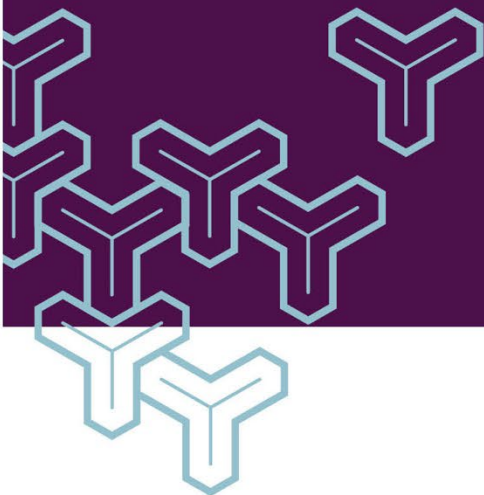


# UPMC School of Histology

Student Handbook



**UPMC**  
LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE

# UPMC School of Histology Student Handbook

## Mission Statement

The mission of the UPMC School of Histology is to educate and prepare a highly skilled and competent workforce of qualified histologists to meet the needs of Western Pennsylvania and beyond. Through a rigorous and high-quality program, students develop knowledge, technical skills, professional attitudes, and ethical values essential for success in the field of histology.

## Program Description

The UPMC School of Histology is a 9-month accelerated certificate program accredited by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS), beginning in January and July each year. This program combines five months of rigorous virtual didactic learning with four months of full-time practical, hands-on training at one of our UPMC clinical rotation sites. Upon successful completion of the program, students will be eligible to take the American Society of Clinical Pathology Board of Certification for either Histotechnicians (HT ASCP) or Histotechnologists (HTL ASCP), depending on their prior level of education.

## Program Goals

### **Graduate Competency**

Prepare graduates with the knowledge, technical skills, and professional behaviors necessary to competently perform routine and specialized histological procedures in clinical laboratories.

#### ▪ **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to demonstrate proficient theoretical histology knowledge
- Students will develop an aptitude for performing histological techniques
- Students will be able to conduct themselves in a professional manner and communicate effectively

### **Workforce Readiness**

Provide clinical training experiences that reflect employer expectations, ensuring graduates are immediately employable

- **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to demonstrate proficiency in core competencies in all areas of the histology laboratory

**Critical Thinking & Problem-Solving**

Foster critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to enable graduates to function effectively in a variety of histology laboratory settings.

- **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to apply theoretical knowledge to make informed decisions and effectively troubleshoot problems

**Program Assessment & Improvement**

Continuously evaluate and improve curriculum and instructional methods based on feedback, outcome data, and NAACLS standards to ensure program effectiveness.

- **Student Learning Outcomes:**

- To monitor graduation success rates
- To monitor employment rates
- To monitor graduate satisfaction rates with the program
- To monitor employer satisfaction with the graduates

## Academic Policies

### Virtual Learning Expectations

Students are expected to engage in virtual learning activities Monday through Friday for the duration of the virtual component of the program, excluding designated holidays. These holidays include New Year's Day, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Virtual learning activities include completion of daily quizzes, participation in discussions, and timely progression through course modules. The academic calendar, including all relevant deadlines and holidays, is available on Canvas upon enrollment.

Each module includes required readings, lecture content, discussion board participation to foster peer interaction, learning activities, a final assessment, and an evaluation. Modules must be completed within the assigned timeframe. Daily quizzes are available for a 24-hour window on the date assigned and are not eligible for make-up under standard circumstances.

## **Enrichment Opportunities**

Live virtual enrichment sessions will be offered to enhance student learning while providing access to a wider array of UPMC's rich resources. When possible, recordings will be made available for those unable to attend in real time. Students will be required to attend 5 live virtual enrichment sessions. Students who attend 10 additional live enrichment sessions throughout the program may be eligible for up to 10 bonus points, as determined by the Program Director.

