

SPECIALIST ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

MEDICAL

TRAINING PROGRAMME

HISTOPATHOLOGY

Approved by SAC on 4th March 2008

The Trainee's Record Book and Trainer's Report Book are attached



THE MALTA COLLEGE OF PATHOLOGISTS

OUTLINE OF TRAINING PROGRAMME IN HISTOPATHOLOGY

1. TITLE

Outline of **Training Programme** in **Histopathology** (Including Cytology)

2. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Recognised First Degree in Medicine.
Full registration with the Medical Council of Malta.

3. DURATION

Five years

4. MAIN AREAS COVERED (competencies to be acquired)

4.1. Outline of Training Programme

The trainee will be attached to a consultant pathologist and will be exposed to all biopsy / surgical pathology material and to all procedures and techniques that the consultant deals with. The consultants are on a continuous roster for routine surgical specimens and cytology. The trainee will also be attached to pathologists performing postmortems.

4.1.1. Induction Period: 2 months

The trainee will spend part of the day within the laboratory and mortuary learning the principles of:

1. Health and Safety with regards to surgical biopsies, cytology specimens and autopsy procedures;
2. routine handling of specimens in the laboratory, including processing, staining, technical procedures and technical problems related to histology and cytology; some practical training in the cutting of tissue sections and in staining procedures, including special stains, immunohistochemistry and immunofluorescence, will be provided;
3. molecular biology techniques and their applications;

4. Information Technology (IT) related to report writing, including diagnostic coding systems; and
5. autopsy technical procedures and medico-legal procedures relating to documentation, identification, handling and release of bodies.

4.1.2. Routine Surgical Pathology Specimens

Since this is the major public hospital, trainees are exposed to specialised disciplines, including:

Gynaecological pathology

Dermatopathology

Neuropathology (including muscle pathology)

Paediatric pathology.

The major specialised discipline not available is renal pathology.

The trainee will

1. be taught gross examination of specimens and cut up techniques and will gradually perform more of his/her own cut up, initially under supervision;
2. view slides with the consultant pathologist at the multi headed microscope during specimen reporting;
3. be taught diagnostic skills and formulation of reports;
4. be expected to increasingly preview slides from the cut up and formulate an appropriate report;
5. initially observe and gradually participate in the reporting of frozen sections;
6. become familiar with laboratory routine and specialised laboratory techniques, including special stains, immunohistochemistry and immunofluorescence, and molecular biology techniques; and
7. be expected to get used to discussing cases with clinical colleagues on a regular basis.

4.1.3. Cytology

The laboratory performs gynaecological and non-gynaecological cytopathology investigations, including fine needle aspirations.

The trainee will

1. become familiar with cytology laboratory techniques and the different types of preparations;
2. progressively learn to recognise and interpret abnormal material and formulate a report;
3. become familiar with the role of a cytoscreener; and
4. learn about screening programmes

4.1.4. Autopsies

The trainee will be expected to attend as many postmortem examinations as possible.

The trainee will

1. be taught the techniques of evisceration and dissection and how to present and discuss a case so that he/she will gradually learn to perform an entire postmortem under supervision.

By the **end of the first year** the trainee should be able to:

1. perform a basic autopsy under supervision;
2. present and discuss the case with the consultant pathologist;
3. discuss the case with clinical colleagues; and
4. write a report.

Training in specialised dissection techniques and exposure to Forensic autopsies will be provided.

4.1.5. Audit and Quality Control

The trainee should

1. learn the concepts of audit and quality control;
2. participate in the departmental audit and quality control programmes;
3. present a few audit projects.

4.1.6. Management

The trainee is expected to attend regular courses provided by the Department of Health and the University, as directed by the Trainer.

4.1.7. Information Technology

The trainee should:

1. become familiar with the use of IT relevant to the practice of pathology; and
2. attend regular courses provided by the Department of Health and the University, as directed by the Trainer.

4.1.8. Research

Time will be allocated for research activity, which will be encouraged and supervised. Trainees who are in possession of a postgraduate degree, at Masters level or above, in any relevant Pathology discipline (e.g. cytology, immunohistochemistry, molecular biology) will be exempted from **one** year of the proposed Training Programme.

4.2. Training Outside Malta

Following a minimum of **three years** in Malta, the trainee will require further training in a specialist centre.

