Academic Research Track (ART)

# Overview

ART is a program designed to enrich the curriculum of the Medical School of the University of Rochester so as to support students who are interested in pursuing careers in academic medicine:

The Academic Research Track will provide selected students, strongly motivated to pursue an academic career in medicine that encompasses research, with a broad and deep exposure to basic, clinical, educational or translational research, involving both didactic and mentored research experiences through an enriched medical school curriculum.

# The Program in Brief

The ART will be based in the Double Helix Curriculum, with additional requirements[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Attendance at a series of monthly seminars, lectures and workshops (optional for those students also pursuing a Masters degree), throughout the years of training, consisting of
	+ Lectures that describe and analyze research studies based on topics covered in the Double Helix Curriculum
	+ Mini-courses or modules on topics related to medical research, including working in research teams; formulating a research question; choosing and evaluating measurements; study design, data collection, analysis and presentation; obtaining funding; and writing for publication. Other topics will include conflicts of interest and sources of bias.
	+ Presentations by ART students who are developing, implementing or completing their own research projects
* Required training in Ethics in Research through the course offered in the Graduate School
* Required certification in human studies through the self-study Human Subjects Protection Program
* Encouraged completion of a mentored research rotation during the summer between years 1 and 2 (~eight weeks in duration), designed to provide exposure to research and to potential research mentors (optional but strongly encouraged). Completion of a ‘year-out’ to participate in a mentored research project – typically, between years 2 and 3 or between years 3 and 4. Applications for support via the Clinical and Translational Science Award are competitive, with a nominal 5 slots per year available. However, there are other funding opportunities.
* Completion of a first-author manuscript describing the research and its results, in a form suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. A master’s thesis will suffice for this purpose for students who are participating in Masters Programs. See also Section V for related requirements for the Distinction in Research designation for the MD degree.

# Administrative

## General:

* An Executive Committee will direct the ART program of study – see below for listing of individuals. These individuals will serve as core mentors for students throughout the program, as a complement to the research mentors.
* Students should alert the Director of the program of their interest prior to or concurrent with the development of a plan for research during the year out.
* After graduation, students are expected to respond to periodic communications for the ART Executive Committee and the CTSA or its Institute (CTSI) regarding their academic progress beyond medical school, to allow tracking of ‘outcomes’ of ART.
* If a Masters program is desired, the student must apply separately to that program. Discussion with the appropriate director is encouraged.

## Requirements:

* Quality assurance will be an on-going process throughout the curriculum. In addition to the specific components outlined below, students will maintain high ethical and professional standards of behavior.
* Students will be expected to remain in good academic standing in the medical school curriculum. A yearly form will be used to declare the student’s continued interest in the ART, and will require approval by the student’s Advisory Dean. If there are concerns regarding performance or ability to continue the program of study, mentoring will be available.
* Students are expected to attend *at least* 75% of the scheduled ART seminars, unless exempt (e.g., Masters candidates).
* Students are expected to engage fully in their summer and year-out research projects; their mentors will work with the student to develop expectations and will evaluate performance.
* Members of the Executive Committee – and others, depending on expertise – will review the students’ oral presentations and written components. The latter should be of publishable quality.
* Members of the Executive Committee have final ‘sign off’ on all components of each student’s portfolio.

## Financial / Funding:

## Applications for support are due the February before the academic year in which the work is to be done. Funding, and therefore slots, are limited, with scholars chosen on a competitive basis.

## For students taking a year out, tuition for the Medical School is waived if they are chosen as a CTSI scholar (fees will be covered as well).

## Affiliated Masters Degree Programs (SMD-based) also waive tuition for ART students in good standing; tuition is usually covered by the CTSA.

## Stipends: Some affiliated programs (please refer to the ART website <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/education/art/index.cfm>) have stipend support for students taking a year out for research in their designated areas (e.g., in Pediatrics). Many investigators in the Medical Center have independent funding that can support students. Finally, the Medical Center’s CTSA, through the Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) provide stipend support to ART students doing a year-out for research in clinical or translational science. Additional funding is available to both student and mentor to cover some research expenses. See below (VI) for additional information.

