



Geisinger
Commonwealth
School of Medicine



Research Mentor Manual
2021 – 2022 Academic Year

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Introduction to the Office of Research & Scholarship (ORS)

On behalf of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, the Office of Research & Scholarship (ORS), and participating students, thank you for agreeing to serve as a research mentor through one of the programs explained in this manual.

The mentoring process requires an experienced, highly regarded, empathetic person to guide another individual in the development and re-examination of their own ideas, learning, and personal and professional development. Mentoring relationships are key to student success in medical school and early research experiences may contribute to a student's eventual career path and professional identity formation. It is our hope that through these research experiences and mentoring relationships, medical students will bring the skills of scientific inquiry, scholarship, and collaboration to their future practice.

The Office of Research and Scholarship (ORS) reports to the Vice Dean for Medical Education and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Our goal is to foster and support faculty and student research and scholarship efforts at GCSOM. We work closely with Geisinger Research Administration to assist faculty and students with securing research funding, to provide learning and training opportunities related to research and scholarship, and to ensure compliance with regulatory research requirements.

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.

Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP)

Each summer, the SRIP provides first-year medical students the opportunity to gain research experience in basic science, clinical science, public/community health, behavioral health or medical education under the guidance of a research mentor. The summer research experience includes a \$2,500 educational stipend provided by Geisinger Commonwealth for students who complete all program requirements. At the end of the program, students present their research in a poster session and/or may be selected for an oral presentation. The 2022 SRIP runs for eight weeks, from **June 6 – July 29, 2022**.

The goals of the SRIP are as follows:

- Provide GCSOM medical students with an in-depth research experience under the guidance of a mentor
- Enhance students' knowledge of the scope and types of research relevant to improving health in the region, nationally and globally

- Provide research opportunities that span the translational continuum from laboratory-based biomedical studies to clinical and public health research conducted with community partners
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in peer learning and networking
- Enhance students' skills in oral and written scholarship

Mentor Application Process

A call for prospective mentors is sent to Geisinger Commonwealth faculty, clinical partners, and community research collaborators in the fall of each academic year. Information about prospective projects is collected using a Mentor Data Sheet (links to Qualtrics). Mentor Data Sheets are also accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. An example Mentor Data Sheet is provided in Appendix A.

Student Application Process

Applications are released in December and are due in early February. Students who are interested in applying are encouraged to review the Mentor Data Sheets and to seek additional information from SRIP personnel and prospective mentors about projects that match their interests. Students may rank up to three preferred projects on their SRIP application.

In some cases, students may develop their own project and identify an appropriate research mentor. In this case, we ask that SRIP personnel are notified as soon as possible so that program expectations can be clarified.

Project Assignment

Mentors will receive the SRIP application materials of interested students when the application window closes in early February. Mentors are welcome to review these materials, reach out to interested students to assess compatibility, or seek additional information from students at this time. Mentor-student assignments are made using (1) the ranked project preferences of students and (2) the ranked student preferences of mentors. Additional input may be sought from a SRIP application review panel consisting of Geisinger Commonwealth faculty members and administrators. Formal acceptances to the SRIP are released in April. If the number of SRIP applicants exceeds available funding, students are placed on a waitlist and notified if openings become available.

Academic Eligibility

Participation in the SRIP is contingent upon a student's academic eligibility status during the Preclinical/Phase 1 curriculum. Students who are on probation for academic or professionalism issues are not eligible to participate.

In rare instances, changes in academic eligibility status may occur after a student's SRIP acceptance and assignment to a mentor/project. If this should occur, the SRIP director will inform the prospective mentor as soon as possible and discuss potential next steps.

Student Expectations

All students participating in the SRIP must meet the following requirements to remain in the program and to receive the full stipend amount. Additional requirements may apply to certain research placements.

