



COLUMBIA OPHTHALMOLOGY OBSERVERSHIP

The **Columbia Ophthalmology Observership** program offers clinicians and non-clinicians from outside institutions the opportunity for ongoing training and education through Columbia University Medical Center at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) and the Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute. The Observership program is offered throughout the year, providing the opportunity to observe our world-class physicians and researchers deliver internationally recognized care.

While observers must refrain from "hands-on" patient contact due to hospital regulations, they are able to observe, first-hand, the highest level of medical and surgical ophthalmology in a host of subspecialty areas. Participants are also encouraged and welcome to take part in research efforts.

Observership Sub-Specialty Areas:

- Anterior Segment and Refractive Surgery
- Comprehensive Ophthalmology
- Genetics
- Glaucoma
- Neuro-ophthalmology
- Oculoplastic Surgery
- Ophthalmic Oncology
- Pediatric Ophthalmology
- Retina

Applicants specifically interested in Optometry are also welcome to apply for an Optometry Observership.

The following information answers many of the most Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the program. Also, the application checklist that follows will assist you in preparing your application. Once you have reviewed the information below, additional questions may be directed to Denise Abreu at heiobservership@cumc.columbia.edu.

OBSERVERSHIP FAQ

What is an Observership? An Observership allows interested individuals to observe clinical practices and/or research at the Columbia University Medical Center.

Who can be an Observer?

- Scholars from American universities and colleges outside the New York metropolitan area who are not teaching at Columbia University or participating in a research project sponsored by it;
- Scholars who work or reside in the greater New York area and are on leave from their home institutions;
- Graduate students from other American universities and colleges;
- Members of research laboratories or institutions; and
- Staff and students of foreign hospitals and universities.

There are two types of Observerships – clinical and non-clinical – requiring different application forms. All observers must be sponsored by a member of the NYPH medical staff and must have the approval of the Service Chief, and must be appropriately registered with the Workforce Health and Safety (WHS) prior to commencement of the Observership experience. Regardless of background and experience, no observer is allowed to have any patient care responsibilities or engage in any “hands-on” experience with patients and their families. Observers must always be accompanied by their sponsor or a university/hospital employee while in patient/clinical care areas.

- **Clinical Observership** is for a physician, dentist, or PhD who is involved in clinical practice and desires to visit NYPH for an informal educational experience.
- **Non-Clinical Observership** may include high school students, visiting undergraduates, post-baccalaureates, and other observers (who observe but do not practice research or clinical techniques or processes) or trainees (who receive training in research or clinical techniques or processes, including practice with appropriate supervision).

How long does an Observership last? The length of any Observership may range from one day to three months.

How much does an Observership cost? There is no charge for the Observership; however, there is an administrative fee.

Observership Fee: \$350.00 USD covers administrative costs associated with the Observership and is non-refundable. Scholarships are available on a case-by-case basis.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

There is a two-step application process for the **Columbia Ophthalmology Observership**.

STEP ONE - Applicants must first complete and submit an online application for Observership in a particular subspecialty. Then, preceptor pairing finds and pairs the prospective Observer with an appropriate member of the CUMC-NYPH Faculty. If an available preceptor is identified, the applicant receives “conditional program acceptance” within 20 business days of application submission.

STEP TWO - Conditionally approved Observership candidates must next complete the application process by providing the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae
2. Medical Attestation Forms – to be signed by the observer and completed by the observer’s healthcare provider. **This must be completed within 3 months of the start date. Incomplete forms will NOT be accepted.**
3. Immunization Record – to demonstrate you have had:
 - PPD within one year
 - PPD within one month of starting
 - Vaccines for Hepatitis B
 - Rubella
 - Measles
 - Varicella
 - Mumps
 - Flu vaccination documentation (September – March)
4. Scrub Access Form – to be completed and returned by the applicant.

Once these materials have been submitted and reviewed, the candidate’s application will be considered. If full approval is granted, the Columbia Department of Ophthalmology will advise the applicant of their acceptance. In the same communication, the effective start date will be confirmed and the approved observer will be put in contact with their preceptor.

5. The Observership fee (\$350.00 USD) is due by check on the first date of the Observership. Checks should be made out to “The Trustees of Columbia University” and indicate “Ophthalmology Department” in the note/memo section of the check.

All forms can be found on the Observership website: www.columbiaeye.org/content/observerships

OTHER OBSERVERSHIP RESOURCES

Columbia DOES NOT PROVIDE VISAS OR HOUSING ASSISTANCE. However, the following resources are available:

Immigration

AVVO.com – A searchable online directory for Immigration lawyers and others offering legal assistance.

Housing

There is no formal housing offered through New York-Presbyterian Hospital - Columbia University Medical Center. However, there are plenty of options to consider depending on your length of stay, as follows:

- Columbia Housing – See the pdf on the Observership page at Columbiaeye.org
- The Edge Hotel - www.edgehotelnyc.com
- Air BnB - www.airbnb.com
- Tripping.com

Please note the choices above are not your only options. You may certainly find alternatives. Companies offering extended stay rentals, include but are not limited those listed here:

(www.tripping.com/industry/rentalcompanies/9-airbnb-competitors-that-you-should-know-about).

Finally, please direct further inquiries to heiobservership@cumc.columbia.edu .