

Scholarly Year Program Guidelines

At the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (ISMMS), medical students are encouraged to pursue research or other scholarly work outside of the curriculum. Because the demands of required coursework and clinical responsibilities some students elect to spend a full year carrying out a scholarly project to explore other scholarly pursuits.

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

Exploring a Scholarly Year

If considering a Scholarly Year, student should first meet with the Director of the Medical Student Research Office (MSRO) to discuss interests, fellowship programs, funding opportunities, and timelines. 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 & Requirements

The Scholarly Year program is available to medical students who have completed their second or third year and choose to devote a year to conducting research or quality improvement and are in good academic standing

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.

Students considering completing a degree program or a consulting fellowship should contact Student Affairs. These are NOT eligible for Scholarly Year, but may be eligible for Extended Scholarly Status (ESS) or another type of leave. Additional details are provided in the [Student Handbook](#).

Below is a list of requirements for requesting Scholarly Year approval.

1. Students should meet at least once with the MSRO Director to develop a plan.

2. Review these guidelines and available mentor and funding fellowship in the MSRO Directory available in Blackboard prior to the initial meeting with the MSRO Director.
3. Often for external program or funding opportunities a Dean's Letter or Reference Letter may be required as part of the application. This letter is written by the MSRO Director. If such a letter is required, send an email request to medicalstudentresearch@mssm.edu and include the following completed documents:
 - a. Completed Dean's Letter template
 - b. Dean's LOR Request Form
 - c. Dean's LOR Questionnaire

Forms can be found on the Medical Student Research Office Blackboard organization page under Scholarly Year Program. Please allow at least 3 weeks for your letter to be prepared. No letters will be written between December 20th and January 1st. Note that these application deadlines are often in the fall.

4. All students on Scholarly Year (SY) must have a source of financial support. Students on a SY are not eligible for Icahn School of Medicine institutional scholarships or federally subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford loans. However, while on SY students remain full-time student which prevents loans from going into repayment. For any specific financial aid questions, please contact studentsfinancialservices@mssm.edu
5. If not receiving a stipend or scholarship, the student may Self-Fund the year. The Funding form will need to be signed and notarized attesting the funder (e.g., parent, spouse, student's own funds) will be providing financial support for the year. The School has set a minimum of \$28,000 as the NYC cost of living expenses for the year.
6. The Request for Scholarly Year form is due by May 15 of the year the student intends to begin the Scholarly Year. The request must be approved by several offices (student advisor, research mentor, Registrar, Financial Services, Housing, Library, MSRO, MSRO Director, etc.). The online form can be found on the School's website at: <https://icahn.mssm.edu/education/students/registrar/medical-forms>

The Request form requires the following supporting documents be attached:

- a. For independent projects (i.e., not a formal fellowship program at another institution) submit:
 - i. Mentor-mentee agreement form
 - ii. Research abstract proposal, following guidelines on [Blackboard](#)
 - iii. Scholarly Year Source of Funding form
- b. For an externally funded national research program submit:
 - i. Letter of acceptance

Note. The School's approval can take 3-8 weeks after the form is submitted.

7. A maintenance matriculation fee for the scholarly of \$100 is required. This fee allows the retain student status and benefits. Students on a Scholarly Year are eligible for

housing. For any questions about housing contact housing@mountsinai.org. Students may remain in school housing at their own expense or may terminate their lease with 30 days' notice. Terms and conditions are outlined in the [Student Handbook](#)

8. Health insurance is required. Students attending another institution can remain with Icahn School of Medicine's student health insurance. If the student decides to accept the 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.
9. Students are required to work full-time on their scholarly project for a minimum of 11 months. Students 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 these terms are violated the student will be put on administrative leave, which will impact privileges, including eligibility for housing and loan deferment.
10. Requirements by year of medical training.

Current second-year students (before starting the Scholarly Year):

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

Current third-year students:

- Complete all requirements of the third-year curriculum or seek approval for a minor exception
- Take and pass COMPASS II on the date assigned
- 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 the student's original entering class
- In the unlikely event that the student does not pass Step 2 CK or CS, the SY will have to be interrupt to study and retake the examination
- Maintain responsibilities for competency upon return. Consult the "Scholarly Year Clearance Checklist" on Blackboard to be certain what is required, as guidelines periodically change. Information can also be found on the [Return from Scholarly Year Form](#)
- Take a clinical refresher before the sub-Is. A refresher may be the emergency medicine rotation or a rigorous clinical elective approved by the student's advisor.

Current fourth-year students:

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

Other Miscellaneous Information

- 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 4th year with prior approval from the MSRO.
- Students on Scholarly Year will be covered by Mount Sinai malpractice insurance whether they stay at the school or spend their Scholarly Year elsewhere.
- Students are entitled to the Year 3 and 4 winter and spring breaks, and the school's holiday schedule.
- If any of the requirements detailed here are not met, the student may be obliged to re-enter school or to take an administrative leave.
- Refer to the ISMMS academic calendar for any other details, and discuss any time off with mentor.

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 15 of their Scholarly Year. The form is available at the School's website <https://icahn.mssm.edu/education/students/registrar/medical-forms>.
2. A scholarly product about the project is due by May 1 for students except those participating in a national fellowship program. The scholarly product may be a 3-5-page final report, a manuscript for publication (in preparation or submitted), or a first author abstract submitted to a national meeting. Products must be emailed to: medicalstudentresearch@mssm.edu, along with any submission/acceptance notifications (if relevant). Failure to do so will result in being put on administrative leave and student will not be permitted to return to clerkships.

[How to Prepare a Research Proposal](#)

[How to Write an Abstract](#)

Returning Student Clearance Requirements

All students returning to clinical rotations or electives must complete clinical requirements. A separate form will be sent to the student once they completed the Return from Scholarly Year form has been processed. Allow for 2-8 weeks for the processing of the Return form.