UCD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
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https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/ssra/

SSRA | STUDENT SUMMER RESEARCH AWARDS

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Information Booklet 2026

SSRA KEY DATES - 2026

Date	Event	Time/Location
Tuesday 16th March 2026	Deadline for new project submissions – **SUPERVISORS ONLY**	-
Monday 23rd March 2026	Ethics Workshop	3pm - 4pm B004 Health Science Centre
Tuesday 19th May 2026	Introduction to SSRA & Research Master Class (registration details, communication skills and research methodology session)	9.15am - 12.30pm C004 Health Science Centre
Monday 1st June 2026 **Tuesday 2nd June 2026**	Last Date for Commencement of SSRA 2026 Projects Submission of Ethics Declaration Form in Brightspace	12.00pm | Brightspace
Wednesday 8th July 2026	Mid-SSRA Review	1.00pm - 2.00pm | Brightspace
Wednesday 5th August 2026	Submission: Abstract: Assignment 1 in Brightspace (All students) Research Report: Assignment 2 in Brightspace (Credit students only)	12.00pm Brightspace Assignment 1 & 2
Monday 17th August 2026	Submission: 1) letter and 2) presentation heroes	12.00pm | Brightspace
Wednesday 2nd September 2026	Submission: Poster PDF: Assignment 3 in Brightspace (All students) **Supervisors Report:** emailed by supervisors to ssra@ucd.ie (Credit students only)	12.00pm |Brightspace Assignment 3
Tuesday 8th September 2026	Communication workshop	12.00pm - 2pm Charles Seminar Room – Charles Institute
Thursday 10th September 2026	3-minute pitch of research (no visual aids or slides)	12.00pm - 2pm Charles Seminar Room – Charles Institute
SSRA STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PRINTING / PAYMENT OF A0 POSTER		
Monday 14th September 2026	All Students to display posters	Time TBC O'Brien Centre for Science
Tuesday 15th September 2026	SSRA 2025 Poster Adjudication / Presentation | **All SSRA STUDENTS**	5.30pm - 9.00pm O'Brien Centre for Science
Monday 21st September 2026	SSRA Gold Medal Finalists - communication preparation	12.00pm - 2pm Charles Seminar Room – Charles Institute
Tuesday 22nd September 2026	All Students to display posters	Time TBC - O'Brien Centre for Science
Wednesday 23rd September 2026	SSRA Gold Medal Final Reception and Presentations | **All SSRA STUDENTS**	5:30 pm - 9pm |O'Brien Centre for Science

Table of Contents

Welcome to SSRA 2026

Dear Students,

We are delighted to welcome you to the School of Medicine Student Summer Research Awards (SSRA) programme. We hope this booklet will be of use to you and your supervisor throughout your 8-week research experience this summer.

The Student Summer Research Awards programme is an undergraduate research initiative to support and showcase undergraduate research affiliated with the UCD School of Medicine. Each year, students are competitively selected for projects based on academic records, personal statement, and an interview with the principal investigator.

The research projects are submitted by investigators affiliated with and within the School of Medicine including our affiliated hospitals, Irish Charities and internationally placed UCD Alumni. Bringing together all research projects in a single research symposium showcases the breadth and diversity of the projects undertaken by our students and encourages interaction and the exchange of experiences.

In most cases, the SSRA scheme gives students their first experience of research. This is an invaluable opportunity, as many will consider possibly undertaking Intercalated MSc's, MDs or PhDs in the future, fostering the idea of careers as true "cliniciancientists".

In addition to the laboratory and clinical based projects, the SSRA programme endeavours to offer projects involving our Irish Charities under the auspices of Patient Advocate Centered Educational-Research (PACE-R). Understanding the needs of patients and society is a key educational objective for UCD medical, radiography and health science graduates. It also gives an opportunity for our students and their supervisors to partner with voluntary organisations to undertake short research projects. These projects enhance our students' awareness of social

responsibility, and the important role of voluntary organisations in advocacy and healthcare research. Establishing such a link at an early stage in their careers will undoubtedly impact not just on the professionalism of our graduates but also on their lifelong engagement with patients, patient advocates and charitable organisations.

Continuing on the success of last year, the programme also includes a number of medical education research projects where students have the opportunity to help develop an evidence base for change in the future of medical education; changes which may benefit both our students and the wider society in the future.

Furthermore, School of Veterinary Medicine students are also eligible to participate in the programme under the "One Health" theme. This highlights the potential of the SSRA programme to foster new collaborations within our colleges and become a flagship for undergraduate research throughout UCD.

Each year our International SSRA programme goes from strength to strength. Through utilising the School's extensive alumni networks and institutional affiliations, we have been able to offer opportunities for students to undertake research in locations such as The Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, Canada), University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of Minnesota, Johns Hopkins University, Boston Children's Hospital, Northwestern University, St Joseph Care Group Ontario, University of Missouri, Columbia, National University of Singapore, The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Peterborough Regional Health Centre Canada, American University of Beirut Medical Centre, University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, BC Children's Hospital Research Institute, Vancouver, and many other prestigious research centers throughout the world. In recognition of the tremendous educational opportunities that these projects foster, the Dean of Medicine kindly provides a number of scholarships to students to attend overseas under the remit of

"The Dean's SSRA International Research Scholarship Scheme".

