Vanderbilt University School of Medicine is committed to train future leaders and scholars in medicine. Its graduates must be prepared to address the current and future challenges in the field of medicine. Among the general objectives of the curriculum for the School of Medicine are for students to:

• Make a commitment to practice medicine in a scholarly manner, based on an understanding of the need to engage in lifelong learning.

• Acquire the capacity to recognize and accept limitations in their knowledge and clinical skills.

• Acknowledge and rectify personal shortcomings that may result from these limitations; the skills of self-reflection and self-assessment are critical to achieving these objectives.

The intent of the Emphasis Program is to provide students with the opportunity to acquire specialized knowledge and experience by working in one of nine focus areas:

- Biomedical Informatics;
- Community Health Initiatives and Health Outreach;
- Education;
- Healthcare Research and Management;
- Global Health;
- Laboratory-Based Biomedical Research;
- Law;
- Medical Humanities;
- Patient-Oriented Research.

This in-depth experience will help prepare them with skills to serve as effective leaders as they pursue their professional careers. The mentored experience of the Emphasis Program will provide students with a special opportunity to acquire and practice these skills, with accessible faculty mentors providing guidance in this effort.

The relationship the student establishes with a faculty mentor is therefore vital to successful completion of the Emphasis Program. Mentor-student relationship is therefore vital to success of the Program. To ensure that the match between mentor and student is appropriate and that the completion of the student’s desired project is feasible, the Emphasis Program Planning Committee has developed this document to summarize the stages involved in the Emphasis Program, and to clarify expectations, roles and responsibilities for the mentor-student relationship.
The relationship the student establishes with a faculty mentor is vital to successful completion of the Emphasis Program.

Stages of the Emphasis Program

The emphasis program runs for the first two years of medical school. At the beginning of the fall semester, VMS I students were exposed to each of the areas in the Emphasis Program. They came to understand the unique characteristics of the individual areas by learning how scholars in these areas identify and investigate important questions. The students reflected in a formal way upon this experience as a means to clarify their understanding of what it takes to be a leader and a scholar.

For the remainder of the fall semester, students meet with the Emphasis area committees to discuss project opportunities and begin meeting with potential mentors in order to select a project of their choosing. For the subsequent eighteen months, the mentor will become vital to their success in the Emphasis Program.

During the spring semester of the first year, students devote two half-days each week to learning more about their emphasis area and planning and initiating their projects, which they then pursue full-time for an eight-week period in the summer.

During both semesters of VMSII, they continue to pursue their projects in collaboration with their mentors. Two half-days each week are scheduled for them to complete the work and prepare their projects for presentation at a Medical School wide scientific meeting scheduled in the Spring.

Establishing Mentor-Student Relationship

Each student will have a primary mentor and may have additional mentors, as dictated by the nature of the project. Two key initial steps in establishing a successful mentor-student relationship are the selection of a mentor by the student and reaching agreement on the terms of the collaboration by mentor and students.

The following pages describe the roles and responsibilities of mentors, and students in this process.

Mentor-Student Match

The objective of this phase of the Emphasis Program is to assist the students in identifying a mentor and project.

During the first semester, students are progressing from a consideration of all areas, through a phase of focusing on one or two areas, to the ultimate step of selecting an area, project and mentor.

A series of faculty committees have been formed around each Emphasis area. These committees have the task of placing students in contact with potential faculty mentors. Students may also approach faculty independently to request that they serve as their mentors.

Some students will already have a very clear idea of a project; for them, the process may move very quickly. Others will have less clear ideas, or plans for a project that may not be feasible, based on the availability of suitable faculty to serve as mentors, time or other factors relating to the particular scope of the proposed project.

More>>>
Mentor Student Match (continued)

Area heads and faculty who agree to serve as mentors must be prepared to help students develop a plan that is feasible and can be accomplished in the time allotted.

To reach agreement on the terms of the collaboration, the student and mentor first sign a student -mentor agreement indicating their intent to work together in the Emphasis Program. The student then will draft an online document, known as the Student Mentor Agreement, after discussions with the mentor. The mentor will then endorse the agreement or suggest modifications. This document should capture the understanding mentors and students reach in their discussions of the planned project.

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

- Review potential projects and their feasibility with students.
- Be open to discussing alternative research projects in the event that a project suggested by the student is not feasible and the student would still like to work in the area with the same mentor.
- Outline possible projects with students who have an interest in the area but no specific project ideas.
- Reach agreement with the student to establish a collaborative relationship and agree on the title of the project. Sign the Mentor Choice Form. This involves a commitment to work with this student for the duration of the project, i.e. to the end of VMS2.
- Review and reach consensus on the Mentor-Student Agreement – the online student-generated description of the proposed project and the means to achieve it.
- In the event that agreement cannot be reached on a project, notify the area head and, where possible, assist the area head in identifying alternative projects and/or mentors.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

- Review with mentors potential projects and their feasibility.
- Be open to considering alternative research projects in the event that a proposed project is not feasible.
- Reach an agreement with a mentor to establish a collaborative relationship. As appropriate, reach agreement with your primary mentor about others who may serve as secondary mentors.
- In the event that a relationship with a mentor is not established, meet with the area head or the Program Director to discuss alternative projects.
- Read, understand, and complete the online student-mentor agreement: a. In collaboration with your mentor, develop a description of the proposed project and the means to achieve it. b. Review with the mentor the content and objectives of the online Mentor-Student Agreement.

We match the students' areas of interest with those of committed faculty mentors, providing students the opportunity to draw from seasoned professionals.
## Completion of Project

### MENTORS
- Act as a role model for your students in demonstrating professionalism and collegiality.
- Be available to your student and provide appropriate supervision for the project (especially in the summer) with the aim of having your student complete a significant body of work.
- Provide ongoing feedback both in-person and on-line and provide interim progress reports to your student and the area head.
- Involve your student in opportunities that relate to the student’s area of research.
- Provide a summative evaluation of your student’s performance at the conclusion of the project.
- Provide feedback to the area head and to the Emphasis Planning Committee on your experience in the Emphasis Program.

### STUDENTS
- Fulfill obligations defined in the Mentor-Student Agreement.
- Be receptive to ongoing feedback from your mentor both in-person and on-line.
- Be respectful of your mentor’s time commitment to other responsibilities.
- Complete the on-line “Cognitive Mapping Assessments” at the appropriate times. The “cognitive maps” will assist students in capturing and gauging knowledge and understanding within their chosen area of focus. Further information about cognitive mapping will be provided at a later time.
- Participate in evaluations of the Emphasis Program.

## Important Dates

**December 1, 2005** - Student Mentor Commitment due. Students will be asked to get a written/signed agreement from a faculty mentor.

**February 27, 2006**—online Student Mentor Agreement complete.

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**Course Website**—Access through the Student Portal-  
https://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/medschool/portal/login.php