

UW HEALTH JOB DESCRIPTION

PATHOLOGISTS' ASSISTANT

Job Code: 530008	FLSA Status: Exempt	Mgt. Approval: M Marggi	Date: Oct 2022
Department: Laboratory Services		HR Approval: A Phelps Revolinski	Date: Oct 2022

JOB SUMMARY

Under the direction of the Clinical Laboratories, Manager Lab Services the Pathologists' Assistant is responsible for the accuracy of pathology services requiring specialized techniques at the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics. The Pathologists' Assistant works independently using the medical knowledge to perform human specimen examination for diagnosis and patient treatment. The laboratory receives and processes specimens from the operating rooms and clinics throughout the hospital and health care organization. Specimens are also received from external clients and research groups.

This Pathologists' Assistant functions in support of and as an adjunct to the physicians in Pathology. Difficult dissection procedures are performed on tissue samples from surgical specimens and from autopsies. The incumbent assists and occasionally directs pathology residents in tissue dissection techniques and provides in-depth support to pathologists in all phases of the pathology laboratory. The Pathologists' Assistant maintains supplies, equipment and instruments and provides administrative support in the day-to-day operation of the laboratory. Adaptation of recognized dissection methods and procedures for unusual or difficult specimens/cases is common and the incumbent is required to train students and staff in these specialized procedures. The incumbent must maintain competency and keep abreast of changing techniques and requirements in Anatomic Pathology dissection and pass this knowledge on to residents and trainees, they may oftentimes be the primary resource for this information.

Work is performed under general supervision referring matters to the supervisor only for clarification of policy. Independent decision making occurs frequently in day-to-day operation. Innovative procedures are occasionally necessary to accommodate the variety of samples prepared.

The incumbent interacts internally with staff pathologists and other technologists on a daily basis. External contacts occur frequently with staff physicians and referring facilities.

Organizational skills are required to plan and coordinate workflow in order to meet patient care requirements and provide for satisfactory turnaround time of tests. Working knowledge of computers is required to accession specimens, report results and collect quality assurance data using the Anatomic Pathology information system is required.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Preparation and performance of surgical specimen dissection

1. Assure appropriate specimen identification and accessioning.
2. Obtain the clinical history including scans, x-rays, laboratory data, etc., as indicated after consulting with the pathologist(s).
3. In association with the pathologist(s), describe gross anatomic features: describe the overall specimen dimensions, structures, size, appearance and relationship of disease (e.g., cancer, tumor) present to tissue border (margins). Dissect surgical specimens and prepare tissues for processing according to established procedures.
4. Exercises judgment by preserving samples for testing.
5. Obtain biological specimens for specialized analysis (flow cytometry, image analysis, immunohistochemistry, etc.) and upon direction of the pathologist(s) perform special procedures.
6. In collaboration with the pathologist(s), select and prepare gross tissue sections for frozen section and electron and immunofluorescent microscopy.
7. Photograph of pertinent specimens and microscopic slides.
8. Assume responsibility for administrative maintenance of surgical pathology protocol manuals, reports and data including filing of reports, protocols, photographic and microscopic slides and assuring completion of coding in accordance with regulatory standards.
9. Assure proper maintenance of equipment, provision of adequate supplies, and cleanliness of the surgical pathology suite.
10. Assist in the organization and coordination of anatomic pathology conferences.
11. Act as liaison to tissue bank activities for educational and research purposes.
12. Maintains quality control/assurance activities and records.

B. Assist in human postmortem examinations

1. Ascertain proper legal authorization has been obtained for autopsy.
2. Review patient's chart and other pertinent data for discussion with the pathologist(s). Communicates with surgeon to obtain patient history and orientation of sample.
3. Confer with the pathologist(s) to identify the special techniques and procedures that will be necessary (e.g., histochemical, immunofluorescence, toxicological, viral, or electron microscopic studies, cultures, smears, coronary artery perfusion studies, tumor triage, and Faxitron (x-ray). etc.) and notify all personnel directly involved.
4. Notify the physician involved in the care of the patient and all other authorities prior to beginning the dissection; coordinate special requests for specimen sampling (e.g., organ transplantation team, research, etc.).
5. Under the direction of the pathologist(s), perform postmortem examinations which may include: external examination, in situ organ inspections, evisceration, dissection and dictation or recording of data such as organ weights, presence of body fluids and gross anatomic findings. Inspect all external surfaces and orifices noting abnormalities.
6. Obtain biological specimens for analysis (blood cultures, viral cultures, toxicological material, etc.) and perform special procedures such as coronary artery perfusion studies, central nervous system perfusion studies, enucleation (eyes), inner ear bone dissection

UW HEALTH JOB DESCRIPTION

- and removal of the spinal cord in consultation with the pathologist(s).
7. Perform photography of the body, organs, microscopic slides, and other relative materials.
8. In collaboration with the pathologist(s), may assist in the assembly of data necessary for the preparation of the preliminary summarization of the clinical history.
9. Release the body to the correct mortuary, following proper restoration and indicating any biohazards – such as contagious disease or radioactive implant – that may be present.
10. Assure anatomic pathology protocol manuals are maintained, and photographic and microscopic records are retained according to established regulatory guidelines.
11. Assure proper maintenance of equipment, provision of adequate supplies and cleanliness of the autopsy suite.