Students have the option to undertake the SSRA programme for credit. The module is grade point neutral with outputs of Pass/ Fail and for exceptional research endeavours a Distinction (Ds) will appear on the student transcript. In relation to our Graduate Entry Medicine (GEM)

Students, all students can undertake SSRA for audit, however, only the **Stage 1 GEMs** can take SSRA for 5 credits.

Research outputs from the scheme continue to result in peer reviewed full articles and span all of the programmes within the UCD School of Medicine namely Undergraduate Medicine, Graduate Entry Medicine, Radiography, BSc in Biomedical Health and Life Sciences and 3rd/4th Year Physiology in addition to students from the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering and School of Veterinary Medicine. Moreover, the programme brings together students from each of these programmes with the overall remit of undertaking translational clinical research which is a key theme within the UCD School of Medicine.

In summary, the success of this scheme has been due to the participation of our many colleagues as supervisors, mentors and administrators within the UCD School of Medicine, our affiliated teaching hospitals, institutes and patient advocate organisations.

On behalf of the SSRA Committee, we wish you every success in your research endeavours for the Summer of 2026.

Dr Melinda Halasz
Chair SSRA Committee

1. Introduction

This booklet describes the policies and requirements that apply to the SSRA 2026 Scheme. In embarking on your research programme it is essential that you are aware of these requirements so that you can proactively plan your work and studies to satisfy them and achieve your research and career development goals.

- If you require clarification about these requirements, you should discuss them in the first instance with your principal supervisor/co-supervisor.
- If sufficient information is not available, please contact us via email: ssra@ucd.ie
- For all other information regarding SSRA, please visit the SSRA website at: https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/ssra/

SSRA Projects and further information can be accessed as follows:

1. Student Hub.
2. Click the *Available Research Projects* link.
3. The Available Research Projects link will bring you to a Google Page with available projects in PDF format.
4. Once you have chosen a project(s), email the project Supervisor(s). You should include the completed **SSRA Student Project Application Form (2026)** in this email (found at the bottom of the page in the Student Hub section of the SSRA website).
5. Wait for the Supervisor to respond to your email (this can take a few weeks in some instances).
6. If the Supervisor chooses you, please email the SSRA office with the Project Number and confirmation email from the Supervisor: ssra@ucd.ie .
7. If you have sourced your own SSRA Project through a Supervisor you have approached, your chosen Supervisor can submit the project details for review through the Project Portal found HERE .

2. Module Descriptor

Module Descriptor for MDSA30280 in 2025/2026

Short Title	Long Title	Subject Area	College	School/Unit	Last Modified
SSRA Research Elective I	SSRA Research Elective I	Medicine Systems One	Health & Agricultural Sciences	Medicine	26 Nov 2025

UCD Level	Credits (ECTS)	Semester/Trimester	Grade Scale	VLE Setup	Module Coordinator	Status
3 - Degree	5.0	Summer	Distinction/Pass/Fail (GPA Neutral)	Start of Trimester	Melinda Halasz	Active

Mode of Delivery	Internship Module	Module Type	Micro-credenti al Module	Active & Collab Learning Space
Blended	No	Research/Capstone Module	No	No

Purpose & Overarching Content

This is an 8-week research module offered to UCD School of Medicine (SoM) students involved in supervised laboratory, clinical, computational, patient advocate centered, or medical educational research initiatives during their undergraduate course in UCD SoM. Projects may be conducted at UCD, its affiliated hospitals, or internationally.

Student supervision will be carried out by staff within and associated with the UCD SoM and affiliated hospitals, and International hosts. Project selection for this research elective and the mechanism of student assignment to each project is the responsibility of the module coordinator and the SSRA committee and relevant project supervisors.

Applicants will be expected to:

1. Source their own project AND/OR review "Available Projects" (SSRA Student hub website).
2. Email Supervisors of projects they are interested in, including completed Student Project Application Form (found on the SSRA website).
3. Students may be selected on academic record AND/OR may have to present for interview with the relevant Supervisor(s).

4. Appreciate the ethics aspects of research and organise the necessary ethics documents for the project.
5. Once selected, undertake an 8-week research project from June to August (Summer).
6. Write an abstract in the style of the Irish Journal of Medical Science (IJMS).
7. Submit a research report in the format specified on Brightspace.
8. Obtain a good supervisor's report.
9. Submit a pdf of research poster on Brightspace.

Outside of the assessment process:

All students will be invited to present their research activity as a poster which will be adjudicated by a panel of academics for the Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals for excellence in Research with the winners to be announced at the Annual Student Summer Research Award (SSRA) Gold Medal Night held annually in the following Autumn trimester.

