



ROSALIND FRANKLIN
UNIVERSITY
of MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS



Clerkship
Manual
2026 - 2027

PATHOLOGISTS' ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT



ROSALIND FRANKLIN
UNIVERSITY
of MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

May 1, 2026

Dear Class of 2027,

Congratulations on successfully completing the didactic year of the Pathologists' Assistant program. You will now embark on a ten-month, clinical experience in anatomic pathology designed to allow for the practical application of the knowledge you have gained in both surgical and autopsy pathology.

The coming months, while demanding, will also be rewarding both personally and professionally. As a graduate student, I suspect each of you will rise to the occasion and meet the challenges that lie ahead of you while taking full responsibility for your education. This manual has been carefully designed to guide you through the requirements for successful completion of the remainder of the program. I have confidence in each and every one of you that you will make both yourselves and the program proud as you move into the clinical setting.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary L. Mattes".

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SECTION 1: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Mission

The mission of the Pathologists' Assistant Department is to prepare and develop individuals for the professional practice of surgical and autopsy pathology in a continually evolving health care environment.

Vision

The Pathologists' Assistant Department will be recognized as the leader in providing graduate-level training in Pathologists' Assistant studies through its outstanding graduates, curricular innovation, scholarly activity, community service, and the leadership it provides to the pathologists' assistant community worldwide.

Philosophy Statement

The Pathologists' Assistant Department assures a level of professional training, both academic and clinical, that prepares its graduates to serve as stewards of the profession and empowers them to set forth and provide exceptional care and leadership for the profession as well as educate future generations of health care providers in the art and science of practicing anatomic pathology.

The Pathologists' Assistant Department asserts that there is an inherent dignity in surgical specimens that represent a unique human being and that the utmost care and skill will be provided in transmitting the information contained within to pathologists, surgeons, and other members of the health care team. As such, the same professional care will be delivered to our patients in the autopsy service who have come to teach the living from their individual lives and deaths.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the 22-month Master's Degree Program for Pathologists' Assistants, the graduates will:

1. Recognize and respect the diversity of patients and fellow health care providers as well as acknowledge one's responsibilities to patients' families and the community at large.
2. Effectively communicate and collaborate with other health care professionals in interprofessional teams.
3. Engage in evidence-based practice within the anatomic pathology laboratory while making a conscious, continued effort to improve performance.
4. Synthesize clinical information from various sources to present comprehensive clinical pathologic correlations.
5. Communicate complex anatomic pathology information effectively in written, verbal, and photographic forms.
6. Discern normal structure and function of organs, tissues, and cells from pathologic changes as demonstrated by selecting appropriate techniques for collecting, handling, submitting, and processing specimens.
7. Embrace and actively participate in a systems-based approach to reducing error,

- ensuring safety, and improving quality of care.
8. Understand the value of information technology and promote its utilization in professional practice.
 9. Provide leadership in the laboratory through an understanding of management techniques and the operations and services provided in the anatomic pathology laboratory to facilitate efficiency and productivity.
 10. Conduct the practice of a Pathologists' Assistant in a professional manner, and by doing so, act as a steward of the profession for students, colleagues, and the public through education and research into the art and science of the practice of anatomic pathology.

Surgical Pathology Learning Objectives

The goal of the surgical pathology portion of the anatomic pathology clerkships is to provide the student the opportunity to develop skills in the preparation, gross description, and dissection of surgical specimens via hands-on training.

By the end of the anatomic pathology clerkships, the student will be able to:

1. Outline the standards that the College of American Pathologists (CAP) requires for submitting surgical pathology specimens.
2. Assure correct specimen accessioning.
3. Obtain pertinent clinical information and data required for prosection from the requisition, medical records, consultation with the pathologist(s) and other clinical providers, etc.
4. Identify common situations that require expedited processing of a pathology specimen.
5. Discuss the common indications for intraoperative consultation.
6. Describe gross anatomic features and specimens clearly and concisely in the form of dictation.
7. Identify, under pathologist supervision, tissue to be submitted for frozen section diagnosis, prepare frozen sections competently (e.g., with care, skill, and efficiency, etc.), and effectively manage problems with suboptimal frozen sections.
8. Demonstrate competency (e.g., care, skill, efficiency, etc.) at prosection for routine and complex surgical specimens.
9. Perform special procedures in the surgical pathology laboratory.
10. Manage workflow effectively in the gross room.
11. List procedures for locating a missing specimen such as a block, slide, or tissue.
12. Demonstrate proficiency at taking gross photographs of pertinent findings.
13. Explain the basic principles of informatics in anatomic pathology and effectively utilize the Laboratory Information System (LIS) and local computer network.
14. Perform other related job functions as needed such as laboratory maintenance

Autopsy Pathology Learning Objectives

The goal of the autopsy portion of the anatomic pathology clerkships is to provide the student the opportunity to develop skills in the preparation of human postmortem examinations via hands-on training.

By the end of the anatomic pathology clerkships, the student will be able to:

1. Determine whether proper legal authorization for an autopsy procedure has been obtained and the appropriate authorities to contact prior to the autopsy.
2. Explain the necessary procedures to ensure the safety of those in the autopsy suite.
3. Collect pertinent clinical information and data (e.g., from existing medical records, clinical providers, etc.) to reconstruct the deceased patient's medical history.
4. Distill the essential parts of the medical history into a likely manner, cause, and mechanism of death.
5. Recognize when it is necessary to seek consultation on a case from the attending pathologist(s).
6. Conduct systematic and thorough external examinations and in situ organ inspection.
7. Demonstrate competency at selecting, preparing, and submitting appropriate gross tissue sections for frozen section analysis and microscopy.
8. Demonstrate common evisceration techniques including the Letulle Method, the Virchow Method, as well as brain and spinal cord removal.
9. Demonstrate competency (e.g., care, skill, efficiency, etc.) at block and organ dissection.
10. Discern abnormalities and/or pathologic changes encountered during the autopsy and dictate or record the findings accurately.
11. Obtain biological specimens such as blood, tissue, and toxicology material for analysis.
12. Indicate when special studies are needed such as non-routine cultures, special evaluation of bones, sinus cavities, and other tissues not routinely evaluated.
13. Demonstrate proficiency at taking gross photographs of pertinent findings.
14. Summarize patient information and autopsy findings clearly and concisely for oral and written presentation.
15. Outline the proper procedure for preparing the body for release and releasing the body to the appropriate mortuary or funeral home representative.
16. Perform other related job functions as needed such as laboratory maintenance, administrative tasks, and assisting with conference preparation.

