Residency Showcase FAQ’s

What is a day in the life of a resident at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center like?

It’s really hard to say what a day in the life on residency looks like since every day is different and every rotation has different expectations and projects to be done. A typical day during residency probably involves coming into the office and preparing what you need to get done for the day. You will then typically start patient care by reviewing patient charts in order to make interventions necessary. You will typically talk with your preceptor about interventions to start and then go to rounds, if your specific rotation is involved with rounds. After rounds, you may have other patient care things to follow up on that involves reaching out to providers. You may also have consults to complete for the day. There will typically be a topic discussion or other presentation to attend or present at least one day out of the week (again, this depends on the rotation you are on). After this, you will use whatever remaining time to work on longitudinal projects or other projects that are occurring during that week. One day a week, after rotation, you will staff down in the IV room.

What are the provider-pharmacist relationships like at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

Overall, our provider relationship with pharmacy is very good. There are not a lot of providers that don’t at least consider your input. There are always those few that haven’t jumped on board with taking pharmacy’s opinion but I haven’t really run into this since starting. The providers are also very good about explaining their thought process if you ask so that you can try to better understand where they are coming from if they don’t take a recommendation.

Is there an on call component at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

There is not an on call component for the PGY1 here at MercyOne.

Do you feel like you have autonomy as a resident at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

It is very dependent on how you are feeling with the rotation, so far, I have had autonomy during the last few weeks of the rotations that I have been on but I am still learning the ins and outs of what pharmacists are allowed to do without reaching out to providers so that also plays a role. If you are comfortable making recommendations on your own, and the preceptor is comfortable with it, you can have complete autonomy. Really it depends on rotations and preceptor preference.

-Very much depends on the rotation and your comfort level in that particular area. Our preceptors are great at assessing how comfortable you are when starting a rotation and are always available for questions and support. – Meghan O – Past resident
How is feedback given to you as a resident at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

So far, I have received informal and formal feedback. When presenting topics or journal clubs or cases presentations, there is an evaluation form that is filled out. When on rotation, it depends on the preceptor as to how you receive feedback but on all my rotations thus far, there has been a mix of both. It is also always good to ask for feedback if you think you need it. The preceptor are always willing to give feedback when you ask.

How is your work-life balance as a resident at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

My work/life balance is better some weeks than others. If you are good about time management and getting projects done, your work life balance can be good. It is really dependent on how much time you need for projects and to do patient care. If you are proficient in getting both of these done, time outside of work shouldn’t really be a problem. It really varies week to week and through different times of the year depending on when projects are due and other things you have going on. We also work once every 4th weekend so unlike other programs that have a higher staffing load, we have a bit more time on weekends for life activities.

How is the work-life balance?

-The staffing model of working one evening a week and every 4th weekend allows you to be able to have a life outside of residency. I was able to explore areas around Des Moines and spend time with my family. – Meghan O – Past Resident

How is your interaction with the Residency Program Director at at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

My interaction with the RPD is wonderful. Ben is always looking out for us and is reachable really at any time. We have meetings once a quarter to sit down and have lunch and talk through articles as well as anything else that may be on the mind. He is available to meet at any time throughout the year as well. He is always open to suggestions or feedback on the year/rotations and is trying to make the program the best he can. He is flexible, a wealth of knowledge, and wants to make the best possible year for the residents.

How is your interaction with the preceptors at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center?

Thus far, I have had great interactions with all my preceptors. They are here to help us learn and try to schedule anything that you may want to see or do while on rotation with them. They are open to change and feedback for the rotation. They want to see you grow as much as you want to grow while with them.
How flexible is rotation selection at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center? Can selections be changed throughout the year?

The rotation selection is very flexible here. Since there are only two residents, it made it very easy to see what our interests were and how to get us rotations that we wanted to experience before mid-year. I had an interest in oncology and pediatrics when I started so he was sure to get those rotations in before applications to PGY2’s are due. Ben will try hard to make any changes to your schedule as needed depending on availability of preceptors and other logistics. If he can’t get your rotation moved, he may try to work out a deal so that you can have at least a few days in that experience while on a different rotations so that you have some experience in that area.

-Yes! Ben is fantastic at making sure you get the experiences you are looking for... for example, completing a rotation at the VA for psych and changing to an academia rotation in order to get more precepting experience. – Meghan O – Past Resident

Do you feel that you get enough 1 on 1 time with preceptors at MercyOne Des Moines Medical Center? Are their shared experiences with other residents/students?

I feel like I get enough 1 on 1 time with preceptors. They are very good about asking you what you need and are willing to take a meeting with you at any time if you feel you need more time with them. This year, my co-resident and I shared two experiences for the first two rotations. To me, this was helpful since we were just starting, it helped to have someone else’s brain to pick. This is a choice though and if you are not comfortable with this set up, Ben will split you up. There are some shared experiences with students and typically what I have experienced in these settings in layered learning so you get to try and help the student and teach them while you both are learning from your preceptor of the rotation.

How did you decide your research topic?

This year with COVID, we disnt have any presentations of reach proposals. We did have a day that we sat down and learned about the research process but as far as choosing what project we picked, we were given a list. The list had what the project title was and who you would be working with as well as if there would be some significance to the hospital by doing that project. From there, you reached out the person mentoring the research topic and asked for more information and/or to meet with them to see if this project would be something you would be interested in. From there, you just started working together if that is the project you choose. If you decided that you weren’t interested in the project, you just started the process over.

– During the orientation month, we had a research day where all the preceptors presented ideas for research projects and everyone discussed feasibility and the impact the project would have on the department. After research day, we met with the preceptors for the projects that we were interested in and got to decide after meeting with the preceptors. –Meghan O – Past Resident