IMPORTANT: Please be advised that the module is GPA neutral and the final assessment for this module will appear as DISTINCTION/PASS/FAIL.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module, students are expected to have fulfilled the following learning outcomes:
1. Adhere strictly to designated guidelines for completion of application forms for project selection.2. Demonstrate an understanding of research report writing which MUST be submitted as part of the assessment process.
3. Display an authoritative understanding of the research question in hand and design a coherent experimental strategy to critically evaluate the research question.
4. Understand why particular experimental approaches have been used to address the research question in hand.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the requirement of ethical approval if appropriate to the project.
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the statistical tests used in determining the significance of the findings if appropriate.
8. Following a strict set of author guidelines, submit an abstract in the style of IJMS. Assessment will be based on adherence to journal style, word count and designated journal format.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of how to generate a research poster.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Project based

Student Effort Hours

Student Effort Type	Hours
Specified Learning Activities	
Specified Learning Activities	120
Total	**120**

Assessment Details

Assessment Type	Description	Timing	Open Book?	% of Final Grade	Component Scale	Must-Pass?	In-module Component Repeat Offered?
Assignment(Including Essay)	Research Report	Week 10		40	Pass/Fail	Yes	Yes
Assignment(Including Essay)	Research Abstract	Week 10		20	Pass/Fail	Yes	Yes
Assignment(Including Essay)	Research Poster (submission as PDF)	Week 10		20	Pass/Fail	Yes	Yes
Participation in Learning Activities	Report submitted by project supervisor	Week 10		20	Pass/Fail	Yes	Yes
Total				**100**			

Carry Forward of Passed Components
Yes

Feedback Strategy

Feedback Strategies	Sequence of Feedback
- Feedback individually to students, on an activity or draft prior to summative assessment - Feedback individually to students, post-assessment	Students will get feedback from their Supervisor(s) during the 8-week research project.

Remediation Strategy

Remediation Type	Remediation Timing
In-Module Resit	Prior to relevant PEB

2. MDSA30280 SSRA Research Elective:

MODULE REQUIREMENTS FOR 5 CREDIT AND AUDIT

Credits	Duration of Research Experience	Description	% of final grade
Requirements for ALL Students (CREDIT & AUDIT)		All students are strongly advised to keep detailed records of their research activities throughout their projects as they are essential for the preparation of abstracts / posters and publications. Please consult your Supervisor(s) about the format of these records. 1. All students must complete the **Ethics Declaration Form** and submit it before the commencement of their project. 2. Students are required to submit their abstracts which may be published in the Annual SSRA Book of Abstracts AND/OR The Irish Journal of Medical Science (IJMS). 3. All students must submit and present one poster for display at the SSRA Poster Night on Tuesday, 15 September 2026. 4. Students must attend the following: - The **Research Masterclass** on 19 May 2026. - The **Communications Workshops** on 8 and 10 September 2026, 12-2pm. - The **SSRA Poster Night Adjudication** on 15 September 2026. - The **SSRA Gold Medal Night** on 23 September 2026.	**GRADE POINT NEUTRAL**
5 CREDITS	8 weeks	Students must submit the following via **Brightspace** for assessment purposes: 1. The completed Ethics Declaration Form. 2. The abstract of your work in 250 words following the guidelines of the Irish Journal of Medical Science (IJMS) (Assignment 1 on Brightspace). 3. Research Report (Assignment 2 on Brightspace). 4. A copy of your A0-sized poster as pdf (Assignment 3 on Brightspace). 5. Supervisor's report to be submitted directly by the Supervisor to ssra@ucd.ie.	20% 40% 20% 20%
AUDIT	6 - 8 weeks	Students must submit the following via **Brightspace**: 1. The completed Ethics Declaration Form. 2. The abstract of your work in 250 words following the guidelines of the Irish Journal of Medical Science (IJMS) (Assignment 1 on Brightspace). 3. A copy of your A0-sized poster as PDF (Assignment 3 on Brightspace).	This research material is not assessed.

3. Module Registration

ALL SSRA Students are to complete the SSRA Module Registration Form, available in the Student Hub window of the SSRA website and return to email a PDF copy to ssra@ucd.ie by **Friday 22nd May 2026**.

This form needs to be signed by you and your supervisor

All Students will be registered to the SSRA module through the Medicine Research Office.
******DO NOT WEB REGISTER FOR YOURSELF FOR THIS MODULE******

3.1 Registration information

- Please tick ONE of the following on the form:
  - Audit (No credit loading)
  - **MDSA30280** (5 credits)
- All registered undergraduate students (UGM, GEM, Radiography, BSc Biomedical Health and Life Science, Physiology students) within the School of Medicine, School of Veterinary *(subject to approval)* and School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering *(subject to approval*) can undertake the SSRA research programme.
- Please note the following:
  - Only GEM Stage 1 students can take the SSRA for 5 credits. All other GEM students (Stages 2, 3 & 4) can only take the SSRA for Audit.
  - School of Veterinary Medicine and College of Engineering and Architecture students can undertake the SSRA research programme for 5 credits subject to approval.
  - If you have registered previously for the **5 credit SSRA module** and if you want to do SSRA again you can only do it on the second occasion for audit.

