United in our quest to make a global difference in health outcomes.
Welcome

I would like to extend a warm welcome to clinicians in your role as preceptor to one of our Year 1 MD students at The University of Queensland. I am very grateful that you are able to provide guidance and mentoring to the next generation of Medical Graduates.

In their first year of study, UQ MD students complete courses in Clinical Science, Clinical Practice, Ethics and Professional Practice, and Health, Society and Research. At the end of Year 1, all students in our MD program complete either a four-week (domestic and on-shore international students) or eight-week (Ochsner students) Observership in order to satisfy Australian Medical Council requirements. The Year 1 Observership affords students a unique opportunity to experience clinical or research practice with senior colleagues.

As the name suggests, this will be primarily an observational experience.

So that the student gains the maximum benefit from their Observership, clinicians will be asked to provide feedback regarding student progress, both formatively during their time with you and at the end of the placement by completing the “Preceptor Evaluation Form”. It is important that clinicians assess student knowledge and skills at a level appropriate for a year 1 student. Students are graded as pass/fail, therefore please consider this as they progress through the placement.

Students are expected to attend Monday to Friday (5 days per week), for a minimum of 4 hours per day for the duration of their Observership.

Again, I would take this opportunity to extend my appreciation for the time that clinicians have dedicated to act as a preceptor to a University of Queensland, Year 1 medical student. I acknowledge that this adds to your daily schedule but would hope that this will be both personally and professionally rewarding for you as much as it is for the student.

Dr Tammy Smith
Academic Lead: Phase One
Office of Medical Education
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The University of Queensland
PRECEPTOR GUIDE TO THE YEAR 1 OBSERVERSHIP

At the end of Year 1, MD students are required to successfully complete a requisite number of weeks of approved Observership placement(s) before being permitted to advance to the 2nd year of the program. Preceptors can be clinicians, scientists or allied health professionals. Students may also elect to undertake a research-based Observership instead of a clinical placement.

Domestic and on-shore International students are required to complete a minimum of 4 weeks (a minimum of 4 hours per day, 5 days per week) to meet this milestone, whereas Ochsner students must complete a total of 8 weeks (a minimum of 4 hours per day, 5 days per week). This is a requirement to meet Australian Medical Council accreditation purposes. Meeting the minimum required number of weeks cannot be obtained by working longer hours per day or extra days each week. Attendance must be for the full number of days irrespective of the hours of attendance. That is students must attend 5 days per week.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 1 ELECTIVE (Observership)

The Year 1 Observership is designed to allow students to gain a wider perspective on medicine. Depending on the Observership, students may
• develop a knowledge of health systems
• develop an understanding of the professional roles of a range of health care professionals
• develop an understanding of health care team dynamics, team management, and patient roles
• gain an insight into ‘the life of a doctor’
• experience the practice of medicine in other environments
• experience clinical and non-clinical research
• develop appropriate communication skills with patients and colleagues
ARRANGING THE PLACEMENT

Typically, it is the responsibility of the student to contact a preceptor to arrange their placement. Please note there are exceptions to this where the placements are arranged through the Clinical Unit, eg in Paediatrics. The student will submit their placement details and written confirmation to the Faculty of Medicine through the Year 1 Observership site. The required time that students must complete in order to meet the course and AMC requirements are as follows:

Domestic and On-shore International Students: 4 weeks (a minimum of 4 hours per day, 5 days per week)

UQ-Ochsner Students: 8 weeks (a minimum of 4 hours per day, 5 days per week)

The Year 1 Observership period is from Monday, 20 November 2017 to early February 2018. Students can split their Observership placement. Domestic and On-shore International students can split their 4 weeks into 2 + 2 weeks and Ochsner students may split their placements into either 2 + 6 week blocks or 4 + 4 week blocks.

Research-based electives can be undertaken by all cohorts. Ochsner students may complete a maximum of 4 weeks in a research placement, with the remaining 4 weeks to be completed in a clinical setting. If clinicians wish for a student to remain involved in the research project that is perfectly appropriate, however, students will only be credited for 4 weeks in total.

Please be aware that any time students spend in the “Summer Research Program” must be above and beyond their Year 1 Observership. Time spent during the Summer Research Program cannot be credited toward their Year 1 Observership. We would ask that if you are participating in this program please contact the Clinical Placements Office so we can ensure all students meet the minimum requirements for their Observership.

THE ROLE OF THE PRECEPTOR

The role of the preceptor is multi-faceted, primarily acting as facilitator, teacher and mentor. The preceptor will introduce the student to staff attached to the practice/site and to any procedures and timetables involved. Preceptors will provide limited tuition in clinical and/or scientific skills and will help the student identify areas for self-directed learning. The student will also develop professionalism through observing and speaking with their preceptor.

