Distinction in Research

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Program Contacts

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Coordinator</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Alex Haynes, MD, MPH</td>
<td>Barbara Northern</td>
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Curriculum

The primary goal of the third year of Dell Medical School is to focus students on the distinct challenges of 21st century healthcare and medicine through a rigorous scholarly experience. This distinction offers students the opportunity to pursue a full-time, mentored research experience, during which they will design and execute a research project. This can encompass the full spectrum of research, including basic, translational, applied pre-clinical, clinical, health services, population health, and outcomes investigation; both quantitative and qualitative. The Distinction in Research intends to benefit students through exposure to research design and implementation in a rigorous scholarly environment where they can develop skills for investigation, pursuit of discovery, and transmission of knowledge to others, while learning to incorporate ethical principles in research.

Students choose an individual mentor during their second year from participating faculty members in the health sciences within Dell Medical School and other UT Austin colleges and schools. Mentors assist students in preparing realistic project proposals and timelines before the nine-month block begins. Mentors also provide research space, equipment and supplies, allocate time and attention on a regular basis to students to ensure a positive and meaningful research experience, and help in preparation of students’ final papers, poster and oral presentations for a culminating student research symposium. In addition to the mentor, the Research Distinction Advisory Committee (RDAC) will oversee all student research projects. The distinction committee will approve proposed project proposals and monitor the student experience and progress through individual research advisory committees. The individual committees will work in conjunction with the mentor to recommend the final grade of pass, fail or honors to the students.

Program Structure

There is structure and oversight built within the Research Distinction, but students who have prior research experience and students who are skilled in self-discipline will do well in this distinction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Distinction Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Student Progress Report Presentation to Committee 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Student Progress Report Presentation to Committee 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Student Progress Report Presentation to Committee 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Research Distinction Symposium</td>
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Tuition and Fees
There are no additional tuition or fees associated with this distinction.

Application Instructions and Timeline

**Application Materials**
- Distinction Application DUE JANUARY 2
- Distinction Proposal Submission Form DUE BEFORE the March MS2 Intersession
- Distinction Proposal Template

**MS1s**
- Read about the Distinction and speak to upperclassmen in the Distinction
- Attend the spring open house
- Read about the research going on at Dell Med through the Intranet

**MS2s**
- MS2 Intersession 1: Attend the information session during the first MS2 Intersession
- Read about the research going on at Dell Med through the Intranet and set up meetings with potential mentors
- MS2 Intersession 2: Get advising from Distinction leadership or set up meetings with potential mentors
- MS2 Intersession 3: Distinction Application is due
- Meet with your mentor and spend time working on the proposal template
- MS2 Intersession 4: Your proposal is due: Distinction Proposal Submission Form
- The RDAC may send you comments for revisions.
- MS2 Intersession 5: Your revised proposal is due.

**Orientation**
A three-day orientation to the distinction takes place in August.

**Grading Rubric**
As the culmination to this nine-month long scholarly endeavor, all students are expected to complete a poster, oral presentation and thesis for the end-of-experience Research Distinction Symposium. We strongly encourage students to submit their abstracts for poster or oral presentations at national and regional conferences. We also encourage manuscript submissions for publication, grant proposals, commercialization activities, including patents, or hand-off of the project to another UT or outside entity for further development.

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<th>Fail</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Honors</th>
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| ___Did not meet the expectations as listed in Pass. | Achieved all areas below:  
___Analysis of data completed during 9-month Distinction  
___Final thesis submitted on time  
___Final committee meeting completed  
___Local presentation of project at Distinction Symposium  
___Professional and ethical standards upheld  
___Achieved expected level of advancing/attained on all ILD Rubric competency categories | Achieved all areas defined in Pass in addition to one of the below:  
___Accepted regional/national peer reviewed abstract or manuscript  
OR  
___Prototype approved for implementation; patent application  
OR  
___Submitted grant proposal using data from project  
OR  
___Awarded based on Research Distinction Advisory Committee Review of Thesis |

If a student does not achieve one of the criteria for Honors prior to course close, the Research Distinction Advisory Committee will review the students’ Thesis and make a determination.

Some examples of what might be included in an honors-level thesis are:
- Reflectivity around successes and failures of the research project
- Evidence of engagement in research professional development beyond execution of the research
- Contextualization of the project within the research field
• Recounting how your view of the discovery process has evolved over the year as a result of your research experience
• Discussion of how this experience will influence your future career directions