

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY OPHTHALMOLOGY CLERKSHIP ELECTIVE

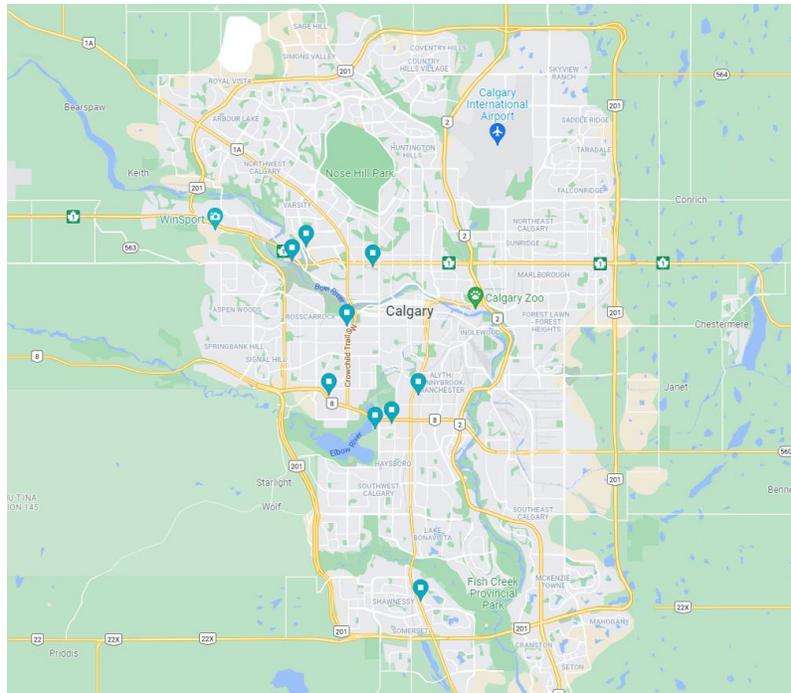
Thank you for your interest in pursuing an elective with the Calgary Ophthalmology program. This elective is offered to 3rd or 4th year medical students, with a primary goal of giving students interested in ophthalmology as a career an opportunity to work with many of our staff, explore various outpatient clinics frequented by our residents throughout their training, and experience a glimpse into life as a resident by participation in patient care at the urgent referral Eye Clinic at the Rockyview General Hospital (RGH) +/- optional weekend call with the on-call resident and staff. Elective students will also get to participate in the numerous teaching events offered by the program (Academic Half Day, Grand Rounds, Retina Rounds, Glaucoma Rounds, Neuro-Ophthalmology Rounds). This elective gives aspiring students a chance to get to know the Calgary program, and for us to get to know you for CaRMs considerations. As such, priority for this elective is given to students specifically intending to apply to ophthalmology.

WHAT TO EXPECT

We hope to maximize your exposure to the Calgary program throughout your elective, and as such, the experience can be something of a whirlwind. Approximately one week prior to your elective, you will receive your two-week schedule. This typically includes days of full-day clinic placements, half-day clinic placements (two per day), RGH Urgent Eye Clinic placements, and allotted time for participation in resident academic half-day on Friday afternoons. There may or may not be an opportunity to join in the OR, pending staff schedules and clinical presentations. You also have the option to join for weekend clinic days on the weekend between your elective weeks. The following is a hypothetical example of a possible elective schedule (without staff names included):

Date	AM	PM
Day 1	Cloudbreak Eye Care	
Day 2	RGH Urgent Eye Clinic	Bow River Professional Centre
Day 3	Alberta Children's Hospital Low Vision Clinic	
Day 4	RGH Urgent Eye Clinic	
Day 5	Signature Eye Specialists	Resident Academic Half Day (RGH)
WEEKEND	<i>Optional RGH Urgent Eye Clinic and Call</i>	
WEEKEND		
Day 6	RGH Urgent Eye Clinic	Bow River Professional Centre
Day 7	Bow River Professional Centre	
Day 8	RGH Urgent Eye Clinic	Vector Eye Centre
Day 9	Mitchell Eye Centre	Calgary Retina Consultants
Day 10	Calgary Ophthalmology Centre	Resident Academic Half Day (RGH)

It should be noted that due to the distributive nature of ophthalmology care in Calgary, transport to, from and between clinics can be challenging. As such, pre-arranging a vehicle or alternative modes of transport between clinics will be helpful. Here is a non-exhaustive map of clinics which host ophthalmology residents and clerkship elective students:



You may work with a staff ophthalmologist once, twice, or multiple times throughout your elective. After completing your final scheduled clinic with any one staff, you will give them an evaluation form to complete on your behalf. The evaluation will comment on your basic ophthalmology knowledge, clinical skills/documentation, and attitude/professionalism. All evaluations will be returned to our undergraduate medical education director for compilation and consideration during CaRMs application evaluations*. Acquiring a letter of reference can be difficult on the Calgary elective, as scheduling may limit your exposure to any one staff. Optional weekend clinics often give a chance to work with an attending multiple times, but you or the staff still may feel this time is inadequate for a strong recommendation.

*Note: Due to the difficulties in obtaining visiting electives during the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not be considering electives during the CaRMs evaluation process and will not advantage students who have completed a Calgary elective.

HOW TO PREPARE

To maximize the experience of this fast-paced elective, we strongly recommend clerks have the basic knowledge and clinical skills necessary for evaluation and management of ophthalmological patients. Specific high-yield topics to review include:

- Common lid lesions
- Red eye differential
- Glaucoma
- Common corneal abnormalities
- Strabismus
- Diabetic eye disease
- Retinal tears and detachments
- Ophthalmology documentation and clinic notes

Some resources that may be helpful in preparation:

The Wills Eye Manual - <https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/the-wills-eye-manual>
Kanski's Clinical Ophthalmology - <https://www.elsevier.ca/ca/product.jsp?isbn=9780702077111>
Practical Ophthalmology - <https://store.aao.org/practical-ophthalmology-8th-edition.html>
OphthoBook - <https://timroot.com/ophthobook/>

Additionally, as ophthalmology relies heavily on visualization, the experience and ability to participate in clinic will depend on the clerk's clinical skills. Beneficial clinical skills to review and/or practice prior to the elective include:

- Assessment of visual acuity, extra-ocular movements, confrontational visual fields, and measurement of intraocular pressures.
- Slit lamp examination of lids, lashes, conjunctiva, sclera, cornea, anterior chamber, lens and vitreous
- Undilated optic nerve visualization – direct ophthalmoscope/slit lamp with lens; assessment of cup-to-disc ratios
- Dilated indirect fundus examination

Helpful resources include:

Slit Lamp 101 - <https://www.aao.org/young-ophthalmologists/yo-info/article/slit-lamp-101>
Introduction to the Slit Lamp Examination - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9wMJ6job_0
How to Use a Slit Lamp - <https://www.aao.org/young-ophthalmologists/yo-info/article/how-to-use-slit-lamp>
How to Use the Direct Ophthalmoscope - <http://morancore.utah.edu/basic-ophthalmology-review/how-to-use-the-direct-ophthalmoscope>
The Glaucomatous Optic Neuropathy Evaluation (GONE) Project (assessment of optic nerves) - <https://gone-project.com/newgone/>
Binocular Indirect Ophthalmoscopy - https://eyewiki.aao.org/Binocular_Indirect_Ophthalmoscopy

Most clinics utilize an individual electronic medical record (EMR) system, so you will not be required to complete any training for documentation prior to your elective. The RGH Eye Clinic currently utilizes paper charting with a typical ophthalmology note format, so reviewing this format may be valuable. A useful review of this and other general assessment techniques can be found at <https://eyeguru.org/blog/preparing-for-your-first-ophthalmology-rotation/>.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Be Professional, Hard-Working, Keen and Pleasant** – Our program prides itself on a diverse group of individuals who are cohesive, support one another, and can be relied upon to represent the program well. As such, the foremost attribute we evaluate in applicants is compatibility with the culture and aims of the Calgary ophthalmology program. While ophthalmology knowledge and clinical skills will be taught throughout residency, other attributes are more important to your ability to learn and contribute as a member of the program. Arriving on time, being understanding of unexpected situations that may arise, and being friendly with clinic staff are simple ways to impress that require no prior experience.
- **Shake it Off** – Not every day will be your best, and you may leave some clinics feeling as though you didn't demonstrate your full knowledge, skill or potential. Shake it off! No single clinical encounter will define your elective experience, and often it is your non-clinical attributes that are more important to your evaluation as a clerk including your professionalism, patient interactions, response to feedback, and ability to learn/read-up on cases.