

ADVANCED STUDIES RESEARCH SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK

Advanced Studies is the research and scholarship theme that is integrated across all four years of the Flinders University Doctor of Medicine (MD) program. Students have the option of undertaking a research or coursework pathway for Advanced Studies, which they pursue from Year 2 to Year 4 of the MD program.

This handbook provides information for those who are supervising Advanced Studies students who are undertaking the research pathway.

Dear Advanced Studies Research Supervisors,

Welcome to Advanced Studies!

Thank you for your willingness to contribute to the Flinders University Doctor of Medicine program by providing opportunities for our students to engage in health and medical research.

This handbook is intended to provide you with information related to Advanced Studies to help you understand and undertake your role as an Advanced Studies research supervisor.

Advanced Studies supervisors are able to access to the MD Advanced Studies Resources Flinders Learning Online (FLO) site. This FLO site is regularly updated with information and resources and is intended to be a resource for Advanced Studies students and their supervisors. You will find information in this handbook (as well as a copy of this handbook) on this FLO site.

We regularly update our materials in response to feedback from both our students and our supervisors. To this end, we encourage you to contact us if you have any questions, concerns, feedback, or suggestions.

Once again, thank you for your willingness to provide opportunities for our medical students to undertake research.

We hope that you find the experience of supervising medical students to undertake research to be a rewarding one!

Kind regards,

George, Gurmeet and Nicola

Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors



A/Prof Savio George Barreto
(Advanced Studies Coordinator and SA Advisor)



A/Prof Gurmeet Singh (NT Advisor)



Dr Nicola Parkin (MDRS Advisor)

(NT Advisor)

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What is Advanced Studies?

Advanced Studies is a compulsory research and scholarship theme integrated across all four years of the Doctor of Medicine (MD).

Advanced Studies is intended to provide medical students with a solid understanding of medical research, together with practical research skills. In the short term, this would make them highly competitive for places in both internship and postgraduate specialty training programs which are no longer guaranteed. In the long term, this theme equips medical students to competently interpret and appraise scientific medical literature and develop skills to drive medical research as a medical practitioner. It is the view of both the Australian Medical Council (AMC) and the Flinders University College of Medicine and Public Health that these skills are essential for the future roles of our society's medical professionals.

Advanced Studies requires medical students to undertake either a research project (the *research pathway*) or postgraduate coursework (the *coursework pathway*), leading towards the Advanced Studies Capstone in Year 4 (MD4).

The research and coursework pathways are available in MD2 and MD3. In MD4, all students, irrespective of their chosen pathway, are required to fulfil the requirements for the MD4 Advanced Studies Capstone. Both pathways require a similar level of commitment and investment of time, as outlined later in this handbook. Whilst research students undertake Advanced Studies Capstone assessments related to their research work, coursework students undertake a clinical audit and an Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) project.

Advanced Studies research projects span many disciplines broadly related to medicine and are conducted in collaboration with clinical, academic and research staff within and across all Flinders University related sites including regional hospitals and local health networks. Research opportunities may also be available at research centres such as SAHMRI and Menzies (NT) and, in some cases, industry partners and private medical centres.

Advanced Studies research pathway students work with the same supervisor throughout MD2, MD3 and MD4, leading to the production of a series of assessments that report on their research activity and outcomes that constitute their Advanced Studies Capstone work in MD4.

Advanced Studies Learning Outcomes

On completion of Advanced Studies, you will be able to:

1. Apply extensive knowledge of research design and methods to a scientific, community or clinical context.
2. Analyse, interpret, and critically appraise research outcomes and data using conceptual frameworks grounded in relevant fields.
3. Extend and advance personal knowledge in a specialised area of biological, clinical, epidemiological, social and/or behavioural sciences that will enhance professional practice and/or build professional capacity.
4. Identify and exercise ethical responsibilities in reviewing processes in the conduct of research.
5. Self-reflect and improve professional practice.
6. Demonstrate a high standard of personal and professional behaviour as part of a collaborative or inter-professional team.
7. Demonstrate leadership in a specialised area of health practice.
8. Communicate acquired knowledge of expertise to a variety of audiences to relevant community and professional audiences, potentially using new technologies and systems.
9. Demonstrate the significance of Advanced Studies work to the community and/or the profession in relevant contexts.

