

Obtaining MRF Level 3 “Scanner Operator” Certification

Background

Operating the scanner is a significant responsibility and we treat it as such. The scanner operator is responsible for the safety of everyone in the MRI suite and for protecting the integrity of the MRI infrastructure. We wish to ensure that any individuals who are certified to independently operate the scanner are fully capable of undertaking that responsibility. Before agreeing to train anyone to become a Level 3 scanner operator, MRF staff, primarily Lynn Fanella and Michael Worden, must be comfortable that the potential candidate has the requisite level of maturity, technical aptitude, familiarity with the MRI environment, and interpersonal skills to be an effective scanner operator. Typically, this assessment will be based on our interactions with and observations of the candidate after he or she has spent a reasonable period of time working at the MRF. The amount of time it takes for the MRF to be comfortable agreeing to train someone for Level 3 status will vary depending on the individual. In some cases, an individual may have a previous background that would significantly reduce the need for interaction with MRF staff prior to undertaking Level 3 certification: for example, a faculty member or postdoctoral fellow with substantial previous experience independently scanning on a comparable system. In all cases, the MRF reserves the right to decline training for any individual.

Who can become a scanner operator?

Potential scanner operators may be faculty members, postdoctoral researchers, graduate students or RAs. As a matter of policy, undergraduates may not operate the scanner nor will we train first year graduate students. Level 1 and Level 2 training are a prerequisite for Level 3 training.

How does training begin?

Level 3 training requests should be made by the PI in writing (email is fine) to Michael Worden, at which time Michael and Lynn will make a determination regarding the suitability of the individual to be trained as a scanner operator.

Once it has been determined that an individual can be trained, we will send that person a letter outlining what needs to happen for their training and a copy will be sent to the PI.

What does training involve?

Our standard operating procedure outlines the basic procedures with which a Level 3 trained individual must be familiar. Further, it specifies a minimum of 6 hours of supervised independent scanner operation. Note that this is only a minimum. Scanner Operator training is fundamentally an apprenticeship model and different people will require different amounts of training depending on many factors including previous experience, aptitude, and frequency of training sessions. Scanner operation should include protocols beyond only those used in the trainee’s lab. Training will continue until Lynn and Michael are comfortable that the individual has demonstrated sufficient

competence with scanner operations, screening and safety procedures, emergency procedures and other aspects of managing the scanner environment. Current CPR certification is also required. The individual being trained must themselves also feel comfortable with all of the above.

When both the relevant MRF staff and the individual being training are comfortable that all of the requirements have been met, Michael Worden will send out a letter to the MRF Safety, Education and Training Committee (SETC) and to the MRF Medical Director, along with a copy of the individual's CV, requesting that they approve Level 3 certification. When the request is approved, the trainee and the PI are notified by MRF Director, Jerome Sanes.