



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
**FACULTY OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY**  
Department of Laboratory Medicine & Pathology



**ALBERTA PRECISION  
LABORATORIES**  
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## **Clinical Fellowship Program in Gastrointestinal Pathology**

Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB, Canada

Updated: April 5, 2021

### **Fellowship Committee:**

Dr. Safwat Girgis

Dr. Aducio Thiesen

Dr. Brinda Balachandra (Program Director)

Dr. Ross McLean

Dr. Justin Bateman

## **Contact Information:**

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Program Director, Gastrointestinal Pathology Fellowship  
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## **Introduction:**

The Gastrointestinal Pathology Fellowship is a comprehensive one-year program designed to prepare a highly motivated candidate for a successful career as a subspecialist pathologist. The fellowship is offered by the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine within the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta.

The University of Alberta Hospital, along with affiliated community hospitals, provides tertiary-level care to inhabitants of Edmonton, northern Alberta, and the territories. Over the course of one-year the fellow will have exposure to all forms of neoplastic and non-neoplastic gastrointestinal, pancreaticobiliary, and liver pathology, including pediatric and liver transplant.

The Division of Gastroenterology at the University of Alberta performs more than 25,000 advanced endoscopic surgical procedures per year with internationally recognized programs in inflammatory bowel disease, peptic ulcer disease, liver failure and liver transplantation, viral liver disease and human nutrition.

Edmonton is a vibrant and family friendly city known for its river valley, sports teams, annual festivals, and its diverse population. Edmonton is the capital of Alberta and is in relatively close proximity to the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

## **Program Governance Structure:**

The program director shall be appointed by the GI Pathology Fellowship Committee for a 3-year term position. The program director should be a pathologist with subspecialty interest in GI pathology and affiliation with the University of Alberta.

## **Fellowship Committee:**

Dr. Safwat Girgis, MB BCH, FRCPC  
Clinical Professor (UAH site)  
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta

Dr. Aducio Thiesen, MD, MSc, PhD, FRCPC  
Associate Professor (UAH site)  
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta

Dr. Brinda Balachandra, MD, FRCPC  
Associate Clinical Professor (RAH site)  
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta

Dr. Ross Mclean, MD, FRCPC  
Associate Clinical Professor (RAH site)  
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta

Dr. Justin Bateman, MD, FRCPC  
Clinical Lecturer (RAH and UAH sites)  
Department of Pathology and Lab Medicine  
Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, University of Alberta

**Program Objectives: Based on CanMEDS Framework**

**Medical Expert**

1. The fellow will acquire a strong and up-to-date knowledge base in both neoplastic and non-neoplastic gastrointestinal, pancreaticobiliary, and liver pathology.
2. Be responsible for complete work-up of biopsy and resection cases with graduated responsibilities provided over the course of the one-year program.
3. Focus on basic principles of surgical pathology with emphasis on the importance of gross examination and H&E morphology, along with appropriate use of ancillary investigations (e.g., immunohistochemistry, special stains, molecular testing, etc.).
4. Acquire proficiency and expertise in handling both routine and more challenging cases (including exposure to consult material).
5. Take advantage of additional learning opportunities including teaching sets, departmental rounds, conferences, etc.

**Communicator**

1. The fellow will ensure clear and ongoing communication with supervising pathology staff regarding all active cases.
2. Write clear and concise pathology reports.

3. Proactively communicate directly with clinical staff when appropriate (e.g., critical results, etc.).

### **Collaborator**

1. The fellow will demonstrate an ability and willingness to work respectfully with other pathologists, pathologist assistants, trainees, clinical colleagues, and technical and administrative staff.
2. Attend and participate in both intradepartmental consensus conferences and any appropriate multi-disciplinary rounds.
3. Share challenging cases with other faculty in order to achieve consensus.

### **Leader**

1. The fellow will be expected to take ownership of cases, ensuring timely work-up, safe practice, and quality care.
2. Appropriately supervise trainees, pathologist assistants, and technical staff.

### **Scholar**

1. The fellow is expected to participate in at least one original research project during the one-year program. Ideally this project will be submitted to a major pathology conference (e.g., USCAP, CAP-ACP, etc.) as an abstract for poster or platform presentation, as well for eventual publication in a peer-reviewed pathology journal.
2. Present journal club rounds to faculty and trainees 2-3 times per year.
3. Routinely perform literature searches when dealing with challenging cases and incorporating available research into diagnostic interpretations.
4. Utilizes up-to-date diagnostic terminology and references (e.g., current CAP protocols, WHO nomenclature, etc.).
5. Participates in both formal and informal teaching of trainees (including medical students and residents).

