Department *of* Health & Human Services
Medical Examiner

Office of the Medical Examiner
4451 South 2700 West, Taylorsville, UT 84129
Phone: 801.816.3850
Fax: 801.964.1240
https://ome.utah.gov

Investigations Internship Program

General Information

This is a volunteer position; it is unpaid and non-benefited with an average time commitment of 5–12 hours per week. Program participation qualifies for institutional college course credit if coordinated through your university. The Utah Office of the Medical Examiner will accept one intern at a time. The desired volunteer is available Monday-Friday, or on a pre-set approved schedule. The main office hours are from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, with the internship hours being flexible from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm.

Qualifications:

1. Must be 18 years of age or older.
2. Must be currently enrolled in an accredited college or university, or have graduated with a degree in a relevant field (e.g., forensic science, criminal justice, biology, nursing, anthropology).
3. Must possess and maintain a valid driver's license.
4. Must have proof of health insurance.
5. Must successfully pass a comprehensive criminal background check and sign a strict confidentiality agreement before beginning the program.

While these internships provide an incredible foundation for your career, the environment is highly sensitive and demanding. Interns will be exposed to graphic scenes, human remains, and emotionally difficult contexts. A high level of maturity, respect, and professionalism is mandatory at all times.

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Who We Are:

The Office of the Medical Examiner (OME) was established in 1972 as a division of the Utah Department of Health. Our current location serves the entire state of Utah. The central office staff is composed of forensic pathologists, investigative staff, autopsy technicians and office support staff. Determining cause and manner of death for any death that falls within OME jurisdiction is one of the main roles of this office.

What We Offer:

This program is structured to align with a standard academic semester, spanning approximately 12 weeks. The primary focus of this internship is to understand the core roles and responsibilities of medical examiner investigators. Throughout the course of the internship, interns will gain a comprehensive understanding of how the Office of the Medical Examiner functions as a whole in conjunction with the field-level responsibilities of a medical examiner investigator. This track is built upon five foundational tenets:

1. Understanding OME Jurisdiction & Case Intake
    a. Learn why the OME exists and what Utah State Codes mandates our active involvement in a case.
    b. Understand what separates an OME case from a natural death handled by a physician, including why sudden, unexpected, violent, or unattended deaths legally require our involvement.
    c. Observe and learn the death reporting process when receiving death notifications from law enforcement agencies, medical facilities, and the public.
2. Field Investigation & Scene Response
    a. Ride along as an active observer with certified Medical Examiner Investigators (MEIs) responding to diverse scene types.

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   b. Master the principles of taking clear, and objective scene photographs. Learn how to document the decedent, physical evidence, and the surrounding environment without disturbing the scene.
   c. Observe the proper protocols required to legally document, package, and label physical evidence while maintaining a secure chain of custody.
3. Case Analysis & Documentation
   a. Gain experience writing comprehensive, objective, and detailed narrative scene reports used by forensic pathologists, law enforcement, and legal entities.
   b. Participate in vital scene tasks, including the inventorying, counting, and documentation of prescription medications and evidence recovered from a scene.
   c. Learn how to read, interpret, and cross-reference medical histories and death certificates to help investigators piece together a decedent's pre-existing conditions and medical timeline.
4. Interdisciplinary Shadowing
   a. Understand the administrative flow, closed records laws, and how the agency interfaces with families, funeral homes, and other stakeholders.
   b. Learn how the data gathered at death scenes is used by public health experts to track mortality trends, identify consumer product hazards, and monitor public health crises.
   c. Follow cases from the scene into the autopsy suite, bridging the gap between field findings and forensic pathology.
5. Academic Application & Professional Evaluation
   a. Complete a research project, case studies, and a final presentation assigned by the internship coordinator.
   b. Participate in regular performance reviews and a final evaluation to assess your growth, forensic competency, and readiness for a career in the field.

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How to Apply:

1. Review the qualifications for the internship position.
2. Complete the application form (enclosed) and mail to:

Utah State Office of the Medical Examiner
ATTN: Investigations Internship Coordinator
4451 South 2700 West
Taylorsville, Utah 84129

Or email the completed application with a resume attached to:
omeinternship@utah.gov

3. When the application is received it will be reviewed by the committee and an interview will be granted based on qualifications.

Expectations

1. Regular attendance.
2. Excellent work ethic.
3. Interest in the field and the desire to learn.
4. Good customer service skills.
5. Willing to accept supervision and constructive feedback.

Note: Your internship will be reviewed periodically. This will be done to make sure we are meeting your goals and you are meeting our expectations. If the internship should fail to meet your goals or our expectations, the internship will be terminated.