Specialty Training Requirements (STR)

Name of Specialty:	Forensic Pathology
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Date of submission:	04 August 2026

The Specialist Training Committee (STC)[1] is responsible for completing this Specialty Training Requirements (STR) document. The STR provides the following for **Forensic Pathology** residency in Singapore:

Section	Requirement
A.	Purpose, Admission, Selection and Separation
B.	Specialty Governance Framework
C.	Programme of Learning and Learning Outcomes
D.	Programme of Assessments
E.	Quality Assurance and Improvement

Note:

- Statements that are for the purpose of explanation of the requirements will be in italics.
- In addition to the training requirements stated in this STR, residents must comply with any other regulatory requirements or practice-based requirements mandated by the healthcare institutions or place of practice.

[1] The Specialist Training Committee (STC) shall assume the role of Residency Advisory Committee (RAC) until the RAC is formally established.

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Scope of Forensic Pathology

Forensic pathology is a discipline/field of pathology that focuses on medico-legal investigations of sudden or unexpected death. Forensic pathologists have a critical and pivotal role in death investigation, examining the body of the deceased to define the cause of death, factors contributing to death and to assist with the reconstruction of the circumstances in which the death occurred. As with all medical consultations the diagnostic process involves the forensic pathologist integrating evidence from the deceased's medical history, the supposed circumstances surrounding the death, the findings of post-mortem medical examination (autopsy) and the results of laboratory investigations undertaken as part of the autopsy. A post-mortem examination typically involves careful examination and documentation of the appearances of the body of the deceased and dissection of internal organs and structures.

A sound knowledge of normal anatomical findings and variants as well as anatomical pathology (including normal histological appearances and variants) is essential, particularly as microscopic assessment of body tissues is often needed to enable a precise diagnosis. Forensic pathologists work closely with other death investigators including coroners, police and forensic scientists; they may be required to attend scenes of death and are often required to testify in court.

Purpose of the Residency Programme

This programme is designed to produce competent and independent forensic pathologists who are adept at carrying out their duties in Singapore's coronial death investigation system. The primary purpose of a death investigation system is to fulfil the following four societal needs:

1. Administration of justice
2. Public health
3. Closure for the family of the deceased
4. Financial and non-financial matters arising from death

Administration of justice

The programme trains residents to accurately determine the causes of death using various medicolegal death investigation methods and procedures. In doing so, the residents would have to work with various stakeholders such as police, lawyers, and the courts. They must be able to provide medicolegal opinions without undue bias to aid the justice system. Residents will be exposed to various suspicious and criminal cases in this programme. Their involvement will range from observations to actual practical experience in these cases.

Public health

The programme trains residents to identify patterns in the cause and manner of deaths that would be useful in four major public health domains. These are infectious disease

surveillance and outbreak investigation, adverse health and behavioural effect prevention, audit of adverse medical outcomes, and accident prevention.

Closure for the family of the deceased

The programme trains residents in the understanding of the pathophysiology of death. They must be able to explain the various causes and mechanisms of death both medically and in layperson's terms.

Financial and non-financial matters arising from death

The programme trains residents to understand the legal and ethical issues in death certification. They will develop an understanding of how their conclusions and opinions can affect downstream processes such as compensation and insurance claims, civil litigation, professional tribunals, etc.

At the end of residency programme, the residents are able to:

1. Have a sophisticated understanding and perspective of forensic pathology and its role in death investigation;
2. Independently examine and report macroscopic and microscopic findings at postmortem examination of all types of coroners' cases;
3. Integrate subjective (i.e., history) and objective (i.e., post-mortem findings and laboratory investigation results) information about cases, provide a well-balanced opinion to courts, coroners and authorised investigators;
4. Clearly distinguish observation of fact from interpretation and opinion;
5. Have sound knowledge of the legislative basis and ethical issues of forensic medical practice, being an effective advocate on behalf of the deceased;
6. Liaise with other medical and scientific specialists, with a clear understanding of their expertise;
7. Provide advice on the limitations of forensic medical practice;
8. Provide advice on the value of post-mortem examination of the deceased in the provision of quality health care;
9. Have a working knowledge of mortuary and laboratory management, particularly recognising and advocating maintenance of quality and workplace health and safety procedures;
10. Participate in, and be an advocate for, continuing professional development of all staff; and
11. Participate in teaching residents in forensic and anatomical pathology.

Admission Requirements

At the point of application for this residency programme,

a) Applicants must be employed by employers endorsed by Ministry of Health (MOH);

b) Residents who wish to switch to this residency programme must have waited at least one year between resignation from his / her previous residency programme and application for this residency programme; and
c) Applicants must have undergone a 6-months posting in Forensic Pathology at the Health Sciences Authority.