Degree Plan

YEAR 1

| Summer Quarter | Course Name | Credit Hours |
|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| HAPA 501 | Clinical Anatomy | 10 |
| HAPA 560 | Clinical Correlations I | 3 |
| HAPA 560A | Clinical Correlations I, Lab | 2 |
| HAPA 550 | Seminar I | 2 |
| HAPA 535 | Medical Terminology | 1 |

Fall Quarter

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| HAPX 677 | General and Systemic Pathology | 6 |
| HAPX 578 | Structure and Function | 6 |
| HAPA 561 | Clinical Correlations II | 3 |
| HAPA 561A | Clinical Correlations II, Lab | 2 |
| HAPA 551 | Seminar II | 2 |
| HAPX 529 | Foundations for Interprofessional Practice | 1 |

Winter Quarter

| | | |
|-----------|--|---|
| HAPX 677 | General and Systemic Pathology | 3 |
| HAPX 578 | Structure and Function | 5 |
| HAPA 562 | Clinical Correlations III | 3 |
| HAPA 562A | Clinical Correlations III, Lab | 2 |
| HAPA 552 | Seminar III | 2 |
| HAPX 529 | Foundations for Interprofessional Practice | 1 |

Spring Quarter

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| HAPX 677 | General and Systemic Pathology | 3.5 |
| HAPX 579 | Neuroscience | 5 |
| HAPA 563 | Clinical Correlations IV | 3 |
| HAPA 563A | Clinical Correlations IV, Lab | 2 |
| HAPA 553 | Seminar IV | 2 |
| HAPA 540 | Autopsy Pathology | 2 |
| HAPA 540A | Autopsy Pathology, Lab | 2 |
| HAPX 532 | Leadership in the Healthcare Environment | 2 |

YEAR 2

| | | |
|----------|--|----|
| HAPA 630 | Anatomic Pathology Clerkship I, Summer Quarter | 9 |
| HAPA 631 | Anatomic Pathology Clerkship II, Fall Quarter | 13 |
| HAPA 632 | Anatomic Pathology Clerkship III, Winter Quarter | 15 |
| HAPA 633 | Anatomic Pathology Clerkship IV, Spring Quarter | 7 |

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

YEAR 1

Summer Quarter

HAPX 563 Clinical Anatomy (10 QH)

Both gross anatomy and developmental anatomy are studied in this course. Laboratory time is devoted exclusively to the regional dissection of human cadavers.

Supplementary offerings within the course include films, prosected cadavers and bone sets for individual study.

HAPA 560 Clinical Correlations I, Lecture (3 QH)

This is the first part of a full-year sequence designed to provide a bridge between the didactic coursework of the first-year curriculum and its application to the practice of surgical and autopsy pathology by Pathologists' Assistants in the clinical setting. This course is taken in conjunction with the corresponding Clinical Correlations Laboratory sequence and provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 560A Clinical Correlations I Lab, Laboratory (2 QH)

This is the first part of a full-year laboratory sequence designed to provide practical, hands-on experience to complement the didactic portion of the corresponding Clinical Correlations lecture sequence. This segment of the course provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 535 Medical Terminology, Lecture (1 QH)

This course instructs the student in an advanced level of medical terminology pertinent to the practice of Pathologists' Assistants.

HAPA 550 Seminar I, Lecture/Discussion (2 QH)

This is the first part of a four-course sequence designed to address special topics pertinent to Pathologists' Assistant students in the didactic year. The content includes topics such as history of the profession, professional development, pathology in literature, etc. In each course, students will examine current and emerging information relevant to the topic addressed as a means to help students develop an understanding of the commitment to continuous learning that is required of Pathologists' Assistants.

Fall Quarter

HAPX 677 General and Systemic Pathology (6 QH)

This course covers the biologic basis and mechanisms of disease, including inflammation and repair, and cell injury by infectious, immunologic, vascular, genetic, physical, chemical and

neoplastic mechanisms, followed by a beginning survey of disease with emphasis on clinical pathologic correlations.

HAPX 578 Structure and Function (6 QH)

This 11 credit-hour lecture and laboratory course presents the principles of medical histology and physiology. Normal organ systems will be examined at the ultrastructural, microscopic and whole-organ levels. The course is an important prerequisite for Pathology, Pharmacology and Medicine.

HAPA 561 Clinical Correlations II, Lecture (3 QH)

This is the second part of a full-year sequence designed to provide a bridge between the didactic coursework of the first-year curriculum and its application to the practice of surgical and autopsy pathology by Pathologists' Assistants in the clinical setting. This course is taken in conjunction with the corresponding Clinical Correlations Laboratory sequence and provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 561A Clinical Correlations II Lab, Laboratory (2 QH)

This is the second part of a full-year laboratory sequence designed to provide practical, hands-on experience to complement the didactic portion of the corresponding Clinical Correlations lecture sequence. This segment of the course provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 551 Seminar II, Lecture/Discussion (2 QH)

This is the second part of a four-course sequence designed to address special topics pertinent to Pathologists' Assistant students in the didactic year. The content includes topics such as history of the profession, professional development, pathology in literature, etc. In each course, students will examine current and emerging information relevant to the topic addressed as a means to help students develop an understanding of the commitment to continuous learning that is required of Pathologists' Assistants.

HAPX 529 Foundations for Interprofessional Practice (1 QH)

Foundations for Interprofessional Practice is an experiential learning opportunity for students to engage in interprofessional healthcare teams. This interactive course is intended to prepare the healthcare professional student to provide effective interprofessional patient-centered preventative health care through small/large group discussion and problem-solving activities. The curriculum of evidence-based lifestyle healthcare is focused on the promotion of health and prevention of disease. Through this content, students will learn the roles/responsibilities of other healthcare providers, how to work on teams and practice teamwork and to communicate interprofessionally to optimally care for themselves and their patients.

Winter Quarter

HAPX 677 General and Systemic Pathology (3 QH)

Continuation.

HAPX 578 Structure and Function (5 QH)

Continuation.

HAPA 562 Clinical Correlations III, Lecture (3 QH)

This is the third part of a full-year sequence designed to provide a bridge between the didactic coursework of the first-year curriculum and its application to the practice of surgical and autopsy pathology by Pathologists' Assistants in the clinical setting. This course is taken in conjunction with the corresponding Clinical Correlations Laboratory sequence and provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 562A Clinical Correlations III Lab, Laboratory (2 QH)

This is the third part of a full-year laboratory sequence designed to provide practical, hands-on experience to complement the didactic portion of the corresponding Clinical Correlations lecture sequence. This segment of the course provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 552 Seminar III, Lecture/Discussion (2 QH)

This is the third part of a four-course sequence designed to address special topics pertinent to Pathologists' Assistant students in the didactic year. The content includes topics such as history of the profession, professional development, pathology in literature, etc. In each course, students will examine current and emerging information relevant to the topic addressed as a means to help students develop an understanding of the commitment to continuous learning that is required of Pathologists' Assistants.

HAPX 529 Foundations for Interprofessional Practice (1QH)

Continuation.

