

Observership Policy For the Department of Plastic Surgery Sites Other than CHP

Creation date: 11/11/25

I. PURPOSE:

All observerships in the UPMC Department of Plastic Surgery must:

- Operate with concern for patient and physician safety
- Define and deliver unambiguous expectations for the observership
- Operate in a collegial atmosphere that encourages life-long communication with UPMC
- Follow UPMC policies regarding conduct

II. POLICY:

- I. This policy pertains to physician observers who are graduates of either U.S. or international medical schools. It is the policy of UPMC Department of Plastic Surgery that all visiting physicians who are completing a medical observership at the hospital **cannot** have hands on contact with patients and will be under the supervision of an attending physician at all times. UPMC Department of Plastic Surgery will have no financial responsibility for salary, fringe benefits, travel, housing, or other expenses incurred during the time of observation. Observers have no protective policies of UPMC, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine (UPSOM), or PSD nor any benefits from same. Observership programs are subject to all requirements and policies of UPMC Department of Plastic Surgery and other UPMC controlled healthcare providers.
- II. It is the position of the Department that having observers is very positive for the reputation of the Department, for promoting the exchange of ideas, and fostering relationships with professional colleagues. The Department believes that barriers to observership should be low.
- III. The Department shall set requirements for observing individual sites consistent with the hospital requirements
- IV. Special considerations and procedures may be necessary for observers under the age of 18. This policy applies to adults 18 and older.

III. PROCEDURE:

All UPMC Department of Plastic Surgery observers must send the following documentation sixty (60) days prior to on-campus experience to the attention of: Lindsey Fera, HR manager, at lff16@pitt.edu

- CV
- Image of photo ID (front and back of driver's license for US visitors or Passport for foreign visitors)
- Completion of **Attachment A** – UPMC Visitor Confidentiality Agreement
- Proof of influenza vaccine - **Attachment B**
- Other additional requirements for documentation that may be set by an individual hospital for observers in that facility after this policy was released.
- A letter of invitation to observe in the Department should come from the Chair or a Faculty member. If the observer is not directly known to the inviting faculty member, the faculty member should take sufficient steps to validate that the observer candidate is truly a medical or scientific professional or medical scientific trainee in good standing. This can include a review of the candidates CV and/or recommendations/references in support of the candidate.

Once approved, the hosting department will be responsible for obtaining badge access thru IMS.

All other documentation generated concerning the observer shall be sent to the Lindsey Fera.

Acceptance of Observership and Observer Responsibilities

- Acceptance for Observership is based solely on Department policy and capacity of the given rotation. Selection can be restrictive as deemed necessary for preserving education in the UPMC Graduate Medical Education programs, including refusal of any observers. UPMC Medical Education includes many levels of medical education programs in addition to medical students from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. All these learners have priority over observers in access to faculty teaching efforts and clinical/patient resources.

At all times, an Observer must:

- Introduce him/herself to the patient as an observer and request the patient's permission to be present at the time of the clinical visit, procedure, or other patient services. If the patient declines to allow the observer's presence, he/she must leave the area.
- Not have any direct patient contact. Contact is defined as physically touching, performing a medical history and/or examination, counseling (patient or patient's family/friends), assisting in surgery or any other procedure, or otherwise interacting with patients, either individually or in the presence of others.
- Not be allowed to make patient chart entries (electronic or hard copy). He/she may not make copies of patient charts (paper or electronic).
- Accept termination at UPMC's sole discretion without due process or appeal if the hospital mandates this.
- Never misrepresent the experience he/she completed here.

International Medical Graduates

There are nuances associated with bringing an international observer to UPMC. If the observer is not a US citizen or Permanent Resident it is likely that he/she will require a visa to come to the US for the Observership. It is the Observer's responsibility to secure an appropriate visa for the Observership. If the Observership is for three months or less, it is possible that a B-1 visitor visa may be required. The observer will require a letter of invitation from the Department Chair or other faculty member. The letter should include a formal invitation to observe in that Department, the time period of the Observership, and the purpose. (e.g., that the individual will be observing a particular kind of surgery). The letter of invitation should also state that the observer will not receive any compensation or other financial support of any kind from UPMC during this Observership, will not at any time be allowed to touch patients or otherwise provide patient care of any sort, and will be always supervised by a faculty physician. If the observer is a foreign national and is already in the US, it may be illegal for the individual to participate in an Observership. For instance, if the observer comes to UPMC for several months following completion of employment or training at another institution, it is possible that his Observership with UPMC may give rise to a legal requirement that UPMC compensate the individual. Similarly, if the individual comes to the U.S. to sit for an examination and subsequently wishes to engage in an Observership it may be prohibited by the limitations of their visa classification. It may not be possible for UPMC to allow a foreign national to engage in an Observership immediately preceding their employment. All participants must also be in compliance with all other visa and immigration statutes.

Attachment A
UPMC VISITOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Visitor Name: _____(Print Name)

Visit Date(s): _____

Visit Location and Purpose: _____

I understand that I will be taking a tour and/or be provided with a demonstration at the UPMC facility mentioned above. I understand that through the course of this tour or demonstration, I may come into contact with patient information. I understand that this information is confidential information for which UPMC is obligated under both federal and state law to keep confidential. I further understand that if I encounter patient information through the course of my tour or demonstration, it is solely for the purpose of demonstrating concepts or principals, and not for the purpose of disclosing the patient's information, condition, diagnosis or treatment.

I agree that I will otherwise not attempt to view any patient information. I also agree that I will not copy, or otherwise remove any patient information from the facility. Additionally, I agree that I will not disclose any patient information that I may come into contact with.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Attachment B – (Requirements)

Vaccination Attestation Requirements

Immunizations are required in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, and as required by various business units of UPMC.

Observers are required to provide supporting documentation from their Physician of the following:

- Influenza vaccine

All documentation must be provided in English, three (3) weeks prior to arrival in the United States