

VCU SOM Dean's Summer Research Fellowship

The purpose of this program is to help students get valuable research experience in an area of their interest by offering them 8 weeks paid summer research fellowship at VCU. Students are encouraged to identify an area of research interest, talk to a research mentor at VCU (VCU faculty member or a clinician working at VCU), prepare a one-page research proposal after consultation with the mentor, and submit an online application.

Eligibility and requirements for students and faculty mentors

- Fellowship is limited to current first-year VCU medical students to conduct funded research during the summer between years M1 and M2.
- Students may conduct research with any faculty member in the School of Medicine.
- Faculty members with primary appointments at the VA hospital and having VCU affiliation are eligible to mentor students.
- Projects in both clinical and basic sciences are eligible for funding.
- A student may submit only one application for the fellowship.
- Students are encouraged to discuss potential research projects with their mentors, write their own proposals and seek faculty approval before submission.
- Students who are selected for a Dean's Summer Research Fellowship receive a stipend of \$3,000 that will be paid in two equal installments. The number of these fellowships is limited and they are, therefore, competitive.
- Fellowships are awarded for a period of two months.
- A faculty member may mentor only one fellowship-funded student application per year, unless a compelling justification to supervise more than one student is approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Research Training.
- Mentors must be present for at least 6 weeks to supervise students. Mentors should state their availability in the support letters.
- Dean's fellowship funding cannot be used for research outside of VCU and its affiliated institutions.

Application process

- Applicants must complete the [School of Medicine Student Summer Research Fellowship Application Form](#). Only online submissions through the following website will be accepted. Please use the following URL to submit your application.
<https://redcap.vcu.edu/surveys/?s=77WD8AEMMTLY4KCK>
- The applicant's prospective research mentor must prepare an NIH-style Biosketch and a letter in which the mentor agrees to supervise the research and to be present for at least six weeks of the research period. Instructions for the Biosketch can be found at the following link: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>.

- The applicant must upload the mentor's Letter and Biosketch online as part of the [School of Medicine Summer Research Fellowship Application](#).

Review of applications

Applications will be judged on three criteria:

1. The quality of the mentorship plan (Does the mentor have a history of successful research? Has the mentor made a commitment to supervise the student? Does the mentor have a prior history of mentorship success?).
2. The quality of the applicant (Does the applicant have prior research experience? Does the applicant demonstrate an understanding of and ability to describe the proposed research?). Please note that prior research experience is not required to apply for the fellowship.
3. The quality of the research plan (Is there a clearly stated and testable hypothesis? Is a clear rationale for the project presented with a statement of the research problem, prior research, and gaps in knowledge? Is the project feasible in the duration of the project? Will the project provide an educational experience for the student? Does it appear that the student wrote the proposal themselves?).

Student Obligations

- The student will devote full time to the research project and will not hold other jobs during this eight (8) week period.
- Students can apply for other fellowships while their application of the Dean's fellowship is under consideration. However, Dean's fellowship cannot be combined with other fellowships that require students to conduct research in summer.
- The student should promptly notify Dr. Zakir Ullah at the Office of Research when a student is unable to start the project or encounter serious problems that they are unable to resolve.
- The student will submit a poster of their research for presentation at Medical Student Research Day in April/May of the following year. Not all submitted research summaries are accepted for presentation. The best presentations are awarded prizes: First prize gets \$1,000, 2nd \$500 and 3rd \$250.
- Any publication resulting from this research should acknowledge support by the School of Medicine.

Important dates

- Student Notification: January 12, 2024
- Application Submission Deadline: February 28, 2024, 5pm
- Decision Notification: March/April 2024

For more information, please contact:

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