Spring Quarter

HAPX 677 General and Systemic Pathology (3.5 QH)

Continuation.

HAPA 563 Clinical Correlations IV, Lecture (3 QH)

This is the fourth part of a full-year sequence designed to provide a bridge between the didactic coursework of the first-year curriculum and its application to the practice of surgical and autopsy pathology by Pathologists' Assistants in the clinical setting. This course is taken in conjunction with the corresponding Clinical Correlations Laboratory sequence and provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 563A Clinical Correlations IV Lab, Laboratory (2 QH)

This is the fourth part of a full-year laboratory sequence designed to provide practical, hands-on experience to complement the didactic portion of the corresponding Clinical Correlations lecture sequence. This segment of the course provides an introduction to clinical medicine, microbiology, pharmacology, oncology, laboratory operations and various aspects of general and systemic pathology, running parallel to MPAT 600A-C.

HAPA 540 Autopsy Pathology, Lecture (2 QH)

This course provides an introduction to autopsy pathology and includes instruction in evisceration techniques and perinatal and pediatric pathology.

HAPA 540A Autopsy Pathology Lab, Laboratory (2 QH)

This is the corresponding laboratory to complement the Autopsy Pathology lecture-based course, and provides the student with hands-on experience practicing autopsy techniques on cadavers.

HAPA 553 Seminar IV, Lecture/Discussion (2 QH)

This is the fourth part of a four-course sequence designed to address special topics pertinent to Pathologists' Assistant students in the didactic year. The content includes topics such as history of the profession, professional development, pathology in literature, etc. In each course, students will examine current and emerging information relevant to the topic addressed as a means to help students develop an understanding of the commitment to continuous learning that is required of Pathologists' Assistants.

HAPX 579 Neuroscience (5 QH)

Neuroscience is a comprehensive series of lectures on the structure, neurophysiology, function and neurological disorders of the human nervous system. The lectures are complemented by PowerPoint presentations, laboratory demonstrations, and clinical correlations.

HAPX 532 Leadership in the Healthcare Environment, Lecture/Discussion (2 QH)

This interprofessional course is designed to introduce the student to the concept of leadership within the healthcare environment. The course begins with an overview of leadership styles, and then continues with more specific topics such as building teams, evaluating others, managing finances, managing risk, marketing of healthcare and healthcare policy.

YEAR 2

Summer Quarter

HAPA 630 Anatomic Pathology Clerkship I (9 QH)

This is the first part of a ten-month practical course sequence that forms the curriculum for the second year. Students rotate through various clinical sites and departments and perform the duties of a Pathologists' Assistant under the guidance of a preceptor. Emphasis will be placed on developing the student's skills of gross tissue description, dissection and frozen section preparation in surgical pathology. In autopsy pathology, emphasis will be placed on autopsy technique including evisceration and block dissection.

Fall Quarter

HAPA 631 Anatomic Pathology Clerkship II (13 QH)

Continuation.

Winter Quarter

HAPA 632 Anatomic Pathology Clerkship III (15 QH)

Continuation.

Spring Quarter

HAPA 633 Anatomic Pathology Clerkship IV (7 QH)

Continuation.

Specific syllabi for HAPA 630-633 can be found under course information on the D2L platform.

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the clerkship is to provide students an opportunity to apply, under the supervision of a preceptor, the didactic training they received during the first year of their graduate study on campus. It is recommended that the student receive a formal orientation to the clinical facility, pathologists, pathologists' assistants, staff, policies and procedures, laboratory information system and any other information deemed appropriate by the preceptor. The student should be provided with increased responsibility in the gross room and autopsy suite (commensurate with experience). At the conclusion of the ten months of clinical rotations, students are expected to have mastered the knowledge and skills necessary to function as an entry-level pathologists' assistant (see student learning outcomes).

Additionally, the clerkship assists the student in refining interpersonal communication skills, developing professional socialization amongst various health care providers, and enhancing the ability to critically think and make decisions. The role of the pathologists' assistant as a member of a team in the pathology laboratory will be emphasized.

SUPERVISION

The student will receive the appropriate level of supervision, depending on the type of clinical experience (e.g. surgical pathology, autopsy pathology) and the student's level of skill. The integrity of a surgical specimen or autopsy patient should never be jeopardized. In the event that the integrity of a specimen or autopsy patient is jeopardized in a way that the rendering of a diagnosis in pathology has been compromised, the preceptor should be notified immediately. Following preceptor notification, the student and the preceptor should notify the Director of Clinical Education. This notification should be followed by written documentation from the clinical preceptor outlining the details. In the event that patient outcomes (e.g. diagnosis, treatment) are jeopardized as a result of critical or habitual/recurring errors on behalf of the student, the student will receive a grade of "F" for the applicable quarter and will have a subject to dismissal hearing which may culminate in dismissal from the program. Any concerns about a student's interaction with specimens and/or autopsy patients should be directed to the Director of Clinical Education and the Pathologists' Assistant Department.

PROFESSIONALISM

The Pathologists' Assistant Program believes that professionalism is an important quality of a pathologists' assistant student and future member of the healthcare team. In addition to satisfying the grading criteria as specified in the clerkship syllabi, the student will be evaluated on

professional conduct in the quarterly evaluations. The student must pass a professionalism component in the quarterly evaluation in order to successfully pass each course. Criteria to be evaluated in the professionalism component will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- *Honesty*
- *Attendance and punctuality*
- *Preparedness*
- *Respectful and appropriate interaction with faculty, staff, preceptors and fellow students*
- *Ability to work effectively as a team member*
- *Overall attitude*
- *Handling of complaints and disputes including following of established protocols and chain of command*
- *Communication skills*
- *Work ethic*
- *Appearance and attire appropriate to place and situation*

Habitual unprofessional behavior may result in a subject to dismissal hearing due to professionalism reasons and may culminate in student dismissal from the program.

STUDENT ETHICS

All students in the Pathologists' Assistant Program are required to adhere to the policies outlined in the Standards of Student Responsibility and Student Conduct found in the Student Conduct Section of the [University Student Policies Handbook, pages 6-21.](#)

TITLE IX POLICY

All members of the university community should be aware of the Title IX policy and process related to discrimination based on sex. The purpose, scope, policy, definitions and reporting structure for Title IX can be found in the Title IX Policy section of the [University Student Policies Handbook, page 47.](#)

SAFETY

Safety during clinical rotations is important; please visit the University's Insite page ([Personal Safety Practices](#)) for information on personal safety practices.

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

It is your responsibility to review and abide by the University's full Social Networking Policy as

outlined in the [University's Student Policies Handbook, pages 109-113](#).

A NOTE ON UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE POLICY

All College of Health Professions policies contained in the College of Health Professions Student Handbook and University policies contained in the University Student Policies Handbook are applicable to students during their clinical rotations. Additionally, healthcare practices that are directly applicable to and relevant for clinical rotations also include, but are not limited to Universal Precautions and HIPAA.

