

Frequently Asked Questions

Methodist Education and Research Learner Information Network (MERLIN)

1. **Where do I apply for a rotation at a Houston Methodist Hospital facility?**
 - To apply, please go to www.houstonmethodist.org/apply and submit your application. You must use Google Chrome, Fire Fox or Microsoft Internet Explorer 11 or higher to upload all required documents.
2. **What are the required MERLIN documents that must be uploaded for all learners?**
 - Required documents to be uploaded are:
 - Immunization Records to include PPD/Tuberculosis, influenza vaccination (rotations between November 1 and April 1 only), Hepatitis B
 - Copy of personal health insurance card
 - Copy of driver's license or passport
 - Background Check results or institutional verification letter
 - Drug screen results or institutional verification letter
3. **What is required to be an Observer?**
 - Houston Methodist offers two types of observership opportunities that include:
 - Observation for 5 consecutive days or less. This experience is free of charge and no MERLIN application is required. Observers must still complete and sign the Houston Methodist confidentiality agreement form, as well as the Faculty Supervision Observership Agreement form.
 - Observation lasting more than 5 days. For observerships lasting more than 6 or more business days, additional requirements must be met. The experience should not NOT TO EXCEED TWO MONTHS, per institutional policy. The fee for this observership is \$250.00 and the observer must complete the online MERLIN application www.houstonmethodist.org/apply. Please follow the MERLIN browser recommendations listed above to complete the application.
 - **The application must be completed four (4) weeks prior to your rotation start date.**
4. **What is the status of my application?**
 - The MERLIN system allows learners to inquire about the status of their application. The status can be obtained by logging into the system. Your application will appear as "in process" until it has been approved by the departments that must verify your information and dates of rotation. Once your application has been approved, you will receive a letter from your credentialing coordinator via email. To ensure that your application is approved in the most expeditious manner possible, please make sure to upload all required documents as soon as possible. It is suggested that all documents be submitted 3- 4 weeks prior to your start date, to ensure timely approval.
5. **I completed my application a month ago. When will it be approved?**
 - The IAM has two coordinators that approve applications in the month leading up to the requested rotation. While they do their best to complete the applications at least a week prior to the rotation start date, this is dependent upon the number of applicants who have submitted applications for that month, as well as the pending approvals of the rotation department and Immigration Services (if applicable).
6. **I'm locked out of MERLIN. Who can help me?**
 - If you get locked out of MERLIN, please contact merlinsupport@houstonmethodist.org and they will be able to assist you.
7. **MERLIN continues to reject my password even though it meets the requirements (uppercase, lowercase, 6-16 characters, etc). Who can I contact?**
 - Your password cannot contain your username or your email address or a portion of it. If you feel that you have selected a password that fits the criteria listed in the application, please contact merlinsupport@houstonmethodist.org.
8. **I do not have a way to scan my documents. What should I do?**

- To ensure consistency in our application process, each learner is responsible for uploading their required documents into MERLIN. If you are experiencing difficulties and cannot scan your documents, your institution or any public library may be able to assist you in uploading the documents. In addition, there are several apps that you download to your smartphone that will allow you to scan the document and attach it to your application. Please ensure that you follow the uploading instructions (no special characters in the filename) or it could delay your application approval.
9. **Can I fax or drop off the confidentiality form to you?**
- We strive to ensure confidentiality and therefore, we do not accept paper or fax copies of any required documents. It is the student's responsibility to upload the required documents to the MERLIN application.
10. **I'm using Google Chrome, but it still won't work.**
- There are specific guidelines in place that may give you an error when uploading files. Please make certain that you follow these guidelines.
 - Uploaded files may not exceed a file size of more than 5MB, each.
 - Remove special characters (hyphens, colons, commas, etc) from the file names, prior to uploading to MERLIN. Special characters in file names may cause a delay in processing your application.
11. **I know that there is a drug screen requirement. Where can I go to obtain a valid drug screen? How much will it cost me? How long will it take before I get the results back?**
- If your institution requires that you complete a drug screen to be admitted into your current program, please obtain the results and upload to MERLIN. If you are required to obtain this screen on your own, you may call The Houston Methodist Wellness Center, located at 6445 Main Street, 23rd floor, at 713.441.5978. You must make an appointment and have the results sent to Trevor Burt. The cost is \$36 and the turnaround is rather quick, but it is pertinent to complete this requirement at least a week prior to your scheduled start date. If you decide to go elsewhere to obtain the drug screen, please make sure you request a 10-panel drug screen and provide us with the results vis MERLIN.
12. **Where can I go to get a background check? How much will it cost me? How long will it take before I get the results back?**
- If your institution requires that you complete a background check to be admitted into your current program, please obtain the results and upload to MERLIN. To obtain a background check please go to www.castlebranch.com and use package code "et56". If you have only lived in the United States, you should request this package for \$99. However, if you have lived outside of the United States, you should request an international background check, which will likely have an additional cost associated with it. Once your results are ready, upload the document into your MERLIN application.
13. **I need a PPD (tuberculosis screening), influenza vaccine, or Hepatitis B vaccination series. Where can I go to obtain these requirements?**
- Houston Methodist requires that you submit your current immunization record, to ensure compliance with institutional standards. This is to ensure that we meet accreditation guidelines, but most importantly so we protect our patients, who are at the center of everything that we do at Houston Methodist. To obtain any vaccinations or required health screenings, you should visit your primary care practitioner or your local pharmacy's clinic.
14. **Where can I get information about visa requirements for an international visa?**
- To obtain information about a United States Visa, please visit the U.S. Department of State Website at travel.state.gov/content/visas/en.html.
15. **I'm having issues accessing the mandatory, on-line orientation. Who should I contact?**
- If you are experiencing issues accessing the on-line MARS orientation, please contact merlinsupport@houstonmethodist.org and they will provide you with appropriate contact information.
16. **How, when, and where do I obtain my badge?**

- Once your application has been completed and you have received your approval email from MERLIN, you will be cleared to receive your badge. Badges are produced by each Houston Methodist entity. You will receive your badge on your first day of your approved rotation. Houston Methodist Hospital (Medical Center) rotators will visit the Security Services badge office on the first floor of the Mary Gibbs Jones building located at 1130 John Freeman Boulevard. Rotators to the other various Houston Methodist facilities will report to the respective Human Resources office to obtain their badge.

17. When and where is my orientation?

- Please contact your coordinator/preceptor and they will be happy to assist you.