UFCD Research Track Program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Research Track is a mechanism to integrate an intensive research experience into the dental curriculum and to provide dental students with an enhanced opportunity to conduct meaningful research. The Research Track is intended for students who are committed to obtaining a concentrated research experience during dental school, many of whom will have an interest in an academic career.

The goal of the Research Track program is to allow students to maintain a connection with clinical, translational or laboratory research during the entire 4 years of dental school at UFCD. The Research Track program requires dental students to commit on average a minimum of 4 to 6 hours per week to the research program. Student activities may include laboratory or clinical research, critical reviews of the literature, writing manuscripts, participating in laboratory or clinical research meetings, and interacting with speakers and other attendees at research seminars. The specific activities and their timing will be agreed upon by the student and their mentor, and thus the research experience can be customized for each student.

Students who complete the Research Track will be eligible for Research Track Honors and High Research Track Honors. *(Students who do not participate in the Research Track program remain eligible for Research Honors and High Research Honors by satisfying current requirements.)*

Eligibility requirements for entry into the program

- Entry into the program requires a defined student-mentor team. Students who wish to enroll in the program but are not already paired with an approved mentor and/or co-mentor should contact the Associate Dean for Research for additional information.
- The student-mentor team must complete and sign the "Application Form for UFCD Research Track Program"
  Prior enrollment in the Summer Research Program is not required.

Selection process for student-mentor teams

Students interested in participating should select a mentor from the eligible mentors and schedule a meeting to develop a research training plan and work closely with the mentor to complete the required "Application Form for UFCD Research Track Program"

The UFCD Research Committee will review mentor and student applications and assist in the selection of mentors and students. The committee will make a recommendation to the Associate Dean for Research, who will make the final decision as to the suitability of the student, mentor and project for the program.

Program description

The Research Track will consist of 2 components, an elective seminar course, and a mentored research elective.

- The seminar elective course will be offered annually for 1 credit. The course is open to all interested dental students, fellows and residents, and no prior research experience is required. The goal of the course is to provide a venue: 1) in which students are exposed to ongoing research at the University of Florida through informal discussions and 2) to allow students to informally discuss their research interests and/or ongoing research projects to help establish a DMD student research community. The course will meet for 10 class periods each year, once a month.
- The mentored Research Elective will be overseen by the Associate Dean for Research, who, in conjunction with the Research Committee, will oversee the process of matching mentors with students and monitoring students' progress.

Requirements for completion of the program

To successfully complete the Research Track, the following requirements must be met:

- Completion of the first year seminar elective course (described above), entitled "Discussion of Research Interests."
- Membership and participation in the Student Research Group chapter of AADR. Dues for these organizations will be paid by the UFCD for successful applicants to the program.
- Continuous involvement in a mentored research experience (minimum of two consecutive years).
    - A written progress report signed by the student and mentor is required every year as well as a review completed every six months. The yearly progress report will be evaluated by the research committee. This report is designed to: 1) ensure that the goals defined at the initiation of the project or previous report were met, or if not, that an appropriate explanation and alternative goals are provided; and 2) establish new goals yearly. This evaluation is done to ensure a productive experience for the student and the mentor.
- Certification by the primary mentor that the student has completed a research project as part of their research experience. Evaluative criteria will need to include:
    - satisfactory grades for each semester the student is enrolled in a research elective,
    - recognition by the UFCD Research Committee and mentor of continuous student involvement and progress as documented in the aforementioned progress reports, and
    - publication of abstract(s) and/or manuscript(s)