# Curriculum:

## Overview:

* *Introductory seminars* – a series of lectures, covering general areas of medical research (basic science, translational, clinical, health services, education) incorporated as one-hour blocks into the MMI course. Rationale: ALL 1st year students will get early exposure to encourage participation.
* *Ethics and HSPP*. The Ethics requirement is met by the Graduate Studies-approved coursework, which can also fulfill the Double Helix Curriculum’s Medical Humanities selective requirement in the Second Year. Rationale: This is a requirement of NIH funding; all graduate students must complete the course.

HSPP training can be completed at any time as an on-line offering; but it must be completed prior to participating in any research involving human subjects.
* *Mentored Research Projects*: A ‘rotation’ (typically, eight weeks or more) between years 1 and 2 is encouraged; a year-out in-depth project
* *Portfolio Building*: ART students will build a portfolio during the course of study, to be evaluated by members of the Executive Committee. Elements include:
**a)** a first-authored written short (5-10 page) research proposal submitted by March before the year out, to include Hypothesis, Aims, and Approach;
**b)** a written publishable paper on the student’s research, submitted by the end of their last year.
**c)** oral presentations, open to the public, within or outside of the University community, on their research; and
**d)** attendance at a minimum of 75% of ART seminars in the first two years (unless waived).

## Curriculum:

The seminars are open to all students and faculty; missed sessions can be ‘made up’ in another year. The full curriculum runs each year.

We will present topics to help the development of a research career, taking care to address all potential areas of research – as far as possible – within each module. We regard this as a “Liberal Arts” approach to the basics of medical research careers.

The proposed modules follow. The names in parentheses indicate the leaders for that topic (see below).

* Research as a human enterprise: developing research teams and mentoring relationships
* Formulating a Research Question; Research Models and Conceptualization Measurements, Analysis
* Data Analysis and Presentation
* Finding the Money: Research Funding Sources, Process
* Writing for Publication

Summer Project: After year 1 or 2, strongly encouraged but not required

After year 2 or year 3: Mentored research experience, plus lab-affiliated seminars and didactics; possible to-be-developed core seminars; Ethics course

End of research year: Students present their research in written and half-hour oral formats for peers to critique

5th year (last year of medical school): Students participate in the required Process of Discovery course, but in addition to the usual course requirements, round out their research experience by critiquing other students’ proposed research programs.

# ART and Distinction in Research Designation

Students who have elected to participate in ART will be required to complete the requirements of that program as determined by the ART committee. The requirements can be found in this document and on the ART website <http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/education/art/index.cfm>. Students who meet all the criteria will receive a *certificate of completion for ART and this achievement will be noted on their transcript*.

The University of Rochester allows for graduates of the Doctor of Medicine program at the School of Medicine and Dentistry to receive Distinction in Research. This designation is *noted on the diploma and on the official transcript*. All ART students are strongly encouraged to submit their research work for consideration for the MD degree with Distinction in Research. Students who have not participated in ART are also encouraged to submit any research they completed during their matriculation to medical school for consideration. They will receive the same consideration as students who have participated in the ART program as submissions will be blinded for ART participation.

Students are eligible for both Distinction in Research and Distinction in Community Service.

Learning Objectives: The successful completion of a research project often depends on the quality of preparation. With this in mind, ART students are strongly encouraged to seek active input from their mentors, who should have experience in research and mentoring. Projects that are likely to be successful in obtaining a Distinction in Research designation are those that are hypothesis-driven or hypothesis generating; that ask novel and relevant questions in the area of study; that are feasible; and that are likely to generate interpretable and meaningful data. We recognize that not all projects can be highly successful in a year’s time – research is often unpredictable.

# ART and CTSA Funding – The details

Stipend support for students doing a year out for research in clinical and translational research is available through the CTSA / CTSI. Currently there are five slots per year; Masters tuition is covered for those students pursuing a Masters degree (just over half ART year out students have elected to pursue a Masters degree). All slots also support modest funding for the applicant and for the mentor to support the student’s research, plus a travel allowance.