- Dedicate 35–40 hours per week to SRIP project (exact schedule arranged with mentor)
- Attend SRIP seminars/workshops (typically weekly/bi-weekly throughout program)
- Attend any trainings, meetings and events required by mentor(s)
- Establish mutually agreed-upon expectations with mentor(s)
- Prepare a 250–300 word project abstract
- Prepare an academic/scientific poster or an oral presentation summarizing the work
- Attend and present at the Summer Research Symposium
- Submit all required paperwork for payment
- Complete all mentor and/or program evaluations

Mentor Expectations

Students who participate in the SRIP work on a wide breadth of topics in a number of diverse settings. Due to this variation, expectations of mentors are flexible, but typically include the following:

- Add student(s) to active IRB protocol; if new IRB protocol is necessary, act as PI on protocol*
- Oversee student work on a mutually agreed-upon schedule
- Establish mutually agreed-upon expectations with student(s)
- Verify student effort by signing off on forms throughout program (used for payment)
- Review/provide input on student abstract and final presentation (poster or oral format)
- Attend Summer Research Symposium, if possible
- Evaluate student upon conclusion of program

If both mentor and student are amenable, arrangements can be made to continue the mentoring relationship, the research collaboration or both. Please refer to the **Medical Research Honors Program** and **Research Elective** sections of this manual for more information on longitudinal research collaborations.

*Please note that all SRIP projects must be reviewed by Geisinger’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For more information on this, please refer to the **Research Compliance & IRB** section of this manual.

Medical Research Honors Program

The Medical Research Honors Program (MRHP) is a long-term, hypothesis-driven research program. Students who complete the program, while remaining in good academic standing, will receive an honors distinction upon graduation. To complete the 4-year program, students are required to submit a research project proposal, write a thesis, and deliver an oral defense. Additionally, students will write abstracts, present posters, and publish findings while building towards their thesis defense. The research experience is guided by a research mentor, a thesis advisory committee, and the program director. Participation in the Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP) is encouraged but not required.

The goals of the MRHP are as follows:

- Advance fundamental scientific knowledge
- Promote independent responsibility for hypothesis formulation, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of a mentored research project
- Strengthen critical thinking skills
- Refine scholarly communications through scientific writing and presentations
- Foster a mindset of continual growth and learning

Mentor Application Process

Although there is no specific call for prospective mentors or official application process for becoming a mentor, interested Geisinger Commonwealth faculty, clinical partners, and community research collaborators are always encouraged to reach out to MRHP@som.geisinger.edu. Outreach for new mentors is being conducted in a variety of ways including but not limited to scheduled provider meetings in various clinics, digital signage, and electronic communication. Interested individuals are encouraged to fill out a Mentor Data sheet at any time. An example Mentor Data Sheet is provided in Appendix B.

Student Application Process

The application cycle opens in February and completed applications are due in April. Students who are interested in applying are encouraged to review the Geisinger Investigators Interested in MRHP list on their Canvas course. Students should seek out a mentor who shares their research interests.

Once a mentor has been identified, students can begin to work on their application packet. The application packet includes the following:

- Application Form
- Letter of Support from Mentor
- Acknowledgement of Mentor's Expectations (signed by mentor)
- Student's CV
- Project Proposal: Project Title, Specific Aims, Hypothesis, Background, Preliminary Data (if available)

Academic Eligibility

Participation in the MRHP is contingent upon a student's academic eligibility status throughout their academic tenure. Students who are on probation for academic or professionalism issues are not eligible to participate.

Student Expectations

All students participating in the MRHP must meet the following requirements to graduate from the program with the honors distinction. Additional requirements may apply to certain research projects.

