

Frequently Asked Questions: Dermatopathology

Question	Answer
Institution - Sponsoring Institution	
<p>Under what circumstances would it be acceptable for the dermatopathology program to be associated with ACGME-accredited dermatology and pathology residencies from another sponsor if the sponsoring institution of the dermatopathology program does not sponsor ACGME-accredited dermatology and pathology residencies?</p> <p>[Program Requirement I.A.1]</p>	<p>It would be acceptable for the dermatopathology program to have an association or formal affiliation with the dermatology and pathology departments at another academic institution at which the program director has an academic appointment or is on the faculty part-time.</p>
Educational Program - Curriculum Organization and Fellow Experiences	
<p>How does the Review Committee define "direct inspection" in reference to diagnosing skin disorders, and in what contexts does the Review Committee expect fellows will acquire this experience?</p> <p>[Program Requirement IV.A.2.a).(2)]</p>	<p>Direct inspection refers to the assessment of primary and secondary skin lesions and their distribution on the body surface, resulting in the generation of a reasonable differential diagnosis and a determination of the most likely clinical diagnosis. Fellows who are dermatologists should already have acquired this skill.</p> <p>Fellows who are pathologists will have these same experiences, but will spend 50% of eight months of their 12-month fellowship examining patients in a dermatology clinic setting. In the clinic, direct inspection of lesions may be enhanced by techniques such as dermoscopy and Wood's light examination.</p> <p>Direct inspection related to the examination of gross specimens removed from the patient is more limited in scope but can also provide useful information. This takes place most often in the grossing room, and would probably be encountered more often by dermatology-educated fellows rotating in surgical pathology. Examples include assessments of irregular pigmentation, hemorrhage, or blistering, each of which may prompt a differential diagnosis or considerations about where sectioning of a specimen should be obtained.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>How does the Review Committee define “examine” in reference to dermatopathology specimens?</p> <p>[Program Requirement IV.A.3.a).(1).(a)]</p>	<p>With regard to dermatopathology specimens, “examine” means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reading the requisition form or consultation letter for demographic information, physical examination findings, and clinical history, e.g., travel history; 2. microscopic review of the H&E (hematoxylin and eosin) stained slides, integrating the information from #1 and developing a rational differential diagnosis list; 3. if necessary, ordering of histochemical stains, immunohistochemical stains, or molecular studies; 4. review and interpretation of #3 to assist in narrowing the list of differential diagnoses; 5. contacting the clinician, if necessary, to obtain further clinical information; and, 6. writing the pathology report and reviewing, with the supervising attending physician, on a double-headed microscope.* <p>* with graded responsibility, #6 may be done by “oversight supervision.”</p>
<p>How does the Review Committee define “examine” in reference to dermatology patients?</p> <p>[Program Requirement IV.A.3.a).(2).(a)]</p>	<p>The Review Committee considers “examination” to include the following actions that must be done by the fellow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. take a history focused on the skin issues; 2. perform a physical examination; 3. perform ancillary tests as indicated, including Wood's light examination, Tzanck smear, punch or shave biopsy; 4. write a clinic note; and, 5. review with supervising attending staff to countersign the clinic note.

Question	Answer
<p>How does the Review Committee define “examine” in reference to pathology specimens?</p> <p>[Program Requirement IV.A.3.a).(3).(a)]</p>	<p>For surgical pathology specimens, “examine” means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gross dissection and dictation, review of the requisition form, microscopic examination of the specimens, and signing out of specimens with the supervising attending physician; 2. sitting in on sign-outs of specimens that other pathology residents assigned to the surgical pathology service have worked up; or the pathology resident has grossed in; or, 3. reviewing study sets. <p>For cytopathology specimens, “examine” means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reviewing and signing out of specimens from those cases to which the fellow is specifically assigned, or from the cases for which the fellow was assigned to review and perform a microscopic examination; 2. sitting in on sign-outs of specimens that other pathology residents or cytopathology fellows have worked-up; 3. sitting in on cytopathology QA conferences; or, 4. reviewing study sets in cytopathology.
<p>Must the pathology education for dermatology-educated fellows be spread out over eight months?</p> <p>[Program Requirement IV.A.3.a).(3)]</p>	<p>There cannot be a four-month rotation in pathology only, as that would not meet the requirements that: there be eight months comprised of 50% pathology and 50% dermatopathology, averaged over one week; that the dermatopathology education must continue during the entire 12 months of education; and that education should be equivalent for all fellows (pathology-educated fellows would not have equivalent education).</p>
Duty Hours	
<p>Who is qualified to supervise fellows in patient care activities?</p> <p>[Program Requirement VI.D.1.]</p>	<p>In both the clinic setting, where fellows see patients, and in pathology or dermatopathology, where fellows work up and sign out biopsies or excisions, there must be a qualified attending staff physician who reviews and signs off on a fellow’s diagnosis and treatment plan, or pathology report. Since there is graded responsibility over the fellowship year as competency is documented, the attending physician may exercise indirect and/or possibly oversight supervision.</p>

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