



# KYCOM SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

## Mentor Change Policy

### Purpose

This document outlines the procedures for students who wish to change mentors, withdraw from the program, or fail to meet key participation requirements during the Summer Research Fellowship (SRF) at the University of Pikeville – Kentucky College of Osteopathic Medicine (KYCOM). The goal is to ensure transparency, professionalism, and accountability throughout the research experience.

### Mentor Change Process

Students may request a change in mentor for reasons including:

- Misalignment of research interests or project scope
- Persistent unavailability despite accommodation attempts
- Unforeseen personal or professional circumstances
- Mentor's inability to provide adequate guidance or support
- Ethical violations or research misconduct

### Steps to Request a Mentor Change

#### 1. Communication and Resolution Requirements

- Before requesting a mentor change, students must first attempt to resolve concerns through direct communication with their assigned mentor. The student must schedule a meeting to discuss issues and then allow at least two weeks to implement the agreed-upon solutions. Only after making genuine efforts to address problems directly should students consider requesting a change in their mentor.
- If a resolution is not possible, students may proceed to the next step.

#### 2. Release Letter from Mentor

- Before initiating any transition from a research project, students are required to obtain a formal release letter from their assigned research mentor. This letter confirms that the student has fulfilled all responsibilities, returned all research

materials and data, and that the mentor has no objections to the student's departure from the project.

- The release letter must be submitted to the Research Committee for record-keeping and approval before any new research engagement or support can be considered.

### **3. Submission of a Formal Request**

- Email the chair of the Research Committee with the following:
  - Brief explanation of the reason for the request
  - Preferred outcome (e.g., new mentor, new project, interest area)
  - Release letter from Mentor

### **4. Request Review**

- The chair of the Research Committee will review the request and may schedule a confidential meeting with the student.
- Input may also be sought from the current mentor, if appropriate.
- The Research Committee will vote on whether the change is appropriate.

### **5. Mentor Reassignment**

- If approved, the student will be matched with a new mentor based on availability and research interests.
- A revised project scope and timeline will be developed collaboratively.

### **6. Documentation and Transition**

- The change will be documented in the program records.
- Students must notify both the previous and new mentor of the transition.
- Any work completed under the previous mentor should be acknowledged appropriately.

## **Voluntary Withdrawal from the Program**

Students may choose to withdraw from the SRF program at any time. However, the following conditions apply:

- No stipend will be awarded to students who withdraw before completing the program.
- A notification must be submitted in writing to the chair of the Research Committee.
- An exit Interview may be required to discuss the reason for withdrawal.

## **Review by KYCOM Professional Conduct & Ethics Committee**

Depending on the nature of the withdrawal (e.g., professionalism concerns, failure to communicate, or disruption to the research team), the student may be referred to the KYCOM Professional Conduct & Ethics Committee for further review. This is to ensure accountability and uphold the standards of KYCOM's academic and research environment.

## **Progress Report Requirements**

All SRF participants are required to submit periodic **progress reports** as outlined in the program timeline. These reports ensure accountability, track research development, and support mentor feedback.

**Failure to submit required progress reports** may result in:

- **Forfeiture of fellowship stipend**
- **Referral to the KYCOM Professional Conduct & Ethics Committee**, if non-compliance reflects broader professionalism concerns

Students are encouraged to communicate proactively with the chair of the Research Committee if they encounter challenges in meeting reporting deadlines.

## **Timeline Considerations**

- Mentor-change requests should be submitted **no later than Week 1** of the fellowship.

## **Program Withdrawal**

Withdraw from the program is not allowed after Week 2 of the fellowship unless severe extenuating circumstances occur. These circumstances are bodily injury, death of an immediate family member, or debilitating illness. At which point withdrawal will be allowed, but no further stipend will be awarded.

## **Confidentiality**

All mentor change requests will be handled with discretion and professionalism. The goal is to support the student's academic growth while maintaining respectful relationships with the faculty.