

McMaster University, Hamilton (2022)
Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology

Program Director: Dr. Michelle Morais
1200 Main Street West
Hamilton ON, L8N 3Z5

What are you looking for specifically in an impressive candidate?

We welcome a variety of individuals to our program! We are looking for applicants who demonstrate strong interpersonal and leadership skills, well-rounded competencies, and a genuine commitment to women's health issues. Interest in women's health can be shown in many domains, including but not limited to advocacy, research, and clinical work.

What can a potential candidate do now in order to be an appealing applicant to your program?

Due to COVID-19 and the limitation on electives, we appreciate that this may be a challenging process to navigate. We are working on adapting our assessment process and are looking forward to reviewing your applications in the near future!

How is your residency program organized? (i.e. year by year breakdown and schedule of rotations)

PGY-1

Transition to Discipline

OB/GYN: 3 blocks

Internal Medicine CTU: 1 block

Obstetrical Medicine: 1 block

General Surgery: 2 blocks

ICU: 2 blocks

Emergency Medicine: 1 block

Anesthesia: 1 block

NICU: 1 block

Sexual Medicine & Women's Mental Health: 1 block

*Surgical Foundations curriculum takes place weekly throughout PGY1.

There is also an introductory 2-week Surgical Foundations boot camp that consists of didactic and hands-on sessions. We also recently added on a separate OB/GYN Boot Camp to orient residents and present common topics for Labour & Delivery.

PGY-2

Foundations of Discipline

General Obstetrics: 5 blocks (As a PGY2, you will be the senior resident at St. Joseph's Hospital, which is the low-risk obstetrics site in Hamilton. There

is also opportunity to rotate through neighbouring community sites)

General Gynecology: 6 blocks

Gynecologic Oncology: 2 blocks

PGY3-PGY5

Core of Discipline & Transition to Practice

Maternal-Fetal Medicine: 3 blocks

Urogynecology: 3 blocks

Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility: 3 blocks

Colposcopy: 2-3 blocks

Gynecologic Oncology: 3 blocks

Ultrasound: 1 block low-risk, 2 blocks high-risk

Prenatal Diagnosis Clinic: 2 weeks

Laparoscopy: 1-2 blocks

Senior Gynecology: 3 blocks

Chief Obstetrics: 2-4 blocks

Chief Gynecology: 2-4 blocks

Senior Rotation: 3-4 blocks

Electives*: 6-9 blocks

*Elective time is scattered throughout PGY3-5. Each resident gets 6-9 blocks total, of which at least 3 can be taken off the call schedule.

What is your residency program's orientation and focus?

We excel in minimal access surgery, resident learning and mentorship, and research literacy. We hope to provide our residents with wide exposure across both generalist and subspecialty practice to facilitate high-quality clinical education and informed career decision-making.

What is the availability of experiences in subspecialty areas during training?

Excellent! We have strong programs in REI, Gynecologic Oncology, Minimally Invasive Surgery, Urogynecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine. Our residents graduate as capable generalists but there is an abundance of opportunity for electives and exposure to this wide range of subspecialties.

We also have a unique Obstetrical Medicine rotation in PGY1 which residents find incredibly educational and insightful, especially when it comes to the more complex obstetrics patients.

What is the typical day in the life of a resident?

Daily activities can vary depending on the rotation, particularly as a PGY1 on off-service blocks. While on Obstetrics & Gynecology rotations, there is daily teaching at 07:00-07:30. These sessions include learners across all levels, including medical students, junior, and senior residents. Handover takes place at 07:30 on weekdays and 08:00 on weekends. Teams may agree to meet prior to handover to see their patients. Evening handover takes place at 17:00.

If on labour and delivery, the team will then divide up the work for the day (eg. inductions, labouring patients, cesarean sections) and see the postpartum patients. The teams in the OR start their cases at 7:45 and are scheduled until 15:30. There are several clinics to attend both in the hospital and off-site, whose hours vary depending on the day.

Departmental rounds are on Wednesday mornings in place of teaching and grand rounds occur once a month. The OB/GYN Department's academic half-day occurs on Wednesday afternoons and includes learners across years PGY 2-5. Residents are protected from clinical duties in order to attend these rounds.

What is the resident satisfaction?

