicians, staff and volunteers.

Professional Staff Observerships provide an excellent opportunity for individuals who are passionate about health care to gain insight into how healthcare is provided in hospitals and to gain an understanding of the various health care professions.

PURPOSE:

To clarify the roles and responsibilities of the participant (the "**Observer**") while engaged in an Observership at Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH).

To clarify the roles and responsibilities of the supervising Professional Staff member (the "**Supervisor**") to ensure that Observers are provided with appropriate supervision and are involved in activities that are appropriate to their role.

This guideline does **not** address clinical placements for clinical clerks, residents, fellows or midwives, which are coordinated through the Rural Ontario Medical Program, RVH Academic and Medical Affairs and/or RVH Professional Practice; nor does it address visits arranged through educational institutions including the RVH Job Shadow Observational Learning Program or Take Your Kid to Work Days, which are coordinated through the RVH Human Resources Department.

DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of this document, the following capitalized terms shall have the following meaning:

"Department Chief" is the medical leader in the Department in which the Observership is occurring.

"Observership" is a learning/educational experience that is strictly observational. Under no circumstances do participants provide any direct or indirect patient care.

"Observer" is an individual who is not a staff member, or a staff member outside of regularly scheduled hours, who is at least 16 years of age or older. Observers can include, but are not limited to high school, college, or undergraduate students; or international medical students or graduates not currently enrolled in an accredited Canadian program.

"Professional Staff" is a member of the RVH Professional Staff to whom hospital privileges have been granted.

"Supervisor" is the Professional Staff member who has taken on the responsibility of supervising an Observer throughout the duration of the placement. The Professional Staff member must hold current hospital privileges in order to be a Supervisor to an Observer.

PROCEDURE:

While Observerships provide excellent educational opportunities, patients' confidentiality, safety, and care, as well as the safety of the Observer, are of the utmost concern.

To ensure a valuable and safe learning experience, all Observers and Supervisors engaging in Observerships must adhere to the following process:

1. Request a Supervisor:

It is the Observer's responsibility to connect with and secure a Supervisor. Once a Professional Staff member has agreed to be a Supervisor, he/she should advise the Observer to contact the **Academic and Medical Affairs** to obtain an **Observership Application Package**. Sharon Youell, Medical Affairs Coordinator, can be reached by email at youells@rvh.on.ca.

If you would like to pursue an Observership, but do not have a Supervisor, please email Academic and Medical Affairs with a brief description of your learning objectives and an updated Curriculum Vitae. We will do our best to help facilitate a potential connection for you. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee that a connection will be made.

2. Complete an Observership Application Package:

All documentation relating to the application must be completed by the Observer and submitted to Academic and Medical Affairs at least **two weeks prior** to the anticipated start date. Applications submitted less than two weeks prior to the anticipated start date will be denied and the Observership will not be permitted.

Each applicant must submit the following documents as part of a completed application package:

- ☐ **FORM A:** Application Form signed by the Observer, the Supervisor, the Department Chief
- ☐ **FORM B:** Observer Agreement signed by the Observer and the Supervisor
- ☐ **FORM C:** RVH Code of Conduct
- ☐ **FORM D:** RVH Privacy Agreement for RVH Affiliates
- ☐ **FORM E:** Offence Declaration Form
- ☐ **FORM F:** Worker Health Assessment Immunization Record/Respiratory Fit Form
(for Observerships that are 7 days or more)

3. Obtain Approval:

Academic and Medical Affairs will confirm approval of the application with the Observer and the Supervisor within two weeks of receiving the application package. Academic and Medical Affairs will also contact the Program Director and Security Services to confirm the dates when the Observer will be on site.

4. Orientation:

Sharon Youell, Medical Affairs Coordinator, will arrange orientation for the Observer on the first morning of the Observership.

DURATION

The duration of an Observership shall not exceed 14 days/year. Special consideration for Observerships can be presented to Academic and Medical Affairs for review and will be considered at the discretion of the Vice President, Academic and Medical Affairs.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OBSERVER:

1. Observers must acknowledge that they have read, understand and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the **Observer Agreement, Form B**.
2. Observer must agree that the Observership is strictly observational and that under no circumstance are they permitted to participate in any direct or indirect patient care.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR:

1. Supervisors must acknowledge that they have read, understand and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the **Observer Application, Form A**.
2. Supervisors must agree to the following terms and conditions with respect to Observing Patient Care:
If the Observer will be present during any contact with a patient, the Supervisor must introduce the Observer to the patient as an Observer and explain the reason for the Observership. In accordance with **Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004**, the Supervisor **must obtain express consent** from the patient or the patient's substitute decision-maker where applicable, before permitting the Observer to observe patient encounters. **Consent must be sought without the Observer being present** so that the patient is given every opportunity to provide or withhold consent. A patient's decision to provide, withhold, or withdraw consent must not alter the patient's access to healthcare in any manner.

REFUSAL, TERMINATION OR CANCELLATION OF OBSERVERSHIP:

The Supervisor and/or the Hospital may refuse, terminate or cancel the Observership at any time in their sole discretion. Any concerns regarding the appropriateness of the Observer's conduct or behaviour will be addressed by the Supervisor and, if necessary, by the Department Chief/Chief of Staff/Program Director, and may result in the Observership being terminated immediately and the Observer being required to leave the premises immediately.

HOSPITAL IDENTIFICATION:

Hospital-issued identification must be worn and visible at all times. Observers will obtain an Observer Identification Badge on their first day from Academic and Medical Affairs by paying a \$25.00. Observer Identification Badges must be returned on the last day of the Observership to Academic and Medical Affairs office in order for the \$20.00 deposit to be returned to the Observer.

PARKING:

Observers are responsible to pay for their own parking, which is available at a discounted rate through Academic and Medical Affairs.

REFERENCES:

1. Lakeridge Health, *Student/Trainee Program Implementation and Coordination Policy and Procedure*
2. Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital, *Professional Staff Observership Policy*
3. University Health Network, *Observerships*. <http://www.uhn.ca/healthcareprofessionals/Observerships>