

Frequently Asked Questions for Mentors Uganda Research Training Collaborative (RTC)

What is the Research Training Collaborative?

The Uganda RTC is a program for students in the University of Minnesota's Academic Health Center and partner institutions in Uganda (including but not limited to Makerere University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology) to gain hands-on experience in global health research. Research projects are carried out by a study team made up of students (UMN and Ugandan) with guidance from faculty mentors at all participating institutions. Students propose small-scale research projects to be carried out with their student collaborator(s) from the partner country over the course of about one year.

How long will I be involved?

The RTC takes place over 3 stages and student teams should set a goal of completion in 12-18 months. If projects are not feasible within this timeline, mentors should advise teams on how to scale back their projects to ensure completion.

- Stage 1: Student Research Preparation (3-6 months)
- Stage 2: Study Implementation (6-12 weeks)
- Stage 3: Data Analysis and Dissemination (3-6 months)

How much time am I expected to dedicate to the research teams?

Mentor input during the pilot program varied significantly, but generally mentors contributed feedback through meetings with student teams and email once a week during the refinement of the research question and methods. Student teams will also consult with mentors on protocol development and revisions, human subjects approvals, and navigating study implementation by connecting students with clinical and lab resources at the study site.

Will I be the only mentor to the team?

No. You will have at least one additional mentor from a partner institution with expertise related to the students' research interest. It is recommended that you familiarize yourself with your co-mentors' area(s) of expertise so that the guidance of the team can be shared among mentors. Some mentor teams decide to appoint a "primary" mentor to take the lead and consult with other mentors as needed. These arrangements are made at the discretion of the mentors.

A student has approached me to be their URTC mentor. Can I influence the selection process?

Yes. Mentors are asked to complete a recommendation form for students who apply. Mentor recommendation has an important role in the selection criteria, and highly recommended students will be more competitive. If you have any reservations about a student's ability, you should indicate it in the recommendation form and advise the student about your concerns before they apply.

Do I need to generate a research idea for my team?

No. If you have a current study in which a sub-study lead by students would be appropriate, you may share the idea with the team and they can consider it as a possible project. This is not required, and mentors should not assume the student team will take on a project that precisely aligns with their own research interests.

What if I don't have the right expertise to mentor the team once they settle on a study?

If your URTC team advances a project that you believe you cannot contribute to scientifically

(please consider this broadly – many times another mentor will be able to provide topical expertise), you may still be able to mentor them on issues such as methods, implementation, teamwork, and writing. If you still feel that there is no way you can mentor the team you've been assigned to, please notify the URTC leadership (Dr. Josh Rhein and Dr. David Meya) and they will work to identify an alternate faculty mentor.

Who is an eligible student?

University of Minnesota Students: Any graduate or professional student in the Academic Health Center (medicine, public health, veterinary medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry). Other post-baccalaureate learners, including medical residents, may apply to the program. University of Minnesota undergraduates are not eligible. Interested graduate students from non-health science schools should inquire about eligibility to Molly McCoy (mccoy019@umn.edu).

Makerere University Students: Any student in the health sciences (medicine, public health, veterinary medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry). COVAb recommends graduate students apply; the Medical School recommends advanced medical students apply (4th-5th year). Medical students that anticipate beginning an internship within the next year are discouraged from applying. MMed students may also be eligible with approval from their mentors. Pharmacy students are also eligible (no graduate program available). Other Makerere students should consult with a mentor to determine their eligibility.

Students from Other Ugandan Institutions: Health science graduate students from other Ugandan institutions of higher education are eligible to apply, however they must have approval from their faculty advisors.

The project requires a commitment from all students to carry out the project to completion with the understanding that they will be expected to write a manuscript to submit for publication as a final product.

Do mentors receive any support from the program?

Mentors from Ugandan institutions receive an honorarium for their role in advising the student team.

How many student teams will there be?

In January 2018, we anticipate 2 student teams with a possibility of another application cycle in August 2018.

What are the expected outcomes?

Student participants will be expected to submit a manuscript to a peer-reviewed journal for publication. Publication expenses are eligible to be covered in the program costs.

More questions?

Visit the website: <https://globalhealthcenter.umn.edu/research/research-training-collaborative>
Ask a URTC leader and mentor: Dr. David Meya (david.meya@gmail.com) and Dr. Josh Rhein (0776607288 or joshua.rhein@gmail.com)

Ask a URTC administrator: Martha Kandole (0754052104 or 0775189697) or Molly McCoy (mccoy019@umn.edu)