C. Educational Responsibilities

1. Assist in the organization and coordination of anatomic pathology conferences.
2. Assist in the training of pathology residents in gross dissection techniques
3. Coordinate and develop the curriculum for the Pathology Assistant internship program
4. Act as lead instructor for Pathology Assistants interns during their UW Health rotation

D. Assume other responsibilities as directed by the supervisor

ALL DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS MUST BE PERFORMED CONSISTENT WITH THE UW HEALTH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Education	Minimum	<p>Bachelor's degree in a chemical, physical, biological or clinical laboratory science, or medical technology.</p> <p>Or Bachelor's degree must include minimally 60 semester hours or equivalent, that includes either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 semester hours of medical laboratory technology courses OR • 24 semester hours – 6 chemistry, 6 biology <u>and</u> 12 chemistry, biology, medical laboratory technology in any combination
	Preferred	Master's Degree in Pathologists' Assistant Studies
Work Experience	Minimum	<p>If formal Pathologists' Assistant training program complete: No prior Pathologists' Assistant experience required</p> <p>If no formal Pathologists' Assistant training program complete: Five years laboratory experience, with at least one year functioning as a Pathologists' Assistant</p>
	Preferred	One year functioning as a Pathologist Assistant
Licenses & Certifications	Minimum	Pathologists' Assistant (American Society for Clinical Pathology) certification within 6 months of hire.
	Preferred	
Required Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational methods needed to effectively interact with staff Pathologists and Residents. • Working knowledge of adult learning styles and techniques is required to conduct effective programs for pathology residents, and university students. • Knowledge of current laboratory principles and procedures used in gross tissue examination and autopsy techniques. • Knowledge of the principles of cytology as applied to the analysis of specimens submitted for early detection of malignancy. • Extensive knowledge of advanced laboratory theory, technique, and testing related to anatomic pathology. • Knowledge of group process techniques and team leadership used in meetings and on project teams. • Effective oral and written communication skills. Able to formulate processes and develop procedures. • Knowledge of quality control, quality assurance, and record-keeping procedures which constitute good laboratory practice, and which comply with regulations imposed by outside agencies such as The Joint Commission, College of American Pathologists and Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments • Knowledge of standard laboratory safety procedures. • Ability to apply laboratory principles in clinical analysis leading to the diagnosis of disease as it applies to cytology. • Effective team skills. • Effective interpersonal skills.

UW HEALTH JOB DESCRIPTION

AGE SPECIFIC COMPETENCY (Clinical jobs only)

Identify age-specific competencies for direct and indirect patient care providers who regularly assess, manage and treat patients.

Instructions: Indicate the age groups of patients served either by direct or indirect patient care by checking the appropriate boxes below. Next,

	Infants (Birth – 11 months)		Adolescent (13 – 19 years)
	Toddlers (1 – 3 years)		Young Adult (20 – 40 years)
	Preschool (4 – 5 years)		Middle Adult (41 – 65 years)
	School Age (6 – 12 years)		Older Adult (Over 65 years)

JOB FUNCTIONS

Review the employee's job description and identify each essential function that is performed differently based on the age group of the patient.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Indicate the appropriate physical requirements of this job in the course of a shift. *Note: reasonable accommodations may be made available for individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this position.*

Physical Demand Level		Occasional Up to 33% of the time	Frequent 34%-66% of the time	Constant 67%-100% of the time
	Sedentary: Ability to lift up to 10 pounds maximum and occasionally lifting and/or carrying such articles as dockets, ledgers and small tools. Although a sedentary job is defined as one, which involves sitting, a certain amount of walking and standing is often necessary in carrying out job duties. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required only occasionally and other sedentary criteria are met.	Up to 10#	Negligible	Negligible
X	Light: Ability to lift up to 20 pounds maximum with frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects weighing up to 10 pounds. Even though the weight lifted may only be a negligible amount, a job is in this category when it requires walking or standing to a significant degree.	Up to 20#	Up to 10# or requires significant walking or standing, or requires pushing/pulling of arm/leg controls	Negligible or constant push/pull of items of negligible weight
	Medium: Ability to lift up to 50 pounds maximum with frequent lifting and/or carrying objects weighing up to 25 pounds.	20-50#	10-25#	Negligible-10#
	Heavy: Ability to lift up to 100 pounds maximum with frequent lifting and/or carrying objects weighing up to 50 pounds.	50-100#	25-50#	10-20#
	Very Heavy: Ability to lift over 100 pounds with frequent lifting and/or carrying objects weighing over 50 pounds.	Over 100#	Over 50#	Over 20#
List any other physical requirements or bona fide occupational qualifications:				

Note: The purpose of this document is to describe the general nature and level of work performed by personnel so classified; it is not intended to serve as an inclusive list of all responsibilities associated with this position.