* The awards are competitive, based on the applicant’s record and potential for a research career, on the relevance of the project to the mission of the grant (clinical and translational science) and on the quality of the project itself, including the quality of a detailed mentoring plan. The level of stipend support is based on NIH criteria, currently approximately $23,844 per year. Support is awarded for a one-year appointment.
* Participation in ART is required for funded scholars, unless pursuing a Masters degree.
* Several concurrent Masters programs are available: these include MPH, MS-CI (clinical investigation), MS-TR (translational research), MS-NBA (Neurobiology and Anatomy), and MBE (Biomedical Engineering). If students pursue a SMD-based Masters, the CTSI will usually cover tuition. Non-SMD-based Masters programs may be pursued, but tuition will be at the student’s expense.
* The NIH sets standards for Ethics training, which MUST be followed for students receiving CTSA funding. The student will be required to take either IND 501 or IND 503 to fulfill the training in research Ethics requirement.
* Documentation of completion of the course of study is required.
* Requirements are constantly being reviewed, and students are encouraged to seek counsel from their mentors or from members of the ART Executive Committee if there are questions about what constitutes an approved Ethics curriculum.
* We require in addition HSPP certification, which in most cases will be attained as a matter of course if the research involves human subjects.
* Awardees must also participate in protégé workshops and academic development seminars.
* Participation in other CTSI activities is strongly encouraged.
* Some students may wish to pursue research opportunities outside of URMC. While this is allowed, for students who wish CTSA support, rigorous documentation in the application for funding is required to justify the proposed research plan and thus to assure a quality research experience. It is anticipated that applications seeking funding for work done elsewhere will be approved as exceptional cases rather than as routine. In general, the following must be addressed:
	+ The project should have an obvious and clear connection to on-going research at URMC. For example, a project for which additional expertise, materials or environment is necessary – with such resources not available at URMC – would benefit from such an arrangement. Indeed, the student could serve as the nidus for or to strengthen a collaborative effort.
	+ The mentoring team must include a URMC investigator in addition to the external mentor. The means of on-going communication among all mentoring members and the student must be specified.
	+ There may be restrictions in the support available to the student and the mentor for work done outside URMC. This applies primarily to the additional monies for support of the research itself and not to the student’s stipend.
	+ Work done outside URMC but within the Upstate Academic Consortium (UNYTRN) will have the same application requirements, and is encouraged.
	+ The requirements outlined above will still apply, including the Ethics requirement.

**NB:**  *If a student chooses a year-out research experience that is not local, they are very strongly encouraged to take an equivalent course, approved by the NIH, at their hosting institution. Alternatively, they may complete an approved on-line course*

*Additional Years of Funding:* Some students may elect to pursue research for longer than one year. Typically, these will be students who elect to pursue either a certificate or, more likely, a Masters Program (*e.g.*, MPH, MS-CI, MS-TR, NBA,), for which the requirements may necessitate greater than one year to accomplish. The CTSI is therefore willing to consider applications for funding for greater than one year, according to the following guidelines:

* It is expected that the applicants for additional years of funding will have committed at the start of the first year of funding to an advanced program, typically a Masters Program. Students electing to pursue a second year of research, but not pursuing a Masters degree, may submit applications for continuing support, but the expectation should be that granting of such support would be exceptional.
* Awarding of stipends and research support for the second year will be on a competitive basis. The criteria for additional funding will require demonstrated productivity over the first year of funding and a strong rationale and plan – from both applicant and mentor – justifying the request for an additional year of support.
* There will be no funding available from the CTSI for work that extends beyond two years.

**ART Executive Committee:**

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For detailed information, go to our [Website](https://tinyurl.com/y7fo4xl8)

1. Students who are involved in research leading to a Master’s degree – such as in existing programs in Public Health or in Neurobiology – may have additional requirements. The final decision regarding requirements for ART will require review by the ART Committee, but it is anticipated that to obtain ART certification with the MD degree, the requirements of ART must be met. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)