

## **Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine**

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DEAN APPROVED: October 21, 2025

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Dean & Chief Academic Officer

Policy Title: Student Research & Scholarly Activity Policy

## **Policy & Procedure Statement:**

#### **General Statement**

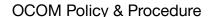
The Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine (OCOM) has drafted a Research and Scholarly Activity Strategic Plan (Element 8.1), which will be reviewed and revised annually, as well as a Research and Scholarly Activity Budget (Element 8.2). Both incorporate students into the research paradigm at all levels and throughout their osteopathic medical education. This policy highlights the importance of student-driven research and scholarly activity (in both clinical and non-clinical arenas), as well as student participation in faculty-driven research endeavors.

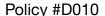
#### **Purpose**

Research knowledge is a core element utilized frequently by practicing osteopathic physicians. Research skills are crucial to develop longitudinally throughout the osteopathic medical education continuum. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement competency involves:

- Data gathering and statistical interpretation
- Evaluating research validity and clinical significance
- Critically evaluating medical evidence, and
- Applying systematic methods to improve patient and population health.

These elements will be fostered through student-directed learning, traditional didactics, laboratory- and field-based research, and mentorship across all four years of the student's osteopathic medical education.







# Requirements

Students must not only learn research technique and theory, but also apply it to clinically-relevant scenarios. To that end all students:

- Must complete the Research Fundamentals course sequence in Years 1 and 2, which covers research methods and ethics, biostatistics, the grant writing process, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, critical appraisal of medical literature, and evidenced-based medicine.
- Students will have protected time (Friday afternoons, Years 1–2) to engage in research and faculty mentorship.
- Must complete a research project (typically in Year 3) in a form such as a case report; literature review; quality improvement project; protocol development; bench or clinical research; or medical education, biomedical science, osteopathic, or public health research, etc. Projects must result in either a manuscript submitted for peer-reviewed publication or a presentation at OCOM Research Symposium or other local, regional, or national research meeting or conference. This will prepare students to take on a quality improvement project, required by the American Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) guidelines, once in residency.
- May enroll in research electives in the clinical years which provide students dedicated time to devote to research-based endeavors.

#### Eligibility to Participate in Extracurricular Research

In order to participate in extracurricular research, students must:

- Complete the Foundations of Medical School Sciences course.
- Be in good academic and behavioral standing.
- Have an identified research mentor—either an OCOM faculty member or an approved external collaborator.

## **Ethical Review of Human Subjects Research**

All human subjects research conducted by OCOM students, faculty, or staff must undergo ethical review prior to initiation. OCOM has designated internal **Exemption Determination Officers** who will review submitted protocols to determine whether they qualify for exempt status under federal regulations.

- **Exempt Protocols:** If the project meets exemption criteria, the determination will be documented in writing by the Exemption Determination Officer.
- Non-Exempt Protocols: If the project does not clearly meet exemption criteria, it
  must be submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for expedited or full



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review. OCOM contracts with WIRB-Copernicus (WCG) for IRB review services. (A *Master Services Agreement* is available upon request.)

Faculty or external researchers with proper credentials (e.g., MD, DO, PhD) must serve as Principal Investigator (PI) on all protocols. Students may not serve as PI nor submit research protocols directly to the IRB.

## **Funding**

As outlined in the Research and Scholarly Activity Strategic Plan (Element 8.1) and Budget (Element 8.2):

- Subject to budget availability and pre-approval by the Director of Research, funding is available:
  - To cover Application Processing Charges (APCs) for manuscripts accepted for peer-reviewed publication. Complete the *Publication and Presentation Pre-Submission Approval Form*.
  - To support students presenting research at local, regional, national, or international conferences. See the Research and Scholarly Activity Travel Fund Policy (D094) for details.
- An Annual Research Symposium will highlight faculty and student research.
- Additional support may come from internal Research Seed Grants (RSGs), faculty or preceptor-funded projects, or on-site scholarships as they are developed.

## Interprofessional Education

Students will have opportunities to engage in interprofessional research with health professionals such as physician assistants, nurses, and others, both within OCOM's network and with external partners.

# Osteopathic Principles and Practices (OPP) and Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) in Research

OCOM strongly supports and prioritizes funding for OMM/OPP research and scholarly activity. OPP faculty are given protected time for OMM/OPP research and scholarly activity and are encouraged to mentor students in these activities.

This policy shall be posted at <u>ocom.org/policies</u>.