Advanced Studies Structure and Timelines in the MD

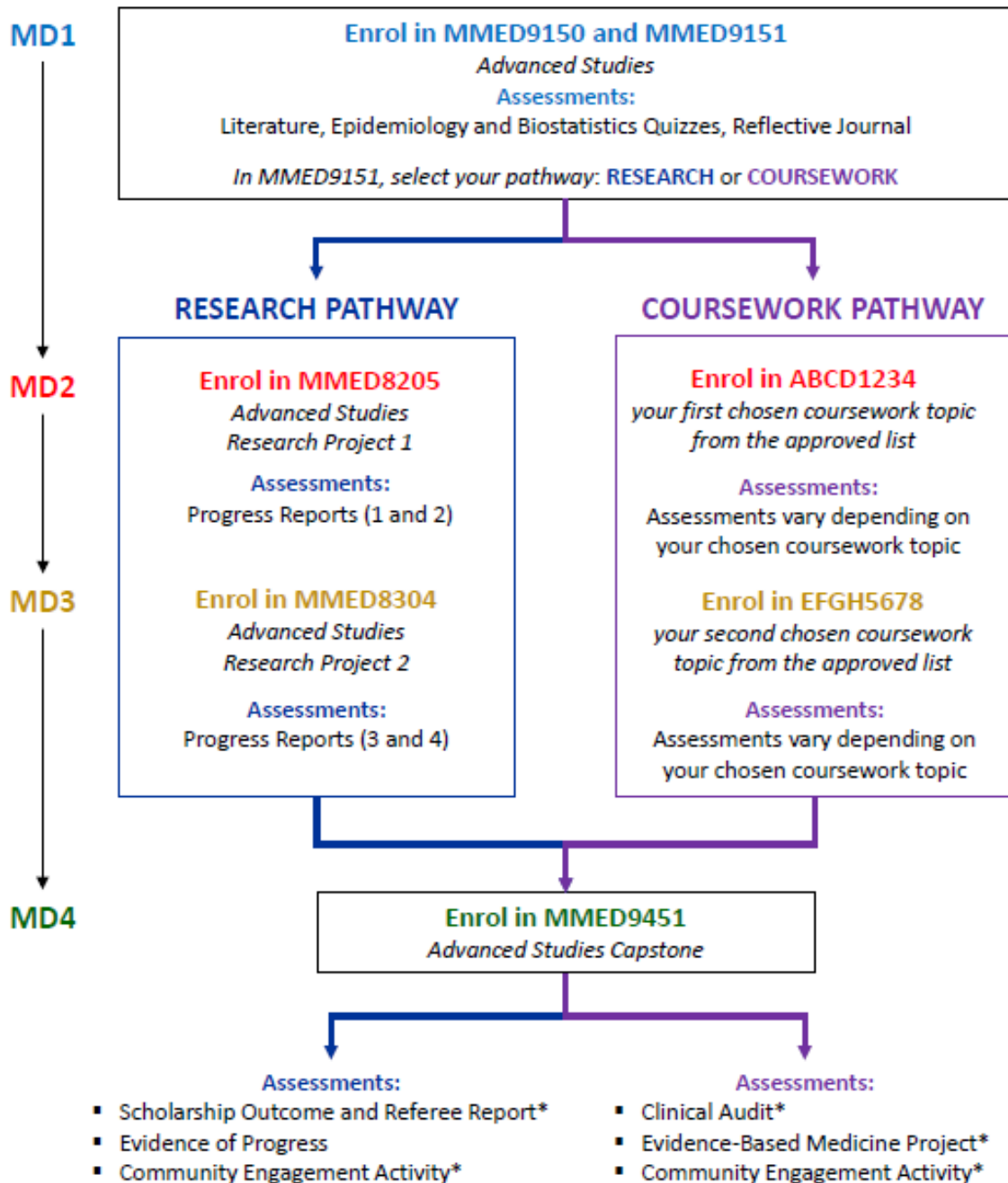
Advanced Studies is comprised of a total of 18 units (equivalent to one semester of full-time study), involving a total time commitment of 405 hours over a three-year period. This includes student activities and tasks such as:

- Meeting with the supervisor and the research team
- Undertaking a literature search/critique
- Supporting ethics application processes
- Collecting and analysing data (including laboratory work, if applicable)
- Writing up results and final reports
- Independent study related to the research project

The figure overleaf provides an overview of Advanced Studies across the four-year MD program.



FLINDERS UNIVERSITY DOCTOR OF MEDICINE ADVANCED STUDIES OVERVIEW



NOTE: Transfers between Research and Coursework Pathways:
Research to Coursework transfers are permissible at any stage.
Coursework to Research transfers can only be made prior to commencement of MMED8205.
ALL transfer requests are assessed by the Advanced Studies Coordinator with consideration given to critical enrolment dates.
Please refer to the MD Advanced Studies Resources FLO site (Advanced Studies Information module → FAQs) for further information.

**Task can be undertaken prior to MD4, but must be submitted for assessment as part of MMED9451*

Updated December 2022

Research Pathway Overview and Assessments

MD1

During Year 1 (MD1) of the medical program, students engage in Advanced Studies coursework which intended to provide them with a foundation and introduction to basic principles of research and scholarship, including research methodologies (qualitative, quantitative and Indigenous approaches to research in different health and medical contexts), epidemiology, engaging with the literature for research, biostatistics, and research policies and procedures including ethics.

During the second semester, students must decide on their chosen pathway (i.e., research or coursework). We endeavour to provide students with information about both pathways to assist them in making an informed decision.

To facilitate this decision-making process, the Advanced Studies team provide all MD1 students with a list of research proposals which have been submitted by research supervisors and approved by the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors. These projects are grouped according to location (i.e., South Australian metropolitan-based projects, rural and remote health projects, and projects based in the Northern Territory), as students make decisions that are informed by their clinical placement location in MD3.

Once the research projects are released, MD1 students are encouraged to contact potential supervisors to discuss the projects on offer. Alternatively, students may elect to identify a supervisor and work collaboratively with the supervisor to develop a research proposal, using a similar template to that which supervisors use to submit an Advanced Studies research proposal.

The decision-making process is administered by the Advanced Studies team and requires students to: (1) formally nominate their top three preferences from the previously approved research projects; (2) submit a research proposal that has been collaboratively developed with a supervisor; or (3) indicate their preference to undertake coursework. For those who submit three research project preferences, these are processed in three rounds, and supervisors are contacted with the details of students who have nominated their preference for particular projects. For those students who submit a research proposal that has been collaboratively developed with a supervisor, these are reviewed by the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors.

Once students and supervisors receive formal notification of their project allocation, they can commence working on their research project.

MD1 Assessments

Advanced Studies teaching occurs across both first and second semester. There are assessments in each semester that are designed to assist students to consolidate their learning across different topics. These assessments predominantly take the form of online quizzes that assess students' knowledge and understanding of content related to epidemiology, biostatistics, and engaging with the literature.

MD2 and MD3

To complement the formative assessment of students' progress (through supervision), Advanced Studies students are formally assessed twice per topic, via a Progress Report.

Progress reports are important as they provide a formal opportunity for you and the student to discuss details of progress and reflect on any challenges that have arisen. The progress report also serves as a mechanism to communicate any issues to the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors.

You will be asked to work with your Advanced Studies student to complete two Advanced Studies Research Student Progress Reports per year, using an assessment template which the student is responsible for accessing.

A Statement of Assessment Methods (SAMs) for each topic, together with the Advanced Studies Research Progress Report proforma, will be emailed to you prior to the start of the topic.