3.2 Important Dates

- The deadline for submission of the SSRA module registration form to ssra@ucd.ie is **Friday 22nd May 2026.**
- Please note that all SSRA projects must be commenced by **Monday 1st June 2026.**
- All abstracts, whether for credit or audit, must be submitted as Assessment 1 in Brightspace by Wednesday 5th August 2026.
- All PDFs of posters, whether credit or audit, must be submitted as Assignment 3, by Wednesday 2nd September 2026.
- Students undertaking the module for Credit must submit a Research Report as Assignment 2 in Brightspace by Wednesday 5th August 2026.

3.3 Registration implications

- The credits for this module will be assigned to the 2026/27 academic year therefore students should register for 5 credits less in 2026/27.
- Students may be liable for fees if they register for more than 60 credits in an academic year. If you have any queries regarding your credit load email programme.medicine@ucd.ie
- Auditing this module will not incur a fees liability.

3.4 Credits For 2026/27

- In relation to credits for SSRA appearing on your transcript, please note that the credits for the Summer 2026 module, will be assigned to the forthcoming 2026/27 academic year and will be added to your academic record after the Examination Board in October 2026.

For further information on this module please contact ssra@ucd.ie

4. Guidelines For Ethical Approval For SSRA Projects

Ethics approval (if required) **must be in place before the commencement of all summer research projects.**

You must upload the Ethics Declaration Form on Brightspace BEFORE the commencement of your project. This declaration must be completed, even if the project does not require ethical approval.

SSRA students may not be insured unless UCD can verify that the proper ethics protocols have been followed.

For the UCD ethics guidelines, see https://www.ucd.ie/researchethics/policiesguidelines/

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Does your research involve the use of

( ) Cell lines? → No ethical approval required.

( ) Published papers for review → No ethical approval required.

( ) Human subjects (e.g., survey participants, patients etc.), human data (e.g., clinical data, sequencing data etc.), human tissues, primary cells isolated from humans?
→ **See section HUMANS below**

( ) Animals, animal tissue? → **See section ANIMALS below**

An **SSRA Ethics Workshop** will be held on **Monday 23rd March 2026** to support students in understanding and addressing the ethical considerations of their SSRA projects.

4.1 HUMANS

- Please note, **students do not have the right to access medical records which identify patients** (e.g., imaging databases that identify patients) **for research purposes.**
- There must be **specific consent from the patient** which allows you to have access to their records for research.

For research, in order to comply with GDPR and the Health Research Regulations, please note the following:

- **All research (even if a health professional survey only) must have ethical approval from the relevant Hospital / Institution Research Ethics Committee (REC).**
- Consent is required for all research and data processing.
- RECs will not give retrospective approval for research already commenced/completed.

*The **retrospective chart review**, also known as a medical record review, is a type of analysis that involves the use of pre-recorded, patient-centred data to answer one or more questions.*
*Retrospective chart reviews can be used for several purposes, i.e., **research, clinical audit, service evaluations,** etc.*
***Retrospective chart review conducted for research purposes (must be submitted to a Hospital Research Ethics committee**, while those conducted for audit or evaluation purposes should follow the clinical governance path as outlined by their organisation.*

Understanding the Difference between Research and Other Activities.			
Theme	**Clinical Audit**	**Service Evaluation**	**Research**
Definition	Clinical audit is a clinically led quality improvement process that seeks to improve patient care and outcomes through systematic review of care against explicit criteria and acting to improve care when standards are not met.	Service evaluation seeks to access how well a service is achieving its attended aims. It is undertaken to benefit the people using a particular healthcare service and is designed and conducted with the sole purpose of defining or judging the current service.	Research is designed and conducted to generate new generalisable or transferrable knowledge. It includes both qualitative and quantitative studies that aim to generate new hypothesis as well as studies that aim to test existing or new hypothesis.
Answers question	Clinical audit demonstrates whether a predetermined standard is being met.	Service evaluation tells how well a service is working.	Research demonstrates what should be done.
Purpose	To find out if best practice is being practised for quality assurance and improvement purposes.	To evaluate current practices for information purposes. The information can inform management decisions.	To generate new knowledge and find out what treatments, interventions or practices are the most effective.
Context	Carried out at local or national level.	Carried out at local level only.	Carried out at local or national level.
Methods	Measures practice against evidence-based clinical standards.	Measures current service without comparison against standards.	Has a systematic, quantitative or qualitative approach to investigation.
REC Review	No, but ethical considerations should still be considered.	No, but ethical considerations should still be considered.	Yes.

*See **Health Research Regulations** (S.I. 314 of 2018; S.I. No. 18/2021) for more information. The Department of Health issued the Health Research Regulations S.I. 314 of 2018 which outline how data protection applies to health research. S.I. 18/2021 modify these to apply to the processing of personal data for health research purposes*.

