

University of Ottawa, Ottawa Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Newborn Care
Program Director: Dr. Constance Ling
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What are you looking for specifically in an impressive candidate?

Well-rounded individuals who have demonstrated a genuine interest in OB/GYN through research or extracurricular activities. If you are friendly, motivated, personable, work well in a team environment, and are a self-directed learner, Ottawa will be a good fit for you! We are a very supportive program who likes to spend time with one another, so please also tell us about your outside interests.

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

Explore the specialty through electives and speak to mentors at your own hospitals to get an idea if you think OB/GYN and a surgical lifestyle will be a good fit for you. Completing an elective in Ottawa is helpful so we can get to know you, and you can get to know us. However, we know electives can be tricky to get and so they are NOT required to get an interview or to match to our program.

As Ottawa is a bilingual city, the program has implemented two streams: an English and French stream. The English streams are based at The Ottawa Hospital campuses (General, Civic and Riverside).

The French stream, which is based at the Montfort Hospital, has been implemented in the past few years with great success. Trainees in the English stream who speak French may also be eligible for rotations at the Montfort site.

Both streams require their own applications, however applicants can apply to both the English and French streams. Applicants in both streams have opportunities for great clinical exposure.

How is your residency program organized? (i.e. year by year breakdown and schedule of rotations)

As per the RCPSC, all Obstetrics & Gynecology programs across the country have implemented Competence by Design (CBD) since 2019. CBD breaks training down into several different stages. Each stage has its own entrustable professional activities (EPAs) and CanMEDS milestones. New trainees will attend a CBD session in their orientation which will outline the milestones and EPAs required to complete the residency program. The trainees are well supported in this transition to a CBD system and encouraged by members of the CBD committee to ask for regular feedback through EPAs to ensure successful completion of each stage of training.

Here is a breakdown of approximately what the year rotations look like:

- PGY-1 Foundations in OB/GYN
 - 3 block Core Obstetrics
 - 2 blocks Core Gynecology
 - 1 block Gynecology Oncology

- 1 block CTU/Internal 1 block
- Emergency Medicine 1 block
- Female urology 1 block
- General Surgery 1 block
- ICU 1 block
- NICU 1 block
- PGY-2
 - Core Obstetrics 6 blocks
 - Core Gynecology (including Riverside day surgery) 5 blocks
 - Ultrasound 1 block
 - Research 1 block
- PGY-3
 - Core Obstetrics 4 blocks
 - Core Gynecology (including Riverside) 4 blocks
 - MFM (including chief OB) 1-3 blocks
 - REI 1-3 blocks
 - Urogynecology 1-2 blocks
 - Elective 1 block
- PGY-4
 - Chief Gynecology 1-5 blocks
 - Gynecologic Oncology 1-3 blocks
 - MFM 1-3 blocks
 - REI 1-3 blocks (including 1 block of Pediatric REI at CHEO)
 - Urogynecology 1-2 blocks
 - Electives 1-2 blocks
- PGY-5
 - Selective 5-9 blocks
 - Gyne Oncology 1-3 blocks
 - MFM 1-3 blocks
 - REI 1-3 blocks
 - Urogynecology 1-2 blocks
 - Chief Gynecology 1-2 blocks
 - Chief Ambulatory 1 block
 - Elective 1 block
- Community sites include: Queensway
Carleton Winchester Humber Almonte Cornwall Fergus Brockville Brampton Thunder Bay Sudbury Montfort Oakville Oshawa
- In addition to the community sites uOttawa offers a 1 week rotation in Iqaluit in seniors years (interested residents are chosen by lottery).

What is your residency program's orientation and focus?

To produce well trained OB/GYNs. By the end of your five years, you will be competent and confident generalists; however, if you choose to apply for a Fellowship, our program offers ample opportunity to explore the subspecialties and many residents have gone on to successfully complete Fellowships across Canada.

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

We are fortunate in Ottawa that there are fellowships available in almost all subspecialty areas. As such, our program benefits from a subspecialty faculty that is familiar with teaching learners and is enthusiastic to have residents on service. We have rotations and selectives available in: REI, Gynecologic Oncology, Maternal Fetal Medicine, Urogynecology, Womens' Health/Menopause, Family Planning, Pediatric & Adolescent Gynecology, Gynecologic Pathology, Sexual Medicine. We also have a very strong MIS group, which you will be exposed to in your gynecology rotations starting from PGY-1 right through to PGY-5.

What is the typical day in the life of a resident?

There is no such thing as a typical day, especially in Obstetrics and Gynecology! The first three years focus on core Obstetrics and Gynecology; therefore, most of your time is spent on Labour and Delivery or the Operating Room. These are full days that start at 7am and end at 5pm (unless you are on call). Senior years are more geared towards subspecialty rotations, chief, and electives; these days vary depending on the rotation. What can be counted on is our Academic Half Day, which is protected time held every Wednesday afternoon.

What is the resident satisfaction?

