

2017 Extended Research in the MD Program

FAQs

Extended Research refers to extra-curricular research opportunities and activities for all medical students, regardless of their research background, with an interest in doing some research during their MD program.

The Extended Research option is ideal for students who don't want to take on a Research Higher Degree (RHD) (MPhil or PhD) alongside their medical program. Extracurricular research is more flexible, and with careful planning, can work around your full time MD curriculum. Although you are essentially a volunteer and will receive no payment for your efforts, the vast majority of students gain tremendous advantage from their experience.

An important word about commitment and communication:

While you will be a volunteer, please take any commitment you make to a research project and your supervisor seriously. Most important is communication. Be very clear about your competing MD priorities. Remember that the clinicians and researchers you work with are generously giving their time and resources to provide you with experience, skills, and for most students, a publication(s).

- ***If you commit*** – follow through
- ***If in doubt*** - communicate

Can anyone do Extended Research during their medical program?

Yes. While the MD curriculum will provide didactic training in the research process and certain skills, all students are encouraged to get involved in an extra-curricular 'hands on' project in a volunteer capacity.

Is there a grade point average (GPA) minimum required to do Extended Research?

Yes. We strongly advise you to keep your GPA up above a 5. Remember your MD is your priority.

When can I begin an extra-curricular project as part of Extended Research?

Extra-curricular research can be undertaken at any time throughout the MD degree, but it is strongly suggested that Year 1 students wait until at least semester 2 to get involved in and commit to a research project. This is to avoid a common mistake of taking on too much-too soon. It's better to ensure you are well aware of and settled into your MD responsibilities before you commit time to a project.

Will I be allowed any time out of my medical program to devote to research activity?

No. There is no dedicated time out of the medical program to devote to extra-curricular research or a Research Higher Degree. All students must fulfil all the normal requirements of the medical program.

Can I get officially acknowledged for my research projects, and research output and achievements as part of my medical program?

Yes. We have a simple process that will allow us to acknowledge your extra-curricular research activity and research output throughout your medical degree. This acknowledgement is vital to your early career progression, your CV, future references, and your Dean's letter.

- Please register and report all your research activity, projects, publications, presentations and awards on the [Medical Student Research Portal](http://research-portal.medicine.uq.edu.au) <http://research-portal.medicine.uq.edu.au>
- ***If you don't report it on the Portal we can't acknowledge your efforts when you graduate.***

What are the specific requirements for a research project or activity to count as Extended Research?

To qualify as Extended Research:

- The project should be **extra-curricular** and undertaken on a volunteer basis.
- There must be some **output** from the project agreed between the student and their supervisor. Examples of research output are: co-authorship on an abstract for a conference, a journal publication, research report, or literature review etc.
- The **time** commitment overall should be at least 10 weeks full time equivalent devoted to the research. This can be spread over a summer break, several holiday periods, or over a year or years of the medical program.
- The project must be **registered** on the [Medical Student Research Portal](http://research-portal.medicine.uq.edu.au) You may register multiple projects as often as necessary throughout you degree.

Can I choose my own research topic or project?

Yes. This decision will also be made in partnership with your supervisor.

- Take time to consider what area of research you are interested in and then do some 'research' in finding a topic and a supervisor.
- The '**Find a Project**' database on the [Medical Student Research Portal](#), is a searchable database that contains contacts, potential projects and advisors to assist students in finding a suitable area of research.
 - ✚ Students do not have to choose a research project from the Portal, but it is a good place to start for ideas, guidance and assistance.

Find a Project: How will I get started looking for a research area or project?

1. Browse the database to learn more about available projects and supervisors
2. Complete an *Enquiry Form* on any project that you have a genuine interest in, and submit the form.
3. A copy of your form will be sent to the supervisor, and you should receive a reply within a week. *If you don't receive a reply in a weeks' time, you may contact studentresearch@uq.edu.au for assistance.*
4. From that point you may discuss the project or topic directly with the supervisor and explore opportunities.

What types of research projects are best for medical students?

Because students do not get dedicated time to devote to a research project, it is strongly recommended that you choose projects that are flexible and feasible within your curriculum timeframe. Projects that have time critical components such as wet lab work should be considered carefully, and probably avoided unless the lab time can be done at weekends or in summer breaks.

Please **choose research projects** that;

- are flexible and will allow you to do research work in your spare time e.g., weekends and holidays,
- involve data that is readily available through secondary sources such as databases, charts, etc.
- are not dependant on strict timelines or deadlines.

Are students who are based outside of Brisbane, e.g., Ochsner and Rural Clinical Schools, able to participate in research?

Yes. Students are encouraged to find research projects within their study location but may also undertake research that is based in Brisbane. Please keep in mind the practicality of what you do. e.g., if you are based outside of Brisbane, the research should not entail work that must be done in Brisbane or is dependent on strict time frames.

I have no research experience at all. Where should I start?

- Start by looking at the [Medical Student Research Portal](#) for a broad variety of research projects, activities and supervisors on the '*Find a Project*' database
 - Please understand that with little or no prior research experience you may be limited in the types of activities you may be allowed to do, especially in wet lab or clinical research.
 - Try looking for research projects that involve analysis of secondary data or existing data.
 - Public health and health systems research, medical education and epidemiological research are good options to look for.
 - Literature reviews or a systematic literature reviews are also excellent experience.

Also keep in mind the **Summer Research Scholarship** scheme which is run by the UQ Advantage Office

- All the information is available here: www.uq.edu.au/uqadvantage