- Enroll in MD-698R/MD-798R Research Electives if conducting research during pre-clinical years
- Form a Thesis Advisory Committee upon acceptance to program
- Meet with Thesis Advisory Committee twice per year to monitor progress
- Attend any trainings, meetings, or events required by program and/or mentor(s)
- Establish mutually agreed-upon expectations with mentor(s)
- Present findings at least twice during the program
- Prepare an academic/scientific poster or an oral presentation
- Submit and defend thesis to Thesis Advisory Committee
- Complete all mentor and/or program evaluations
- Submit finalized thesis for publication in *Scholarly Research in Progress (SCRIP)* journal

Mentor Expectations

Students who participate in the MRHP work on a wide breadth of topics in a number of diverse settings. Due to this variation, expectations of mentors are flexible, but typically include the following:

- Add student(s) to active IRB protocol; if new IRB protocol is necessary, act as PI on protocol*
- Oversee and supervise student work on a mutually agreed-upon schedule

- Establish mutually agreed-upon expectations with student(s)
- Provide the student with:
 - A supportive research environment
 - The facilities to complete research
 - Financial support (when/if applicable)
- Meet with student and Thesis Advisory Committee twice per year
 - Student will submit Mentoring Committee Progress Report after the meeting (signed by mentor)
- Be present for oral thesis defense and provide feedback on written thesis

*Please note that all MRHP projects must have a Research Approval Number (RAN) and be reviewed by Geisinger’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). For more information on this, please refer to the **Research Compliance & IRB** section of this manual.

Pre-Clinical Independent Research Elective

The Independent Research Elective course allows medical students to gain research knowledge and skills through an immersive, mentored research experience during their first (MD 698R) or second year (MD 798R) of medical school. The research must be conducted under the supervision of a GCSOM/Geisinger/Guthrie faculty member or an external mentor with Course Director approval. Students taking the elective will need to find a research mentor who works in their area of interest and who will agree to instruct a research course. Together they will create a structured educational experience plan and document progress throughout the elective. Students are required to write and submit a final scientific report or scholarly product to the course director via Canvas by the end of the elective. Students who do not submit a final report will be unable to register for additional semesters of independent research.

MD 698R (Spring) and MD 798R (Spring and Fall)

Students must be in good academic standing and remain in good academic standing throughout the course duration. Students must be fully enrolled prior to registering for this course. This course is an elective and is not required to complete the MD educational program. Mentor expectations are as follows:

- Supervise the student over the period of course enrollment (4-20 weeks duration)
- Ensure the student successfully completes the Structured Education Experience Plan
- All mentors within the Geisinger system must follow FLSA regulations
 - Review the FLSA Fact Sheet and sign the DOL Acknowledgement Letter*
- Ensure student meets required deliverables prior to course closing

- Complete required feedback and assessment of student performance at the end of the scheduled elective

*Required documentation for this course is provided in Appendices C & D.

Research Compliance & IRB

All student research projects (including SRIP, MRHP, and research electives) must have a GCSOM Research Approval Number (RAN) and be reviewed by Geisinger's Institutional Review Board if the project involves human subjects. RAN request forms can be completed and submitted [here](#).

[Geisinger's IRB](#) collects and reviews documentation using the iRIS system. All GCSOM students have active iRIS accounts and can be added to protocols using the RAN.

For questions about IRB approval for SRIP, MRHP, or other research projects, please contact the GCSOM Manager of Research Compliance, Laura Mayeski, at lmayeski@som.geisinger.edu.

Credentialing, Training, and Access

It is a student's responsibility to ensure that the below credentials and trainings are current. Students participating in the SRIP are expected to be up to date at the time the program commences.

