

THE SHADOWING PROGRAM FOR INCOMING MEDICAL STUDENTS' GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended to help both shadowing medical students and volunteer physicians take part in a program that:

- (a) Maximizes the opportunity for incoming medical students to experience, firsthand, what it is like to work in a contemporary family practice; and
- (b) Minimizes the physicians' time away from patients and other clinical and administrative responsibilities

NOTE FOR VOLUNTEER PHYSICIANS: Feel free to modify these guidelines to best meet the uniqueness of your clinical setting.

SHADOWING PROGRAM PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS

STUDENT:

- Students will be required to complete an online Shadowing Program application to provide information on preferred location/clinical setting, availability, and contact information
- Following shadowing placements, students are required to complete an online Shadowing Program assessment. This information is collected to help the ACFP develop/enhance the Shadowing Program for future medical students
- Students do not have to be pre-registered with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) to participate in this Shadowing Program
- **Students are only permitted to shadow the physician.** Students are encouraged to listen, watch, and learn from physician-patient interaction. Direct involvement or assistance with patient intervention is not allowed

PHYSICIAN:

- For matching purposes, physicians are required to complete an online Volunteer Shadowing Program Intake application.
- Following shadowing placements, Physicians will be asked to evaluate the Shadowing Program by completing an online Volunteer Shadowing Program assessment.
- All physician participants are expected to be a CPSA and ACFP member in good standing.
- All physician participants are expected to adhere to the CPSA's "[Advice to the Profession: Medical practice observation experience](#)"

CONTACT INFORMATION

The ACFP office will forward contact information to both physician and student once a match has been made. The student should contact the physician prior to the experience to arrange the date, time, and location for the initial meeting with the physician. This can be done via email or phone.

Please contact the ACFP office if you are unable to connect with each other.

PHASE ONE OF SHADOWING PROGRAM

INITIAL MEETING

The purpose of the initial meeting is making introductions and allow the volunteer physician to say a few words about their practice. Students may want to indicate why they chose to participate in the Shadowing Program and what they hope to take away from the experience. Other topics to consider discussing during the initial meeting include:

- **Terms and definitions** – Review the terms ‘shadowing’, ‘clinic office’, and any other terms. Both parties discuss how they define these terms and adopt a common understanding for the placement
- **Clinic expectations** – Discuss clinic operations and expectations, for example dress code. Students are expected to dress in professional attire (i.e., business casual) unless otherwise specified
- **Confidentiality agreements** – If necessary, the physician/clinic should prepare a confidentiality agreement and provide it to the student at the initial meeting
- **Placement schedule** – Discuss common availabilities for the placement to occur. Scheduling can vary and be any combination of mornings, afternoons, or evening on-call opportunities. Preferences will be shared; however, it is ultimately up to the physician’s availability, learning opportunities, and discretion. Other arrangements/times may be suggested for the student’s consideration
 - Shadowing opportunities average between two to four days within the two-week timeframe

Once shadowing dates have been selected, please email this information to: shadowing@acfp.ca.

PHASE TWO OF SHADOWING PROGRAM

SHADOWING EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The onsite shadowing experience expectations should have been addressed during the initial meeting. Thus, your shadowing experience can focus on the following.

- **Establish a professional dialogue protocol** – The physician and student should designate set times during the placement when the student can ask questions or seek clarification. For example, taking 15-20 minutes at the start or end of each day. It is at the discretion and convenience of the physician to address questions on an ad hoc basis (e.g., between appointments)
 - **NOTE FOR STUDENTS: You are encouraged take notes about your experience, not on personal identifying information.** Pose questions in an appropriate environment (e.g., not in the presence of patients), and raise these with the physician during the times designated, unless otherwise instructed by physician
- **Clinical introductions** – Introduce the student to clinic staff and if time permits, provide the following:
 - **A clinic walkthrough** of the physical layout of the space – this can be done by the volunteer physician or another available staff member

POTENTIAL SHADOWING EXPERIENCE GOALS

There is no structured curriculum for the Shadowing Program; however, the following areas related to family practice are **suggested topics** to be addressed during placements:

- Family physician lifestyle: balancing the physician’s own health with work, holidays, shifts, community expectations, and other demands
- Choosing family medicine as a first-choice specialty
- Diversity of practice: discuss available options to family practice (e.g., rural, urban, private practice, hospital privileges, community resource supports, etc.)
- The value of longitudinal therapeutic relationships (e.g., trusted patient-physician experience, cradle-to-grave care, complex care, Patient’s Medical Home, etc.)
- Working within Alberta’s health care system – partners, relationships, and models of team-based care (e.g., family physician colleagues, other specialists, Alberta Health Services, the ACFP, Alberta Medical Association, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA))
- Comprehensive care and options on selecting a continued area of competency (e.g., obtaining additional certification in elderly care, obstetrics, sports medicine, emergency medicine, etc.)
- Exploring other activities such as teaching, research, administration, CME, liability issues, third-party contracts (WCB, insurance claims), and PCNs
- Effective business management strategies (e.g., overhead costs, staffing, business models, etc.)

NOTES REGARDING RURAL SHADOWING PROGRAM EXPERIENCES/EXPENSES

For those students who shadow in a rural location, four days is the maximum number of days that will receive reimbursement (maximum of 4 days and 3 nights) unless previously arranged with ACFP staff.

If you choose a rural location and must travel to a town or city outside of the city of Calgary or Edmonton, costs associated with parking, travel, accommodation, and meals will be reimbursed if required. Suburban locations such as Sherwood Park, Spruce Grove or St. Albert are excluded as rural settings and will not be considered for expense reimbursement.

CPSA ADVICE TO THE PROFESSION

For further information regarding clinical observation, please read the [CPSA’s “Advice to the Profession: Medical practice observation experience”](#).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information about the ACFP Shadowing Program, please contact:

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