

VCU SOM Dean's Summer Research Fellowship

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the timeframe for the application cycle?

Applications are accepted from late January to late February. Review of applications is completed in March/April and students are notified in March/April. Check the SOM Research website for this year's deadlines.

2. Who is eligible to apply for the fellowship?

Fellowship is limited to current first-year VCU medical students. Other students are not eligible to apply.

3. How can I apply for the fellowship?

Applications are accepted through online submission in late January/February. Exact dates and submission deadlines are subject to change and are communicated to eligible students each year. A link to the online submission form and other information can be found on the student research website (<https://medschool.vcu.edu/research/medical-students/>). Scroll down to the section titled "Dean's Summer Research Fellowship".

4. Can I submit multiple projects for consideration?

No. A student may submit only one project for consideration.

5. Who can serve as a research mentor?

Any VCU SOM faculty member working on health-related research projects can be a mentor for the summer fellowship. Faculty members with primary appointments at the VA hospital and having VCU affiliation are also eligible to mentor students.

6. Is there a list of potential faculty mentors that I can use?

Yes, a list of some faculty members who have expressed an interest in serving as mentors is available on the [student research website](#)

(<https://medschool.vcu.edu/research/medical-students/>). However, please note that there are many additional faculty members who can be excellent mentors but are not included in the list. Students are encouraged to broaden their searches for potential mentors.

7. Will I get paid during the fellowship?

Yes. All fellowship awardees receive a stipend of \$3000 that will be paid in two installments. In addition, there are prizes for the best proposal and best research presentations at the end of the projects.

8. When will I get paid?

Payment dates vary from year to year and are dependent on how soon students provide information required for processing payments, and availability of personnel in the finance department who process payments.

9. How long will I need to do research?

Eight weeks. Typically, from mid-June to Mid-August, between the years M1 and M2. Students are required to work full time on their research projects.

10. Can I submit a project I am already working on, to apply for the Dean's fellowship?

Existing research projects are eligible for the Dean's fellowship. However, the student must work full time during the summer to conduct new experiments/collect or analyze data. Experiments previously completed can not be used to apply for the fellowship.

11. Can data science projects be used to apply for the fellowship?

Yes. Data science projects related to human health and analysis of charts to extract useful information can be used to apply for the fellowship.

12. How are the applications evaluated?

Applications will be judged on three criteria; the quality of the research plan, the quality of the applicant, the quality of the mentorship plan.

13. Is previous research experience necessary to apply for the fellowship?

Although it helps to have some previous research experience, it is not required to apply for the fellowship.

14. Can I use the fellowship funds to conduct research at another institution/university?

Dean's fellowship funding cannot be used for research outside of VCU and its affiliated institutions.

15. What should I do when I face issues in communicating with my mentor?

If a student is unable to initiate their research project in time or finds that the mentor does not have enough time for them, then the student should communicate their concerns to their mentor first. However, if that does not work then students should inform the Office of Research (Zakir.Ullah@vcuhealth.org) and ask for guidance.

16. Will I need to present my work at the end of the fellowship?

Yes, all students are required to present their research at the *annual medical students' research day*, held in April/May, regardless of the outcome of their projects.

17. How are the best projects selected and prizes awarded?

Three posters are selected by a group of judges for the first, second and third positions that carry prizes of \$1000, \$500 and \$250 respectively. Best proposal is also awarded a prize.

18. What is the success rate of applications for the Dean's fellowship?

Success rates for Dean's fellowship are high, but vary from year to year and depend on the number of applications received each year. Up to fifty fellowships can be awarded each year.

19. Can I combine the Dean's fellowship with other fellowships?

Students can apply for other fellowship while their application is under consideration for the Dean's Fellowship. Students with fellowship offers from other institutions will need to choose between the Dean's fellowship and the other offers. Dean's fellowship can not be combined with other offers and require full time commitment for 8 weeks.