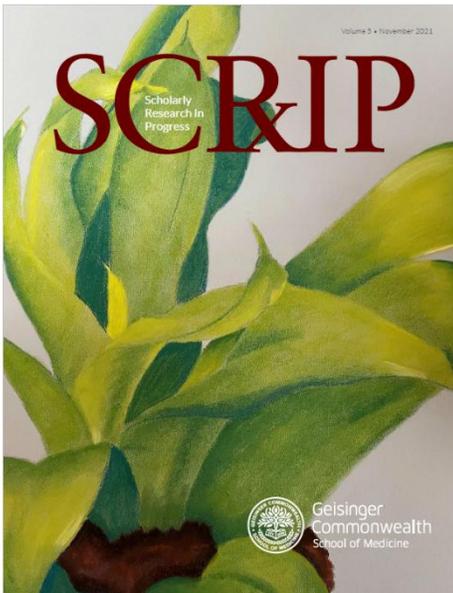
- PPD (purified protein derivative) skin test for tuberculosis infection - annually
- Drug Screen – annually
- PATCH (Pennsylvania Access to Criminal History) Clearance – annually
- Child Abuse Clearance – annually
- FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) – annually
- BLS – renewed certification required every two years
- Flu Shot – annually
- COVID-19 vaccination (two-dose Pfizer or Moderna, or single-dose Johnson & Johnson)
- HIPAA/OSHA Training – annually
- CITI Training – every three years

If your research project or location will require additional credentials, clearances, and/or trainings, please let ORS staff know as soon as possible by sending an email to studentresearch@som.geisinger.edu.

Additional onboarding processes and procedures for gaining access to specific Geisinger resources may apply to students placed at clinical or research sites within the Geisinger system.

Please contact Drew Slocum (dslocum@geisinger.edu) in Geisinger's HR department for assistance identifying and initiating these processes.

Scholarly Research in Progress (SCRIP) Journal



Students are encouraged to write up their research projects/findings in manuscript form and submit their work for publication in GCSOM's student research journal, *Scholarly Research in Progress (SCRIP)*. The aim of this research journal is not only to highlight and disseminate student scholarly activity at GCSOM, but also to support students' development of their writing skills, writing confidence, and to reduce barriers to turning research experiences into published papers. The journal invites all GCSOM students to contribute their original research articles, reviews, short communications, letters, editorials, literature reviews, and case reports for consideration. All submitted manuscripts are peer-reviewed by faculty prior to a decision on acceptance for publication, providing valuable feedback to student authors and an opportunity to revise their work. For additional information, please contact Dr. Sonia Lobo at scrip@som.geisinger.edu.

Contact Information & Websites

[Office of Research & Scholarship](#)

[Summer Research Immersion Program \(SRIP\)](#)

[Medical Research Honors Program \(MRHP\)](#)

[Journal of Scholarly Research in Progress \(SCRIP\)](#)

[Geisinger's Institutional Review Board](#)

Office of Research & Scholarship Staff Contact Information



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Appendix A



Summer Research Immersion Program 2022 Mentor Data Sheet

Thank you for considering mentorship through GCSOM's Summer Research Immersion Program (SRIP)!

SRIP 2022 will run from June 6 to July 29, 2022. Students are expected to dedicate 35 – 40 hours per week to their SRIP project under the guidance of a mentor and on a mutually agreed-upon schedule. Projects should be of a reasonable scope for students to meaningfully contribute and describe results by the conclusion of the 8-week program.

All SRIP projects must have a GCSOM authorization number and approval from Geisinger's Institutional Review Board if the project involves human subjects. [Geisinger's IRB](#) collects and reviews documentation using the IRIS system. All GCSOM students have active IRIS accounts and are able to be added to protocols.

Please complete and return this form by clicking "Submit Form" upon completion. If technical issues arise, please send the completed form via email to studentresearch@som.geisinger.edu.

If more than two projects are available or anticipated, please attach additional information as a Word or PDF document.

Mentor Information:

Name (please include degrees): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Title: _____

Department/Institute: _____

Mentor 2 Information (if applicable):

Name (please include degrees): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Title: _____

Department/Institute: _____

Office Manager, Research Coordinator, or Administrative Assistant Contact Information (if applicable):

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Would you be interested in mentoring a student through GCSOM's **Medical Research Honors Program**? This new program would continue the mentoring relationship beyond the Summer Research Immersion Program.

