PATHOLOGISTS’ ASSISTANT—M.S.

Program director
Cheryl Germain

Clinical Coordinator
Michael Weitzeil

Medical director
Jeremy Deisch

Loma Linda University offers a professional course of study leading to the M.S. degree in Pathology, Pathologists’ Assistant. This degree prepares students for a career as mid-level health-care professionals in hospital pathology laboratories, private laboratories, universities, and industry.

Program objectives
Upon completion of the program, the pathologists’ assistant (PA) graduate will be qualified to (under the supervision of a pathologist):

Surgical pathology
1. Ensure correct specimen identification and submission techniques prior to processing.
2. Supervise specimen accessioning and laboratory information systems for correct patient and specimen correlation.
3. Recognize and identify pathology in surgical specimens, correlating the correct technique for dissection and evaluation for tissue submission.
4. Order special testing on tissues as necessary to specimen management, including radiology, immunohistochemistry, flow cytometry, cytogenetics, immunofluorescence, microbiology, etc.
5. Perform stat frozen section and special testing procedures, such as kidney biopsy evaluation, intraoperatively.
6. Correlate the full patient history and treatment with pathologic findings for professional presentation.
7. Manage and train other health care professionals such as residents, medical students, and PA students in surgical pathology.
8. Manage the surgical pathology suite while acting as liaison to nursing, surgery, and other hospital services.

Autopsy pathology
1. Ensure correct procedural permissions and patient identification.
2. Perform a full external examination for hospital and forensic autopsy cases.
3. Conduct a complete evisceration utilizing various techniques as required by permissions and patient history, ordering and variously performing special testing as necessary.
4. Formulate a preliminary anatomic diagnosis within 24 hours of the procedure.
5. Compile a complete autopsy report for submission to the pathologist.
6. Review and report pathologic findings to pathologists and other pertinent clinical practitioners.
7. Act as liaison to patient families and outsourced services for the department.
8. Train other health-care professionals—including residents, medical students, nurses, and PAs—in autopsy technique and management.
9. Develop and maintain procedural and training manuals for the autopsy service.
10. Manage the autopsy service and staff and act as liaison to other hospital departments and outsourced services.

Other
1. Teach at the university level.
2. Work in research and/or industry (pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical equipment and devices, etc.).

Program outcomes
In addition to the stated institutional learning outcomes, (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/institutional-learning-outcomes) the M.S. degree in Pathology, Pathologists’ Assistant student is expected to meet the following program learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate basic science knowledge in pathology and clinical laboratory sciences.
2. Demonstrate competence, knowledge, and clinical skills in anatomic pathology.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in pathology and clinical laboratory sciences.

Accreditation
Loma Linda University is regionally accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501; telephone: 510/748-9001; fax: 510/748-9797; Web site: <http://www.wascsenior.org> or <http://www.wascsenior.org/contact>.

Pathologists’ Assistant Program accreditation
Accreditation is a long and complicated process. Preliminarily, the Pathologists’ Assistant Program will be comprehensively reviewed by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) to achieve “serious applicant status” prior to graduation of the first class. This designation makes the program’s graduates eligible to take the national certification examination administered by the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP).

NAACLS is the premier accreditation for pathologists’ assistant programs. Strict standards required for this accreditation ensure a quality education and preparation for the certification examination and competence in the field as a pathologists’ assistant. The Loma Linda University School of Medicine Pathologists’ Assistant Program will adhere to those standards to produce high-quality and competent pathologists’ assistants.

For further information, please visit http://www.naacls.org or contact:
National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
5600 North River Road, Suite 720
Rosemont, IL 60018-5119
847/939-3597
773/714-8880
Admissions

The application period for the inaugural class (Class of 2017) is February 15, 2015- May 31, 2015. Dates are strict for acceptance of application materials and only select applicants will be invited for an individual interview (no group interviews). The first class will include 10-12 students. The accepted students will be notified by July 15 to begin the Autumn, 2015 quarter.

In addition to Loma Linda University (http://llucatalog.llu.edu/about-university/admission-policies-information/#admissionrequirementstext), the applicant must fulfill the following requirements:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution, completed by May of the year of application (final transcripts must be submitted before May 31).
2. A cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 or higher.
3. All prerequisite courses must be completed at an accredited college or university in the United States prior to admission. Transcripts from international institutions are not accepted.
   a. Human anatomy and physiology with laboratory (complete sequence), 12 quarter units/ 8 semester units
   b. General chemistry with laboratory (complete sequence), 12 quarter units/ 8 semester units
   c. Organic chemistry (complete sequence), 12 quarter units/ 8 semester units
   d. Microbiology with laboratory, 4 credits
   e. College algebra or higher, 3 credits
   f. English composition (complete sequence)
   g. Strongly recommended: medical terminology and conversational Spanish
4. Three letters of recommendation. Suggestions:
   a. A laboratory professional (clinical or research) with whom you’ve worked (no relatives or friends)
   b. An undergraduate professor
   c. A work supervisor who can speak to your work ethic and dependability

These are suggestions, but family members or friends are NOT acceptable. DO NOT use the Pathologists’ Assistant with whom you’ve shadowed for a recommendation.

Recommendations:

• Speak with the person you are asking for the recommendation and be sure they know you well, understand the program to which you’re applying and why, make sure they can speak to your abilities, not just that you are a nice person.
• Be sure the person supplying the recommendation understands that NO PAPER RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ACCEPTED! All recommendations must follow the electronic procedure. If the recommendation does not have an e-mail account, help them to create a free e-mail account on yahoo or google.

Proof of shadowing:

• During the interview the student will be asked to relate what a Pathologists’ Assistant does during a normal working day. While there is no required number of hours to shadow, the student must be interactive, asking questions to learn the duties of a PA (ASCP).

Contact information of the PA with whom you shadowed must be provided.
• We do not require GRE or any other pre-graduate school standardized testing.
• NOTE: There are no transfers of credit into the Pathologists’ Assistant program. All courses in the curriculum must be completed at Loma Linda University.

Preference given to:

• Seventh-day Adventists
• Loma Linda University graduates
• Applicants from under-represented populations

Program requirements

First Year

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<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>Autumn Quarter</td>
<td>ANAT 544</td>
<td>Human Embryology Lecture</td>
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<td>IBGS 501</td>
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<td>PATH 501</td>
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<td>PATH 521</td>
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<td>RELE 505</td>
<td>Clinical Ethics</td>
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<td>AHCJ 538</td>
<td>Histology</td>
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<td>AHCJ 543</td>
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<td>PATH 524</td>
<td>Clinical Microbiology for Pathologists’ Assistants</td>
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<td>PATH 551</td>
<td>Disease Mechanisms I</td>
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<td>PATH 582</td>
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<td>PATH 598</td>
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<td>PATH 644</td>
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Second Year

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<tr>
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<td>Pathology Review IV</td>
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Multiple clinical rotations are assigned by the Program Director to ensure a varied and comprehensive clinical experience for each student. Rotations will include surgical pathology in academic and community settings, private laboratories, pediatric pathology, medical examiners offices and hospital autopsy services.

**Normal time to complete the program**

2 years (24 months) — full-time enrollment required