WORK HOURS

Attendance in clinical experiences is mandatory. It is expected that students will set appropriate work hours with their clinical preceptor that will reflect the workload at their clinical site and total a minimum of 40 hours per week. For instance, if a majority of large specimens do not arrive in the gross room until late in the day, it is expected that students will adjust their schedule accordingly to allow them to gross these specimens. In general, students should consider the ten months of their clinical rotation(s) as a gross anatomic pathology residency. As such, they should fully immerse themselves in the day-to-day functioning of the anatomic pathology laboratory. Occasionally, the workload will necessitate working more than 8 hours, but should be at the discretion of the student's clinical preceptor.

Clinical preceptors and the faculty at the university are basing part of your evaluation on effort and willingness to learn and participate which may, in part, be evaluated by the amount of time you are at your clinical site.

STANDARDS FOR PROMOTION POLICY

The Pathologists' Assistant Department utilizes the grading system as established by the University in the Academic Catalog. The Department has a predetermined, sequenced degree plan in which students are required to earn a minimum grade of a "C" or "P" in all courses of the curriculum, including both the didactic and clinical year. A student failing to meet these minimal standards may become subject to dismissal in accordance with University policy. Continuance into the clinical year and assignment to a clinical site is guaranteed to students who have fulfilled all requisite criteria to complete the didactic year.

If a student is removed from a clinical site during their clinical experience for jeopardizing patient outcomes and/or failing to meet academic/professionalism standards, the student will receive a grade of an "F" for that quarter which may result in a subject to dismissal hearing.

In the event that patient outcomes (e.g. diagnosis, treatment) are jeopardized as a result of critical or habitual/recurring errors on behalf of the student, the student will receive a grade of “F” for the applicable quarter and will have a subject to dismissal hearing which may culminate in dismissal from the program. Any concerns about a student’s interaction with specimens and/or autopsy patients should be directed to the Director of Clinical Education and the Pathologists’ Assistant Department.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Pathologists’ Assistant students are required to successfully complete the didactic and clinical curriculum, totaling 119.5 quarter hours, with a cumulative grade-point average of a 2.0 (C) or better on a 4.0 scale. Upon successful completion of the program, students will then be eligible for graduation and to take the American Society for Clinical Pathology’s (ASCP) certification exam. Students must complete graduation requirements within five years from the date of matriculation. Graduation from the Pathologists’ Assistant Program is not contingent upon passing any type of external certification or licensure examination.

PROGRESSION

The integrated nature of the Pathologists’ Assistant program curriculum necessitates that student progression is predicated upon the student’s natural progression from testing knowledge (didactic year) to assessing the technical skills and behaviors required to perform successfully in the clinical year. As such, the program expects regular progression through specimen complexity to exhibit competency (performance at the level of an ASCP certified pathologists’ assistant). Details related to regular progression can be found in the Anatomic Clerkship I-IV syllabi.

STUDENT SERVICE WORK POLICY

Students may pursue outside employment at any point throughout their education at RFU; however, the issue must be handled more sensitively during the clinical year. Students may not be compensated for time spent performing the duties of a pathologists’ assistant at their respective clinical site or any other institution, as this is a conflict of interest. Any outside employment a student participates in may not compete with or take the place of student education.

The department does not encourage employment at the facility where students are completing their clinical education. In the event that a student is employed at the facility, immediate notification must be made to the Director of Clinical Education for approval to ensure that the integrity of the academic evaluation of the student and other risks are properly managed.

Service work in the clinical setting is non-compulsory and students may never be substituted for regular staff at any time during the clinical experience.

SITE VISIT

Each student receives at least one mandatory site visit during the clinical year. It may be in person or virtual. During the scheduled site visit, a program faculty member will discuss feedback with the student and their preceptor. In addition, a Site Visit Evaluation is completed and shared with the student upon completion of the visit.

ABSENCES

Students are encouraged to avoid personal absences, however, there are five days built into the clinical year to be taken at the discretion of the student after approval by both the Director of Clinical Education and the clinical preceptor. These days can be used for personal reasons and/or the reasons listed below, and **must be appropriately documented in the student's Exxat logs**. Discretionary days taken in succession (two or more consecutive days) can only occur with approval by the Director of Clinical Education.

Additional time may be granted at the discretion of the clinical preceptor pending approval from the Director of Clinical Education for major life events (e.g., wedding of a family member, death of a family member, etc.), providing a minimum two weeks advance notice where applicable.

SICK TIME

If a student is sick and unable to participate at their clinical site, they must notify their clinical preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education via email and through Exxat. Not reporting an absence to both the clinical preceptor and the Director of Clinical Education will be perceived as an abuse of sick time and a letter from a healthcare provider may be required as a result. Failure to provide appropriate documentation may result in a subject to dismissal hearing which may culminate in dismissal from the program.

HOLIDAY TIME

While at a clinical site(s), students may take regularly scheduled hospital holidays (Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, etc.) at the discretion of the clinical preceptor without requesting the time off.

JOB INTERVIEWS

Please schedule job interviews in concert with the scheduling demands of the clinical site and seek approval from both the clinical preceptor and Director of Clinical Education. Please provide notification at least ten (10) days prior to the interview, when possible.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) Conference attendance is optional, and permission is granted at the discretion of the Director of Clinical Education and the applicable site's clinical preceptor. Approval must be requested in writing via email a minimum of six (6) weeks prior to the start of the conference. The Director of Clinical Education will send notification of approval to both the student and the student's clinical preceptor.

Requirements for conference attendance (if approval is granted):

Students must attend all lectures delivered during their time at conference and provide proof of attendance to the Director of Clinical Education. Students will submit a 250-word (minimum) essay reflecting on their conference experience. Student essays and proof of attendance are due to the Director of Clinical Education two (2) weeks after the end of conference. If students do not attend the entire conference, time taken off from the clinical experience for traveling to and from the conference will need to be made-up.

MAKE-UP TIME

Students must make-up all missed learning experiences that exceed the 5 discretionary days granted by the program. If a student fails to report an absence to the Director of Clinical Education, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and the student may be subject to a dismissal hearing which may culminate in dismissal from the program.

All students are required to make-up clinical time that exceeds the allotted discretionary days. In order for time to be considered, students must comply with the following procedures:

- The student must document the time off in Exxat.
- The student must make-up all of the time they are absent.
- The student must submit a [Make-Up Time Report Form](#) for each absence and properly document the make-up time in their weekly journal.
- Make-up time must be completed in a minimum of 4-hour increments.

- The student may not work through a scheduled lunch period or break period for make-up time.
- The student may not add up the hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week to compensate for any time off (e.g., working 48 hours in a week does not make up for an absence or missed 8-hour workday).