The **UCD School of Medicine Undergraduate and Taught Masters Research Ethics Committee (UTMREC-SM)**reviews applications for ethical approval, including low risk studies, for research conducted by registered undergraduate and graduate taught students in the School of Medicine on behalf of UCD-HREC-LS, including SSRA projects. The Chair of UTMREC-SM is Associate Professor John Baugh.

For the UCD ethics guidelines, see https://www.ucd.ie/researchethics/policiesguidelines/

Discuss the ethical aspects of your research project with your Supervisor.

- For **clinical** studies,

1. First your supervisor should secure **ethical approval from the relevant Hospital / Institution Research Ethics Committee, AND**
2. Also, afterwards you need to **apply for a low risk approval from UTMREC-SM (form H3).**

- Some projects involving human participants (who are not patients) may require **full ethical review.** If you have a **UCD Supervisor**, you **should submit the HR1 form** to UTMREC-SM. Please allow enough time for this to take place in advance of the project start date. Deadlines and meeting dates are available on the website.

If you have a non-UCD supervisor, your supervisor should secure approval from the relevant institution first, and then you need to apply for a low risk approval from UTMREC-SM.

Students can find the **relevant forms** at this address:
https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/research/researchethics/howtoapply/

Insurance for Research Involving Human Participants and their Data

Please note, the Insurance Self-Assessment Checklist must be completed by all persons making a Human Research Ethics submission. It applies to both applications for full review and low risk studies.

4.2 ANIMALS

If your research involves animals and/or animal tissue, **contact Associate Professor John Baugh (john.baugh@ucd.ie).**

- Please note that SSRA students are NOT permitted to conduct procedures on living animals as part of their research activity.
- SSRA students may use animal tissue from projects with ethical approval in place (e.g., project authorisation from HPRA in Ireland).

You may need to apply for an **Exemption from Full Ethical Review from the Animal Research Ethics Committee (AREC) in UCD**.

Grounds for exemption:

i. use of animal tissue from projects with ethical approval in place (e.g., ethics approval from HPRA in Ireland);

ii. no procedures are being carried out

iii. the use of clinical samples (where procedures are not carried out for the purpose of research).

In Ireland, the use of living animals in research is regulated by S.I. No. 543 of 2012, which transposes the EU's Directive 2010/63/EU into national law.

"animal" means

(a) any **live non-human vertebrate** animal, including
  (i) an independently feeding larval form,
  (ii) (ii) a foetal form of mammal as from the last third of its normal development,
(b) any animal at an earlier stage of development than that referred to in subparagraph (a), where the animal is to be allowed to live beyond that stage of development and, as a result of the procedures performed, is likely to experience pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm after it has reached that stage of development; or
(c) any **live cephalopod**.

"procedure" means any use, invasive or non-invasive, of an animal for experimental or other scientific purposes, with known or unknown outcome, or educational purposes, which **may cause the animal a level of pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm equivalent to, or higher than, that caused by the introduction of a needle in accordance with good veterinary practice**. This includes any course of action intended, or liable, to result in the birth or hatching of an animal or the creation and maintenance of a genetically modified animal line in any such condition but excludes the killing of animals solely for the use of their organs or tissues.

5. Research Report – Credit Students Only

Your Research Report is a record of your research activity during your project. Please note that assessment of your Research Report accounts for 40% of your final grade for the module. It is critical that you include all your procedures and data in the Research Report in a timely fashion while you are conducting project work.

The layout for your report is as follows:

1. **SSRA Research Report Checklist (available in Brightspace)**
2. **Ethics Declaration Form (signed by Supervisor)**
3. **Copy of Abstract (only the abstract page)**
4. **SSRA Research Report Cover Page (signed by Supervisor)**
5. **Research Report using the following guidelines:**

PREPARATION OF THE TEXT

Title: The title should capture the conceptual significance for a broad audience. (max. 20 words max)

Introduction: The introduction should provide the necessary background information to place the subject in its general biological/clinical context, making the report understandable to non-specialists. The introduction should end with a clear description of the hypothesis/research question(s) being addressed in the study. (max. 600 words)

Materials and methods: This section needs to provide concise details of key methods/approaches used in the study. Standard procedures may be referenced. (max. 300 words)

Results: This section should present the experimental findings clearly but succinctly. Include a concise summary of the data presented in all display items (figures and tables). This section may be divided with sub-headings. All results (including negative results and/or failed experiments) may be reported along with relevant discussion and interpretations. The maximum number of figures and/or tables should not exceed six. (max. 500 words)

Figure and table legends: Each legend should be as concise as possible and self-sufficient. Every table must have a descriptive title and enough explanatory information so that the reader can understand the data without referring to the main text. Legends should not repeat details already in the main text and should generally avoid including references. Figure titles should describe the main result of the figure and be distinct from any sub-headings used in the Results section.