## **Make-Up Work**

Make-up opportunities for missed module content may be provided at the discretion of the Program Director. Students are expected to communicate proactively regarding any circumstances, such as illness, emergencies, or technical issues, that may impact their ability to complete coursework as scheduled.

## **Clinical Rotation Attendance**

Students are required to attend clinical rotation assignments for 8 hours per weekday, with exceptions only for designated holidays. These holidays include New Year's Day, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, the 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Daily schedules will be determined by each clinical site. Students should be punctual as chronic tardiness will result in disciplinary action. Consistent attendance is essential to meet required competencies and maintain standing in the program.

## **Attendance During Illness**

Students experiencing symptoms of a communicable illness must not attend clinical rotations. In such cases, students must notify both the Clinical Liaison and Program Director prior to the start of their scheduled clinical day via phone call or text. Absences exceeding three consecutive days require a physician's note verifying the student's inability to attend due to illness. Students must work with their Clinical Liaisons to develop a plan to make up all missed work due to absence. Any student missing more than 40 hours of clinical rotation time will undergo academic review by the Clinical Liaison and Program Director to determine whether essential competencies can still be met.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

Students are expected to uphold high academic integrity standards. Assignments are open book/open note, but quizzes and exams are to be tests of your knowledge retention; therefore, they need to be conducted without textbooks, notes, or technological assistance. Proctored exams will be conducted during clinical rotations to ensure academic honesty. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an assistant is permitted for grammatical checks and refinement, but assignments presenting as more than 20% AI-generated are not permitted.

- **Grading and Evaluation:**
  - All graded assignments and assessments will be graded based on points scored out of points possible. Students must maintain at least a 70% overall to remain in good academic standing.

## **Academic Dismissal Policy**

Failure to comply with the academic policies set forth in this handbook will result in a written counseling, and a zero score for the graded assignment or assessment completed with a lack of academic integrity. Failure to heed the written warning, meet the academic standards, or meet the competency requirements for clinical rotations can result in academic dismissal from the program after review by the Program Director and Medical Director.

## **Lab and Clinical Safety Policies**

### **Dress Code and Hygiene Standards**

Students should wear clean scrubs in any color or professional print for clinical rotations. Long hair should be secured in the laboratory. Closed-toe shoes are to be worn in the laboratory. Lab coats/aprons/PPE will be provided.

### **Student Injury and Exposure Procedure**

If a student participating in a clinical experience within UPMC-owned and operated domestic locations is exposed to potential infectious material or is injured during the clinical experience, initial triage shall include the student receiving consultation and direction by calling **833-280-8511**. The student will be directed to the appropriate UPMC Employee Health Services office (or the appropriate UPMC hospital emergency department) as warranted and in accordance with UPMC policies.

### **ID Badge Policy**

Students are required to wear their ID badge visibly, above the waist during clinical rotations.

### **Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy**

No use in lab or clinical settings unless explicitly permitted.

## **Professionalism and Conduct Policies**

### **Code of Conduct Policy**

Students are expected to behave professionally in academic and clinical settings. Listening actively, participating constructively, and collaborating with team members are essential. All communication- verbal, written, and electronic- should be respectful, clear, and professional. Students are expected to treat others with dignity and respect. Gossiping, inappropriate language, or a hostile tone in any format is unacceptable.

### **Confidentiality Policy (HIPAA)**

Students are expected to adhere to the provided training on privacy laws, expectations for protecting patient data, and sign off on the HIPAA and Confidentiality forms provided.

## **Professionalism and Conduct Policies**

### **Student Grievance Policy**

Students are encouraged to first attempt to resolve grievances informally by discussing the issue directly with the party involved. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should consult with the Program Director to seek a mutually acceptable resolution.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, students may initiate a formal grievance as follows:

1. The student must submit a written grievance to the Program Director within 10 business days of the incident or decision prompting the complaint.  
The grievance should include:
  - A clear statement of the issue
  - Relevant facts and evidence
  - Steps taken to resolve the matter informally
  - The desired outcome or resolution
2. The Program Director will acknowledge receipt of the grievance within 5 business days. An investigation will be conducted, which may involve interviews with relevant parties and a review of pertinent documents.