At the point of entry to this residency programme, residents must have fulfilled the following requirements:

a) Hold a local medical degree or a primary medical qualification registrable under the Medical Registration Act (Second Schedule);
b) Have completed Post-Graduate Year 1 (PGY1); and
c) Have a valid Conditional or Full Registration with Singapore Medical Council.

Selection Procedures

Applicants must apply for the programme through the annual residency intake matching exercise that is conducted by MOH Holdings (MOHH).

Continuity plan: Selection should be conducted via a virtual platform in the event of a protracted outbreak whereby face-to-face on-site meeting is disallowed and cross institution movement is restricted.

Less Than Full Time Training

Less than full time training is not allowed. Exceptions may be granted by Specialist Accreditation Board (SAB) on a case-by-case basis.

Non-traditional Training Route

The programme should only consider the application for mid-stream entry to residency training by an International Medical Graduates (IMG) if he / she meets the following criteria:

a) He / she is an existing resident or specialist trainee in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom and Hong Kong, or in other centres / countries where training may be recognised by the Specialist Accreditation Board (SAB); and
b) His / her years of training are assessed to be equivalent to the local training by JCST and / or SAB.

Applicants may enter residency training at the appropriate year of training as determined by the Programme Director and STC. The latest point of entry into residency for these applicants is Year 1 of the senior residency phase.

The programme may consider the application of mid-stream entry to residency training by an Anatomical Pathology (histopathology) resident, subject to STC's approval on a case-by-case basis to accredit time spent in Anatomical Pathology residency.

Separation

The PD must verify residency training for all residents within 30 days from the point of notification for residents' separation / exit, including residents who did not complete the programme.

Duration of Specialty Training

The training duration must be 60 months, comprising 36 months of junior residency and 24 months of senior residency.

Maximum candidature: All residents must complete the training requirements, requisite examinations and obtain their exit certification from JCST not more than 36 months beyond the usual length of their training programme. The total candidature for Forensic Pathology is 60 months Forensic Pathology residency + 36 months candidature.

"Make-up" Training

"Make-up" training must be arranged when residents

- Exceed days of allowable leave of absence / duration away from training or
- Fail to make satisfactory progress in training.

The duration of make-up training should be decided by the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC)[2] and should depend on the duration away from training and / or the time deemed necessary for remediation in areas of deficiency. The JCC should review residents' progress at the end of the "make-up" training period and decide if further training is needed.

Any shortfall in core training requirements must be made up by the stipulated training year and / or before completion of residency training.

Learning Outcomes: Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

Residents must achieve level 4 of the following EPAs by the end of residency training:

	Title
EPA 1	Performing Autopsies on Coroner's Cases
EPA 2	Preparing Autopsy Reports in Coroner's Cases
EPA 3	Performing Death Scene Investigations

[2] *The JCC is established for Integrated Programmes (IPs) to oversee resident selection, training curriculum, and faculty and resident evaluations.*

Learning Outcomes: Core Competencies, Sub-competencies and Milestones

The programme must integrate the following competencies into the curriculum, and structure the curriculum to support resident attainment of these competencies in the local context.

Residents must demonstrate the following core competencies:

1) Patient Care and Procedural Skills

Residents must demonstrate the following competencies in Medicolegal Death Investigation:

- Gather essential and accurate information about the case
- Make informed diagnostic decisions regarding the cause of death
- Explain the cause and mechanism of death
- Conduct effective clinicopathologic correlation
- Prescribe and perform essential post-mortem medical procedures and investigations

2) Medical Knowledge

Residents must demonstrate knowledge of established and evolving biomedical, clinical, epidemiological and social-behavioural sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to death investigation.

3) System-based Practice

Residents must demonstrate the ability to:

- Work effectively as a team in the coronial death investigation system
- Coordinate medicolegal death investigation within the health care and coronial death investigation system
- Incorporate considerations of cost awareness and risk / benefit analysis in medicolegal death investigation

4) Practice-based Learning and Improvement

Residents must demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning.

Resident must also demonstrate the ability to:

- Investigate and evaluate forensic medical practices

5) Professionalism

Residents must demonstrate a commitment to professionalism and adherence to ethical principles including the Singapore Medical Council's Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG).

