

# How to Get Involved in Research: A Guide for Learners

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

The University of New Mexico School of Medicine | UNM Health Sciences Center

### THE BENEFITS OF GETTING INVOLVED IN RESEARCH AS A RESIDENT, FELLOW, INTERN OR POSTDOC

- Provides opportunities to add to the evidence base and inform clinical practice, leading to better outcomes for patients
- Provides opportunities to work on a manuscript that may lead to a peer-reviewed publication
- Provides opportunities to work as part of a team
- Helps develop skills to critically evaluate evidence to develop a greater understanding of evidence-based medicine transferable to clinical practice
- Improves career prospects by building up your C.V.
- Provides opportunities for presenting at conferences – either as a poster or an oral presentation. These conferences provide great opportunities for networking.
- Helps develop skills in writing, time management and problem solving.
- Provides a foundational step for an academic career
- Helps develop interest in field of choice
- Helps develop skills to evaluate and test promising interventions to improve services in your field of interest

*“My first baby steps into a clinical academic career started with a research project I completed as a medical student. That early involvement in research opened my eyes to a whole new world of opportunities that I never would have considered.”*

Kyla Thomas, NIH Research Clinical Lecturer in Public Health, University of Bristol

### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE GETTING INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

1. What interests you? Look into studies that are related to a field that piques your interest.
2. How much time do you have available? If time is an issue, look into opportunities to conduct secondary analyses rather than primary data collection. Chart reviews, case studies and literature reviews are also feasible within a short time. Quality improvement projects are also great opportunities to develop research skills that can be conducted in a relatively short time.
3. What do you want to get out of your research experience? For example:
  - a. Brief insight into research?
  - b. A publication?
  - c. Opportunity to present (oral or poster presentation) at a conference?
4. Ask other learners about their experiences in research.



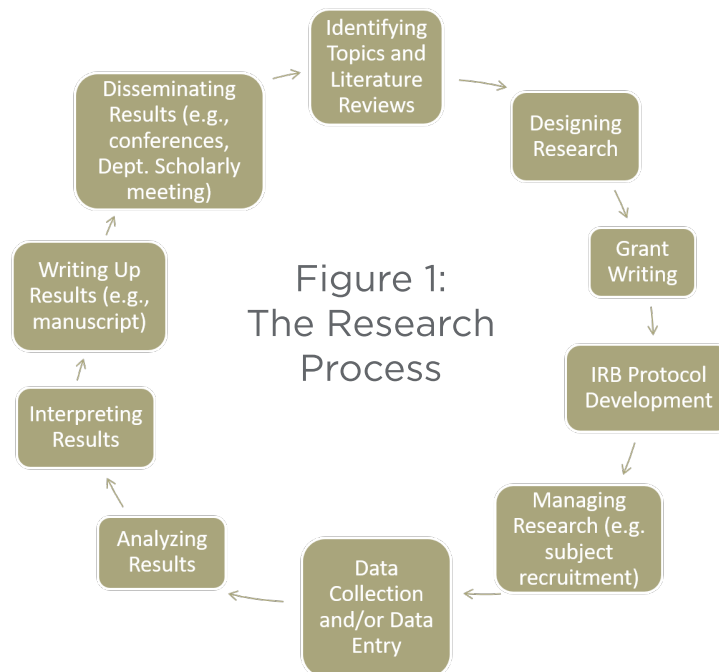
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## HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

1. Contact researchers in the Department. There are various ways to get involved in the research process (see Figure 1). Focus on learning and gaining experience.
2. Attend Department Grand Rounds and the monthly Research/Scholarly meeting, then approach the presenter if they presented about something you are interested in.
3. Follow relevant societies and journals to learn about current research at the national level. Attend as many local conferences as possible.
4. Find a mentor and develop a mentoring contract so that there is a clear understanding of your research goal(s) and what you and your mentor are committing to. A mentoring contract will contribute to your research success by helping you and your mentor stay focused and meet timelines.
5. Take some time to fully understand the different types of research available. For example:
  - Quantitative Research
  - Qualitative Research
  - Mixed Methods Research
  - Epidemiologic Research
  - Systematic Reviews
  - Program Evaluation and Community Based Participatory Research

*"It is important to have a flexible approach to what they offer you—it may not initially sound very exciting, but it will be a necessary part of the research process, and may lead to more interesting research activity later".*  
Taylor and Purdy (2017)



For more information about getting involved in research, contact:  
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### REFERENCES:

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