

UT Southwestern Clinical Observation Policy **Effective September 1, 2008**

UT Southwestern has an intense interest and commitment in sharing clinical expertise with colleagues who want to spend time observing the clinical services provided here. The university welcomes such individuals; however the university also has an obligation to structure such associations so as to protect the interests of the university as well as those of the observer.

Observers are defined as individuals who want to establish an uncompensated association with the university for a defined period of time, not to exceed 3 months without written approval of the Associate Dean for Medical Education. An observer should not be confused with a volunteer. An observer is engaged in unpaid activities of an educational nature that primarily benefit the observer. A volunteer donates time and talent to primarily benefit the university. The observer's role is to learn from the sponsoring faculty and or department at UT Southwestern Medical Center. At no time can the observer participate in any aspect of patient care, decision making or any hands on aspect of patient care- i.e. writing orders, scrubbing and or assisting in surgeries or involvement directly or indirectly in patient care

Observerships are offered by The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas according to this policy and not by individual faculty or staff. To maximize the benefit to all involved, observer programs must be managed to insure that faculty and staff time are used efficiently; that observers receive appropriate educational experiences and that the security of proprietary and patient information is maintained.

Observation periods shall not supersede medical student and resident elective requests nor interfere with any of the ACGME faculty to resident ratio requirements. These ACGME requirements include all trainees, not just residents, who take faculty time away and/or decrease the quality of educational training from the program's own residents or fellows. See applicable specific program requirements on the ACGME website (<http://www.acgme.org/acWebsite/home/home.asp>)

This policy is for individuals with an MD degree or equivalent who wish to participate in educational activities (conferences, meetings and observation of patient care). The policy does not apply to research fellows or research trainees, students enrolled in clinical electives or clinical residents in ACGME approved programs doing rotations on our campus. Nor does this policy apply to faculty from other universities who are here as guest lecturers (visiting faculty), as such visitors may be on campus on a tourist visa for a maximum of one week.

Procedures

In order to sponsor a clinical observer at Southwestern, the sponsoring faculty member must insure that the following items have been submitted to and approved by the Associate Dean for Medical Education and, if appropriate, the International Affairs Office before the observership is begun. All visitors who are not permanent residents or citizens of the U.S. must come on a J-1 visa sponsored by the university, not on a tourist visa or visa waiver.

1. Observer Application Form
2. Departmental Sponsorship Agreement
3. Copy of MD degree (PhDs are not eligible for observership status)
4. Letter from home institution attesting to affiliation in good standing
5. Observer's CV

If the university is sponsoring a visa for the purpose of this observation period the application should also include:

1. Departmental J-1 Application Form
2. On-line J-1 Application to be completed by Observer
3. Proof of federally mandated health and repatriation insurance

Both of these forms and the insurance information can be found at <http://www8.utsouthwestern.edu/utsw/cda/dept26491/files/94390.html>

Procedures Upon Arrival

The sponsoring department is responsible for insuring that, on or before the first day of observation, the observer:

- (1) Checks in with the Medical Staff Office of the university hospitals, Parkland Hospital and/or Children's Medical Center
- (2) Obtains appropriate identification badge
- (3) Receives HIPAA training
- (4) If on a visa, checks in with the International Office

Rules for Observership at Southwestern or University Hospitals

(See separate observation policies for Parkland and Children's)

1. The observer may not administer treatment or render services to patients, including a primary medical examination or taking a history.
2. The observer may not be involved in obtaining patient consent for any clinical or research procedures.
3. The observer may not participate in decisions concerning patient management; write orders or notes in patient charts; scrub into surgery or give orders.
4. The observer must be supervised by the sponsoring physician or a designated faculty physician at all times when in the presence of patients.
5. The observer may only be in a clinical setting while the sponsoring physician or designated faculty physician is present.
6. The observer must introduce him/herself to the patient as an observer and must request the patient's permission to be present during any clinical visit.
7. The observer will not receive any academic credit for the experience. The observership does not constitute medical education, graduate medical education, continuing medical education or training leading to licensure or board certification. The observer is not a student, resident or medical staff member and may not represent him/herself as such.
8. The observer must wear appropriate photo identification at all times when at the university or in the hospitals.
9. The observer understands and acknowledges by signing the Observation Application (attached) that he/she is not covered by the university's liability or health insurance and has NONE of the benefits afforded to employees, including having NO coverage for an accident or injury that might occur on the university premises, whether directly or indirectly related to the observation activities.
10. The observer agrees to recognize the strict confidentiality and privacy of patient information, procedures and outcomes. This obligation to confidentiality is permanent upon the observer and does not expire when the observation activities cease.
11. On occasion, an employee who is engaged in higher education will ask to observe activities outside of the scope of their usual work activities. In such an instance, the individual's usual supervisor, as well as supervisor for this additional observation, must sign and agree. Also, if the individual is an employee, then the following applies: during the hours of functioning as an observer, the individual is not paid and is not understood to be at the Hospital in "employee" status except with regard to parking privileges.
Example: an injury during observation activities is not an "on the job" injury.
Example: the individual who is here for observation activities can not mix duties and move from tasks as an employee to an observer role and back again. The individual must clearly demarcate work time by appropriately recording "punch in" and "punch out".