

University of Alberta, Edmonton

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What are you looking for specifically in an impressive candidate?

We value applicants who are self-motivated, personable, open, and friendly. Excellent teamwork skills are essential, and we value diversity in our residents. All candidates with a strong interest in the speciality are encouraged to apply. Also let us know of your extra-curricular interests outside of medicine!

What can a potential candidate do now in order to be an appealing applicant to your program?

You should have some elective experience in OBGYN to see if you really like it. You may want to consider trying a general elective and a subspecialty elective. It's always a good idea to do electives at schools other than your own and nationwide, aim for diversity.

How is your residency program organized? (i.e. year by year breakdown and schedule of rotations)

First year: In first year, you are part of Surgical Foundations with other surgical residents including an academic half day of didactic teaching every Wednesday morning. Rotations in this year consist of OBGYN (5 blocks), ultrasound (1 block), neonatal ICU (1 block), emergency medicine (1 block), general surgery (1 block), vacation (1 block), and internal medicine (2 blocks).

Second year: Second year is a full year of general OBGYN, based mostly out of the Royal Alexandra Hospital. You also spend some time at our 3 community hospitals. Also includes a dedicated rotation in family planning at Women's Health Options (1 block) and ICU (2 blocks). Surgical Foundations culminates with the writing of the SF exam.

Third year: Third year includes rotations in maternal-fetal medicine (3 blocks), reproductive endocrinology and infertility (3 blocks), community OBGYN (2 blocks), and rural (2 blocks). You also have elective time (3 blocks), which you may choose to spend internationally.

Fourth year: Fourth year includes rotations in gynecologic oncology (3 blocks), urogynecology (3 blocks), and additional elective time (2 blocks). Time as a chief resident starts midway through the year, approximately 2 months before the fifth year residents write their exam.

Fifth year: The final year includes the remainder of your chief resident rotations, plus additional ambulatory and elective time.

What is your residency program's orientation and focus?

Our focus is on residents. One of our biggest strengths is the amount of surgical experience you receive throughout residency with early hands-on opportunities. We also have a strong group of sub-specialists who are very involved in teaching.

What is the availability of experiences in subspecialty areas during training?

We have staff trained and practicing in all subspecialties. There are no fellows, which means more hands on subspecialty exposure for our residents!

What is the typical day in the life of a resident?

This varies for the junior and senior residents. Junior residents may assist in the operating room, assess obstetrical patients, manage the labour and delivery ward, perform deliveries, or assess gynecologic patients in the emergency room. Senior residents may be rotating through one of the subspecialty clinics, in ORs or may be on elective. Senior residents are also given increased academic duties. In their final year, chief residents function as a junior consultant under supervision from attending staff.

What is the resident satisfaction?

Very high! We have a solid, committed group and have consistently attracted excellent students. The residents also strive to support one another throughout our training. We are a very close-knit group which is ideal for new residents joining the program. We also have a dedicated Resident Training Committee that meets on a monthly basis and is committed to resolving any issues that come to light with residency training. One resident from each year sits on the committee.

Are there sufficient elective opportunities during training to explore your special interests?

We have at least 6 months of elective time during the course of the program. Many of our residents have chosen to travel outside of Edmonton either within Canada or to places like Africa, Nepal, and China for a different perspective on our specialty. Others may choose to get more experience in related areas such as general surgery and urology.

What is the on-call schedule during each year of residency?

We do a variety of in house and home call to a maximum of 7/block during our residency training. We have two to three residents on call per night at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, and one at the Grey Nuns Hospital.

What distinguishes the UofA program from other programs?

We have lots of time in the OR which allows us to be one of the strongest surgical programs in the country. We have a well-developed subspecialty group, a positive team spirit and committed teachers. We are also one of the only programs with dedicated faculty-supervised and structured teaching at half-days. Also, Alberta residents have one of the best contracts in the country featuring competitive salaries, call stipends and extended health benefits.

What distinguishes your city from others?

Edmonton boasts a population of just over a million people making it the 6th largest metropolis in Canada. We are the City of Champions, home to the Edmonton Oilers and Eskimos. We are also Canada's Festival city hosting over 30 festivals annually that celebrate music, food, culture, sports, theatre and more! We have an unbelievable river valley, it is the largest stretch of urban parkland in North America at 7,400 hectares. There are 22 major parks and over 150 kilometres of trails on which you can enjoy walks, bike rides, picnics, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and more.

There are five hospitals in Edmonton, four of which have OBGYN, and we rotate through all four. The Royal Alexandra Hospital is our base hospital; however, residents will also work at the Grey Nuns Hospital in the Southeast, the Misericordia in the West, and the Sturgeon in the North. Combined with a large referral base from Alberta North, British Columbia and the Territories, our residents in the program are never short for work!

Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?

HeeJung Kim, Program Assistant obgynpme@ualberta.ca

How competitive is it to get in, and then to succeed in your field?

Application to the U of A has been quite competitive in the past few years, and of course, each year is different. We currently accept six PGY-1s each year through CaRMS. We have had excellent results on the Royal College exams, and many of our graduates successfully match to their subspecialty of choice or work confidently as a generalist.

Is there active and/or required research in your residency program?

Yes. Each resident is required to complete a research project during their residency. All residents are also required to present at the department's annual research day at least once. We present at Grand Rounds once per year starting in third year, as well as subspecialty rounds, journal club, academic half-day and rounds at our community hospitals. PGY-1s participate in a one week research methodology course together with residents from many other programs, and in the Surgical Foundations research day. As well, residents can participate in the Clinical Investigator Program (CIP), where you take a paid leave from residency to complete a masters or PhD.

What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?

The Western Central SOGC conference is held every spring in Banff or Lake Louise. The annual SOGC conference is held in late June, and it is a great way to meet the University of Alberta residents in attendance.

Where can we look for more information?

Check out our website! obgyn.med.ualberta.ca

We look forward to meeting you soon!