Residents must:

- Demonstrate professional conduct and accountability
- Demonstrate humanism and cultural proficiency
- Maintain emotional, physical and mental health, and pursue continual personal and professional growth
- Demonstrate an understanding of medical ethics and law

6) Interpersonal and Communication skills

Residents must demonstrate the ability to:

- Effectively exchange information with professional associates and families of the deceased.
- Create and sustain an effective relationship with various stakeholders in forensic death investigation
- Work effectively as a member or leader of a forensic medical team

Other Competency: Teaching and Supervisory Skills

Residents must demonstrate ability to:

- Teach others
- Supervise others

Learning Outcomes: Others

Residents must attend Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law course conducted by Singapore Medical Association.

Curriculum

The curriculum and detailed syllabus relevant for local practice must be made available in the Residency Programme Handbook and given to the residents at the start of residency.

The PD must provide clear goals and objectives for each component of clinical experience.

Learning Methods and Approaches: Scheduled Didactic and Classroom Sessions

The programme must schedule, and residents must attend:

1. Journal reviews;
2. Case reviews;
3. Short case presentations and discussions; and
4. Tutorial sessions conducted by the programme and / or by the overseas professional college (FRCPA).

Learning Methods and Approaches: Clinical Experiences

Residents must complete the following rotations:

- Histopathology rotations for up to 2 years in departments of pathology accredited by STC; and
- Overseas rotation for up to 1 year, preferably in United Kingdom, Australia or United States.

Learning Methods and Approaches: Scholarly/Teaching Activities

Residents must complete the following scholarly / teaching activities:

	Name of activity	**Brief description: nature of activity, minimum number to be achieved, when it is attempted**
1.	Autopsy demonstration	Demonstrating autopsies to medical students
2.	Medical student teaching	Provide talks and lectures on forensic medical topics for medical students
3.	Conferences	Attend overseas forensic conferences

Elective Scholarly Activity that is encouraged

	Name of activity	**Brief description: nature of activity, when it is attempted**
1.	Research	Residents at all stages of their training are encouraged to show an interest in research.

Learning Methods and Approaches: Documentation of Learning

Residents are required to complete the JCST Portfolio and FRCPA / FRCPath Portfolios. They must perform 400 autopsy cases including unnatural, natural and paediatric deaths over their 5-year residency programme. Their logbooks will be reviewed by the STC. The portfolios/summary of the portfolios will also be reviewed by FRCPA / FRCPath.

Summative Assessments

	Summative Assessments	
	Clinical, patient-facing, psychomotor skills etc.	Cognitive, written etc.
R5	<u>Before FRCPA Part II Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (A) (advanced) <u>FRCPA Part II Phase 1</u> • Long practical examination: 4 hours 15 minutes <u>FRCPA Part II Phase 2</u> • Short practical examination: 2 hours • Histopathology slide examination: 3 hours 15 minutes practical examination of 15 cases Or <u>FRCPath Part II</u> • Practical examination: 3 days inclusive of the following: - Autopsy - Microscopy - Long/short cases	<u>Before FRCPA Part II Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (A) (advanced) <u>FRCPA Part II Phase 1</u> • Written paper: 3 hours 15 minutes <u>FRCPA Part II Phase 2</u> • Structured oral examination: Two 20 minutes examinations Or <u>FRCPath Part II</u> • Casebook of 10 medico-legal cases not exceeding 20,000 words excluding references • Oral examination • Written paper: 3 hours
R4	Nil	Nil
R3	<u>Before FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (E) (early) <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Histopathology slide examination: 4 hours 15 minutes practical examination of 20 cases <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 2</u> • Short practical examination: 2 hours Or <u>FRCPath Part I</u>	<u>Before FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (E) (early) <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Written examination: 3 hours 15 minutes <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 2</u> • Structured oral examination: Two 20 minutes stations Or <u>FRCPath Part I</u> • 125 MCQs: 3 hours

	Nil	
R2	<u>Before FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (E) (early) <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Histopathology slide examination: 4 hours 15 minutes practical examination of 20 cases <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 2</u> • Short practical examination: 2 hours Or <u>FRCPath Part I</u> Nil	<u>Before FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Autopsy Assessment (E) (early) <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 1</u> • Written examination: 3 hours 15 minutes <u>FRCPA Part I Phase 2</u> Structured oral examination: Two 20 minutes stations Or <u>FRCPath Part I</u> • 125 MCQs: 3 hours
R1	Nil	FRCPA Basic Pathological Sciences (BPS) 100 MCQs 2.5 hours

S/N	**<u>Learning outcomes</u>**	**<u>Summative assessments components</u>**				
		Component a: BPS	Component b: FRCPA Part I	Component c: FRCPA Part II	Component d: FRCPath Part I	Component e: FRCPath Part II
1	EPA 1: Performing Autopsies on Coroner's Cases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	EPA 2: Preparing Autopsy Reports in Coroner's Cases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	EPA 3: Performing Death Scene Investigations			✓		✓