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## Mayo Clinic Pathology Residency Frequently Asked Questions

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### **Is the frozen section rotation a general surgical pathology rotation or a frozen section rotation?**

The frozen section rotation, also known as the sink rotation, is probably best thought of as a combination of a frozen section rotation and a general surgical pathology rotation. The volume and variety of specimen material seen by residents while on the sink is comparable to what would be seen during a general surgical pathology rotation at a large medical center, yet the workflow is that of a frozen section laboratory.

Accordingly, the nine blocks spent on the sink rotation over the course of four years is slightly less time than would be spent on a general surgical pathology rotation at many programs. The elements that are missing from a traditional general surgical pathology rotation are provided through the XRSR biopsy rotation and other organ-specific rotations, such as gastrointestinal pathology and dermatopathology.

### **Will the frozen section rotation prepare me for a traditional practice following residency?**

Yes. Former residents who have gone out into community practice or academia outside Mayo Clinic have not indicated any difficulty in adjusting to a more traditional practice. A single-color toluidine stain is used in frozen section because it produces a fast and easily readable stain. The toluidine blue stain produces a slightly different staining pattern compared to Hematoxylin and Eosin (H&E), but the morphologic features are inherent to the tissue. Toluidine blue also provides superior nuclear detail compared to H&E which can be very helpful in some situations. The frozen section model may be unique to Mayo, but the skills learned in the lab are universally applicable within any pathology work setting. The primary skills that residents develop in the lab are gross pathological examination skills, frozen section slide interpretation skills, and most importantly, communication skills.

The majority of rotations during your residency will follow a more traditional method of examining formalin-fixed, H&E sections. Your experiences in the frozen section lab will enhance your diagnostic and communication skills. The volume and variety of cases seen in the frozen section lab, and rapid process of correlating gross findings, microscopic findings, and diagnosis is an unparalleled way to learn surgical pathology that has been effective in training surgical pathologists for decades.

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### **What is the clinical pathology training like at Mayo Clinic?**

The clinical pathology portion of the curriculum consists of:

- Hematopathology (4 blocks)
- Lymph node pathology (1 block)
- Cytogenetics (1 block)
- Coagulation (1 block)
- Transfusion medicine (4 blocks)
- Molecular genetics (2 blocks)
- Microbiology (2 blocks)
- Clinical chemistry (3 blocks)

Mayo's clinical laboratories are staffed by experienced clinical pathologists who are eager to teach residents. Because Mayo also operates a rapidly growing national reference laboratory, residents have the opportunity to sign out cases with recognized authorities in the laboratory diagnosis of numerous rare diseases. Because fellowships are offered by many of these areas, established educational programs are already in place that the resident may take advantage of while rotating through various laboratories.

Residents receive extensive exposure to laboratory management by attending numerous administrative meetings with lab directors. Residents also participate in the biannual internal College of American Pathologists (CAP) inspections and are often invited to serve on external CAP inspection teams. Second-year residents participate in the unique Leadership and Management Seminar Series.

### **What kind of hours do residents work?**

On average, residents work approximately 50 to 60 hours a week and rarely have to come in on weekends, except when rotating through transfusion medicine and taking autopsy call or coverage. A typical day starts at 7:15 a.m. with a morning conference and ends sometime around 6 p.m., depending on the rotation. Residents will be assigned by the Chief Resident for weekend autopsy call, transfusion medicine call and chemistry call. Weekend autopsy rotations begin in the first year during your scheduled autopsy blocks. Transfusion medicine and clinical chemistry call consists of after-hours at-home pager call one week at a time, as well as day call during assigned rotations. Frozen section does not have call obligations.

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### **What research opportunities are available to residents?**

Residents may choose to engage in basic, translational or clinical research depending on the level of their interest, research background, and time availability. Research is encouraged but not required. Most residents end up working on at least one project which forms the basis for a “senior year talk”. Many residents also present at the USCAP meeting each year. Recent residents and fellows have won prestigious awards at the USCAP meeting including the Stowell-Orbison award, the Gastrointestinal Pathology Society award and the Society for Cardiovascular Pathology award. For those who wish to have extended time for research during residency, a fully funded physician-scientist research track and an institutional [Clinician-Investigator Training Program](#) are available.

### **What is it like living in Rochester, Minnesota?**

Rochester is a very livable city — in fact, it was ranked No. 1 on [Livability's 2017 ranking](#) of the best small to mid-sized cities in the U.S. Rochester and the surrounding communities have a population of approximately 120,000.

Rochester has an excellent public school system, affordable housing, a variety of restaurants and local cultural institutions, including the Rochester Art Center and Rochester Civic Theatre. There are also numerous outdoor recreational activities available within Rochester, including multiple golf courses, an extensive bike path network, public tennis courts, two climbing wall gyms and a volleyball center. The "Twin Cities" of Minneapolis and St. Paul are located approximately 80 miles north of Rochester.

Find out more about [campus life in Rochester](#).

### **What is it like working at Mayo?**

Mayo Clinic is a remarkable institution and is almost impossible to describe to someone who has not personally visited. Mayo is absolutely committed to providing the highest possible level of patient care and has not been afraid to invest significant financial and human resources towards achieving that goal. Just one example within the division of anatomic pathology is the very large number of support staff. Each of the forty anatomic pathology consultants has at least one administrative assistant who can order special stains, request outside blocks, transcribe dictations and perform numerous other functions that might otherwise be relegated to the resident as scutwork. This high level of support allows the consultant to focus on patient care issues and the resident to focus on learning.

### **Does Mayo provide laptops for all of its pathology residents?**

Yes, you will have a laptop with wireless connectivity for the duration of your residency. The residents' area, anatomic pathology floor, and all others areas where residents rotate are wireless-enabled.

### **Does Mayo have a travel policy for residents presenting at meetings?**

Yes. Residents are reimbursed for airfare, hotel, registration fees, meals and incidentals for meetings at which they are presenting work performed at Mayo. Each year, many residents present at the USCAP meetings as well as various subspecialty meetings.

### **What have previous residents gone on to do?**

Follow this [link](#) for previous resident placement.

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### **What will my interview day be like?**

Your interview day begins around 8:30 a.m. with a program overview by the program director. Then, you have a series of 30-minute interviews with members of the recruitment team, followed by a lunch with residents and a tour of the frozen section and autopsy labs. (Alternate tours will be available for applicants interested in the clinical pathology (CP)-only curriculum as part of the physician scientist research track.)

In the afternoon, there are a few more interviews and a final wrap-up meeting with the current residents.

### **Can I spend more time with the residents during my interview day?**

Yes. We traditionally offer a dinner with one or two of our current residents the evening before your interview day. The dinner is meant as an opportunity to meet some of our residents in an informal setting. You are under no obligation to accept. We always enjoy taking applicants out for dinner, but we also understand that travel itineraries do not always allow it. Furthermore, a group of residents will go to lunch with you and provide additional candid insights into the program.

### **What if I have additional questions?**

Feel free to contact program coordinator Kristina M. Smith or program director Brad S. Karon, M.D., Ph.D., by email at [pathologyeducation@mayo.edu](mailto:pathologyeducation@mayo.edu) or by phone at 507- 284-1196.