

# BWH long term (over 48hrs) clinical observational experience policy:

## Statement of policy/purpose:

The Brigham and Women's Hospital takes enormous pride in training and educating the next generation of physicians and healthcare workers. Most such training occurs as part of formal training arrangements such as medical student clerkships, ACGME accredited internships and residency training programs, and ACGME accredited fellowship programs. However, certain BWH Departments also offer non-credit, informal observation experiences for trainees not enrolled in the above entities but who desire to learn or gain basic exposure to the clinical environment. The purpose of this document is to ensure that all trainees, including those pursuing clinical observational experiences, are documented and abide by BWH Hospital policy ensuring no adverse impact on patient care or the academic environment. This policy pertains to experiences where observers are involved with the BWH clinical environment for more than 48hrs.

Clinical Observational Experiences (COE) at Brigham and Women's Hospital will: (1) provide observers with appropriate educational observations in a closely supervised safe environment, (2) protect the rights and dignity of the BWH patient without adversely impacting clinical care, and (3) maintain the confidentiality and security of protected health information (PHI), and other proprietary or confidential information. COE's are not training programs, and therefore do not provide BWH credit or any type of certification for trainee skills, level of training, or educational time.

Clinical Observational Experiences (COE's) at BWH are not affiliated with any Harvard Medical School program or clerkships(s). Participation in a BWH COE will not have a preferential impact on any pending or future training applications. Upon successful completion of a COE, observers will receive an acknowledgement of COE attendance from the offering Department, confirming the observer's dates of attendance. However, there is no formal credit provided. Prospective observers should also note that it will not be possible for professional or administrative staff to verify observers' clinical skills based on participation in a clinical observership or provide a grade. Likewise, BWH professional staff will not be expected to write letters of recommendation for clinical observers.

## Observer participation & limitations:

- The observer may join patient rounds and/or clinic opportunities under the direction of their BWH Faculty Supervisor but cannot ask questions or interrupt workflow. If there is time after rounds/clinic, questions can be directed to the faculty member or medical team. The observer must note that they are not fulfilling a role as a medical or nursing student. Medical or nursing students (different from clinical observers) are enrolled in a formal training program, and thus may have a direct role in patient care as part of the credentialed medical team.
- The observer can introduce themselves to a patient, but in no way can participate in the care of the patient, documentation of care, or give even the appearance of being a caregiver. Importantly, the observer may not take a medical history, or touch or examine a patient. The observer should not interact with family members of the patient. Observers are not allowed to place medical orders, provide verbal orders, or convey medical recommendations to other patients or other healthcare

members. The observers are not hospital employees or members for the professional staff, and may not represent themselves as such.

- The observers' activities must not interfere with the education or activities of medical students or graduate medical education trainees.
- Clinical observers cannot participate in research\* activities. Similarly, Clinical observers cannot publish any works that imply a formal affiliation with BWH.

*\*Non-employees who expect to participate in research should be onboarded through BWH OSSVS as a Research Trainee.*

### **Observer participation and limitations in the operating room, PACU, labor & delivery:**

Access to these locations is granted only by unique circumstance with awareness and approval by the Department Chair overseeing the Faculty Sponsor. In the Operating Room, PACU, and Labor & Delivery, observers must always be in the company of the Faculty Sponsor and/or the designee.

### **International observers**

- International physicians entering the country on either B1 or Visa Waiver/Business (WB) are welcome to seek observerships. Although the hospital cannot sponsor visas for non-employees, including clinical observers, the Sponsor can provide a formal letter of invitation upon request.

### **Current BWH employees**

- Current BWH employees not involved in clinical care (e.g. research trainees, research assistants) can apply for long term clinical observation in BWH Departments that will approve employee clinical observations. Note that not all BWH Departments allow clinical observation, and approval from the Chairperson, Vice- Chair of Education, or their delegate must be obtained. The duration of any clinical observation period will be firmly capped at 3 months without exception given the impact longer observation has on the broader education mission and other students. Employees must fully complete their long term observation packet. Departments will then follow this guide to complete the clearance process with the Office of Sponsored Staff.

### **Harvard Medical School students**

- Harvard Medical Students that are participating in POM or PCE at Brigham & Women's Hospital may clinically observe within a department so long as they have approval and oversight from a supervising physician who takes responsibility for their observation and participation. Departments will be responsible for tracking and overseeing all efforts during the observation period.
- Harvard Medical Students that are participating in POM or PCE at a different Harvard Affiliated Hospital must contact the department in which they wish to clinically observe (seeking approval), as well as the Brigham & Women's Hospital Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Manager. If the student is not already onboarded as a BWH medical student, the UME Manager will complete the onboarding of the student. Note that paperwork for this must be submitted 3 or more weeks in advance of the clinical observation date, similar to onboarding for all HMS students. Departments will be responsible for requesting any additional resources needed to complete the clinical observation inclusive of scrubs and badges. Departments will be responsible for tracking the observation period.

*Please note that the BWH Observational Experience Policy is subject to change based on hospital policies.*



## Process for applying for an observational experience:



## Termination of clinical observership experience:

BWH reserves the right to terminate a clinical observership **at any time** in the event of observer non-compliance with the terms of the Observership Agreement or if the observer becomes an obstacle to trainee, learning, or patient well-being.