A. a minimum of **one** year, rotating in the following, at specialised centres:

- renal pathology and electron microscopy
- perinatal and paediatric pathology
- cardiopulmonary pathology
- bone pathology
- molecular biology / pathology

B. preferably **another year** in specialised centres in general histopathology, to widen experience.

4.3. Academic Meetings

The trainee is guaranteed a minimum of **four hours** protected time **per week** to regularly attend the academic meetings within the department. At present these include the following:

- weekly Departmental Case Conference
- weekly Dermatopathology Case Conference (attending clinician)
- monthly Clinicopathological Case Conference
- monthly Trainee Case Presentation
- monthly Trainee Unknown Case Conference

The trainee is expected to attend regularly the following Interdepartmental Meetings:

- Breast Cancer Multidisciplinary Meeting every 2 weeks
- Dermatology Clinicopathological Meeting monthly
- Medical Clinicopathological Conference weekly
- Surgical Clinicopathological Conference weekly

5. CRITERIA for COMPLETION OF PROGRAMME and AWARD of SPECIALIST CERTIFICATE

5.1. Annual Review

The trainee is to keep a **record** of training and experience, which must be endorsed **annually** by the **Trainer**. Trainees can only progress to the next year of the Training Programme following a successful assessment.

An **annual review** must also be carried out by a Board nominated by the Pathology Postgraduate Training Committee, composed of three members, including the **Head of Training** for Histopathology, to identify any problems encountered by the trainee and any deficiencies of the training programme.

5.2. Postgraduate Qualification

Once the trainee has satisfactorily completed the **Training Programme** outlined above, he/she will be entitled to obtain the **Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST)**, subject to obtaining a relevant **Postgraduate Qualification**, by **Examination**.

The College will identify the **Examination** and **Examination Boards** that it recognises for the award of a Postgraduate Qualification.

Candidates are strongly encouraged to seek the advice of the College before enrolling in any examination to ensure that any qualification obtained would be suitable for CCST purposes.

5.3 CCST

The **CCST** will be awarded by the Specialist Accreditation Committee, on the recommendation of the College provided the College Council is satisfied of the trainee's proficiency in the discipline concerned.

6. QUALIFICATIONS FOR TRAINERS

A **Post-Graduate Training Co-ordinator**, appointed through a call for applications by the Health Division, will be responsible for implementation of this Training Programme. The Co-ordinator is to set up and chair a single **Specialist Training Committee** for all pathology disciplines, including Histopathology, which will be responsible for the management and administration of Training Programmes in Pathology. The Committee will be composed of Pathology **Trainers** and must include the **Chairman of Pathology**. Each Pathology specialty will have a **Head of Training**, appointed by the teaching staff.

The Post-graduate Training Co-ordinator and the trainers must be on the Specialist Register of the Medical Council and should have been practising the specialty for at least 5 years.

Trainers are expected to have substantial experience in the specialty, to have demonstrated an interest in training, to have appropriate teaching resources, to be involved in annual reviews, to participate in training programmes for trainers and to liaise closely with the Post-Graduate Co-ordinator.

The teaching staff may include specialists in training and non medical graduates but they must be practicing pathology or any other relevant topic, e.g. information technology, molecular biology.

7. DUTIES OF TRAINERS

Each trainee will have a Trainer, whose main responsibility is to perform continuous assessment of the progress of the trainee, throughout the duration of the training period. The Trainer will be responsible to the Specialist Training Committee and the Post-graduate Co-ordinator.

In particular, the Trainer will have the following duties:

- To supervise all aspects of training
- To meet regularly with the trainee to discuss the programme, progress and deficiencies
- To perform an official appraisal every 6 months, at which the trainee is also expected to give feedback
- To liaise with individual trainers in the specialty, to assess the trainee's progress

- To acquire feedback, regarding the training programme, from both trainee and trainers.

8. OBLIGATIONS OF TRAINEE

8.1. Learning Objectives

By the end of a **five year** training programme, the trainee should have acquired:

1. a broad based knowledge of pathology with special emphasis on pathogenesis and morphology of disease;
2. skills in diagnostic interpretation, appropriate reporting and good communication with clinical colleagues regarding:
 - a. anatomical surgical specimens
 - b. cytology
 - c. autopsies;
3. familiarity with routine and specialised techniques performed in the laboratories;
4. basic competence in the application of information technology;
5. managerial skills in relation to administrative issues;
6. basic skills in the concepts of research;
7. an appreciation for the need of Continued Professional Development; and
8. familiarity with laboratory aspects of Health and Safety.

To this end the trainee is required to keep a log book.

8.2. Continued Professional Development

The trainee is expected to:

- read major pathology journals
- keep abreast of current literature
- attend local activities accredited by the Malta College of Pathologists for CPD purposes
- attend conferences abroad.

A list of activities recognised by the Malta College of Pathologists for CPD points is published.

8.3. Teaching

The trainee is expected to take part in the Undergraduate Teaching of the University Pathology Department as follows:

- lectures and tutorials to Medical Students
- lectures and tutorials to BSc MLS students
- supervision of dissertations for BSc MLS students
- training to Laboratory Technical Staff.