

PharmD Honors Research Program

The **PharmD Honors Research Program** is designed to provide exceptional students in the School of Pharmacy with in-depth research training and experience in a specialized area of interest.

Faculty Co-Directors of the Honors Research Program
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The Program provides:

- Training in conducting research and interpreting scientific findings
- Practical experience with experimental design and modern research techniques in a laboratory or clinical setting
- One-on-one mentoring with a School of Pharmacy faculty member
- Enhanced presentation and writing skills
- Development of a specialized area of knowledge during PharmD training
- Summer research opportunities
- Excellent experience for students considering a PhD or the PharmD/PhD dual degree option
- Potential for publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals
- Strengthened curriculum vitae
- Special recognition at commencement and on transcript

The Program is flexible, to maximize opportunities and meet student needs; students may enter at anytime from the spring of the PP2 year through the P2 year, though they are encouraged to enter the program as early as feasible. A checklist will be used to develop a student's plan of study rather than a fixed set of successive requirements. This will allow students to take advantage of courses/lab rotations/summer programs as they become available and as their interests develop. An individual student's plan of study should include research experiences and courses that complement the research project and enable the student to develop a particular area of emphasis while completing the PharmD.

Admission Requirements

- Cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher
- Letter of recommendation from a School of Pharmacy faculty member who agrees to serve as student's Honors Research mentor.
- Letter of intent from the student

Students interested in the Program should meet with one of the Co-Directors (chairs of the honor's research program committee) to discuss areas of research interest and to identify potential faculty mentors. Students may learn about faculty research interests by browsing the School's [website](http://pharmacy.rutgers.edu) (<http://pharmacy.rutgers.edu>) and by browsing the websites of each of the School's academic departments. In order to be admitted to the Honors Research Program, students must have a faculty mentor and an approved plan of study.

Program Requirements

- School of Pharmacy faculty mentor (who will also serve as the student's academic advisor)
- Completion of required Professional Elective (2 credits): Introduction to Research or Clinical Research Design
- Completion of research plan of study developed with mentor, to include:
 - 8 or more research credits with a minimum grade of B or better (4 of these credits will satisfy 2 Professional Elective curriculum requirements for the PharmD, and the other 4 credits will be additional credits beyond what is required in the curriculum)
 - 2 or more didactic credits (either one Professional Elective in the PharmD curriculum or a graduate course in a subject related to the research project)
 - Presentation of work at yearly Pharmacy Research Day or other venue approved by the faculty mentor and the program directors.
 - *(Note – students will take the remaining 2 required Professional Electives in non research courses of their choice; therapeutics courses are recommended.)*
- Submission of working portions of research thesis (i.e., Introduction, Materials and Methods, etc.) to the advisor and the Program Director(s) each semester that the student is enrolled in research in order to receive a final grade for the course. Grades will be determined by the faculty mentor and submitted to the Program Director who will notify the registrar of the final grade.
- Faculty mentor approval of the thesis
- Presentation of the research results at the annual Pharmacy Research Day or other venue approved by the faculty mentor and the Program Director(s).
- Minimum grade of B in each course in the research component of the program.

Students will register for research credits in one of the following:

Research in Chemical Biology	30:158:495 or 497 (496 or 498 in spring)
Research in Medicinal Chemistry	30:715:495 or 497 (496 or 498 in spring)
Research in Pharmacology	30:718:495 or 497 (496 or 498 in spring)
Research in Pharmaceutics	30:721:495 or 497 (496 or 498 in spring)
Research in Pharmacy Practice	30:725:495 or 497 (496 or 498 in spring)

These courses offer variable credits (based on the number of lab or clinical hours) and students must earn at least 8 credits over time. Research should take place either in a laboratory or at a clinical site under the supervision of the mentor. Students are required to take 4 additional credits beyond the requirements for the PharmD curriculum. They are also required to write a thesis for completion of the research program. It is anticipated that the quality of the work will be sufficiently high for eventual publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Portions of the thesis should be written during each research semester and finalized during the final semester of research.

Students in the Honors Research Program are also required to give oral presentations throughout their tenure in the Program. Faculty will ensure that students have ample opportunities for their students to report on their work. One venue for this is Pharmacy Research Day, a spring semester event designed to showcase student work. Participants at that event will include Research Honors PharmD students, master's and PhD students, residents, and postdoctoral fellows. Competitive abstracts for podium and poster presentations will be reviewed by a faculty committee for inclusion in the program. While only some of the Honors Research Students will be able to give podium talks, all students will participate in the event.

Students who successfully complete the Honors Research Program will be identified at graduation with a special commendation, which will also be noted on their transcripts as "Completion of PharmD Honors Research Program." While some of these students will achieve honors awards according to academic accomplishments (e.g., *magna cum laude*), participation in the Honors Research program is not, in and of itself, sufficient for that distinction.

Program Faculty

The Program Co-Directors are faculty members – one representing the clinical faculty and the other representing the basic sciences – who are members of the Pharmacy Honor's Research Committee. They provide prospective students with general information about the program and will direct students to those faculty members whose research fits the interests of the students and who have agreed to serve as mentors. A successful mentoring relationship is built on mutual respect and interest – so students and faculty need to assess the potential for a successful collaborative relationship before making a commitment. Faculty mentors will provide students with academic advising and direction in their labs or clinical sites. The Co-Directors are responsible for the coordination with the mentors, biannual review of students' plans of study, organization of the yearly Pharmacy Research Day, and general oversight of the program.

In conclusion...

The newly launched Honors Research Program continues a long tradition, established in 1952, of providing a research-oriented program for those exceptional students who wish to extend their professional education. The requirements of the revamped Program are designed to give students a clear set of research experiences that will be useful for professional advancement, including PhD study. The Co-Directors will ensure clarity and uniformity in requirements and the faculty mentors will provide one-on-one training in new and emerging fields of clinical practice and basic science.

For additional information, contact:

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