

Accessing paraffin-embedded tissue from the Pathology Department Archive

1. Any research project involving human tissues needs to have IRB approval.
2. For research projects that would require paraffin-embedded tissue from the surgical pathology clinical archives, researchers who are not members of the Department of Pathology are strongly encouraged to find a collaborator among the surgical pathologists at Stanford. Collection of cases, paraffin blocks, glass slides, immunostains, etc. can then be arranged through this individual. This is the best way to make sure that clinically relevant material that may be needed for the future care of those patients is not exhausted and that enough tissue remains for possible future clinical studies, consultations, etc.
3. For studies that would require paraffin-embedded tissue from the surgical pathology clinical archives, but for which no collaborating surgical pathologist at Stanford can be identified, the researcher can request unstained sections, H&E-stained sections, or thick slices for RNA/DNA retrieval, from paraffin blocks through the Tissue Bank. The researcher will pay the standard Tissue Bank fees for these services. The Tissue Bank will establish and periodically revise a fee schedule for such services.
4. A limited "pathology review" is available through the Tissue Bank, as part of the service for which fees are charged. This pathology review is meant to ensure that diagnostic tissue is still present within the sections provided to the researcher. This type of review will not include more labor-intensive procedures such as vessel-counts, scoring of immunostains, etc. For projects involving these types of analyses, the researcher will need to identify a pathologist (and this of course can be a pathologist insider or outside of Stanford) who is interested in the project and is willing to be a collaborator.
5. Under no circumstances will paraffin blocks be handed over from the surgical pathology archives to researchers outside the department. In the interests of patient care, the department has an obligation to ensure that some diagnostic tissue remains in the paraffin blocks permanently. The staff at the Tissue Bank will be responsible for ensuring that this occurs. Accordingly, request for slides or thick slices of tissue must be denied if the staff of the Tissue Bank determines that this would jeopardize the future use of the archived material for patient care purposes.
6. The Tissue Bank does not have the resources to perform "open-ended" searches, e.g., in response to a hypothetical request such as "find me twenty patients under the age of 30 with lung carcinoma." To retrieve cases from the archive, the Tissue Bank requires that the researcher provide a list of patient names, dates of procedure, and, preferably, surgical pathology case numbers.