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

RFU expects students to maintain continuous enrollment in an academic program with the exception of scheduled breaks. However, at times it may be necessary or desirable for a student to take a leave of absence. All leave of absence requests must be approved by the appropriate Dean or Dean's designee. [Forms](#) are available from the Registrar's InSite webpage, and the student must comply with the University's Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy, which can be found in the RFU Academic Catalog. Please refer to the RFU Academic Catalog for more detailed information.

RETURN FROM LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At the end of the approved leave of absence, a student must petition for return by contacting their Leave of Absence Coordinator and Dean or Dean's designee via email at least 8 weeks before the start of the quarter in which the student plans to return, or as stated in the LOA approval.

As a means to re-integrate themselves within the program, any student returning from an extended leave of absence will be required to review the Student Handbook and Clerkship Manual for the current academic year. Subsequently, the student shall sign the Student Handbook, and if applicable, the Clerkship Manual and will agree to be bound by the terms, conditions, policies and guidelines therein. Any student requesting a Leave of Absence during the clinical year is not guaranteed re-assignment to their previous clinical placement upon their return. Please refer to the RFU Academic Catalog for more detailed information.

STUDENT HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION POLICY

All students entering Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS) are required to show proof of immunity through immunization records and blood titers in order to ensure that the spread of communicable diseases is minimized. Each student must also complete a health history and physical form documenting their health status. This policy complies with the recommendations from the State of Illinois College Immunization Code (77 ILL ADM Code 694) as well as follows guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Immunization Action Coalition.

In accordance with the University's procedures for clinical programs, each student will create a personal profile through CastleBranch and upload their titer lab reports, including initial titer results that are negative, along with proof of required immunizations.

In order to comply with the requirements of some clinical sites, students may be required to submit to criminal, sexual offender and other background checks. Some sites may require drug screen testing or other conditions. The program will inform students of the necessary procedures to meet any such requirements. In order to remain a student in good standing in the program, students must meet the technical standards, found on the department website. Students requesting reasonable accommodations based on a disability should refer to the Academic Accommodation section of this handbook.

Refer to the [RFU Student Policies Handbook](#).

STUDENT RELATED WORK INJURY PROTOCOL

The hospital shall provide emergency medical care and treatment to students and staff in any instance of injury or illness occurring at the hospital. The expense associated with such treatment shall be the responsibility of the individual student and their health insurance provider. The student must notify their preceptor prior to leaving the department to seek medical evaluation and/or treatment and report to occupational health, the designated office for reporting work-place injuries or the ER. The student should inform the Director of Clinical Education or their designee immediately following an injury or illness for documentation of the incident. Lastly, the student is required to contact the Office of Student Affairs and complete the [Accidental Exposure Report Form](#).

Each student shall read their hospital's safety manual and procedures for appropriate plan of action and preparation should an injury occur during the clinical training.

During the clinical year, the clinical preceptor will complete a mandatory Evaluation of Safety in Surgical and Autopsy Pathology. The evaluation, as developed by the program, is intended as a tool for use by clinical preceptors as a safety reminder to the student and to possibly aid in reducing accidental exposures. The aim of this checklist is to reinforce accepted safety practices and foster better communication and teamwork between the preceptor and the student.

SECTION 3: PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

Portfolio Guidelines

Students will develop a portfolio that will document their ten-month educational clerkship experience and provide supporting evidence and essays of successful completion of student learning outcomes, goals, and objectives.

Evaluation of students during their clerkship training is primarily accomplished through submission of quarterly evaluative portfolios and in a summative fashion at the conclusion of the clerkship experience. The portfolio provides documentation of the process of learning and documentation of completion of the second-year learning goals, objectives and outcomes. Documentation may come from a variety of sources (student, preceptor, etc.), through multiple methods or artifacts (essays, dictations, specimen photographs, etc.) and should span the entire ten months of training. **All work submitted each quarter needs to be 100% personal student experience generated. Students are not permitted to submit cases grossed and/or dictated by another individual in the clinical setting.**

Portfolios should be organized around the Student Learning Outcomes and Surgical and Autopsy Pathology Learning Objectives. For each objective there will be quarterly submissions of the student's progress towards mastery and documentation of the student's mastery of each of the stated learning outcomes at the conclusion of the clerkship. Clerkship competencies are to be evaluated based on the Evaluation of Clerkship Competencies form, which is to be completed quarterly by both the student and the preceptor.

Additional documentation to demonstrate mastery of the competencies should be submitted in the portfolio and will include personal reflective essays on the student's progress at gaining mastery or demonstration of mastery of the competencies. At the on-campus Round-Ups, students will present their work from their clinical site(s) for discussion with their peers and feedback from program faculty.

The provided examples of evidence should form a starting point for the construction of your portfolio. Students should use the portfolio as an expression of the unique experiences the student has had in the clinical setting which have led to mastery of the learning goals and objectives.

Portfolio Formatting Guidelines: For Learning Outcome and Objective Submissions, please include and format in the following manner:

- Student name
- SLO/SPO/APO number, prompt, and evidence question addressing

- Black font (no preference in font type), 11-12 in size, single-1.5 line spacing
- Essay format (when applicable)
- **All work needs to be completely de-identified prior to submission; this includes case numbers, patient names, patient IDs, DOB, etc. Failure to do so will result in lost credit.**

Evaluations

The Director of Clinical Education maintains regular contact with the students and the preceptors throughout the clerkship experience. Feedback from the student and preceptor on student performance should be based on the competencies and objectives for the clerkship experience and are obtained via phone and email conversations as well as through formal evaluations in the form of the Evaluation of Clerkship Learning Competencies form and quarterly written evaluations. The Director of Clinical Education will also evaluate the student during physical or virtual site visitations, teleconferences and email correspondence. Following clinical site visits, students will receive formal written feedback from the site visitor. Students are required to complete evaluations for practicum and learning competencies each quarter. The necessary evaluation forms are located in Exxat and **require at least 100 word narratives**. Failure to submit the evaluations with the proper narratives will result in loss of points.

It is possible for a student to meet the expectations of the clinical rotation but have identified issues, either professional or knowledge-based, that can jeopardize clinical progression. Consistent concerns related to professionalism or foundational knowledge documented on formative evaluations (quarterly evaluations and clinical visitation forms) or via communication with preceptors can trigger a meeting to review student performance. These patterns of behavior or documented deficiencies may result in a focused clinical evaluation plan and/or additional clinical hours to ensure competence.