- Yes No



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Project 1 Information:

Title: _____

Description/Abstract:

Location of work: _____

Number of Students Desired for Project 1: _____

Project 2 Information:

Title: _____

Description/Abstract:

Location of work: _____

Number of students desired for Project 2: _____

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.

Appendix B



Medical Research Honors Program Mentor Data Sheet

Thank you for considering mentorship through GCSOM Medical Research Honors Program (MRHP)!

The [Medical Research Honors Program](#) (MRHP) is a long-term, hypothesis-driven research program. Students who complete the program, while remaining in good academic standing, will receive an honors distinction upon graduation. To complete the 4-year program, students are required to submit a research project proposal, write a thesis, and deliver an oral defense. Additionally, students will write abstracts, present posters, and publish findings while building towards their thesis defense. The research experience is guided by a research mentor, a thesis advisory committee, and the program manager.

As a research mentor you will supervise a student's research project and act as the Principal Investigator on IRB protocols. Mentors are also expected to provide the student with a supportive research environment, facilities to conduct research, and financial support (if necessary).

MRHP research projects must have a GCSOM research approval number and IRB approval if human subjects are involved. Geisinger's IRB collects and reviews documentation using the iRIS system. All GCSOM students have active iRIS accounts and can be added to protocols.

Please complete and return this form via email to MRHP@som.geisinger.edu.

Mentor Information:

Name (Please include degrees): _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Title: _____

Department/Institute: _____

Office Manager, Research Coordinator, or Administrative Assistant Contact Information (if applicable):

Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____



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Research Interests:

Please write a brief description of your research interests or current projects.

Would you be interested in mentoring a student through GCSOM's [Summer Research Immersion Program \(SRIP\)](#)?

Yes

No

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities

**U.S. Department of Labor
Wage and Hour Division**



Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act

This fact sheet provides general information to help determine whether interns must be paid the minimum wage and overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act for the services that they provide to “for-profit” private sector employers.

Background

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) defines the term “employ” very broadly as including to “suffer or permit to work.” Covered and non-exempt individuals who are “suffered or permitted” to work must be compensated under the law for the services they perform for an employer. Internships in the “for-profit” private sector will most often be viewed as employment, unless the test described below relating to trainees is met. Interns in the “for-profit” private sector who qualify as employees rather than trainees typically must be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.*

The Test For Unpaid Interns

There are some circumstances under which individuals who participate in “for-profit” private sector internships or training programs may do so without compensation. The Supreme Court has held that the term “suffer or permit to work” cannot be interpreted so as to make a person whose work serves only his or her own interest an employee of another who provides aid or instruction. This may apply to interns who receive training for their own educational benefit if the training meets certain criteria. The determination of whether an internship or training program meets this exclusion depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each such program.

The following six criteria must be applied when making this determination:

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.

If all of the factors listed above are met, an employment relationship does not exist under the FLSA, and the Act’s minimum wage and overtime provisions do not apply to the intern. This exclusion from the definition of employment is necessarily quite narrow because the FLSA’s definition of “employ” is very broad. Some of the most commonly discussed factors for “for-profit” private sector internship programs are considered below.

FS 71

Similar To An Education Environment And The Primary Beneficiary Of The Activity

In general, the more an internship program is structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to the employer's actual operations, the more likely the internship will be viewed as an extension of the individual's educational experience (this often occurs where a college or university exercises oversight over the internship program and provides educational credit). The more the internship provides the individual with skills that can be used in multiple employment settings, as opposed to skills particular to one employer's operation, the more likely the intern would be viewed as receiving training. Under these circumstances the intern does not perform the routine work of the business on a regular and recurring basis, and the business is not dependent upon the work of the intern. On the other hand, if the interns are engaged in the operations of the employer or are performing productive work (for example, filing, performing other clerical work, or assisting customers), then the fact that they may be receiving some benefits in the form of a new skill or improved work habits will not exclude them from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements because the employer benefits from the interns' work.

