

Summer Research Assistantship (SRA) – 2021

Program in Liberal Medical Education (PLME)

SRA's are made available to students in Brown University's PLME annually on a competitive basis. PLME students who are awarded an assistantship will receive a \$3,750 stipend to carry out a research project on campus or at a Brown-affiliated hospital under the supervision and mentorship of a Brown faculty member.

Only current sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be eligible to apply for the 2021 SRA, as freshmen will be enrolled in courses during the summer. Ideally, projects could be moved remotely if in-person work were not possible in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The student must dedicate 40 hours per week for 10 weeks between June to August. Other employment is not usually authorized during the defined work-week tenure of the assistantship. If the student plans to take a course over the summer or has other commitments that will run concurrently with the SRA, the mentor must be aware of this situation and give their consent. Though academic credit cannot be obtained for research done during an assistantship, it is permissible to use the research as an element of a thesis to be presented toward a degree, and to obtain academic credit if the student decides to develop and continue the project as independent research during the academic year.

Faculty Mentorship Expectations

The SRA Review Committee expects that the student and faculty mentor will meet a minimum of once per week to provide structured opportunities to discuss the ongoing work. Students should not be expected to work independently for long stretches without adequate mentoring. Applications must show evidence of collaboration between the student and faculty mentor.

It is the mentor's responsibility to ensure that the student has clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and established short- and long-term goals, and is aware of expected work hours. A faculty mentor must give consent if the student plans to take a course of the summer or has other summer commitments.

Please note:

- The faculty mentor must be a **faculty member** in the Division of Biology and Medicine, School of Public Health, or on clinical faculty to mentor a student for the PLME SRA.
- A faculty mentor may sponsor only **one** SRA application per year (i.e., may submit a letter of support on behalf of one student only).
- Each lab will be limited to **one** SRA application per year.
- Students may **not** apply for both the SRA and Summer Research Assistantship-Emerging Infectious Disease Scholars (SRA-EIDS) in the same year.
- A student who has received a SRA previously may apply again, but this will be taken into consideration during the application review process.
- A student who is awarded a SRA and receives another fellowship from the University (i.e., UTRA) or from another source will be asked to choose one source of funding. PLME students should discuss all funding opportunities with their advising dean.

The application deadline is Monday, March 1, 2021 by 12:00 pm EST.

The student will receive a response by early April 2021. The student must officially accept the assistantship by signing and returning the SRA Acceptance Form to judy_jang@brown.edu by Friday, April 9, 2021.

Students working at a Brown-affiliated hospital must abide by hospital workforce regulations. Additional steps may be mandatory and may include, but are not limited to, completing a medical screening, obtaining an ID badge, attending new employee orientation, and completing CITI online research training course. These steps should be completed (if applicable), and the faculty mentor and student should meet to confirm start date, work hours, meeting times, work space, and ensure all required resources will be available by June 1, 2021.

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Following completion of the project, the following will be required:

- The student will be expected to submit a one-page final report summarizing the work conducted during the assistantship.
- The faculty mentor will submit an evaluation letter of the student's performance during the assistantship.
- Both reports will be due by **Wednesday, September 2, 2021**.
- In October 2021, the student will be required to participate in the PLME SRA Poster Session, showcasing the results of the summer research.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please note the following criteria that the SRA review committee uses when reviewing applications:

- **Readability:** use plain language that can be understood by a general, lay audience. Use your own words. Do not cut and paste from your mentor's research abstract. Spell out all acronyms and abbreviations on first reference.
- **Practicality:** make your project goals realistic. Do not propose more work than can be reasonably done within a 10 week period.
- **Quality of mentorship**
- **Potential for scholarly output**

These guidelines are adapted from those required for standard NIH research grant submissions.

FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS

- Use Arial 11 point font size; minimum 0.5 inch for all margins for all pages; single-spaced.
- Include your name at the top of each page.

FORM PAGE 1: Title Page and Abstract

- **Abstract (150 words or less):** The role of the abstract is to present the essential meaning of the proposal, and forms the reader's initial impression of the work. Summarize the significance of the work, the hypothesis, and major objectives of the project, the procedures to be followed to accomplish the objectives, and the potential impact of the work.

FORM PAGE 2 (300 words or less)

- **Background and Significance:** Address why the proposed work is important in the field
 - Make clear what the research problem is and exactly what has been accomplished
 - Identify a gap in knowledge or activities that must be filled to move the field forward; show why the previous work needs to be continued
- **Specific Aims:** State concisely the hypothesis to be tested and the specific aim(s) to be achieved. The aims must be reasonable to achieve during the 10-week period of the award.

FORM PAGE 3 (300 words or less)

- **Research Strategy:**
 - A. **Innovation:**
 - Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
 - Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s) to be developed or use, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation or intervention(s).
 - B. **Approach:**
 - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project.

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- Delineate a timeline for different elements of the project.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

FORM PAGE 4 (no page limitation)

- **Bibliography for any references cited:**

- Each reference must include names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.
- The references should be limited to relevant and current literature.
- While there is not a page limitation, it is important to be concise and to select only those literature references pertinent to the proposed research.

FORM PAGE 5 (250 words or less)

- **Student Responsibilities:**

- Explain each of your responsibilities.
- Describe the schedule agreed upon between you and your mentor, including a work schedule, a meeting schedule, and any other times you are expected to be present in relation to the project.
- Include how this work fits into your educational and future goals, including any goals for scholarly output (i.e., poster presentation, publication).

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Faculty mentor letters of support should be addressed to the PLME SRA Review Committee.

- All faculty mentor letters of support should include:
 - A brief overview of the project and the student's role and responsibilities
 - A formal statement that the necessary space, equipment, and supplies will be available
 - A formal statement that arrangements have been made to provide the student with the expected level of faculty guidance and supervision
 - Provide details of plans for meetings with the student, and how often, when, and where meeting will occur
- If the student plans to take a course over the summer or has other commitments that will run concurrently with the SRA, the mentor should address this situation in the letter and give consent.

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Approval by the IRB or IACUC is mandatory if the project involves human or animal subjects, respectively.

If the work will be completed at a Brown-affiliated hospital, obtaining approval will be the mentor's responsibility as the student is not yet registered as part of the hospital workforce. However, the student may undergo the experience of preparing drafts of the IRB protocol and other required forms. Students must request a copy of the IRB approval letter from their mentor and attach it to the end of the application. If IRB approval is still pending, please attach proof of submission (i.e., a screenshot of the submission).

CHECKLIST

- Title Page and Abstract (Form Page 1, 150 words or less for Abstract)
- Background, Significance, and Specific Aims (Form Page 2, 300 words or less)
- Research Strategy (Form Page 3, 300 words or less)
- References (Form Page 4, no page limitation)
- Student Responsibilities (250 words or less)
- Letter of Support from Mentor (no page limitation)
- Copy of IRB or IACUC approval letter if project involves human or animal subjects, respectively (If approvals are marked as "pending" on the face page, this is not applicable; attach proof of submission)

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SUBMISSION PROCESS

Please e-mail the completed application to david_barnes@brown.edu by **Monday, March 1, 2021 by 12:00 pm EST**. Incomplete applications will not be considered after this date and time.

FORMS

All forms and documents can be found online:

<https://www.brown.edu/academics/medical/plme/current-students/enrichment-activities/research-opportunities/plme-summer-research-assistantship-soc>

QUESTIONS

For questions, contact:

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Judy Jang, MD

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