Academic Associate Program FAQs

Do I need previous experience in research to be successful in the program?

No, students do not need any previous research experience to start the program or be successful in the courses. The first two weeks of the semester are dedicated to training for your clinical shifts, and the course curriculum is focused on building a solid foundation in research.

Which classes require an application?

PED 5900: Clinical Research Methods I, the first course in the core sequence, has an application. This application is in place because our program upholds high standards of professionalism, communication, and engagement, and we want to make sure that students are committed and understand the requirements before signing up for the class.

PED 5901: Clinical Research Methods II, the second course in the core sequence, does not have an application. You just need to complete PED 5900 as a prerequisite.

PED 5902: Clinical Research & Medicine, the third course in the core sequence, does have an application. This is due to the fact that the physician extender schedule limits the class size to 13 students and it fills up fast.

PED 5999: Pediatrics Leadership Experience, allows students to get academic credit by serving as a Teaching Assistant (TA) to mentor and train other students on clinical shifts. An application is required to apply to be a TA.

Where and when do I submit my application?

You can find the application on our website, here: https://medicine.utah.edu/pediatrics/research/education/academic_associate_program.php. The deadlines for each semester are listed as well. You can submit an application at any time prior to the deadline.

Will I be able to pick my own shifts?

Schedules vary during the first two weeks of the semester, since those are training weeks, but are ultimately determined by student-provided availability. After week two, students will have the opportunity to select their own shift schedule. This will be your schedule for the rest of the semester.

What are clinical shifts like?

During the semester, students work out of the Emergency Department at Primary Children’s Hospital seven days a week, 6:00 AM to midnight. Students work in three-hour shifts. Duties include screening and enrolling patients in anywhere from eight to twelve clinical research studies that we have partnered with for the semester. Work load while on shift varies considerably depending on patient volume, time of year, time of day, and what studies we’re enrolling for.
Can I take the classes in any order?

Of the three core classes, PED 5900 must be taken first. The classes are designed to build on each other sequentially, although you can technically take 5902 before taking 5901. Several of the electives can be taken at any time – PED 5600, 5700, 5701, and 5950. You do not need to have taken any of the core classes to enroll in an elective course (except for PED 5999: Pediatric Leadership Experience).

Can I take any of the classes concurrently?

You cannot take any of the core classes, PED 5900, 5901, or 5902, concurrently. You can take an elective at any time, and can take them concurrently with any other PEDs course.

What happens when I enroll for PED 5900 or 5901 for more than four credits?

Two of our three core classes, PED 5900 and PED 5901, can be taken for four, five, or six credits. Changing the number of credits you take the class for changes the number of clinical shifts you are expected to work every week.

- 4 credits – you will work two three-hour shifts every week
- 5 credits – you will work three three-hour shifts every week
- 6 credits – you will work four three-hour shifts every week

Do these clinical shifts require a background check?

Students are expected to complete all required documentation, as determined by Primary Children’s Hospital guidelines, in order to work clinical shifts in the ED. These documents (called ‘Pre-Semester Assignments’), must be completed and submitted to Canvas prior to Orientation. Assignments include, but are not limited to:

- Drug screen and background check
- Immunizations record
- Proof of flu shot
- Negative TB test
- HIPAA training
- CITI trainings

Is this a program from which I would be able to obtain a letter of recommendation for graduate school?

We are very enthusiastic about supporting our students and their goals and future successes. To that end, current and former Academic Associates may request a letter of recommendation from Dr. Holsti. Students will need to make their request via email and complete a short application to provide all needed information for the letter.