Discussion: The discussion should explain the significance of the results and placing them in the context of previous studies where appropriate. In the report, you are also expected to critically evaluate your results, suggest ways to address any shortcomings, and propose any follow-up experiments. You should also describe any limitations of the study and discuss how they might be overcome. (max. 600 words)

Author contributions and acknowledgments: You should clarify your contribution to the study (i.e. which experiments/analyses you carried out).

All sources of funding for SSRA projects must be acknowledged. E.g., the UCD School of Medicine Dean's Scholarships, Alfred Myles Smith, Clare O'Connor, Kathleen Lynn Scholarships and funding from the HRB, Wellcome Trust or any other sources of funding you may have received.

Literature cited: You may cite a maximum of 30 articles in the Vancouver style, which must be published or in press. Citations can be numbered in the text. Unpublished data, submitted manuscripts, and personal communications may only be cited within the text.

Bibliography - Example

1. Drummond PD. Triggers of motion sickness in migraine sufferers. Headache. 2005; 45(6):653-6.

2. Halpern SD, Ubel PA, Caplan AL. Solid-organ transplantation in HIV-infected patients. N Engl J Med. 2002; 347(7):284-7.

3. Geck MJ, Yoo S, Wang JC. Assessment of cervical ligamentous injury in trauma patients using MRI. J Spinal Disord. 2001; 14(5):371-7.

More than six authors:

Gillespie NC, Lewis RJ, Pearn JH, Bourke ATC, Holmes MJ, Bourke JB, et al. Ciguatera in Australia: occurrence, clinical features, pathophysiology and management. Med J Aust. 1986; 145:584-90.

REPORT – SPECIFICATIONS

Please note the use of generative AI (i.e., ChatGTP or any equivalent program) for any part of this report is prohibited. Evidence of the use of such software will mean the report is excluded from the assessment process.

- Report length and number of display items (figures and/or tables): The total length of the report (including all sections, except title, tables, references and figure legends, author contributions and acknowledgments) should not exceed 2000 words (+/- 10%). Please note that word limits indicated for each section are preferred guides.
- The maximum number of figures and/or tables should not exceed 6.
- Display items (figures and tables), along with their corresponding legends, should be included and called out in numerical order within the text. Dimensions should be as small as possible, without compromising the clarity.
- Style and format: Use single spacing and Times New Roman 12 for the text, 11 for figure legends. Pages should be numbered and references included using a bibliographic analysis software.
- Nomenclature and abbreviations: For gene and protein names, you must adhere to accepted conventions in the field of study. Nonstandard abbreviations should

be defined when first used in the text. Use of abbreviations should be kept to a minimum.

- Numerical data should be analyzed using appropriate statistical tests. Detailed information for each statistical test applied should be provided.

Deadline for submission: 5th August 2026 via Brightspace under Assignment 2 saved as a PDF using your Project Number followed by your Last Name_First name as file name.

6. Abstract - All Students

PLEASE ADHERE TO ALL OF THE GUIDELINES AS DETAILED

Project abstracts should be submitted by **ALL students** (credit AND audit projects).

Please complete the Abstract Submission Form (available in Brightspace).

Guidelines for writing your abstract:

Your abstract **should not exceed 250 words** excluding the title, author(s) name(s), address(es), references and acknowledgement of any external funding. The text should be single spaced, Times New Roman, font size 11 and justified. The abstract must have no more than **ONE** table that fits on the same page as your abstract and figures are **NOT** allowed. When using abbreviations, spell out the full name on first mention. Avoid excessive use of abbreviations.

Your Abstract should be structured as follows:

- A descriptive title in **Bold Capital Letters (Not Underlined)**
- The initials and surname of the author(s) without titles or degrees should appear below the title. You are the first author, and your Supervisor is the last author.
- The department(s), institution(s) and city(ies) /town(s) should be listed next. (Not written *in italics* or **Bold**).
- The text should be single spaced, Times New Roman, font size 11 and justified. The abstract should be of the informative type containing **FOUR** paragraphs but **without any** paragraph headings:
    - Brief Background and specify the purpose of the study
    - Outline the methods used, for example study design, study population, statistical test(s).
    - Results of the study and include key statistical data.
    - **Outline the main implication(s) of the study.**

References: **Maximum two**, please adhere to the following format:

Journal Article:

1. Drummond PD. Triggers of motion sickness in migraine sufferers. Headache. 2005; 45(6):653-6.
2. Halpern SD, Ubel PA, Caplan AL. Solid-organ transplantation in HIV-infected patients. N Engl J Med. 2002; 347(7):284-7.

More Than Six Authors:

Gillespie NC, Lewis RJ, Pearn JH, Bourke ATC, Holmes MJ, Bourke JB, et al. Ciguatera in Australia: occurrence, clinical features, pathophysiology and management. Med J Aust. 1986; 145:584-90.