Clinical Site Demographics

The following items need to be included in your Midterm PowerPoint presentation. Required demographics include:

- Facility and Department Description (introductory page; one per site)
- Name of site
- Nature of the site (e.g., teaching hospital, community hospital, clinic)
- Bed count and annual admission rates
- Surgical volume and nature of specimens (e.g., 50% skin biopsies)

- Autopsy volume
- Frozen section volume
- Number of pathologists
- Number of pathologists' assistants
- Residents/Fellows/Medical Students

Journal Guidelines

Students are required to keep a weekly journal documenting their educational experiences during their clerkship. These journals provide the student and department faculty a written account of the activities the student participated in during their ten-month clerkship to fulfill the learning competencies, goals and objectives of the anatomic pathology clerkships. The weekly journal submissions are to be accompanied with a time log detailing daily hours worked, daily preceptor(s), and a specimen log organized by CPT code. **Journal submissions must be a minimum of 100 words. Please include the week of your clinical rotation and/or dates included with each journal entry (i.e. Week 1, 6/1/2026-6/6/2026).**

Topics to consider when writing your weekly journal reflection:

- Reflection of specimens grossed
- Review of gross dictations (alone or with your preceptor)
- Interactions with your preceptor or pathologists.
- Interactions with surgeons
- Camera set-up and gross photos opportunities
- Histology/embedding opportunities
- Research activities
- Sign out opportunities
- Attendance/participation at departmental/hospital conferences
- Interprofessional activities

Weekly logs will be completed via Exxat. Instructions on how to complete your logs will be reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education.

Presentation Guidelines

All students are required to submit PowerPoint Presentations including unique experiences and one case study of a specimen encountered that they found intriguing, is rare or had an unexpected finding. The presentations should include:

- Clinical/patient history
- Surgical procedure
- De-identified dictation
- Gross photographs of the specimen
- Photomicrographs of the histology
- Final diagnosis
- Goals for the next quarter
- Unique experiences

Students will present their second quarter interesting case presentation at Midterm Round-Up for the current first year students and program faculty.

Final Poster Guidelines

For Final Round-Up, in place of the interesting case PowerPoint, the students will present a case study of a specimen encountered that they found intriguing, is rare or had an unexpected finding as a poster. The following components are required:

- Abstract or Introduction
- Background or Clinical History
- Methods or Gross Description
- Results or Final Diagnosis
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- References
- Gross photographs, micrographs, radiographs

University approved templates will be provided on the Class of 2027 student website.

Final posters are due via Google Drive on **Sunday, February 28th by 11:59 pm (CST)** if a student wishes to have their poster printed at no cost to them. The link for submission will be shared via email. To submit a poster for free printing, a PDF and PowerPoint version of the poster file needs to be included. The University does not permit modification or distortion of

university logos; however, students are free to edit the background and header colorings in the provided templates as they see fit.

If a student does not have their final poster added to the shared folder by the 28th, the student shall be responsible for finding a third party to complete poster printing for them and paying for the expense out-of-pocket. The standard size for an academic poster is 48”x36” and should be printed on glossy paper.

Art Show Guidelines

At Final Round-Up students will showcase visual and written communication skills in the form of an art show project. Additionally, the project gives the student the opportunity to reflect on and examine their work while providing health information to the campus community and visitors. The project may be photography from their portfolio or an alternative visual interpretation of a pathology/specimen they worked with. Additional information regarding specific requirements and project examples will be provided at Midterm Round-Up.

Final Portfolio Guidelines

At Final Round-Up, students will be required to submit all of their portfolio items from the clinical year. Any feedback provided throughout the clinical year must be updated in the final version. Please follow the portfolio formatting guidelines with submissions. Final Portfolios will be submitted via Google Drive and additional details on submission of the final portfolio will be provided via email during the 4th quarter.

Your final portfolio must include:

- Surgical Pathology Objectives 1-14 (including SPO 6 & 12 for Quarters 1-4)
- Autopsy Pathology Objectives 1-16
- Student Learning Outcomes 1-10
- Interesting Case PowerPoint Presentations for Quarters 1-3
- Copy of Final Poster
- Weekly Journal Quarters for 1-4

After grading of final portfolios and completion of clinical hours, students will be issued a completion letter signifying they are eligible to begin work and register to sit for the ASCP Certification Exam. Additional information regarding completion letters will be provided at Final Round-up.

The Pathologists' Assistant Department requires a minimum of 10 business days to complete final grading in order to issue completion letters.

**SECTION 4:
OUTCOME AND OBJECTIVE
ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1. Recognize and respect the diversity of patients and fellow health care providers as well as acknowledge one's responsibilities to patients' families and the community at large.**

Evidence: Submit an essay addressing the uniqueness of every surgical specimen and the role and professional responsibility pathologists' assistants have in ensuring the highest quality of care possible for the patient.

- 2. Effectively communicate and collaborate with other health care professionals in interprofessional teams.**

Evidence: Provide the definitions for interprofessional education and for interprofessional practice and cite an example of when you have engaged in each during your clinical training.

- 3. Engage in evidence-based practice within the anatomic pathology laboratory while making a conscious, continued effort to improve performance.**

Evidence: Define evidence-based medicine and cite a specific example of when you have engaged in evidence-based practice.

- 4. Synthesize clinical information from various sources to present comprehensive clinical pathologic correlations.**

Evidence: Define the phrase "clinical pathologic correlation" and submit a specific example from the gross bench and the autopsy suite where you have made clinical pathologic correlations. (You may submit a de-identified final autopsy report as part of your documentation.)

- 5. Communicate complex anatomic pathology information effectively in written, verbal, and photographic forms.**

Evidence: Submit sample dictations, full autopsy reports (includes patient history/clinical information, external exam, internal exam, cause, manner and mechanism of death) and gross specimen photographs. (Submit two examples of your best work from each of the categories listed. Additional examples to be submitted in fulfillment of specific surgical and autopsy objectives.)

- 6. Discern normal structure and function of organs, tissues, and cells from pathologic changes as demonstrated by selecting appropriate techniques for collecting, handling, submitting, and processing specimens.**

Evidence: Discuss a situation where you had to go back to a case and submit additional tissue and reflect on what you learned from that experience. Describe why selecting the appropriate techniques for collecting, handling, submitting and processing specimens is vital for the pathologists' assistant. (Additional documentation may come in the form of narratives provided by your preceptor.)

- 7. Embrace and actively participate in a systems approach to reducing error, ensuring safety, and improving quality of care.**

Evidence: A systems-based approach is one that understands that a whole is made up of parts. Discuss advantages and disadvantages to using a systems-based approach in the pathology laboratory or healthcare setting.

- 8. Understand the value of information technology and promote its utilization in professional practice.**
Evidence: Describe how information technology (IT) may be used in the pathology laboratory and cite an example where IT is not currently utilized in your laboratory and how it would improve your work.
- 9. Provide leadership in the laboratory through an understanding of management techniques and the operations and services provided in the anatomic pathology laboratory to facilitate efficiency and productivity.**
Evidence: Cite a specific instance when you exhibited leadership in the laboratory and how it resulted in increased efficiency and productivity.
- 10. Conduct the practice of a Pathologists' Assistant in a professional manner, and by doing so, act as a steward of the profession for students, colleagues, and the public through education and research into the art and science of the practice of anatomic pathology.**
Evidence: Discuss a situation in which you have acted as a steward of the profession, promoting (educating) another persons' understanding of pathologists' assistants and develop a sample research project which may help promote the profession and the utilization of pathologists' assistants.