For Progress Reports 2 (MD2), and 3 and 4 (MD3), the student is responsible for summarising their learning, research progress and achievements in Section 1 of the form. They then email this form to you one week before you meet with them. You are asked to discuss the information with them and provide your comments in Section 2. Once you and the student have agreed to a plan for the next stage of the project and have signed the form (Section 3), please retain a copy of the completed form for your reference.

The student is required to submit all assessments on FLO by the stipulated deadlines. If an extension is required, students are responsible for submitting extension requests using the Assignment Extension Request tool in the relevant FLO site prior to the submission deadline.

MD2

In MD2, students enrol in the research topic, MMED8205: Advanced Studies Research Project 1, in second semester. The semester dates for this topic are Monday 22 May to Friday 24 November 2023.

Students are expected to work with their supervisors to undertake a *minimum* of 135 hours (equivalent to 4.5 units) during this topic but are encouraged to establish contact with their supervisors to commence project planning as soon as their project details are confirmed towards the end of MD1. This can be particularly important where an ethics application is required, as there can be delays in obtaining the necessary ethics approvals which can affect project timelines. We note, for example, that at present, Site-Specific Assessment (SSA) forms for Southern Adelaide Local Health Network (SALHN) cannot be completed until ethics approval is granted – a process which can take many weeks.

MD2 Assessments

During the second semester, MD2 students submit three assessment tasks:

1. **Progress Report 1: Research Plan | Due Thursday 10 August 2023**

In this assessment, the student and supervisor collaborate to develop a research plan outlining the activities that the student will be undertaking during Advanced Studies. We

have developed a template¹ for this assessment, including explanatory text, to assist in developing this research plan.

2. **Progress Report 2 | Due Thursday 26 October 2023**

In this assessment, the student and supervisor meet and discuss the student's research progress and complete the Progress Report 2 assessment template¹. This task requires the student and supervisor to assess the student's progress against the Advanced Studies learning outcomes, develop learning goals in relation to the student's research work, and collaboratively develop a plan of research activity for the coming months. This template provides an opportunity for you to comment on the student's progress. If you do not believe the student is making adequate progress with their research, please contact one of the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors to discuss your concerns (please refer to the last page of this handbook for contact details).

MD3

Advanced Studies research pathway students continue with their research work with their supervisor in the first semester of Year 3 by enrolling in the research topic, MMED8304: Advanced Studies Research Project 2. The semester dates for this topic are Monday 16 January to Friday 1 September 2023.

As per the expectations in MD2, students in MD3 are expected to undertake a *minimum* of 135 hours (equivalent to 4.5 units). During this topic, students continue with the research project they commenced in MD2.

It is important to note that MD3 and MD4 are the clinical years of the MD program. Each student has a different clinical timetable which means that there may be variation in terms of their availability to work on their Advanced Studies research as they move through different clinical rotations. The student is, however, responsible for making arrangements with you to undertake their research project according to mutual availability and agreement. They are also strongly encouraged to maintain communication and advise you if they will be unavailable for any period.

MD3 Assessments

During the first semester, MD3 students submit three assessment tasks:

1. **Progress Report 3 | Due Thursday 23 February 2023**

In this assessment, the student and supervisor meet and discuss the student's research progress and complete the Progress Report 3 assessment template¹. This task requires the student and supervisor to assess the student's progress against the Advanced Studies learning outcomes, develop learning goals in relation to the student's research work, and collaboratively develop a plan of research activity for the coming months. This template provides an opportunity for you to comment on the student's progress. If you do not believe the student is making adequate progress with their research, please contact one of the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors to discuss your concerns (please refer to the last page of this handbook for contact details).

¹ All assessment templates are available to students via the Online Curriculum Framework and on FLO. These templates are available on the MD Advanced Studies Resources FLO site which all Advanced Studies students and supervisors will be able to access.

