



DO with Research Distinction Mentor/Committee Guidelines

Students are encouraged to actively conduct a research project to gain experience in basic and applied research and advance scientific knowledge. This will enable DO clinicians to understand how their profession is evolving and can contribute to the effort required for such evolution. Students will complete a research project, designed and conducted with a faculty research mentor. After successfully completing the project, the student will be awarded a Research Distinction designation at graduation. If you are asked to be a mentor or a committee member, guidance is listed below to help you get started:

Mentor Guidelines:

- Work with a student researcher to create a research project idea
- Assist the student in the creation of a research proposal (topic title, hypothesis, and a brief abstract/approach)
- Have an initial meeting with the student and their committee to review the research proposal
- Assist the student throughout their DO with Research Distinction project requirements (IRB or IACUC approval depending on project scope, the creation of a peer-reviewed publication, and their presentation at Research Day or other similar local, regional, or national meetings)
- Have a final meeting with the student and their committee to check off that they have completed the program. Note that for projects that involve several students as a team, each student must meet for this last mentor meeting individually
- Coordinate with the program manager (Kayla Afkinich) and keep her informed of any changes

Committee Guidelines:

- Meet with the student and their mentor after the creation of their research proposal for approval or recommendations on how to improve their project
- Ensure the research project has the appropriate number of researchers to ensure that every student makes significant contributions to the project
- Ensure that the target journal is peer-reviewed (and not predatory) and manuscript type (original research, novel clinical case report, not a review) will meet the committee's requirement for a publication
- Be available if any questions arise during the duration of the project in need of committee guidance
- Meet again at the end of the project to decide if the student has met all requirements. Note that for projects that involve several students as a team, each student must meet for this last committee meeting individually
- The Mentor is the chair of the committee, and must resolve any issues among committee
- The Provost for Research and/or the Vice-Provost for Research Development have ultimate power to resolve any committee or mentor issues

Benefits to the student, mentor and VCOM:

- Many faculty and students have ideas for research projects; your effort will advance these ideas.
- Hypotheses and high-risk ideas can be tested to provide essential data for grant applications.

- Publish peer-reviewed scientific manuscripts to demonstrate research prowess; improves residency competitiveness.
- Preparing future physicians in primary care and specialties with cutting edge research experiences.
- Increase grant supported research, critical to VCOM's future.

Contact your Campus Associate Dean for Biomedical Affairs and Research for more information:

- Auburn Campus: Dr. Darren T. Beck, (334) 442-4020 / dbeck@vcom.edu
- Carolinas Campus: Dr. David Eagerton, (864) 327-9831 / deagerton@vcom.edu
- Louisiana Campus: Dr. Pawel Michalak, (817) 673-2353 / pmichalak@vcom.edu
- Virginia Campus: Dr. Jim Mahaney, (540) 231-5280 / jmahaney@vt.vcom.edu