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

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you in your role as preceptor to one of our Year 1 MD students. I am very grateful that you have agreed to provide guidance and mentorship 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, you 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 you assess the student 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.

Once again, please accept my sincere thanks for agreeing to be a preceptor. I appreciate that this role adds to your daily schedule but I hope that this experience will be as personally and professionally rewarding for you as it is for the student.

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

At the end of Year 1, MD students at the University of Queensland are required to complete an approved Observership under the guidance of a preceptor before progressing to the 2nd year of the program. Preceptors can be clinicians, scientists or allied health professionals.

The Observership period begins at the end of the students’ main exam period in November 2018 (9 November) and must be concluded prior to the start of Year 2 classes in 2019 (typically the end of January).

The duration of the Observership depends on the cohort to which they belong.

- Domestic and Onshore International students are required to complete a minimum of 4 weeks of placements, which may be split into 2 x two-week blocks. Students may spend this time in a research placement.
- Students enrolled in the UQ-Ochsner MD program must complete a total of 8 weeks in order to meet Australian Medical Council accreditation requirements. These 8 weeks may be split into two blocks (6+2 weeks or 4+4 weeks). A maximum of 4 weeks of these 8 weeks may be spent in a research placement, with the remaining 4 weeks to be completed in a clinical setting.

Regardless of which cohort they belong to, students must spend a minimum of 4 hours per day, 5 days per week; this cannot be shortened by completing additional hours per day.
OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEAR 1 OBSERVERSHIP

The Year 1 Observership is designed to allow students to gain a wider perspective of life as a medical graduate. 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. The student will submit their placement details and written confirmation to the Faculty of Medicine through the Year 1 Observership site.

Please note if a student would like to participate in an Observership at a UQ Clinical Unit e.g. Greenslopes, Mater or Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital, they must apply through the Faculty Year 1 Observership website.

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 Observership site and to any procedures and schedules 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 their interactions with their preceptor.

As part of the student’s involvement in your workplace, 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. 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.
GENERAL INFORMATION FOR THE PRECEPTORS

Each preceptor, or placement site, is requested to complete a Student Placement Agreement (SPA) in order to ensure that they are officially accepting a student from the MD program at The University of Queensland. This then ensures that all students are covered 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 workplace, the university and the student.

In order to ensure that the student meets your expectations, we request that an induction is completed at the commencement of the placement. This will include such things as your workplace requirements, values and goals for the student during their placement. We ask that you provide 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 you have an existing relationship of any nature with the student, please declare this to the university 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 preceptors 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 must familiarise themselves with the UQ “Fitness to Practise” policy before commencing a placement.

Students should at all times be dressed in suitable attire that complies with the dress codes applicable to their placement. If no dress code is available, students should follow the Medical Student Dress Code.

Students should behave in a professional manner at all times during their Observership. They must adhere to The University of Queensland Codes of Conduct as well as any Code of Conduct associated with your workplace. We ask that you make students aware of any OH&S requirements and of any other expectations.

Should you have a concern in relation to a student’s behaviour we ask that you contact the faculty clinical placements team.

If students are 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.

ASSESSMENT OF THE OBSERVERSHIP

In week 3 of the placement, students are required to submit a “student experience report” online. This report will include questions about how they believe they have performed in this setting, experiences they have had and a chance to include any additional self-directed learning. This is designed to ensure students are able to perform in the clinical or research setting as required.

At the conclusion of the Observership, the preceptor is required to complete a brief “preceptor evaluation form”. A link will be emailed to preceptors and a PDF version can also be provided by the student. All students must provide a completed evaluation form prior to commencing year 2.

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.
UNSATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF THE OBSERVERSHIP

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 OBSERVERSHIP

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

Clinical Placements
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The University of Queensland
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Herston QLD 4006
E: med.observership@uq.edu.au
T: +61 7 3365 5327

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.