Displacement And Supervision Issues

If an employer uses interns as substitutes for regular workers or to augment its existing workforce during specific time periods, these interns should be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek. If the employer would have hired additional employees or required existing staff to work additional hours had the interns not performed the work, then the interns will be viewed as employees and entitled compensation under the FLSA. Conversely, if the employer is providing job shadowing opportunities that allow an intern to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the intern performs no or minimal work, the activity is more likely to be viewed as a bona fide education experience. On the other hand, if the intern receives the same level of supervision as the employer's regular workforce, this would suggest an employment relationship, rather than training.

Job Entitlement

The internship should be of a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the internship. Further, unpaid internships generally should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the internship period. If an intern is placed with the employer for a trial period with the expectation that he or she will then be hired on a permanent basis, that individual generally would be considered an employee under the FLSA.

Where to Obtain Additional Information

This publication is for general information and is not to be considered in the same light as official statements of position contained in the regulations.

For additional information, visit our Wage and Hour Division Website: <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov> and/or call our toll-free information and helpline, available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in your time zone, 1-866-4USWAGE (1-866-487-9243).

U.S. Department of Labor
Frances Perkins Building
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

1-866-4-USWAGE
TTY: 1-866-487-9243
[Contact Us](#)

* The FLSA makes a special exception under certain circumstances for individuals who volunteer to perform services for a state or local government agency and for individuals who volunteer for humanitarian purposes for private non-profit food banks. WHD also recognizes an exception for individuals who volunteer their time, freely and without anticipation of compensation for religious, charitable, civic, or humanitarian purposes to non-profit organizations. Unpaid internships in the public sector and for non-profit charitable organizations, where the intern volunteers without expectation of compensation, are generally permissible. WHD is reviewing the need for additional guidance on internships in the public and non-profit sectors.

RE: Unpaid Externship

I agree that I have read and understand the terms of Fact Sheet #71: Internship Programs under the Fair Labor Standards Act provided below by the Talent Acquisition Department.

While hosting _____ I commit to follow the terms set forth by Fact Sheet, specifically the six major criteria, paraphrased below from the DOL Fact Sheet:

1. **I will provide training similar to that which would be given in an educational environment;**
 - a. The internship will be structured around a classroom or academic experience as opposed to Geisinger's actual operations;
 - b. The intern will not be relied upon to perform or engage in operations of Geisinger or perform productive work (for example, filing, performing other clerical work) except for isolated hands on training opportunities in which case the student will be supervised at all times by a department employee to complete such tasks.
2. **The externship experience is for the benefit of the Student;**
 - a. The fact that the student may be receiving some benefits in the form of a new skill or improved work habits will NOT EXCLUDE them from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements because we the employer benefits from the student's work.
3. **The Student does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff or assigned mentor;**
 - a. If your department uses interns as substitutes for regular workers or to augment your existing workforce during specific time periods, these interns should be paid at least the minimum wage and overtime compensation for hours worked over forty in a workweek.
 - i. Additionally, if your department *would have* hired additional employees or required existing staff to work additional hours had the interns not performed the work, then the interns will be viewed as employees and entitled compensation under the FLSA.
4. **The department that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the student; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;**
 - a. See #2. Additionally, the more the externship provides the student with skills that can be used in multiple employment settings, as opposed to

skills particular to one employer's operation, the more likely the extern would be viewed as receiving training.

- b. Under these circumstances the extern does not perform the routine work of the business on a regular and recurring basis, and the business is not dependent upon the work of the extern.
5. **The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship;**
- a. The externship should be a fixed duration, established prior to the outset of the externship.
 - b. Unpaid internships (otherwise referred to as externships) should not be used by the employer as a trial period for individuals seeking employment at the conclusion of the externship period.
6. **The employer and the student understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the externship.**

Signatures:

Internship Supervisor (Geisinger) _____

Date: _____