WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES
DOCTOR OF PHARMACY RESEARCH HONORS PROGRAM

MISSION

The Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program provides research opportunities in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences to students enrolled in the professional Doctor of Pharmacy program. This program is designated as a separate degree option in the WSU catalog; completion confers the "PharmD with Research Honors". Qualified students who are academically strong and who are motivated to pursue educational opportunities outside of the classroom will work with faculty research mentors to develop research projects and explore areas of interest that complement and enhance their experiences in the Doctor of Pharmacy program.

Students in the first year of the professional program are eligible to apply to the Research Honors Program. Admission of students early in the program will enable the students to develop strong relationships with faculty research mentors and well-designed research projects. Students who successfully complete research projects and the requirements as set forth by the Honors Committee will graduate with honors distinction.

Student Benefits. Students admitted to the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program will:

- Learn about basic, clinical, outcomes research, or other scholarly activities related to health sciences
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills to formulate and test hypotheses, discuss disease interventions, or improve patient care
- Work one-on-one with an accomplished faculty mentor
- Interact with other research faculty members and personnel, graduate students, and other Honors students
- Attend seminars including those presented by outside guest speakers and research experts
- Develop communication skills through oral and poster presentations of research work
- Build a strong curriculum vitae to be more competitive in the job market or as an applicant to residency/graduate school
- Work with faculty members who can provide letters of recommendation in support of career advancement
- Expand career opportunities
- Build lifelong professional relationships
- Students who are interested in the joint PharmD/PhD program can receive valuable research experience for the PhD program
- The accomplishment will be clearly noted on the student's transcript.

ADMISSION

Eligibility. Doctor of Pharmacy students interested in pursuing research opportunities offered by the Research Honors Program must be in the first year of the professional program and be in good academic standing as determined by the College's Student Progress Committee. Good academic standing is defined as having successfully passed all courses with no decisions by the Student Progress Committee to put a student on probation or decertify a student from the Doctor of Pharmacy Program. These situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Step 1: Preparation (Fall PY1)

Interested students need to identify a mentor so that they can sign up for 499 (Special Problems) or 599 (Special Projects) for Spring PY1. The purpose of this experience is to determine whether the student is able to commit time to research, and whether the mentor assignment is a suitable match. Course enrollment can be in either Pharmacy 499 (for mentors in Pharmacotherapy) or PharDSci 499 (for mentors in Pharmaceutical Sciences). Students can register for 1-4 credits in a 499 course, based on discussions with their mentor and the time commitment involved. Students will need to contact their Academic and Student Success Advisor to register for the 499 courses.

To identify a mentor, it is suggested that students review the research interests of the faculty (e.g., https://pharmacy.wsu.edu/research/faculty-experts-index/), and then arrange to meet with individual faculty members to discuss their mutual interests and the potential availability of a project in the mentor's group. This will be done at the initiative of the student, although the Associate Dean for Faculty and Student Development is available for advice during the process. The mentor must approve enrollment of the student in 499 or 599 courses.

Step 2: Participation in 499/599 project

Students will work with the faculty mentor during the Spring PY1 semester. The time commitment is variable but is based upon the amount of credits enrolled in for the 499 course. It must be sufficient for the student to gain sufficient experience, and for the mentor to evaluate the student's research potential, by the middle of the Spring PY1 semester. Upon request to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Student Development, and with the written support of both faculty mentors, it is possible for students to switch mentors during or between semesters, subject to academic regulations.

Step 3: Application.

Students will complete an application to the Research Honors Program. Further details will be provided in Spring PY1. Completed applications must be submitted to the Doctor of Pharmacy Honors Committee to Ms. Alice Stricker (alice.stricker@wsu.edu); the deadline will be announced annually. The application will consist of the following components:

1. Current curriculum vitae or resume
2. An essay (1-2 pages) that addresses:
    a) Why the student is interested in pursuing research, including future career goals
    b) What topic/research question the student is interested in studying
    c) The proposed faculty mentor, and why this is a good match
    d) Research-related experience the student has had, including in the mentor's group
    e) Personal background (including extracurricular activities, community service, leadership activities, and work and volunteer experiences).
3. Letter of support from the mentor
    This letter will be submitted directly to Ms. Alice Stricker (alice.stricker@wsu.edu) in the office of the Associate Dean for Faculty and Student Development.

