

## Orlando College of Osteopathic Medicine

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### 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

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 [ocom.org/policies](http://ocom.org/policies).