2. Progress Report 4 | Due Thursday 22 June 2023

This assessment is very similar to Progress Report 3 and requires the student and supervisor to meet and discuss the student's research progress and complete the Progress Report 4 assessment template. This task requires the student and supervisor to assess the student's progress against the Advanced Studies learning outcomes, and collaboratively develop a plan of research activity for the coming months. This template provides an opportunity for you to comment on the student's progress. If you do not believe the student is making adequate progress with their research, please contact one of the Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisors to discuss your concerns (please refer to the last page of this handbook for contact details).

MD4

In MD4, all students undertake the Advanced Studies Capstone. This constitutes the final stage of the student's research activity.

During the Advanced Studies Capstone, MD4 students should work towards completing the research project they commenced in MD2 and continued in MD3. During the Advanced Studies Capstone, students should focus on:

- Demonstrating progress against each of the Advanced Studies Learning Outcomes
- Developing a product that demonstrates what has been achieved during the research project (i.e., the 'Scholarship Outcome')² and disseminating this to an appropriate community (i.e., the 'Community Engagement Activity')³

Examples of research products include:

- Presentation of results at a departmental meeting
- A data analysis codebook
- Conference presentation
- Journal article (e.g., literature review, research paper)
- This research product should be reviewed by a colleague familiar with the research area (e.g., a supervisor's colleague). The supervisor is responsible for making these arrangements.

As in MD2 and 3, MD4 students are responsible for making arrangements with their supervisors to complete their research work according to mutual availability and agreement.

MD4 Research Pathway Assessments

During the students' final year of medicine, Advanced Studies research pathway students are required to work with their supervisor to finalise their research activity and submit the following assessments. These assessments are due in the second semester:

1. Scholarship Outcome and Referee Report

Due Thursday 26 October 2023

² Some projects may be ongoing, so the Scholarship Outcome demonstrated by the student may be an interim step. The Scholarship Outcome must be reviewed by someone familiar with the research area (e.g., a supervisor's colleague). The supervisor is responsible for arranging this review.

³ A community can be defined by geography, demography, or research domain (e.g., a community of practice).

This assessment involves two parts, both of which are to be submitted by the student for assessment through FLO by the due date stipulated above:

Part 1: Scholarship Outcome

The Scholarship Outcome constitutes the key product of the research work that the student has undertaken over the course of the MD program. This assessment can take the form of a publication, mock journal article, or research report but should include the following:

- Statement of Contribution (template available)
If the student submits a co-authored publication (including if the publication involves other MD students), the contribution of each author should be clearly stated to enable the student's individual contribution to be assessed.
- Introduction/Background
- Research Design/Methods
- Results/Findings
- Discussion (including study limitations)
- Summary/Conclusion

The Scholarship Outcome should be approximately 3000 words in length. This suggested word count serves as a guide only, as disciplines (and journals) may have different expectations with respect to the structure and form of scholarly writing.

Note: Although publishing is strongly encouraged, this is not a requirement for successful completion of the Advanced Studies Capstone.

Part 2: Referee Report of Scholarship Outcome

The student's Scholarship Outcome (i.e., Part 1) must be submitted to you (the supervisor) well in advance of the assessment deadline to give the reviewer ample time to review the Scholarship Outcome prior to the due date outlined above.

As the supervisor, you are responsible for identifying an appropriate person to review the student's Scholarship Outcome. This reviewer must not be listed as a researcher on the Advanced Studies project but should have knowledge and expertise of the research area.

Once the Referee Report of Scholarship Outcome is completed (using the template provided), it should be returned to the student who is then responsible for uploading this document, together with their Scholarship Outcome, to FLO prior to the submission deadline.

2. Community Engagement Activity

Due Thursday 16 November 2023

This assessment can take the form of a presentation about the research at a conference (e.g., oral or poster presentation), or departmental meeting. Evidence could take the form of a copy of your PowerPoint slides, certificate of participation, or signed letter from the research supervisor confirming completion of the activity. Students may also wish to upload photographic evidence (if appropriate).