Acceptance. Admission to the Research Honors Program is competitive and depends on the number of research opportunities available each year as well as the number of qualified applicants. Application to the program therefore does not guarantee acceptance to the program. Applicants will be notified by the Associate Dean of Faculty and Student Development of their acceptance into the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program. Once accepted, the degree program will be changed to the PharmD with Research Honors.

PROGRESS AND RETENTION

Academic Standing. Students admitted into the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program must be in good academic standing as determined at the end of each semester by the College's Student Progress Committee.

Research Project. Students admitted into the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program must complete an Honors research project. Each research project must be developed through discussions with the faculty research mentor. Students are expected to meet regularly with faculty mentors, and to submit an annual progress report at the end of PY2 and PY3 (see below). Research projects must be completed during Spring PY3, prior to advancing to the PY4 advanced pharmacy practice experiences.

Enrollment in Graduate Level Course. Students admitted into the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program are required to enroll in PharmSci 577 (Responsible Conduct in Biomedical Research; 3 credits) in Fall PY2. This course will be available to students on both the Spokane and Yakima campuses, and can be used to fulfill the elective requirements for the PharmD curriculum.

Enrollment in Honors Research credits. Students are required to complete a total of at least 8 credits of PharDSci 598 (Honors Research) in PY2 and PY3. They are required to register for PharDSci 598 each semester of PY2 and PY3, for 1-4 credits per semester. Their faculty mentor will be assigned as Instructor-of-Record for these credits. PharDSci 598 may not be used as PharmD elective credits. Students will still need to complete 12 credits of electives for their degree, in consultation with their Academic and Student Success Advisor.

Presentation of Research in PY2. Students admitted into the Doctor of Pharmacy Research Honors Program must give a poster presentation that includes background, rationale, and process/design of the project at Honors Research Day in Spring PY2. The primary purpose of the presentation is for the student to gain presentation experience, and to obtain helpful feedback regarding the project.

Presentation of Research in PY3. Students will submit a draft manuscript, describing the results of their project, in Spring PY3 (date TBA). It is not required that the manuscript actually be submitted for publication, but the draft must be in a style and format consistent with a journal in the field (journal title must be provided with the draft). The draft manuscript will be reviewed by members of the Honors Program Committee, and feedback will be provided. Students will submit the final edited version of their manuscript by March 1st in PY4. The Honors Committee will then determine whether the work merits the honors distinction.

Progress Reports. Students enrolled in the Research Honors Program are required to submit annual progress reports in the Spring of PY2, PY3, and PY4. Both the student and the mentor will contribute to the report. The purpose is to ensure that students have made satisfactory progress (PY2) and have fulfilled the requirements of the program (PY4). The PY4 report will include a "completion form", to be signed by the mentor, indicating that the students have completed the program.

Consequences for Failure to Meet Requirements as Established by the Honors Committee. Once admitted, students who fail to meet the requirements of the Research Honors Program, as described above, may be dismissed from the program or put on probation until the requirements can be met. These students will consult with their Academic and Student Success Advisor concerning enrollment in the regular PharmD degree option. In the event a student believes that a decision of the Honors Committee is unfair or unjustified, the student is entitled to appeal the decision to the Student Progress Committee. Students whose appeals are successful will be reinstated into the Research Honors Program; students whose appeals are not successful will be permanently dismissed from the Research Honors Program.

GRADUATION

Students wishing to graduate with honors distinction from the Research Honors Program must

- Complete PharmSci 577 and at least 8 credits of PharDSci 598.
- Be in good standing (no delay in progression as per the College's Student Progress Committee)
- Give a poster presentation by the end of second professional year spring semester
- Present a draft manuscript on their research to the Honors Committee in Spring PY3
- Submit a signed "completion form" by March 1st of PY4.

Students who successfully complete all requirements described above will graduate with the distinction of PharmD with Research Honors, to be recognized during the commencement ceremony.