

# Tips for finding your Research Mentor for 3rd year

## 1. Think broadly.

- Map out your research interests.
- Identify potential faculty.
- Talk to your peers (do this in your first year, ie: how often they met with their mentor, tips, experiences, etc.)
- Talk to Dr. Sparks for a broader view of related faculty with interests that align with yours.



## 2. Think about how your potential mentor communicates and if this meshes with you.

- How frequently do you need contact? (different for all people) i.e. they don't email back for a week.... this might be their communication style.
- Does your communication style mix well with your mentors? (text, email, phone, zoom, etc.)
- Consideration of the size of the lab/group and the amount of time the potential mentor spends on research.

## 3. Ask practical questions.

- Where will I sit?
- Will I have a computer?
- What statistical support will I have?
- Have you mentored a med student (from Duke)? If yes... find that individual and contact them.
- Describe a few projects that you would have me on?
- Do you have time to mentor a med student?
- Are you an approved mentor for the 3rd year?
- Who will I work with day to day? Can I meet them?
- Schedule a second visit.



## 4. Never make your mind up on a first visit.

Think about it over the weekend or even take a week.

## 5. Get a sense for how you interact with the mentor. Is this someone that inspires you? Do you think you will both be able to work well together?

## 6. If you find an internal or external grant to apply to, let your mentor know.

Many mentors will be unfamiliar with med student specific grants. Send a follow-up email to your mentor to remind them of deadlines. **Apply!**

**Questions?** Reach out to Matthew Sparks, MD, director of undergraduate medical research for the Duke Department of Medicine: [matthew.sparks@duke.edu](mailto:matthew.sparks@duke.edu)

## More information:

<https://medicine.duke.edu/education-and-training/doctor-medicine>