Note: Students may complete the Community Engagement Activity in MD2 or MD3, but evidence of completion must be submitted for assessment via the Advanced Studies Capstone FLO site in MD4.

3. Evidence of Progress

Due Thursday 9 November 2023

This is a non-graded assessment that is collaboratively undertaken by the student and the

supervisor. This assessment enables the student to conduct a self-assessment of their progress across the Advanced Studies learning outcomes, together with an assessment of progress from the supervisor. This task is completed using the template provided.

Advanced Studies Supervisor Responsibilities

As the student's Advanced Studies research supervisor, you are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the:
 - a. Research project has appropriate ethical and/or biosafety approval and is conducted in accordance with the University's occupational health and safety requirements
 - b. Availability of adequate resources (e.g., equipment, funding⁴) to support the student's research project
 - c. Scope of the student's participation in the research project is appropriate⁵
 - d. Student is aware of:
 - i. Any confidentiality agreements and/or intellectual property issues at the start of the project
 - ii. Facilities, resources, and technical assistance available in the College to support their research
 - iii. Advanced Studies assessment requirements, including submission dates
A copy of the relevant Advanced Studies research topic Statement of Assessment Methods (SAM) will be provided to you for your reference
2. Arranging access to HAD, EPAS and/or OACIS for the project (if required) by contacting the [SALHN Office for Research](#) or the relevant Research Office in your Local Health Network
3. Negotiating and managing project timelines and milestones with the student by:
 - a. Establishing a regular schedule of supervision meetings (virtual and/or face-to-face) for the duration of the research project
Maintaining regular contact is important as these sessions provide students with opportunities to ask questions and exchange ideas. We recommend regular fortnightly/monthly meetings that may increase during high intensity phases of the project
 - b. Informing the student of any planned extended leave (or retirement) during the project and arranging appropriate and effective supervision during any absences
 - c. Developing a work plan with timelines for various stages of the research project
 - d. Discussing and reviewing the student's progress and achievements with them in relation to their learning goals and research work via the Advanced Studies assessments
4. Supporting the student to actively engage in the research by:
 - a. Developing an understanding of the student's academic background and research experience to support the student to identify and develop additional skills and/or knowledge needed to undertake the project
 - b. Encouraging the student to participate in research training opportunities (if available)
 - c. Suggesting library and information resources relevant to the field of research
Note: The [library](#) has a range of fundamental/foundational resources
 - a. Discussing the value of the research and how it contributes to the student's overall learning goals for Advanced Studies

⁴ A maximum of \$2,000 per student is available as a contribution to these resources (further information about this funding is provided later in this handbook)

⁵ Students are expected to produce work equivalent to an Honours (not a PhD) student and are not required to publish their results to achieve a high grade on their work

- b. Supporting the student to understand the research processes involved in the project (e.g., literature review and critique, ethics approval procedures, data collection and analysis, and reporting)
- c. Determining the student's involvement with your team and establish an agreed meeting schedule with the student
- d. Monitoring the student's progress and performance against the agreed timetable and assisting the student to develop solutions to problems as they are identified
- e. Providing constructive feedback and critique on the student's research work (e.g., by reviewing drafts, providing advice on written/oral presentations)
- f. Assisting the student to recognise the impact of their research and how this may be translated into a high-quality presentation for dissemination (e.g., via a poster/oral presentation at national/international meeting)