Please Note

The abstract must be submitted through **Brightspace as Assignment 1**.
Deadline for submission: 5th August 2026

Only Abstract Submission Forms saved as **WORD doc** and submitted through Brightspace as Assignment 1 can be reviewed. Save your Word document **using your Project Number followed by your Last Name_First name as file name.**

Sample Abstract

IL6 TARGETING IN TRIPLE NEGATIVE BREAST CANCER (TNBC) ENHANCES THE EFFICACY OF THE ANTI-PROLIFERATIVE CHEMOTHERAPEUTIC PACLITAXEL (TAXOL®).

O' Malley C[1], Gorzel K[2], O'Reilly E[2], McCann A[1, 2]
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Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC) is a subset of breast cancer immunohistochemically negative for the expression of the oestrogen receptor, progesterone receptor and the tyrosine kinase receptor HER-2. TNBC is associated with poor prognosis, early relapse and a significantly shorter survival rate following disease recurrence when compared to non-TNBC cancers [1]. This aggressive subset of breast cancer relies critically on the cytokine IL-6 to drive tumour growth and suppress apoptosis [2].
The aim of this research was to (a) investigate what impact targeting the IL-6 pathway in triple negative breast cancer cells has on IL6- mediated growth and (b) investigate how this affects the resultant cellular response to the anti-mitotic chemotherapeutic drug Paclitaxel (Taxol®).
The cytotoxic effects of the anti IL-6 monoclonal antibody MAB206 and Paclitaxel on MDA-MB- 231 TNBC cells was assessed using the MTT assay. MDA-MB-231 cells were seeded (5000 cells/well) in 96-well plates in culture medium containing the Paclitaxel IC50 concentration in one treatment and then Paclitaxel and MAB206 in combination. Levels of the cytokine IL6 were analysed using an IL-6 ELISA (Immuntools ®). Cell viability decreased when MDA-MB-231 cells were treated their Paclitaxel IC50 values in combination with MAB206 compared to Paclitaxel treatment alone. This was concomitant with clinical data that shows low IL-6 expression is associated with a better disease free survival in breast cancer patients (DFS).
The results demonstrate that the combination of an IL-6 monoclonal antibody and Paclitaxel attenuated cellular proliferation in a synergistic manner and enhanced the cytotoxic effects of the chemotherapeutic Paclitaxel.

Acknowledgment:
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References:

1. Rodler E, Korde L, Gralow J, *et al.* Current treatment options in triple negative breast cancer. Breast Disease. 2010, vol. 32(1-2):99-122.
2. Hartman Z, Poage G, Hollander P, *et al.* Growth of Triple Negative Breast Cancer Relies upon Coordinate Autocrine Expression of the Proinflammatory Cytokine IL-6 and IL-8. Cancer Res. 2013; vol 73(11); 1-11.

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Abstract Assessment

SCORE SHEET /15	**MARK**
1. A descriptive title in **BOLD CAPITAL LETTERS** (NOT UNDERLINED).	
2. The initials and surname of the author(s) without titles or degrees should appear below the title.	
3. The department(s), institution(s), city(ies) and town(s) should be listed next (NOT IN **BOLD** OR *ITALICS*).	
4. The abstract should be of the informative type containing FOUR SEPARATE paragraphs, WITHOUT ANY subtitles or paragraph headings.	
- Specify the purpose of the study and include a brief background statement.	
- Outline the methods used. For example: Study design, study population, statistical test(s).	
- Summarise the results of the study and include key statistical data.	
- Outline the implication(s) of the study. For example: It is not satisfactory to state “results will be discussed”.	
5. The abstract MUST NOT EXCEED 250 WORDS - Excluding title, author(s) name(s), Address(es) and any reference.	
6. The text should be single spaced.	
7. The font size (Times New Roman) should be 11point.	
8. The Abstract must have no more than one table. Figures are not allowed.	
9. The abstract must be contained WITHIN THE WIDTH of the above margins.	
10. When using abbreviations, spell out the full name on first mention. Avoid excessive use of abbreviations.	
11.Up to 2 references in the VANCOUVER STYLE can be included.	
12. Keywords ARE NOT TO BE INCLUDED at the bottom of the abstract.	
TOTAL	**/15**

Published Irish Journal of Medical Science (IJMS) SSRA Abstracts

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7. Supervision

Prior to commencing your research, you will need to meet with your Supervisor and discuss the ethics aspect of your project, and the plan for the 8 weeks. Please encourage your Supervisor to submit their report (form **available on the SSRA website under the Supervisor Hub tab and Brightspace**) at the end of your 8-week project as this forms part of your assessment.

8. Communication Workshops

Effective communication and presentation skills are vital components of the transferable skill portfolio of any student, particularly in the healthcare space. Whether presenting to peers during Grand Rounds or speaking with a patient about their medical condition and treatment options, the ability to communicate in a clear and succinct manner will be of distinct advantage, particularly when the average consultation time in Ireland today is about 14 minutes.

The SSRA poster and Gold Medal nights are a unique opportunity for students to present the findings of their research project primarily to an audience of academics and clinicians. In preparation, all SSRA students are invited to take part in a communications workshop. Students will learn about the principles of effective communication and explore audience, content and presenter considerations when preparing for the SSRA competition. How do I cope with nerves in front of all those people? What should I say in my pitch?

