PSYCHIATRY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Dr. Laura Stovel, Program Director
Dr. Melanie Marsh-Joyal, Associate Program Director

Frequently Asked Questions

Specialty/Field Questions

1. a) What are the best things about your specialty?

Many are attracted to psychiatry because of its flexibility in types of practice. Office, hospital-based and community, or any combinations of these, are options, as is working part-time.

Many people interested in psychiatry enjoy the direct clinical contact with patients, and generally having the time to hear their stories. Working within multidisciplinary treatment teams is also a plus.

There is also significant involvement in biological and psychotherapeutic research. Subspecialties include child, geriatric, forensic and substance abuse.

Psychiatry is a fascinating discipline in which you never cease to learn about yourself and about human nature and human dilemmas.

b) What are the worst things about your specialty?

Psychiatry patients have a long history of being marginalized and stigmatized within medicine and society. This continues to change but this is still evident. Psychiatry itself is sometimes considered as a specialty that involves giving up "real medicine" to do psychiatry. Your involvement with "real medicine" will be determined by the area of psychiatry in which you choose to practice.

Some would say that the chronic and difficult patient, including those with personality disorders, is the worst part about psychiatry. Certainly, other areas of medicine have their share of chronic and difficult patients as well.

2. Why did you choose your specialty?

Most psychiatrists would say they chose psychiatry as a result of an interest in the specialty developed through undergraduate exposure or community work. As mentioned above, it is also a lifestyle choice with a great deal of flexibility.

3. What types of clinical cases do you commonly see?

This really depends on your practice. Clinical cases could include children, adolescents, adults or geriatrics. Some psychiatrists limit their practices only to medication management and others just to psychotherapy - most do some of both. Some are community-based, some hospital-based and some work in offices. Further, some limit their practice to certain illnesses - for example bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, depression, brain injured or substance abuse.
4. a) What are the varieties of lifestyle within your field?

Though seen as a "lifestyle" specialty, this varies between clinicians. Some work very long hours but others choose part-time work. Call does not tend to be onerous, compared to other fields such as surgery.

b) Specifically, how able is your specialty to accommodate family life?

It is one of the best specialties to accommodate family life.

5. Range of incomes?

Incomes in psychiatry are quite variable depending on how many hours are worked. Generally, most psychiatrists in Alberta feel well-remunerated.

6. How do you see your discipline changing over the next decade?

There is still quite a shortage of psychiatrists; this will probably worsen over the next decade.

Residency Program Questions

1. a) What are you looking for specifically in an impressive candidate?

Academic performance, ability to work in team relationships, strong interpersonal skills, and good self-evaluation skills are important.

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

Electives in psychiatry, research projects, and development of a strong knowledge in medicine as a whole are considered positive.

2. How is your residency program organized?

The residency is a five-year program. The first year is a modified rotating internship and the other years encompass 12 months of general adult psychiatry, six months of rehabilitation psychiatry, six months of child psychiatry, four months of consultation liaison psychiatry, and six months of geriatric psychiatry, plus 14 months of electives.

3. What is your residency program’s orientation and focus?

The main goal is to produce competent general psychiatrists with exposure to subspecialty areas.

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

As listed in question 2, plus many and varied opportunities for electives.

5. What is the typical day of a resident?

Residents typically see inpatients in the morning and in the afternoon see outpatients in clinics or do psychotherapy. Most often days are approximately eight hours, with occasional evenings on call.

6. What is the resident satisfaction?

Feedback from the residents has shown that resident morale and satisfaction is high. A lot of this stems
from the opportunities residents are given to provide feedback, the flexibility within the program, the 
receptiveness of the Program Director and the strength of the clinical preceptors. The undergraduate 
liasion residents are happy to share their thoughts in person at the Residency Fair or during CaRMS 
orientations.

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

Yes. The second and third year of training are mostly taken up by core requirements but in the fourth and 
fifth years of training there is a total of 14 months of elective time available. There are opportunities in 
Edmonton to explore all areas of psychiatry subspecialty, and training outside of Edmonton is an option for 
educational opportunities not available here.

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

During the first year (basic clinical training) the call is dictated by the particular service to which the resident 
is assigned. Call during the second and third year is 1:7 and during the fourth and fifth years 1:10 and is 
done primarily as home call (there is variability in Child Psychiatry call). In accordance with the new PARA 
agreement, residents receive a stipend for each night they do call, and an additional stipend if they must 
return to the site and stay past 0100 h.