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1. Outline the standards that the College of American Pathologists (CAP) requires for surgical pathology.**
Evidence: Record your reflections of the overall standards of the CAP Anatomic Pathology Master Checklist for surgical pathology and specifically address the following standards, citing examples from your clinical experience: Safety Item 1 (ANP.08216), Surgical Pathology Item 1 (ANP.10016), Surgical Pathology Item 3 (ANP.10038), Quality Control Item 8 (ANP. 11640), Quality Control Item 11 (ANP.11670) and Surgical Pathology Reports Item 6 (ANP.12350) For each, include a rationale for their inclusion in the CAP checklist.
- 2. Assure correct specimen accessioning.**
Evidence: Submit an essay of the steps involved in specimen accessioning. Discuss common accessioning errors, describe specific examples of accessioning errors you have observed or been involved in and propose quality control policies and procedures to reduce these errors.
- 3. Obtain pertinent clinical information and data required for prosecution from the requisition, medical records, consultation with the pathologist(s) and other clinical providers, etc.**
Evidence: Discuss how you would obtain clinical information on a specimen you receive with no clinical information listed on the specimen requisition. Discuss how/where to obtain clinical information, how the accumulated clinical information is used in specimen processing, and when it is necessary to reach out to a physician or a surgeon to acquire clinical information.

4. Identify common situations that require expedited processing of a pathology specimen.

Evidence: List the specimens commonly requiring expedited processing and provide a rationale for why expedited processing is indicated.

5. Discuss the common indications for intraoperative consultation.

Evidence: List the specimens commonly submitted for frozen section diagnosis and provide a rationale for the frozen section. List other non-frozen section intraoperative consultations which may occur and the rationale for the consultation.

6. Describe gross anatomic features and specimens clearly and concisely in the form of dictation.

*Evidence: Submit de-identified sample dictations. *Note: Only submit the pertinent dictation, not the entire case.**

*Quarter #1: submit **two** unique sample dictations per CPT code for 88300, 88302, 88304 and 88305.*

*Quarter #2: submit **two** unique sample dictations per CPT code for 88300, 88302, 88304, 88305 (different from Quarter #1) and 88307.*

*Quarter #3: submit **two** unique sample dictations per CPT code for 88300, 88302, 88304, 88305, 88307 (different from previous quarters) and 88309.*

*Quarter #4: submit **five** unique sample dictations per CPT code for 88300, 88302, 88304, 88305, 88307 and 88309 (different from previous quarters).*

7. Identify, under pathologist supervision, tissue to be submitted for frozen section diagnosis, prepare frozen sections competently (e.g., with care, skill, and efficiency, etc.), and effectively manage problems with suboptimal frozen sections.

Evidence: Discuss common problems that may arise during the frozen section process. Provide an example of a problem you have been involved in. How was this problem managed to allow for an accurate and timely frozen section diagnosis?

8. Demonstrate competency (e.g., care, skill, efficiency, etc.) at prosection for routine and complex surgical specimens.

Evidence: Submit an essay to support demonstrated competency at prosection. Provide examples of specimens that you struggled with in the beginning, how you combatted these issues and why you now are more competent at handling these cases. [Additional documentation may include self-appraisal and feedback from your preceptor(s.)]

9. Perform special procedures in the surgical pathology laboratory.

Evidence: Submit an essay addressing the various special procedures and/or studies (e.g., lymphoma work ups, microbiology collection, tissue banking, kidney biopsies, etc.) at your clinical site(s). Provide specific examples of procedures in which you have observed or participated and describe how and why specific tissue was sampled for that special procedure(s) to accurately yield results.

10. Manage workflow effectively in the gross room.

Evidence: Submit an essay on the competing interest in the gross room for your time (e.g., frozen sections, routine biopsies, complex surgical resections, conference preparation, etc.) and how you prioritize responsibilities, utilize your time and manage workflow effectively.

11. List procedures for locating a missing specimen such as a block, slide, or tissue.

Evidence: Draft sample protocols/policies for missing and lost blocks, slides and tissue. Submit a reflective essay on a missing specimen that you have observed or have been involved in including the common problems which may lead to missing specimens and how these problems were managed to prevent further occurrences.

12. Demonstrate proficiency at taking gross photographs of pertinent findings.

*Evidence: Submit five individual cases per quarter including gross photographs with the accompanying dictation and a critique (minimum of 75 words) of the photo (e.g., Is it a quality photo that I could use for publication or display? Why or why not? Does it effectively demonstrate what I am trying to show? etc.) *Note: Only submit the pertinent dictation, not the entire case.**

13. Explain the basic principles of informatics in anatomic pathology and effectively utilize the Laboratory Information System (LIS) and local computer network.

Evidence: Submit an essay outlining the LIS used at your clinical site(s) and evaluating the pros and cons of the system. Include a discussion of your day-to-day utilization of the system.

14. Perform other related job functions as needed such as laboratory maintenance, administrative tasks, and assisting with conference preparation.

Evidence: Submit an essay outlining examples of your participation in other job-related functions outside of your grossing responsibilities.

AUTOPSY PATHOLOGY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Determine whether proper legal authorization for an autopsy procedure has been obtained and the appropriate authorities to contact prior to the autopsy.

Evidence: Describe how you would determine whether proper legal authorization has been obtained for an autopsy and discuss the common indications which would make for a potential medical-legal case.

2. Explain the necessary procedures to ensure the safety of those in the autopsy suite.

Evidence: Draft or outline a sample set of procedures for ensuring the safety of personnel in the autopsy suite.

3. Collect pertinent clinical information and data (e.g., from existing medical records, clinical providers, etc.) to reconstruct the deceased patient's medical history.

Evidence: Submit a sample de-identified write up of a deceased patient's medical history from an autopsy

from which you were involved.

4. Distill the essential parts of the medical history into likely manner, cause, and mechanism of death.

Evidence: Discuss the pertinent gross findings that support the proposed cause, manner, and mechanism of an autopsy case you participated in. Submit a de-identified Preliminary Anatomic Diagnosis (PAD) from the case to support your discussion.

5. Recognize when it is necessary to seek consultation on a case from the attending pathologist(s).

Evidence: Describe when it would be appropriate to seek consultation on a case, site specific examples and detail your personal experience(s).

6. Conduct systematic and thorough external examinations and in situ organ inspection.

Evidence: Describe a systematic protocol for performing external examinations and in situ organ inspection.