After looking at the basic principles and challenges in communication during this interactive workshop, we peel back to the essence of effective communication – the ability to tell a good story. The aim is for students to begin tailoring their research message to a particular audience and exploring how to engage the audience as they tell their research story.

8.1 Communication Workshop Key Dates

Day/Date	Time	Description	
Monday 17th August 2026	12pm	*Submission: letter and presentation heroes	Submit on Brightspace
Tuesday 8th September 2026 (parallel sessions)	12pm- 2pm	Communications workshop	Seminar Rooms 1 + 2 Charles Institute
Thursday 10th September 2026	12pm-2pm	3-min pitch to 2 person communication panel with feedback. No visual aids or slides	Seminar Rooms 1 + 2 Charles Institute
Monday 21st September 2026 Gold Medal Finalists only	12pm-1:30pm	Presentation with slides for feedback	Charles Seminar Room, First Floor, Charles Institute

*** SUBMISSION IN ADVANCE OF WORKSHOP - Monday 17th August 2026**

1. Write a letter to the Irish Times Healthcare section about your research in plain language. Use terms that a general audience can understand, avoid technical jargon, and focus on why the research matters for patients or healthcare. (100 word max)

2. Search online for an example of an excellent speaker and list the traits you think make them a good presenter. Find an example of a bad presenter and list the reasons why they do not make a good impression on you. Submit your compiled list of web addresses, names of speakers & videos that you are nominating and why.

9. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Why Take SSRA?

- It is a supportive environment to undertake a supervised research project at world class research facilities during your degree programme.
- The opportunity to establish collaborations and professional networks that may play a critical role in your future career path.
- The chance to have your research published as conference proceeding or as part of a peer reviewed paper.
- The potential to secure 5 credits towards your undergraduate degree programme.
- An opportunity to present your own work to senior academic faculty.
- The chance to win a Gold, Silver or Bronze SSRA Medal.
- The opportunity to gain international research experience if completing an international project.

Who Can Register For SSRA?

- All registered undergraduate students (UEM, GEM, Radiography, BSc Biomedical Health and Life Sciences, Physiology students) within the School of Medicine and School of Veterinary Medicine (with approval).
- Subject to approval, students from the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering may also undertake the SSRA research programme.

What Is The Duration Of The Project?

- If you are taking the SSRA for credit, your project should last a minimum of 8 weeks.
- If you are taking the SSRA for audit, it should last a minimum of 6 weeks.

Am I Liable For Fees For This Module?

- When students register to this module in 2026, their fees for 2026/27 will change once they are registered.
- As the credits for this module will be assigned to the 2026/27 academic year, students should take a reduced credit load in 2026/27.
- Students taking the five credit SSRA module should register for five credits less during their online registration in 2026/27.
- Students may be liable for fees if they register for more than 60 credits in an academic year.
- If you have any queries regarding your credit load email programme.medicine@ucd.ie
- Auditing this module will not incur a fee liability.

Can I Take A Student Summer Research Module For Credit?

- It is possible to take the SSRA for either credit or audit. Please note, however, that the SSRA Module can be taken for credit **ONCE ONLY**.
- With the exception of stage 2-4 GEM students, all School of Medicine students can take the module for credit (5 credits).
- Students in the School of Mechanical and Materials Engineering (*subject to approval*) can also undertake the SSRA research programme for audit.
- For students who complete the module FOR AUDIT ONLY, their research activity will be recorded on the diploma supplement which all UCD students may request.
- Please note that credits for the Summer 2026 module will be assigned to the forthcoming 2026/27 year and **NOT** the current year.
- Credits will be assigned to students academic records after the Programme Board in October.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - UCD Code of Practice in Research

Please see here a link for UCD Code of Practice in Research**.**

Appendix 2 - World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki

Please see here a link for the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki .

Appendix 3 - Scholarship and External Funding

We have several scholarship funding opportunities available, including partnerships with universities abroad. Please visit the website for further details.

SSRA Scholarships: https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/research/ssra/ssrascholarships/

SSRA International Scholarships:

https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/research/ssra/internationalprojects/

External Funding: https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/research/ssra/studenthub/

Appendix 4 - Intercalated MSc

This programme is for UCD Medicine students who wish to pursue a career in translational research and enhance our understanding of disease and improve human health. This one year intercalated research programme is designed for students with 180 credits from their undergraduate medicine degree programme and graduate entry medicine students with a primary degree in a science-based discipline.

The programme is specifically designed to facilitate those medical students who wish to establish a research career after graduation. The School offers an extensive array of taught and research masters and doctoral programmes across all major clinical specialities including MD, MCh, MSc and PhD. Many clinicians lead successful translational research programmes within the School and are principal investigators with our major associated research centres.

Visit our website for further information:
https://www.ucd.ie/medicine/research/ssra/intercalatedmasters/

Appendix 5 - Useful Contacts

UCD Medicine Research Office

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