DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE **Student Observership Protocol**	**Responsible unit:** Undergraduate Medical Education Office	**Established:** March 26, 2016 (Halifax, DMNS) March 29, 2022 (New Brunswick, DMNB) Sep 24, 2026 (Cape Breton, CBMC) **Last revised:** Sep 24, 2026 (CBMC, DMNB & DMNS Consolidation)

A. Background & Purpose

As part of the undergraduate medical education program, Dalhousie medical students spend a significant amount of time in the many health facilities throughout New Brunswick, PEI and Nova Scotia completing core rotations and electives. Students may also choose to spend time with Dalhousie's Nova Scotia and New Brunswick faculty members and interprofessional health colleagues, observing their medical practices in a variety of settings including clinics, emergency departments, etc. outside of the regular undergraduate medical education program. These experiences are called observerships. Medical students interact with patients and have access to patient information during observerships but are not permitted to be involved in direct patient care. Observerships are not permitted during clerkship years including Med3, Med4, and Med5. Students must manage time in observership within the typical week Schedule and are expected to conduct observerships outside of mandated class time as per the Pre-Clerkship Absence & Attendance Policy. All students must be in good academic standing to participate in observerships.

This protocol only applies to Dalhousie observerships. Students are not permitted to participate in observerships outside of New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia.

Students in Med 1 and 2 seeking involvement in direct clinical activities can participate in mandatory electives and pursue optional summer electives providing experiences in direct patient care with supervision. Details of summer electives and malpractice insurance (see the *"Summer Electives Manual"*) are available in the Summer Electives section on Brightspace. Students in Med 1 and 2 may arrange summer electives outside of New Brunswick, PEI and Nova Scotia.

B. Application

This Protocol applies to medical students who choose to interact with patients and have access to patient information during Dalhousie observerships in New Brunswick, PEI and Nova Scotia.

C. Definitions

1. In this Protocol:

    a. "Observership" means spending time within a clinical setting, with an appropriate clinical supervisor such as a faculty member, observing medical practices outside of regular scheduled curriculum.

    b. "Student" means Medical Student enrolled in Dalhousie University's medical education program

D. **Guideline**

UGME must approve all observership requests. To ensure that students have the appropriate insurance coverage, students must obtain approval from the pertinent health authority.

E. **Procedures**

The following procedures MUST be followed before any observerships can take place:

Step 1 – Action by Students:

- Students must identify a preceptor and ensure that the preceptor is willing to host them for an observership.
- Students must fill out an observership request form and confirm that their preceptor has approved the request.
- The proposed start date must be at least (**3) weeks** from the date the request was submitted, and the date range cannot be longer than six (6) months.
- SharePoint Form is linked **here**.

Step 2 – Action by UGME:

- Observership request is reviewed by UGME's campus-specific Associate Dean, or Assistant Dean, Pre-Clerkship
- The student will be notified about the status of the request within 10 business days.

Step 3 – Action by Regional Health Authority

After the student receives confirmation of the request sent by UGME, the student must connect with the preceptor for the Regional Health Authority Medical Education Office contact or equivalent administrator. This will ensure all administration and confidentiality paperwork is complete.

Both the Preceptor and student must review the Professional standards regarding physician responsibilities for clinical observers and their practice:

College of Physicians & Surgeons: Nova Scotia

College of Physicians & Surgeons: PEI

At this point, the process is complete.

This process is required for any observership experiences outside of formal courses/learning experiences – **there are no exceptions**.

References:
University of Saskatchewan's Shadowing Policy