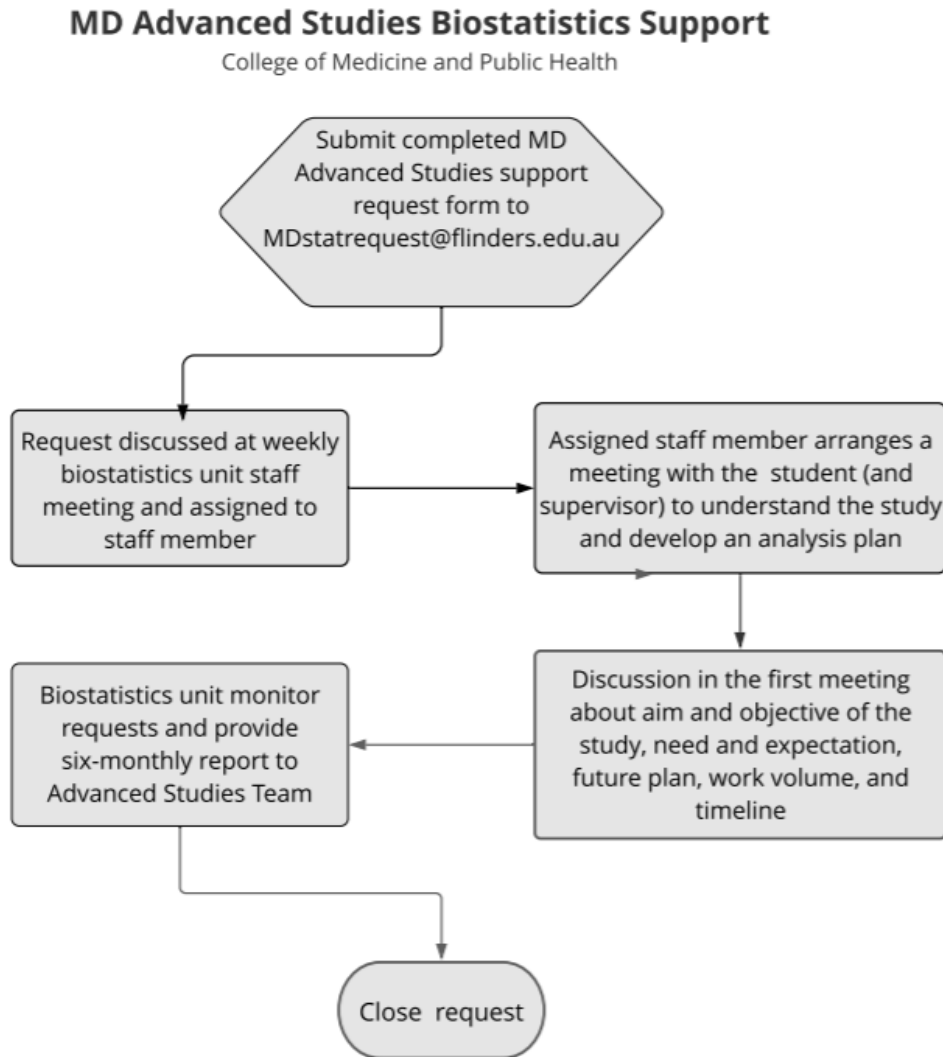
Where students have identified their own area of research interest:

- Provide support and guidance to develop their research idea into a project plan (e.g., review of the literature, conceptual framework, research methods/techniques, ethics approval processes, data collection and analysis)

Biostatistical Support

In order to support students and supervisors in Advanced Studies, the Advanced Studies team have worked with the medical biostatistics team in the College of Medicine and Public Health to enable you to access biostatistical expertise.

An overview of how to access this support is outlined in the figure below:



The Biostatistical Support Request Form is available on the MD Advanced Studies Resources FLO site under 'Analysing Data' > 'Biostatistical Support'.

It is an expectation from the Medical Biostatistical Support Team that the supervisor attend the initial meeting with the student to ensure there is clarity in developing an analysis plan which is key to sample size estimation and the overall planning of the statistical analysis.

In keeping with the ICMJE recommendations⁶, the Advanced studies team supports the request from the Medical Biostatistics team that the specific statistician involved in providing support through

⁶ [Authorship Discussion Document](#)

Advanced studies be included as a co-author on the manuscript ensuing from the analysis performed by them should they fulfil the criteria proposed by the ICMJE, namely:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work;
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
- Final approval of the version to be published;
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.”

Funding Support

Advanced Studies research pathway students are eligible for up to \$2000 to support their Advanced Studies research work.