Resident satisfaction is excellent. Our program provides excellent training and all graduates feel they are more than competent to begin practice. Additionally, we have many residents who go on to match to fellowships throughout Canada. We train at The Ottawa Hospital General and Civic campuses, which are very high-volume hospitals with large catchment areas. The Montfort Hospital is available as an option for residents who are French-speaking, regardless of being in the 'English' or 'French' streams. Teaching opportunities are varied and include hands-on minimally invasive surgery training sessions, simulation sessions at our state-of-the-art University of Ottawa Skills and Simulation Centre, and annual cadaver labs. Staff are always very supportive and approachable. Our program is also very dedicated to resident wellness. We hold biannual resident retreats, one of which is entirely focused on wellness (often hosted at the Nordik spa, one of the largest spas in North America!). There are four academic half days dedicated to wellness activities per year, and our Wellness Committee also plans a number of informal, family-friendly activities throughout the year. The Ottawa program recognizes that residents have lives outside of the hospital. Many of our residents have children. We have many social events throughout the year, including dinners, Christmas parties, and summer barbeques. If you ask our residents how they feel about our program, the usual response is that we are a family. We support and encourage each other, laugh and cry together, and when someone needs help, you can always count on your colleagues to be there for you.

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

Absolutely! Our program elected to move our PGY-1 elective to later in the residency program, which our residents have found to be more beneficial in exploring special interests. We are also given multiple blocks of selectives that we can use to tailor our training to our personal interests and career goals. In addition to electives, uOttawa has strong research programs in MFM, gynecologic oncology and reproductive endocrinology that enables residents to tailor their research projects to help explore special interests.

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

Our rotating chiefs work hard every month to achieve the following call schedule: Mon-Fri – 24 hour call Sat-Sun – 12 -24 hour call. PGY-1 On service: 6-7 calls per block, including two weekends (generally a Friday 24h + Sunday day 12h or Saturday day 12h + Sunday night 12h) Off service: will vary by block, but generally ranges from 5-7 call/block PGY2/3 6-7 calls per block, including two weekends (see above) PGY4 4 calls per block, including one weekend call PGY5 3-4 calls per block, including one weekend call + reduction in call as exam approaches.

What distinguishes the U of O program from other programs?

There is high resident moral; we treat each other like family! We have a new and very motivated Program Director and excellent Program Coordinator, who are always available when you need them and quickly respond to resident feedback. There is a state of the art uOttawa Skills and Simulation Centre (uOSSC). Our former uOttawa OB/GYN program director is the Medical Director of the centre. Annual sim teaching session in which a 'dummy' patient is hooked up to all the monitors and a scenario is played out, video-taped, and a feedback session is given to the residents at the end of the scenario. This gives us a great opportunity to practice OB emergencies, and to see what it is like to be the staff physician. Minimally invasive surgery training: Our program recently purchased laparoscopic training boxes that are available to residents 24/7. Additionally, we have MIS training sessions at the uOSSC Simulation Centre where we practice techniques on pigs, simulated pelvic organs and perform laparoscopic training exercises to improve hand-eye coordination. Relaxed, collegial and respectful culture within Ottawa hospitals (across all medical specialties and allied health staff). Our program is very respectful of post-call time. We work hard to ensure handover occurs on time and our co-residents can get home for some much-deserved sleep! We do not promote a culture that encourages residents to stay post-call or attend academic half day when post-call. Mentorship program – residents are paired with a senior resident and staff at start of program and carries through training. Annual Resident Retreat: forum to discuss CanMeds roles, career planning, stress management, team building and resident issues. Formal academic day curriculum – our new program director has worked hard recently to improve this curriculum and increase staff physician participation and teaching.

What distinguishes your city from others?

It's the National Capital! With a population nearing 1 million Ottawa benefits from all the amenities of a large city, but still maintains a friendly, "small-town" feel. We have great shopping and dining in unique and vibrant neighborhood enclaves. We play host to the National Arts Centre, multiple national museums, as well as NHL, CFL and USL teams. It is also within easy access to Toronto or New York City if you crave an even bigger city getaway for a weekend. Ottawa is a particularly great place for the outdoor enthusiast. We have miles of dedicated cycling and pedestrian pathways/lanes, cross country ski trails, and the beautiful river and canal system right within the city. A short half hour drive away is Gatineau park, with even more hiking, skiing, biking and interesting historical trails.

How competitive is it to get in, and then to succeed in your field?

Overall, OB/GYN has become increasingly more competitive but the selection process rewards motivated and genuine applicants. If you are both medically and surgically oriented, enjoy a fast-paced job with lots of surprises and don't mind being up in the middle of the night, you will succeed in the field. Resiliency has also become a focus of resident wellness that is being emphasized in our program to increase success in the field.

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

Each resident must produce one research project and present at the Resident Research day. Dedicated research time is provided in a research block, which is often in PGY-2. By the end of PGY-2 a project proposal with a faculty preceptor must be completed, and the project is then carried out through PGY-3/4.

What local, national or international conferences would be of benefit to candidates interested in your residency program?

We highly recommend the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada Annual Clinical & Scientific Conference. It is a great experience for medical students!

Who can we contact for more information or to set up electives?

For more information contact: Tiffany Gervais, Undergraduate Education Program Coordinator p: (613) 737-8564 e: obgyn-ugme@toh.ca To arrange electives please visit www.afmcstudentportal.ca Program Coordinator: Tracy Mitchell: (613) 737-8566 and tmitchell@toh.ca

For more information on our program specifically visit: www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/program-descriptions <https://med.uottawa.ca/obs-gyne/> or get in touch with our residents
◆ Specifically, is there a list of residents whom we can call or email? Please contact Tiffany Gervais, and she will be happy to set you up with residents.