



# Office of Research, Innovation & Scholarly Endeavors



## How to Conduct Scholarly Inquiry at USF MCOM: A Student Guide

### **Identifying an area of scholarly inquiry:**

All students at MCOM are encouraged to engage in scholarly activities. The vast majority of students do so by participating in the SCP. Therefore it is highly recommended that the student consult with their SCP leaders in the process of identifying research interests and ultimately a project and mentor. The SCP leaders are experts in their fields and have developed a network of mentors relevant to the areas of scholarly inquiry in their particular concentration. The Office of RISE also helps connect students to mentors by maintaining lists of potential faculty and utilizing input from the individual Scholarly Concentrations Program leaders.

It is suggested that the student pick an area of scholarly inquiry about which they feel a passion. Without a doubt, every project will at some point turn difficult and cumbersome, and it is the passion that sees the student investigator through these periods of struggle. It is recommended that the student stay focused and not divert energy and resources into multiple projects thereby interfering with the final goal of disseminating the findings.

### **Finding a mentor in the area of scholarly inquiry**

The majority of MCOM students find mentors through participation in the SCP. Once a general area of inquiry has been identified, the student consults with their Scholarly Concentrations leader to identify several appropriate mentors. Once identified, it is the student's responsibility to contact these potential mentors in a timely manner. Prior to meeting a prospective mentor, the student should be able to clearly articulate their goals. It is also highly advised to listen to the mentor's assessment of these goals in order to make the appropriate match.

Students are permitted to seek a mentor and project outside of USF. If the student wants to submit the outside project for funding through USF MCOM, the student would be required to identify a USF faculty co-mentor with appropriate content expertise. Typically, the concentration leader will be helpful in identifying such a USF faculty co-mentor.

### **Developing the scholarly inquiry**

Once the mentor and mentee agree on a project, the student should outline the scholarly inquiry by writing a study protocol, clearly delineating the 1) hypothesis/objective(s), 2) specific aims and methodologies, 3) background and significance of the inquiry and 4) expected milestone(s). The study protocol should be well grounded in existing literature and thus contain a solid bibliography. The study protocol would be the basis for submitting the request for approval by regulatory bodies such as IRB or IACUC. Students are to register any scholarly activity as a work-in-progress (WIP) with the Office of RISE using the Archivum interface in order to qualify for financial support for travel/presentation opportunities.

Scholarly projects involving human subject research conducted outside of USF require IRB approval from both institutions. This may result in approval delays particularly for research conducted outside the US that involve ethical review boards as these may work differently from the US IRB process. Some international Universities require documents such as agreement letters that specify the visiting student's terms and conditions which must be reviewed by USF legal. When doing or presenting research outside of the US, medical students must comply with the rules and regulations as documented on the [Medicine International](#) website. Be sure to allow enough time and make sure you are aware of all required documentation prior to embarking.

### **Procuring funding for the scholarly inquiry**

The study protocol is the basis for submitting applications for intramural (through USF MCOM) and extramural funding during the break between the MSI and MSII years. It is recommended that the student apply to appropriate extramural funding agencies in addition to MCOM funding as it increases the students' exposure to outside educational opportunities. Identification of extramural funding opportunities can be facilitated with consultation with concentration leaders and through the Office of RISE. Upon a positive review by the intramural review committee, this funding mechanism can be granted if extramural funding was not obtained. A student may accept only one source of funding for summer scholarly experiences.

### **Working on the scholarly inquiry**

#### *Summer between Year 1 and Year 2*

It is expected that the submitted scholarly project be the student's top priority during the summer, requiring a 100% effort and full-time commitment from the student. 100% effort implies that the student will work diligently and exclusively for the summer period on the project with a maximum of 2 weeks off for personal time. It is important to the success of the project that as much as possible of the work be accomplished during that time period. Specifically, the project should have a very solid foundation by the end of the summer.

#### *Year 2*

The student's priority is to master the curriculum and prepare for the USMLE Step 1 examination. If time permits, students are encouraged to continue working on their projects. It is important for students to maintain regular communication with their mentors during year 2.

#### *Year 3*

Integrated within the clerkship curriculum, there are 2 x 2-week elective periods that are available for continuation of the project and are managed through the Office of RISE. The goal is to be working toward preparing the data for publication.

#### *Year 4*

Integrated within the selective and elective track curriculum, there are up to 3 X 1-month elective periods that are available for completion of the project, e.g.: writing and submitting a manuscript. No more than 12-weeks of a combination of externship, scholarly concentration or independent study can be used.

Throughout the tenure of the student at USF MCOM, students are encouraged to submit their work in the form of an abstract for oral presentation at the Annual SCP Student Symposium. Students who received intramural funding are required to submit an abstract for USF Health Research Day a minimum of once during their tenure.

Students are required to update the progress of the scholarly project in the Archivum platform, updating the work-in-progress (WIP) to indicate the outcome measure: abstract submitted, abstract accepted, paper submitted, paper accepted, oral presentation etc. The SCP student is further required to submit annual progress reports.

Good luck!