



# Scholarly Year Program

At the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS), we encourage students to pursue research or other scholarly work outside of the curriculum. Because the demands of required coursework and clinical responsibilities may limit your flexibility, many students elect to spend a full year carrying out a scholarly project.

To take advantage of the Scholarly Year program, you will need to be in good standing, have completed your second or third year of medical school, and be committed to spending 11 months on your project. The project may be conducted either at the ISMMS, or another site with approval from the Medical Student Research Office.

## Exploring a Scholarly Year

If you are considering a Scholarly Year, you should first meet with a faculty member in the Medical Student Research Office to discuss your plans. They will help you review national fellowship programs that may support your goals and objectives, such as the Howard Hughes Research Fellows Program or the NIH Medical Research Scholars Program, as well as other sources of funding.

The Scholarly Year project must ask a question of scientific, social, or other scholarly value, and must be feasible within the proposed time frame. Projects must be approved by the Medical Student Research Office.

## Scholarly Year Guidelines for Students

The Scholarly Year program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is available to students who have completed their second or third year and choose to devote a year to conducting research or working on another type of scholarly project. Students must receive written approval from the registrar in order to pursue a Scholarly Year. Students who have not been approved for a Scholarly Year at the end of the academic year, and who have not registered for rotations or clerkships will automatically be placed on administrative leave. This may impact student privileges, including eligibility for housing. Those who have registered for rotations or clerkships will be expected to carry out all assigned duties at their clinical sites.

Below is a list of the steps each student must complete before his/her Scholarly Year can be approved. Additional details are provided in the [Student Handbook](#).

Students considering completing a degree program should contact Student Affairs.

## **Guidelines for All Students Considering a Research Scholarly Year**

1. Students are strongly advised to meet at least once with a faculty member in the Medical Student Research Office to discuss their plans. It is recommended that students review these guidelines and the available fellowship opportunities on Blackboard prior to this initial meeting.

2. Most external programs request a Dean's reference letter. The Dean's reference letter is written by a faculty member in the Medical Student Research Office. When asked by the program to whom the request for the Dean's reference letter should be sent, please provide the name of whomever you met with to discuss your Scholarly Year plans. The Dean's Reference Letter Request template and other details can be found on [Blackboard](#). Please allow at least 3 weeks for your letter to be prepared. No letters will be written between December 20<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>.

3. Students are entitled to the Year 3 and 4 winter and spring breaks, and the school's holiday schedule. Please refer to the ISMMS academic calendar for details, and discuss any time off with your mentor.

4. Requests for a Scholarly Year are made to the MSRO and granted at the discretion of the Medical Student Research Office. The Scholarly Year Request form is due by May 15 of the year the student intends to begin the Scholarly Year.

- Students requesting to go on Scholarly Year must be in good academic standing
- All students going on Scholarly Year must submit:
  - Request for Scholarly Year form
  - Scholarly Year academic requirements
- If you are doing an independent project, you must submit:
  - Mentor-mentee agreement form
  - Research abstract, following guidelines on [Blackboard](#)
  - Scholarly Year Source of Funding form, with notarized signatures
- If you are doing an externally funded national research program, you must submit:
  - Letter of acceptance

5. All students on Scholarly Year must have a source of financial support. Students conducting a Scholarly Year are not eligible for Icahn School of Medicine institutional scholarships or federally subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford loans. Your full-time student status allows you to defer any existing loans as long as you remain enrolled. If you have any financial aid questions, please contact [studentsfinancialservices@mssm.edu](mailto:studentsfinancialservices@mssm.edu)

6. If you are not receiving a stipend or scholarship from your program and another individual (such as a spouse or parent) will be providing you with financial support for the year, he/she must sign and notarize the Source of Funding form. He/she must provide a minimum of \$28,000.

