Summer Research Assistantship (SRA) - 2017
Program in Liberal Medical Education (PLME)

Overview

Summer Research Assistantships (SRAs) are made available to students in Brown University's Program in Liberal Medical Education (PLME) annually on a competitive basis. PLME students who are awarded an assistantship will receive a $3,500 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.

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.

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. Students may not apply for both the SRA and Summer Research Assistantship in Emergency Medicine (SRA-EM) in the same year. A faculty mentor may sponsor only one SRA application per 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.

A positive mentee-mentor relationship should be fulfilling and beneficial for all involved. Keys to establishing a successful mentoring relationship include a relationship of trust, defining expectations, using open and supportive communication, and collaboratively solving problems.
Timeline

The application deadline is Wednesday, February 1, 2017 by 12:00 pm EST.

The student will receive a response by March 2017. A student who is awarded a SRA and also receives other summer funding will be asked to choose on source of funding. The student must officially accept the assistantship by signing and returning the SRA Acceptance Form to sheila_haggerty@brown.edu by Monday, April 3, 2017.

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.

By May 2017, the steps above 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, 2017.

Following completion of the project, the student will be expected to submit a one-page final report summarizing the work conducted during the assistantship. Additionally, the faculty mentor will submit an evaluation letter of the student’s performance during the assistantship. Both reports will be due by Wednesday, September 6, 2017.
These guidelines are adapted from those required for standard NIH research grant submissions.

FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS
- Please adhere to the page limitations as stated
- 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 and consecutively number all pages in the application at the bottom of each page.

FORM PAGE 1
- Title Page
- Abstract: 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 PAGES 2-3
Adhering to the page limitations, provide the following:
- Background: 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.
- Research Strategy:
  A. Significance:
    - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
    - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
  B. 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).
  C. Approach:
    - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project.
    - Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.

FORM PAGE 4
Provide a bibliography of 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

Adhering to the page limitations, provide the following:

- **Biosketch:** The biosketch includes 3 sections: personal statement, relevant background, and how this work fits into your educational and future goals. Include courses or activities that underscore your skills in the area.

- **Student Responsibilities:**
  - Explain each of the responsibilities of the student and the expected timeline of completion.
  - Describe the schedule agreed upon between the mentor and student including a work schedule, a meeting schedule, and any other times the student is expected to be present in relation to the project.

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 prove 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. The application must be submitted before the SRA application deadline of February 1, 2017.

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).
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CHECKLIST
☐ Face Page and Abstract (Form Page 1)
☐ Background, Specific Aims (Form Page 2, maximum 1 page)
☐ Research Strategy (Form Page 3, maximum 1 page)
☐ References (Form Page 4, no page limitation)
☐ Biosketch and Student Responsibilities (maximum 1 page)
☐ 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)

SUBMISSION PROCESS
Please e-mail the completed application to sheila_haggerty@brown.edu by 12:00 pm EST on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. The application will not be accepted 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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