3. Within 15 business days of receiving the grievance, the Program Director will provide a written decision to the student, outlining the findings and any actions to be taken.
4. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may appeal in writing to the Director of Allied Health Schools within 5 business days of receiving the decision. The Director of Allied Health Schools will review the appeal and provide a final written decision within 10 business days.

All grievance proceedings will be conducted with appropriate confidentiality. Information will be shared only with individuals directly involved in the resolution process.

The program prohibits retaliation against any student who files a grievance in good faith. Any retaliatory actions should be reported immediately and will be addressed in accordance with institutional policies.

### **Leave of Absence / Withdrawal Policy**

#### **Refund Policy Prior to Classes Beginning**

Applicants may cancel their enrollment in person or in writing one month prior to the commencement of classes. If an applicant cancels his/her enrollment, the tuition portion minus the deposit money will be refunded. It is the responsibility of the prospective student to refund or resell the textbooks. If the School terminates the program prior to the first day of classes, all monies paid by the applicant will be refunded within 30 days after cancellation or termination of the program.

#### **Refund Policy After Classes Begin**

If a student enters training and subsequently withdraws or discontinues four weeks or more after the program has begun, there will be no refund. A prorated tuition will be refunded minus a processing fee if the student withdraws or discontinues prior to the fourth week.

#### **Cancellation Policy**

The UPMC School of Histology reserves the right to dismiss students if they fail to do satisfactory work, if they fail to comply with established rules and regulations, or if they fail to meet financial obligations. There will be no refund. The school reserves the right to terminate the program provided that the students will be able to complete the program or be accommodated by a transfer.

## **Drug-Free and Substance Use Policy**

Zero tolerance for substance use in clinical rotations.

Students will be required to pass a 5-panel drug screening prior to the start of the program.

## **Background Check**

Negative background check, Act 33/34 Clearance, and Act 73 Fingerprints are required.

## **Immunization Compliance**

Negative TB Screening, Influenza\*/TDAP\*/Hepatitis B (up-to-date vaccination or exemption), COVID vaccination (up-to-date vaccination or exemption), and MMR (up-to-date vaccination or titer or exemption) are required.

\*UPMC Children's requires up-to-date Influenza and TDAP vaccinations without exception. You are welcome to attend clinical rotations at another location if you are not able to comply with this policy.

## **Disciplinary Action Policy**

A written warning will be issued for initial policy violations, along with an action plan for correction and consequences for further violations, leading up to and including dismissal from the program.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity**

It is our policy to provide equal employment opportunities (EEO) according to job qualifications without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, genetics, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, or marital, familial, or disability status or status as a protected Veteran or any other legally protected group status. UPMC is committed to taking positive steps to eliminate barriers that may exist in EEO and in employment practices. Areas of focus include, but are not limited to: recruiting, hiring, promotion, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, training, and education. UPMC will provide reasonable accommodation to known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified employee or applicant for employment.

The above statement will also be applied to students in the Allied Health Schools.



Partially sighted individuals would find laboratory work difficult, if not impossible. Vision corrected to near normal or normal by glasses or contact lenses presents no problem. Color blindness is not conducive to a career in histology. Screening will be conducted prior to the start of the program to ensure students meet requirements for subsequent employment in the field.

## Accreditation

The UPMC School of Histology is accredited by The National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, 5600 N. River Road Suite 720, Rosemont, IL 60018, Tele: 773.714.8880.