Students will have completed one year of their medical studies. It should be recognised that their knowledge and skills will be limited. There will be varying degrees of knowledge and ability at this stage in their studies. With this in mind, we have attempted to present placement guidelines that are as open as possible.

As part of the student’s involvement in your workplace/clinic or ward we would ask that they are exposed to diverse and challenging opportunities that are appropriate for a student completing their first year of medical studies.
GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE PRECEPTORS

As a preceptor, the clinician will have been requested to complete a SPA (Student Placement Agreement) in order to ensure that you are officially accepting a student from the MD program at The University of Queensland. This then ensures that all students are covered under by UQ insurance. The following cover is provided to approved placements; $20 million (AUD) in public liability insurance and $10 million (AUD) in professional indemnity insurance. This document also covers the majority of legal questions and situations that you may be unsure of such as confidentiality, intellectual property and outlines the requirements of all involved parties – your practice, the university and the student.

In order to ensure that the student is adhering to your expectations, we request that an induction is completed at the commencement of the placement. This will incorporate such things as your practice/ site requirements, values and goals for the student during this placement. We ask that the clinician provides feedback to the student as they progress through the placement.

Some General Practices may be eligible for PIP (Placement Incentive Payments) for hosting a student. If you do meet the guidelines for this please contact us to facilitate the completion of these forms.

If preceptors have an existing relationship of any nature with the student we would ask that you declare this up front in order to avoid any conflict of interest claims.

Students are expected to complete the tasks assigned to them within a timely manner and while this is primarily an Observership, students will be exposed to a variety of supervised tasks according to their ability. We request that clinicians clearly convey expectations and requirements to the student and advise the student if tasks set may be assessed for a level of competency.

We genuinely thank you for your involvement and hope that this will be both a professionally and personally rewarding experience and that you may wish to participate in future years.
EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT/S

Students should at all times be dressed in suitable smart business attire. They are expected to comply with any dress codes and requirements for staff and must demonstrate that they will adhere to these directions.

Students should behave in a professional and appropriate manner at all times during their Observership. They must remain professional and adhere to The University of Queensland and the practice/site Codes of Conduct. We ask that when students are given an induction into the practice/site that they are made aware of OH&S requirements and any staff practice expectations.

If students are to be absent from their Observership for any reason, they must notify both your office and the UQ Clinical Placements Team. Any time missed must be made up in order to satisfy the requirements of the placement. If students are absent for ill health, they are required to supply a medical certificate and make up the time. Attendance is an AMC requirement by which students must strictly abide.

Students have been reminded that they should communicate appropriately and professionally at all times with clinical and administrative staff, patients and other colleagues. Should clinicians have a concern in relation to a student’s conduct we would ask that you contact Ashlee Dickson whose contact details appear below.

ASSESSMENT ON THE STUDENT/S

In week 3 of the placement, students are required to submit a “student experience report” online which will include questions about how they feel they have performed in this setting, experiences they have had and a chance to include any additional self-directed learning they have undertaken to ensure they are able to perform in the clinical or research setting as required. At the conclusion of the Observership, the preceptor must complete a brief assessment form. A link will be emailed to preceptors (a PDF version can also be provided).

Preceptors are requested to be open and honest and indicate whether they believe that the student has successfully completed their placement. For example the student’s ability to adapt to situations, their general demeanour and attitude will form part of this preceptor report.

Prior to the student finishing their placement, we request that preceptor clinicians discuss the placement and assessment with the student. We would also welcome clinicians making any relevant suggestions to the student regarding how the student can best move forward with their studies and their future career. We ask that clinicians provide detailed feedback in each area to provide an accurate understanding of the student’s performance whilst on placement.

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UNSATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE ELECTIVE

The University acknowledges that students learn and progress at different stages and that their experiences will vary. Students who have not performed or behaved as you would have expected or do not demonstrate an accepted level of knowledge to advance in their studies should be marked as “fail”. While this is unfortunate, this outcome will be discussed with the student by senior academic staff during a counselling session. Students can be granted the opportunity to undertake a remediation Observership that can be arranged by the Faculty of Medicine. Students must successfully complete this elective prior to advancing to Year 2.

Unsatisfactory completion of the Observership could be due to poor attendance and/or attitude or not displaying an accepted level of knowledge. Preceptors who are unsure of the assessment should feel free to contact the Observership team on the details below.

PROBLEMS THAT ARISE DURING THE ELECTIVE

During the course of the Observership, situations may arise that cause concern. Please contact Ashlee Dickson at the Faculty of Medicine as soon as practicably possible.

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The Faculty of Medicine is extremely grateful to you for providing this invaluable experience for our student. The opportunities that you have provided will contribute greatly to their continued learning experiences throughout the MD Program.