7. To qualify for Scholarly Year, you are expected to work full-time on your project for a minimum of 11 months. You are not permitted to have other major commitments or responsibilities or to hold an outside job during normal working hours, e.g., 9am - 5pm. If you violate these terms, you will be put on administrative leave, which will impact your student privileges, including eligibility for housing and loan deferment.

8. Students on a Scholarly Year may not take electives or clerkships for credit towards their MD degree. Credit towards a graduate degree may be earned only if this is an approved part of the Scholarly Year. Students who must return to clinical electives or clerkships prior to completing 11 consecutive months are required to fulfill the remaining time as a research elective for no credit during 4<sup>th</sup> year with prior approval from the MSRO.

9. A maintenance matriculation fee of \$100 allows you to retain student status and benefits. Students on a Scholarly Year are eligible for housing. Contact [housing@mountsinai.org](mailto:housing@mountsinai.org) to file the appropriate paperwork. You may remain in school housing at your own expense or you are allowed to terminate your lease with 30 days notice. Terms and conditions are outlined in the [Student Handbook](#)

10. Health insurance is required for Scholarly Year students. Students attending another institution can remain with Icahn School of Medicine's student health insurance or if the student decides to accept other insurance, they must cancel Icahn School of Medicine health insurance within 30 days of start date. Students will be eligible to re-enroll at the beginning of the next academic cycle. For more information, contact [studentsfinancialservices@mssm.edu](mailto:studentsfinancialservices@mssm.edu).

11. Students on Scholarly Year are covered by Mount Sinai malpractice insurance whether they stay at the school or spend their Scholarly Year elsewhere.

12. If any of the requirements detailed here are not met, you may be obliged to re-enter school or to take an administrative leave.

**If you are currently a second-year student, before starting the Scholarly Year, you will be required to:**

- Complete all requirements for the second year of medical school
- Take and pass COMPASS I on the date assigned to you
- Take and pass the Step 1 examination. In the unlikely event that you do not pass Step 1, you will have to interrupt the Scholarly Year to study and retake Step 1

**If you are currently a third-year student you will be required to:**

- Complete all requirements of the third-year curriculum or seek approval for a minor exception
- Take and pass COMPASS II on the date assigned to you
- Take Step 2 CK examination prior to beginning the Scholarly Year. Most students chose to take the Board Review elective during Block 1 of the fourth year and begin Scholarly Year in Block 2.

- Take Step 2 CS by the date required for your original entering class
- In the unlikely event that you do not pass Step 2 CK or CS, you will have to interrupt the Scholarly Year to study and retake the examination.
- Maintain responsibilities for competency when you return. Please consult the "Scholarly Year Clearance Checklist" on Blackboard to be certain you are up-to-date on what is required, since guidelines change. Information can also be found on the [Return from Scholarly Year Form](#)
- Take a clinical refresher before your sub-Is. A refresher may be the emergency medicine rotation or a rigorous clinical elective approved by your advisor.

**If you are currently a fourth-year student, you must:**

- Reserve 2 weeks of elective time to complete after the Scholarly Year in order to maintain your student status during the Scholarly Year.
- Reserve 1 week for checkout.

**Return from Scholarly Year requirements:**

1. Students must complete a Return from Scholarly Year form with their intended date of return or request for an extension by March 16 of their Scholarly Year. The form is available [here](#).

2. A scholarly product is due by May 1 for all students, except those participating in a national fellowship program. The scholarly product may be a 2-5 page final report on your project, a manuscript you are preparing for publication, a manuscript you have submitted for publication, or a first author abstract you have submitted to a national meeting. Please submit to: [medicalstudentresearch@mssm.edu](mailto:medicalstudentresearch@mssm.edu). Failure to do so will result in you being put on administrative leave and you will not be permitted to return to clerkships.

- [How to Prepare a Research Proposal](#)
- [How to Write an Abstract](#)

**Student Clearance Requirements:**

All students returning to clinical rotations or electives must complete clinical requirements. A separate form will be sent once you have completed the Return from Scholarly Year form.

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