## Affiliations

The UPMC School of Histology is affiliated with the following institutions of higher learning:

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Slippery Rock, PA

Seton Hill University, Greensburg, PA

The school embraces a 3 + 1 program, in which students spend the first three years of their college careers at an accredited institution in histology/ biological science curriculum, and the fourth, attending the UPMC School of Histology. College credit for this senior year is assigned by the institution granting the degree upon successful completion of the internship year. Students at affiliated institutions are given priority over those student applicants from non-affiliated schools. Admission of a student from a non-affiliated school will not result in the exclusion of an equally qualified student from an affiliated program.



## Staff

Chair, Department of Pathology	Liron Pantanowitz, MD, PhD, MHA	UPMC Cancer Pavilion pantanowitzl2@upmc.edu 412-623-7972
Medical Director	Nigar Khurram, MD	UPMC Presbyterian khurramna@upmc.edu 412-647-2184
Program Director	Jessica Connell, HTL (ASCP)	Clinical Laboratories Building stinnerjr2@upmc.edu 412-864-2905
Administrative Directors	Rachel Wall, MHA, MS, PA (ASCP)	Director of Laboratory Service Center Operations klemrd@upmc.edu 412-647-3934
	Tara McCoy, PhD	Director of Allied Health Schools mccoytc3@upmc.edu 412-834-3943



## Course List

Number	Course Name	Credits
HT01	Professionalism	1
HT02	Laboratory Safety	1
HT03	Laboratory Math	1
HT04	Instrumentation	1
HT05	Accessioning and LIS	1
HT06	Grossing	1
HT07	Histology and Microanatomy	1
HT08	Fixation	1
HT09	Processing	1
HT10	Embedding	1
HT11	Microtomy	1
HT12	H&E and Coverslipping	1
HT13	Special Staining- Carbohydrates and Amyloid	1
HT14	Special Staining- Connective Tissue and Muscle	1
HT15	Special Staining- Microorganisms	1
HT16	Special Staining- Pigments, Minerals, & Cytoplasmic Granules	1
HT17	Special Staining- Nerves	1
HT18	Muscle/Enzyme Histochemistry	1
HT19	Antigen Retrieval	1
HT20	Immunofluorescence	1
HT21	Immunohistochemistry	1
HT22	Diagnostic Molecular Techniques	1
HT23	Cytology	1
HT24	Laboratory Management	1
HT25	Clinical Rotations	24

## Teach Out Plan

In the event the program has an unexpected period of closure due to natural or unnatural disasters or decides to permanently close, the following provisions will apply:

### **Temporary Program Closure**

If unforeseen circumstances prevent a student from completing their educational activities at one clinical rotation site, arrangements will be made for the student to complete their clinical experience at another UPMC clinical rotation site. All efforts will be made to provide ample continuity in education to ensure students are still receiving a top-quality education.

### **Program Director Resignation**

If the Program Director resigns, students currently enrolled in the program will continue their education until the conclusion. An interim Program Director will be appointed within 30 days to oversee their studies until a permanent Program Director is appointed.

### **Permanent Program Closure**

In the event of a permanent program closure, students will be notified and allowed to complete their program. If necessary, the Program Director will attempt to find alternative placements for students if needed. The Program Director will ensure that graduating students are cleared to take the ASCP certification exam. The program will not admit students into the next class in the event of closure. If students have already been accepted, they will be notified in writing.



## UPMC School of Histology Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the contents of the UPMC School of Histology Student Handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined within the handbook. I understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### About UPMC

UPMC is a world-renowned, nonprofit health care provider and insurer committed to delivering exceptional, people-centered care and community services. Headquartered in Pittsburgh and affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, UPMC is shaping the future of health through clinical and technological innovation, research, and education. Dedicated to advancing the well-being of our diverse communities, we provide more than \$1 billion every year in community benefits, more than any other health system in Pennsylvania. Our 95,000 employees — including more than 5,000 physicians — care for patients across 40 hospitals and 800 doctors' offices and outpatient sites in Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland, as well as overseas. UPMC Insurance Services covers 4.5 million members with a focus on providing the highest-quality care at the most affordable price. To learn more, visit [UPMC.com](https://www.upmc.com).