This funding is intended to assist with project consumables and other costs (e.g., article processing fees). The funds may also be used to supplement other funding (e.g., student conference attendance to present research work).

Information about funding and how to access these funds is available on the MD Advanced Studies Resources FLO site under ‘Advanced Studies Information’ > ‘Funding for Advanced Studies Research’. Funding will only be approved to the total of \$2000 and is only available for the period in which the student is enrolled in the MD. It will lapse on graduation.

Useful Information

Difficulties with Advanced Studies Students

If you are having difficulties with your Advanced Studies research student in relation to the research project and/or the supervisory relationship, you should discuss your concerns with the student in the first instance.

If your concerns are not resolved satisfactorily, you should seek advice from an Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor.

Should the supervisory relationship breakdown or show signs of conflict, you should immediately inform the relevant Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor (refer to the back of this handbook) via email and follow up with a phone call or meeting.

If a student is having difficulties, it is possible for the student to change their research project or convert to the coursework pathway. Depending on the circumstances, an Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor may/may not approve this change.

You and the Year Level Academic Coordinator (if necessary) may be consulted after the student has met with an Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor.

Changes to Supervision Arrangements

If you leave the University and/or retire, and you are no longer able/wish to continue supervising your Advanced Studies research student(s), please notify the relevant Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor as soon as possible, even if you have identified an individual from your research team to take over the supervision. Please also keep your Advanced Studies student(s) informed of these changes.

Advanced Studies Publication Expectations

All students are expected to present their work to the research department/group with whom they are working over the course of their research project. This provides an opportunity for students to develop skills in scholarly communication while also providing an avenue to receive feedback.

We strongly encourage all Advanced Studies research students to publish and/or present their work locally or internationally as it further enhances their portfolio when applying for postgraduate training. However, publication is not a mandatory requirement.

Should you and the student intend to publish, **it is important that authors and authorship sequence is discussed with the student at the early stages of research planning.** As part of this discussion, you may wish to refer to the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' guidelines regarding authorship: <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>.

Research-Related Travel

Given the current COVID-19 situation around the world, you are advised to heed travel restrictions and make decisions based on current advice provided by SA Health.

If students are travelling for the purposes of Advanced Studies, this should be discussed with the relevant Advanced Studies Portfolio Advisor.

Any leave that is required from the MD program must be approved by MD Course Director (Dr Michal Wozniak).

Relevant Policies to Discuss with Your Advanced Studies Research Student(s)

There are a range of policies, procedures, and guidelines that your research student should be reminded to review prior to and during the research project:

Ethics, Biosafety and Integrity	https://www.flinders.edu.au/research/researcher-support/ebi/ebi_home.cfm
Human Ethics	https://staff.flinders.edu.au/research/integrity/human-ethics
Animal Ethics	https://staff.flinders.edu.au/research/integrity/animal-ethics
Intellectual Property Policy	https://www.flinders.edu.au/integritygovernancerisk/legal-services/intellectual-property.cfm
Research Integrity and Misconduct	https://staff.flinders.edu.au/research/integrity/integrity
Defence Export Controls	https://staff.flinders.edu.au/research/integrity/defence-export-controls
Student Insurance	https://students.flinders.edu.au/finances-and-admin/insurance
International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' guidelines regarding authorship	http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html

Note: This is not an exhaustive list

Advanced Studies Directory

General Advanced Studies Queries	Ask Flinders (request support)
Advanced Studies Academic Portfolio Advisors	
FMC-based students	A/Prof Savio George Barreto Email: savio.barreto@flinders.edu.au
MD Rural Stream students	Dr Nicola Parkin Email: nicola.parkin@flinders.edu.au Phone: 8201 5337
NT students	A/Prof Gurmeet Singh Email: gurmeet.singh@menzies.edu.au Phone: 8946 8579
Biostatistical Support	MDstatrequest@flinders.edu.au
Risk and Insurance	riskandinsurance@flinders.edu.au <i>You may also wish to consult:</i> https://students.flinders.edu.au/finances-and-admin/insurance