### **Professional**

1. Complies with relevant professional codes of conduct.
2. Zero tolerance for verbal, physical, or sexual abuse/harassment.

### **Health Advocate**

1. Advocates for patients by working up and reporting pathology results in a timely, accurate, and clear manner.
2. Reflexively orders all appropriate biomarkers.
3. Advocates for the health-care system by judicious use and ordering of ancillary tests (e.g., immunohistochemistry, special stains, etc.).

### **Curriculum:**

- Five blocks of GI pathology (UAH)
- Three blocks of GI pathology (RAH)
- One block of research (site TBD – could extend to two months if applicant is motivated)
- One block of pediatric GI pathology (UAH)
- One block to include endoscopy, molecular pathology, cytology, and conference attendance
- One block of elective time (requiring approval by the fellowship committee)
- One block of vacation time (specific dates requiring approval by the fellowship committee)

The program is one-year duration, beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 of the following year. The year is divided into 13 blocks (each block is four weeks long). Four weeks of vacation will be provided. The fellowship will predominantly be based out of the University of Alberta Hospital (UAH) and Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH), although exceptions may occur.

While on GI pathology service at either site the fellow will be assigned resections, biopsies, and consult cases from the scheduled staff pathologist. The fellow will be responsible for reviewing gross specimens while on service and will also participate in frozen section coverage. The fellow will shadow the pathologist on call for liver transplant while on service at UAH (in compliance with trainee call regulations and restrictions).

Involvement in at least one research project will be expected from the fellow with the intention of publishing in a peer-reviewed pathology journal (more research time may be permitted for a motivated candidate). Ideally the project will begin early enough for the fellow to be able to submit an abstract to a major pathology conference, and to have the project submitted for publication by the end of the one-year program.

The fellow will be expected to present a one-hour journal club to interested faculty and trainees 2-3x per year. The fellow will also be expected to teach a one-hour didactic lecture to residents as part of the resident academic half-day. Lastly, ongoing informal teaching and supervision of medical students and residents will be expected.

### **Evaluation:**

There will be an emphasis on informal formative feedback. Formal written evaluations will be provided to and discussed with the fellow on a quarterly basis. Successful completion of the fellowship will be determined by the fellowship committee and based upon written evaluations, completion of all fellowship requirements, and demonstration to the committee that the fellow is able to practice in an independent, responsible, ethical, and professional manner.

### **Eligibility:**

Applicants must have completed a residency in the specialty of anatomical or general pathology prior to commencing fellowship training. Clinical Fellows must meet the minimum eligibility requirements for licensure with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) to take up training at the University of Alberta.

### **How to Apply:**

Please submit the following materials to the program director (email preferred):

- Letter of intent
- Curriculum vitae
- Application form <https://www.ualberta.ca/laboratory-medicine-and-pathology/media-library/programs/clinical-fellowship-training-application-form.pdf>
- Three letters of reference (please have letters sent directly to the program director from references – email preferred)

Interviews will be offered to candidates based on review of the above documents. Interviews may be conducted virtually or in person depending on individual circumstances.

### **Important Information for Applicants:**

**Medical Practice License:** Applicants must have a valid Certificate of Registration for Postgraduate Education from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) or a valid CPSA Independent Practice License. The candidate will be required to provide documentation to CPSA including evidence of English Language Proficiency, references, Certificates of Professional Conduct, and verification of their medical degree through <http://physiciansapply.ca/> if degree was obtained outside of Canada.

**Malpractice Insurance:** Applicants must have malpractice insurance with the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA). Coverage can be obtained once the CPSA Certificate of Registration is issued. For information, contact the CMPA directly ([www.cmpa-acpm.ca](http://www.cmpa-acpm.ca)).

**Work Permit (visa):** Applicants who are neither Canadian citizens nor Permanent Residents require a work permit. The Faculty of Medicine Postgraduate Medical Education Office provides the necessary document(s) as required from the Canadian government office (Canadian Embassy, Consulate, High Commission, etc.) in the applicant's country of origin. There is a non-refundable visa-processing fee at the time of application.

### **Funding:**

As per Edmonton Zone Department fellowship allocation form University of Alberta and Alberta health Services. Salary will be at the PGY 5 level.