Resident satisfaction is extremely high. Collegiality and professionalism are two core values within the department and therefore our residents are a tight-knit group who support each other throughout their collective residency journeys. Our residents enjoy the variable surgical and clinical experiences that our hospitals have to offer. As a city to practice within, Hamilton is home to a wide variety of patient populations across a spectrum of cultures, socio-economic status, and health. The diversity allows our residents to cultivate strong social competencies and also participate firsthand in unique clinical cases. Lastly, we have a resident wellness committee that meets regularly to ensure that adequate supports are in place for our learners. There are also plenty of social events throughout the year, including the weekend retreat, welcome BBQs, and resident appreciation night!

Are there sufficient elective opportunities during training to explore your special interests?

There is more than sufficient time, and the program is extremely flexible with regard to the needs of residents with particular interests. There is great support and advocacy from the program in finding you the skills/opportunities you wish for. There are 6 to 9 blocks of elective time throughout residency. Up to 3 blocks of the elective time can be off the call schedule at McMaster. Some residents choose to go overseas for international electives. Residents also help each other with finding electives and covering the call schedules when needed to accommodate resident electives.

What is the on-call schedule during each year of residency?

Our on-call system consists of a day shift from 7:30-17:00 and a night shift from 17:00-7:30. On weekends, handover occurs at 8:00 instead.

In PGY1, call shifts are structured differently by each of the individual services through which you will be rotating. When on Obstetrics & Gynecology rotations, call shifts are 24 hours for both weekdays and weekends. In PGY2 and beyond, weekday shifts are 24 hours but weekend shifts are 12 hours. On weekends, our call shifts are split into 12-hour day and night shifts with residents typically working a combination of shifts (eg. Saturday day shift & Sunday night shift).

What distinguishes the McMaster program from other programs?

Our program emphasizes early competence, surgical exposure, and leadership on the obstetrics floor early in PGY2. Faculty at our teaching sites are very accustomed to working with junior residents and well-versed in CBME requirements. Our learners have a lot of autonomy and quickly develop skills both surgically, in clinic, and on L&D.

Ensuring an exceptional resident experience is the utmost priority of our program. Our administration regularly seeks out feedback from our learners in order to assess progress and implement change as needed in a timely and well-thought out fashion. Our program director is very responsive and passionate about medical education.

What distinguishes your city from others?

Hamilton is a busy centre with a large catchment area, providing many interesting cases and a large volume of patients for trainees. The population is very multicultural and socioeconomically diverse, which facilitates comprehensive training and encourages opportunity for social advocacy for our vulnerable populations. In addition to being an urban centre and only a short distance from other major cities, Hamilton has many beautiful natural areas (Niagara, Dundas Conservation Area, Bruce Trail) for those who enjoy the outdoors and is well-known as the waterfall capital of the world! This city has seen vast amounts of development over the years. Once a predominantly industrial town, Hamilton has evolved into a vibrant region for the arts. The food scene is constantly growing and there are dense pockets of local restaurants, breweries, farmers' markets, and nearby wineries. It is a family-friendly city that has maintained its Steel City roots and commitment to Hamiltonians, new and old.

How competitive is it to get in and then to succeed in your field?

In the past few years, there has been a strong demand for CaRMS positions. In the past 2020 CaRMS cycle, there were 167 applicants in total and only 81 spots across the country. Most years have all spots filled after the first iteration. However, enthusiastic and dedicated students generally do well and match to the specialty.

Is there active and/or required research in your residency program?

Each resident is required to complete a research project and present at our annual research day, RT Weaver Day. We have a diverse range of faculty research interests who are all happy to supervise projects or provide research mentorship. We have a dedicated research coordinator, Nicole Gervais, who is an invaluable resource to the program. In addition, WIHRIP (Women's and Infants' Health Research in Progress Rounds) is a monthly event where residents can present their ongoing research in various stages of development and receive constructive feedback and generate ideas from peers and faculty.

What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?

Any conferences, on either the national or international level, that demonstrates a genuine interest in the specialty. E.g. SOGC, ACOG, AAGL, ISUOG, EPCM etc.

Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?

Pascale Wilmot (Residency Program Coordinator), pgobgyn@mcmaster.ca

Website: <https://obsgyn.mcmaster.ca/education/postgraduate>

Specifically, is there a list of residents whom we can contact?

Shikha Kuthiala, shikha.kuthiala@medportal.ca (PGY4)

Nancy Vu, nancy.vu@medportal.ca (PGY2)

Isabella Fan Isabella.fan@medportal.ca (PGY1)