7. Demonstrate competency at selecting, preparing, and submitting appropriate gross tissue sections for frozen section analysis and microscopy.

Evidence: Site examples of when special tissue processing (etc. frozen section, decal, lymphoma protocol, etc.) might be indicated in an autopsy and detail your personal experience(s).

8. Demonstrate common evisceration techniques including the Letulle Method, the Virchow Method, as well as brain and spinal cord removal.

Evidence: List the steps outlining the above procedures and an essay of your experiences performing them. [Additional documentation may come in the form of written assessment of your technique from your preceptor(s).]

9. Demonstrate competency (e.g., care, skill, efficiency, etc.) at block and organ prosection.

Evidence: Describe block and organ prosection and your experiences performing them. [Additional documentation may come in the form of written assessment of your technique from your preceptor(s).]

10. Discern abnormalities and/or pathologic changes encountered during the autopsy and dictate or record the findings accurately.

Evidence: Submit a narrative description of a specific gross pathologic change which you have observed during an autopsy and how you discerned the change to be abnormal and associated with a particular disease process.

11. Obtain biological specimens such as blood, tissue, and toxicology material for analysis.

Evidence: List common indications for the procurement of blood, tissue and/or toxicology material for analysis in an autopsy and the rationale behind the analysis. Provide a narrative discussing your personal experience.

- 12. Indicate when special studies are needed such as non-routine cultures, special evaluation of bones, sinus cavities, and other tissues not routinely evaluated.**
Evidence: List common indications when non-routine procedures are needed in a n autopsy and the rationale for those procedures. Provide a narrative discussing your personal experience.
- 13. Demonstrate proficiency at taking gross photographs of pertinent findings.** *Evidence: Submit an essay about the importance of photography in an autopsy pathology laboratory. [Additional documentation may come in the form of sample gross photographs from autopsies you have participated in with corresponding critiques.]*
- 14. Summarize patient information and autopsy findings clearly and concisely for oral and written presentation.**
Evidence: Submit an essay on your experiences presenting gross autopsy findings to an attending pathologist and/ or at an autopsy conference and submit a de-identified full autopsy report (includes patient history/clinical information, external exam, internal exam, cause, manner and mechanism of death) which you have written (may be a mock report and not the one actually used for the case).
- 15. Outline the proper procedure for preparing the body for release and releasing the body to the appropriate mortuary or funeral home representative.** *Evidence: Outline the procedure for preparing and releasing a body from the autopsy service and submit a narrative on your personal experience with this task.*
- 16. Perform other related job functions as needed such as laboratory maintenance, administrative tasks, and assisting with conference preparation.**
Evidence: Submit an essay outlining examples of your participation in other job-related functions.

**SECTION 5:
ASCP EXAM INFORMATION**

ASCP SUGGESTED READING LIST

The most up to date ASCP Reading List can be found [here](#). This list is intended only as a partial reference source. Its distribution does not indicate endorsement by the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC), nor does the ASCP BOC wish to imply that the content of the examination will be drawn solely from these publications.

ASCP EXAMINATION CONTENT GUIDELINES

The American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) PA certification examination is composed of 100 questions given in a 2-hour 30-minute time frame. All examination questions are multiple-choice with one best answer. The examination is administered using the format of computer adaptive testing (CAT). In CAT, the examination is tailored to the examinee's ability level and ensures that each question has a 50% chance of being answered correctly. When the examinee answers an examination question correctly, the next question has a slightly higher level of difficulty. The difficulty level of the questions presented continues to increase until the examinee answers a question incorrectly. Then, a slightly easier question is presented. The examinee cannot skip questions because the CAT algorithm measures the examinee's ability level each time the examinee answers a question.

Each question on the examination is classified by content area. The content area aligns with the examination specific content guideline. Each examination administers questions according to the percentages from the content guideline.

The examinee must answer enough questions correctly to achieve a measure at or above the minimum passing standard to successfully pass the examination. There is no set number of questions the examinee must answer correctly to pass, nor is there a set percentage the examinee must achieve to pass. If at the end of the examination the examinee's score is at or above the minimum passing standard, then the examinee passes the examination.

The examination questions may be both theoretical and/or procedural. Theoretical questions measure skills necessary to apply knowledge of pathology/histology, identify/evaluate morphologic characteristics of disease, and correlate pathologic findings to physiologic/disease processes. Procedural questions measure skills necessary to select/perform appropriate laboratory techniques and follow quality assurance protocols.

EXAMINATION CONTENT AREAS

The PA exam questions encompass the following content areas within Pathology: Fundamentals of Pathology, Anatomic Pathology Techniques, Anatomy, Autopsy Pathology, and Laboratory Operations. Each of these content areas comprises a specific percentage of the overall 100-question exam. The content areas and percentages are described below:

- **Fundamentals of Pathology (40-50%)**
 - General Pathology
 - Cell injury
 - Environmental, toxic, and nutritional
 - Fluid and hemodynamic derangements
 - Genetic and metabolic disorders
 - Immunopathology
 - Infectious diseases
 - Neoplasia
 - Systemic Pathology
 - Blood and lymphoid
 - Bone and soft tissue
 - Breast
 - Cardiovascular
 - Endocrine
 - Gastrointestinal
 - Kidney and urinary tract
 - Liver and biliary tract
 - Nervous system
 - Pediatric
 - Perinatal
 - Reproductive - female
 - Reproductive - male
 - Respiratory
 - Skin
- **Autopsy Pathology (10-15%)**
 - Adult
 - Neonatal/perinatal
 - Pediatric
 - Medicolegal/forensic
- **Laboratory Operations (5-10%)**
 - Regulatory And Compliance
 - Governmental agencies (e.g., CLIA, HIPAA)
 - Laboratory accreditation (e.g. CAP, The Joint Commission)
 - Coding (e.g., CPT)
 - Management
 - Personnel
 - Work flow, scheduling and productivity
 - Education/training
 - Safety and Infection Control (e.g., OSHA, SDS, NFPA)
- **Anatomic Pathology Techniques (10-15%)**
 - Autopsy Pathology Techniques
 - Histological Techniques
 - Surgical Pathology Techniques
- **Anatomy (10-15%)**
 - Gross
 - Normal Microscopic

Regulatory questions on the examination are based on U.S. Sources (e.g., AABB, FDA, CLIA, etc.). Examples provided (as indicated by e.g.) are not limited to those listed.

Other resources (hyperlinked below):

[AAPA Macroscopic Examination Guidelines: Utilization of the CAP Cancer Protocols at the Surgical Gross Bench](#)

[American Joint Committee on Cancer \(AJCC\)](#)

[College of American Pathologists \(CAP\): Cancer Reporting and Biomarker Reporting Protocols](#)

[The Joint Commission](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

[Pathoma](#)

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#)

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#)

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