

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADVISING A MEDICAL STUDENT IN RESEARCH: 2016 Fact Sheet

*Thank you in advance to all advisors who take on the supervision of a medical student whether it is for a Research Higher Degree, Summer Scholarships or casual/voluntary research experience. Without your time, effort and expert guidance – there would be no student research program in the School of Medicine.*

Comprehensive information on research options for medical students can be found on the following websites and the [Medical Student Research Portal](#) and [Research in your medical degree](#)

**New MD degree:** The advent of the MD degree in January 2015 sees no change to the research higher degree options for students. Although there will be no Honours in the MD, there will be provision for exceptional students to undertake research projects beginning in Year 2 2016. More information on this option will be forthcoming.

**MBBS Honours:** The final MBBS Honours cohort will be in 2016

***The following points are specific to supervising medical students in research.***

**THE CLINICIAN SCIENTIST TRACK:** The Clinician Scientist Track refers to programs where our outstanding students are encouraged to incorporate a Research Higher Degree (RHD) into their medical degree (MD or MBBS). These students must first be eligible and approved for enrolment in a RHD by the UQ Graduate School. [The Graduate School](#) See also the link below.

- <http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/our-research-degrees>

You can expect a high level of self directedness and research experience from students doing an MPhil or a PhD. But please keep in mind that they are medical students as well as RHD students and more flexibility may be required in terms of your expectations of the student.

- **Concurrent MD-MPhil** - Most students will start as a Concurrent MD-MPhil which means they undertake an MPhil degree on a part time basis concurrently with their full time medical degree.
- **Intercalated MPhil and PhD** – Students may also choose to do an Intercalated MPhil or PhD which means they will undertake a mixture of part time and full time research intercalated with their medical degree.
  - This format requires students to interrupt their medical degree between years 2 and 3 to devote to full time research (1 year for MPhil & 2 years for PhD).

**Full Time Medical Degree:** Please remember that medical students are not provided with any time out of their scheduled timetable for work on their research. They must fulfil all the requirements of the full time medical program. Dedicated time for research over periods other than holidays or weekends is highly unlikely and should not be expected.

**Flexible Project:** Because medical students do not get special research time, it is important that you and your student agree on a project that is 'flexible' i.e. it does not require dedicated periods of time either in the lab or in clinical work.

- Projects requiring strict timelines for data collection or analysis will place substantial pressure on the student. Flexible projects that involve secondary data analysis or systematic literature reviews are all very productive projects that can be scoped appropriately for an MPhil degree.

**Upgrade to a PhD:** Students in the Clinician Scientist Track often are required to initially enrol in the MPhil but may upgrade to a PhD soon after their first milestone (Confirmation). If you and your student intend on upgrading to the PhD then keep this in mind as your approach Confirmation (approximately one year into the part time MPhil).

**Enrolling Unit:** Medical students are encouraged to pursue their personal research interests and may undertake research and engage advisors in any school, centre or institute at UQ or elsewhere. However the nature of the concurrent RHD and medical degree means it is important that medical students enrol in their RHD through the School of Medicine (SOM). This ensures that

the SOM can monitor their progression through both degrees and provide 'special consideration' for requests such as clinical school location and clinical rotation order.

**CASUAL AND VOLUNTARY RESEARCH STUDENTS** – Many students wish to get involved in research on a casual or voluntary basis. These students come with a range of prior research experience. Developing an arrangement with a student who works well with you and your team is often mutually productive. While we advise students with little or no experience not to expect opportunities in lab or clinical research, they can be helpful and productive in assisting with literature reviews, data management, chart audits and statistics.

- The involvement of a post doc or junior staff member as an additional advisor could prove beneficial by providing extra time to a student while allowing junior staff to gain supervision experience and mentoring skills.
- We require all students who are involved in research on a casual basis to register their project or activity on the new [Medical Student Research Portal](#) and urge supervisors to remind students to register their work and record all research output and achievements on the Portal.

***Here are a few reminders relevant to advising medical students in research.***

**Statistical Assistance:** Statistical assistance is available to all SOM staff and students through consultation with a statistician (on request). See web link for details. [Research Support](#)

**Ethics Approval:** Every UQ student undertaking research as part of a course or degree program must apply and receive UQ ethics approval for their individual project, or their substantial involvement in an existing project. If the research project is considered 'low risk' or has prior approval from another ethics review board, it can be reviewed and given UQ approval through the School of Medicine Internal Low Risk Ethics committee.

- See web link for details. [Research Support](#)

**SOM Research Office:** The majority of all information you or your RHD student will need is available from the SOM Research Office. These web links provide comprehensive information for SOM RHD students.

- [RHD Student Support](#)

**The Graduate School:** Medical students doing RHDs will be managed through the SOM Research Office. However all rules and policies related to their RHD (MPhil or PhD) are governed by the Graduate School. Further details on UQ Graduate School administration is on their website.

- [The Graduate School](#)

**Scholarship Support:** The UQ Graduate School administers a variety of competitive scholarships for international and domestic RHD students. See [UQ's new Scholarships website](#)

- **International students** – Please be aware that international students are required to pay tuition fees for a RHD. The Graduate School offers some – very competitive - scholarships that include tuition fee waivers.

**Graduate School Support for RHD Advisors:** The Graduate School provides professional development and support to you as a RHD student advisor.

- See link for details: [Graduate School Information RHD ADVISORS](#)

**Please remember:** Promote your research and attract medical students to work on MPhils, PhDs or on extra-curricular research through the new [Medical Student Research Portal](#)

If you have any questions or require more detail on any of these points please contact:  
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