9. **What distinguishes the University of Alberta program from other programs?**

The UofA program is a solid residency with a focus on training general adult psychiatrists. There certainly 
are strong subspecialists as well but not to the same degree as the larger programs. It has a good balance 
of biological and psychotherapeutic clinicians. Its moderate size is another distinguishing feature. Among 
programs in Canada, we have a high degree of support for attending conferences, both local and national. 
Residents are also highly represented on the Residency Program Committee. This reflects the 
resident-focus of the program and the degree of support that exists from faculty and the Program Director.

10. **a) Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?**

For observations and undergrad electives, contact Tara Checknita (Undergraduate Psychiatry Education) 
at 492-7604 or umepsych@ualberta.ca or the Psychiatry Program Office at 407-6938 or 
bmeier@ualberta.ca for suggestions.

   **b) Is there a list of residents whom we can call or email?**

Contact information available through Psychiatry Program office.

11. **How competitive is it to get in, and then to succeed in the field?**

Generally, students who are interested in psychiatry and demonstrate reasonable aptitude in medical 
school should have a good chance of gaining admission.

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

There is an extremely active research component to the Psychiatry Residency Program. There are several 
research facilities affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, including the 
Neurochemical Research Unit, the Beebensee Schizophrenia Research Unit, and the 
Psychopharmacology Research Unit among others. There are a number of very active researchers in 
various areas of psychiatry research. Research is not required but is encouraged. Residents in the 
program are able to obtain Masters degrees concurrent to their specialty, and the course curriculum 
provided in the PGY-2 and PGY-3 years may be applied towards this.
13. What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?

The Annual Feldman Lectures at the Grey Nuns Hospital in Edmonton in October of every year, the Annual Flor Henry Lecture at Alberta Hospital Edmonton in late May of every year, the Annual Meeting of the Alberta Psychiatric Association in March, and the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

List of Psychiatrists Available for Shadowing

* Students must bring ID tag and a clinical jacket and arrive early.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Day &amp; Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Alberto Choy</td>
<td>Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. to noon</td>
<td>Alberta Hospital Meet at security lobby Of 3-Building (Helen Hunley Forensic Pavilion) of Alberta Hospital Edmonton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:alberto.choy@albertahealthservices.ca">alberto.choy@albertahealthservices.ca</a></td>
<td>Call to confirm time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pierre Chue</td>
<td>Thursday – 12:30 pm</td>
<td>CLiP 3rd Floor 9942-108 Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:pchue@ualberta.ca">pchue@ualberta.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Please contact Dr. Choy by email.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. A. Cojocaru</td>
<td>Tuesday, 8:00 am–12:00 pm</td>
<td>ER – D Pod University of Alberta Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Pips.wolfaardt@ualberta.ca">Pips.wolfaardt@ualberta.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Demas</td>
<td>Thursday 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Grey Nuns Hospital 735-7119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:mdpc1@shaw.ca">mdpc1@shaw.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Steven Hesse</td>
<td>Tuesday – 9:00 am</td>
<td>CLiP 3rd Floor 9942-108 Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:melanie.n.campbell@albertahealthservices.ca">melanie.n.campbell@albertahealthservices.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Please note shadowing for Dr. Chue is specifically for Telepsychiatry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. G. Gordon Mowat</td>
<td>Thursday – 2:00-5:00 pm</td>
<td>5th Floor 9942-108 Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:gordon.mowat@albertahealthservices.ca">gordon.mowat@albertahealthservices.ca</a></td>
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Contact: Dr. Bob Drebit for Child Psychiatry robert.drebit@ualberta.ca
For the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Sharon Murphy Sharon.murphy@albertahealthservices.ca
* Please note that students are required to commit to attending for the full four hours as these times are based upon the group therapy sessions taking place.

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Y. Shapiro</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>9:00 am–1:00 pm</td>
<td>Grey Nuns Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:yshapiro@shaw.ca">yshapiro@shaw.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psychiatric Outpatient Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>2931-66 St</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meet at Cedars Professional Park Office.</td>
<td>(Group psychotherapy observ) 490-1014</td>
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Observation will include 2 outpatient visits at the office and 2 groups at the Psychiatric Outpatient Program. Please contact Dr. Shapiro by leaving him a message and your contact number at his office (780) 490-1014, preferably with 1-week notice.

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<tr>
<td>Dr. L. Stovel</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>8:00 am–12:00 pm</td>
<td>Day Treatment Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:carol.miller@albertahealthservices.ca">carol.miller@albertahealthservices.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
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<td>University of Alberta Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Lorne Warneke</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:30 am–12:00 pm</td>
<td>Grey Nuns Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:warnekechan@shaw.ca">warnekechan@shaw.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Outpatient Psychiatry</td>
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