



## Medical Student Research Office

### Guidelines for Mentors of Students Doing a Scholarly Year

An increasing number of students are interested in dedicating a year to full-time research, typically following their second or third years. Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is wholeheartedly supportive of this and encourages mentors to guide students through this endeavor. [Scholarly Year](#).

The following may be helpful if you have been asked to serve as a student's research mentor:

1. If the student's Scholarly Year is not part of an externally funded national program, students are required to submit a 5-10 page research proposal outlining their planned projects. Students must write the proposal themselves, but will depend upon you for help. The role of the student on the project must be well defined, especially if they are working with others on a larger project.
2. The proposal or application must be accompanied by a letter from you. This letter should include the name of the project, a statement that you have read the application and that you support the student taking a Scholarly Year to work on the project, and that the student will have a chance to take ownership of a portion of the project. The letter should also state what the student's specific role on the project will be if it is part of a larger effort involving other people.

The mentor's letter of support should include:

- The student's qualifications to participate in the program and his/her commitment to conduct research.
- The student's qualifications to undertake the proposed project, and the feasibility of the project within the time available (only if a project proposal has been submitted).
- The mentor's commitment to supervise the student.
- The mentor's background enabling them to supervise the student on the proposed project, and the availability of necessary institutional facilities.

- Goals for the training experience (e.g., ability to learn written and oral research presentation skills, present results at a local/national meeting, etc.).
  - Information about additional mentoring available to the applicant, if relevant, such as a faculty co-mentor, graduate students, post-docs, or fellows in the group who can provide daily oversight.
3. In order to stimulate students' interest in research, as well as provide them with something they can discuss during interviews, they should work on a focused project. It is rarely in their interest to work on highly speculative or long-term projects that yield no results during their Scholarly Year. It is ideal if they are able to co-author a paper, including a review article, or submit a first author abstract to a national meeting.
  4. At the end of the Scholarly Year, the student will be responsible for submitting a final report, between 5 and 10 pages, on his/her research work. The report should follow the general format of a manuscript prepared for journal submission, e.g., abstract, introduction/background, materials and methods, results, discussion, and references. If a manuscript has been prepared for publication, this may be submitted instead.
  5. If one of the student's goals in considering a Scholarly Year is to be a more competitive candidate for a residency position, please advise them on whether you think this is a realistic outcome based upon their academic record to date, and the availability of training positions in the field. The student can provide you with his/her transcript and clerkship evaluations for this purpose.
  6. Many students who complete a year of full-time research will have the opportunity to apply for graduation with Distinction in Research (DIR). Graduation with Distinction in Research is granted to students who publish a first author manuscript on an original research study in a peer-reviewed journal and receive your endorsement for this honor. Alternatively, the student may submit a manuscript on his/her work for review by an ad hoc Distinction in Research committee to determine whether they consider it to be of publishable quality.
  7. The student has chosen you as his/her mentor. You will help him/her enormously by providing them with guidance. Maybe s/he is thinking about a career path similar to the one you followed or is interested in your area of research. You can help greatly if you know why your student has chosen to work with you. Most importantly, to maximize what s/he gets from the year, please follow your student's progress.