Dartmouth
GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Academic Scholar Year Policy

Summary of Purpose

This policy explains the definition of the Academic Scholar Year (ASY) student status and the procedure for approval.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Geisel medical students.

This version of the ASY policy will be applicable to the Class of 2028 and later (i.e., students completing their M3/Phase 2 year in the academic year 2026-2027 and later).

Students in the Class of 2027 or earlier, students who completed their M3/Phase 2 year prior to 2026-2027, and students with approved ASYs before this revision, will be held to the parameters and stipulations outlined in the prior version of the ASY policy. The prior version can be found here.

Definitions

Academic Scholar Year (ASY): A status where the student has been approved for a proposed program of rigorous academic scholarly activity or research that has gone through the appropriate approval process. The student is classified as a full-time, non-resident student in good standing.

Policy Statement

- The primary objective of the ASY is to provide a mechanism for interested students to pursue a sustained, intensive, and high quality academic scholarly activity/research endeavor for a duration that is longer than that which is possible during a brief summer fellowship or elective experience but not as prolonged as a formal degree-granting program.

- Qualified programs include (but are not limited to) funded fellowships such as Sarnoff, Howard Hughes, National Institutes of Health (NIH), and National Science Foundation (NSF). Students may also arrange an individually designed ASY with a Geisel or non-Geisel faculty mentor, which may include financial support. If the ASY is not funded by the

research/academic program, students are encouraged to seek external funding to support cost of living during the ASY.

- A student whose proposed ASY program of study or research has been approved will be classified as an ASY student.

- Students are eligible for an ASY if they 1) have completed all Phase 2 required clerkships prior to starting the ASY, 2) have successfully taken and passed USMLE Step 1, and 3) are in good academic standing with no unresolved professionalism or academic concerns.

- The ASY student is considered fully enrolled and is entitled to the same privileges as a regular full-time student, regarding access to Dartmouth facilities and eligibility for health insurance coverage through the Dartmouth Student Group Health Plan.

- Students can maintain professional liability insurance coverage during an ASY if certain conditions are met, as outlined with the ASY application approval process, and in alignment with school policies.

- The student's ASY status will be noted on the Geisel transcript as a credit-bearing course. One credit will be awarded in the Fall Term, and one credit will be awarded in the Spring Term. A Pass/Fail grade will be indicated on the transcript for each term with grades submitted by the Assistant Dean for Medical Student Research. Credits can count toward graduation requirements as non-clinical elective credits.

- ASY status is typically approved for one year and in all cases will not be less than 9 months. Students seeking a scholarly experience for less than 9 months must choose a split year option, utilizing a non-clinical research elective for the scholarly experience.

- The ASY may begin as early as the first block of Phase 3 and must begin no later than July 1 of the ASY year.

- For structured external programs with start dates that do not align with the start of a Geisel term, the student may enroll in Geisel Phase 3 electives/clerkships before the ASY begins, which will be reflected on the academic record. Regardless of optional elective/clerkship enrollment, the ASY must begin no later than July 1 of the ASY year.

- Students will not be permitted to return from the ASY any earlier than the start of the Phase 3 curriculum in the upcoming academic year. The actual return date for the student will be specified when the ASY application is approved. If the ASY ends earlier than planned, the student must take a Leave of Absence until the start of Phase 3.

- It is the student's responsibility to meet with a member of the Office of Student Life to understand how the ASY status will impact them with regard to various Dartmouth and Geisel support services, including but not limited to, campus billing, financial aid, eligibility for student health insurance, payment of student fees, and access to personal counseling

services. If the student has questions regarding the services offered by any Dartmouth or Geisel student services office, the student is expected to engage with the office(s) for clarification.

Procedure

1. Permission to apply for ASY: A student interested in the ASY must first discuss their plan with the Assistant Deans for Phase 2 and Phase 3 to ensure that they meet criteria for the ASY.

2. Application for ASY: If the student qualifies for the ASY, the student will present their application for the ASY to the Program Manager in the Office of Medical Student Research (OMSR). The Program Manager in the OMSR will review the application with the Assistant Dean for Medical Student Research, who will endorse the application.

3. Status change request/approval: **Note: Applications for an ASY must be submitted by the student through the Status Change Form as early as possible, and in all cases no later than 30 days prior to the start of the term in which the ASY is planned to begin.** Exceptions to this timeline are not possible due to the necessary steps required in processing ASY applications.
    a. The student will upload their endorsed application for the project with the Status Change Form available on the Geisel Registrar's website.
    b. Applications will be further reviewed and approved by the academic deans at Geisel through the Status Change process. If there are questions about the ASY plan, an academic dean may contact the student for further clarification.

4. The Geisel Registrar will take appropriate action in all student-related databases, which includes registration and posting the ASY information to the transcript. The Geisel Registrar will also notify Dartmouth and Geisel departments with a need to know.

5. While completing an ASY, students are required to meet once per term with the Program Manager in the OMSR to discuss progress in their research work. Students are also required to complete written attestation of continued engagement in the research work.

6. Successful completion of the ASY will be confirmed and reported by the Faculty Advisor to the Program Manager of the OMSR with a grade submitted to the academic record by the Assistant Dean for Medical Student Research. If the Faculty Advisor brings forward to the OMSR any concerns about the student's progress during the ASY, then the student will be referred by the Assistant Dean for Medical Student Research to the Clinical Committee for Academic Advancement and Growth (CCAAG) for discussion.

7. Students are expected to present their ASY research at the Scholarly Project in Medicine (SPIM) Poster Session. The ASY research will fulfill the SPIM requirement.

LCME Standard

Standard 3.2 – Community of Scholars/Research Opportunities

A medical education program is conducted in an environment that fosters the intellectual challenge and spirit of inquiry appropriate to a community of scholars and provides sufficient opportunities, encouragement, and support for medical student participation in the research and other scholarly activities of its faculty.

Related Information: Documents, Policies, Links, Etc.

General Tuition and Financial Aid Policy: UME-OSA-FA-0002

Status Change Form: https://geiselmed.dartmouth.edu/registrar/status_change/

Policy Administration

Policy Number	UME-REG-0002		
Reviewed By:	Geisel Registrar, Associate Deans for Medical Education and Student Life	**Effective Date:**	June 1, 2017
Approved By:	Dean of Educational Affairs	**Last Date Approved:**	October 19, 2026

Policy Contact Information

Geisel Registrar
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History

Date	History
June 1, 2017	Policy was created, approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education, and put into effect.
July 7, 2017	Policy was reviewed and revised.

June 12, 2018	Policy was reviewed.
April 1, 2022	Policy was revised to add Appendix.
May 11, 2023	Policy was reviewed and revised to remove reference to “Year 4” credits.
April 30, 2024	Policy was reviewed and revised to add statements regarding successful completion of ASY.
April 3, 2026	Policy was reviewed and revised to refine and limit the beginning and end dates of the ASY, refine the approval process, and include parameters for oversight of the experience and submission of a grade by the Assistant Dean for Medical Student Research.
October 19, 2026	Policy was revised to correct placement of word “unresolved” related to professionalism and academic concerns.

Background

None.