

Master's Degree in Clinical Research

Frequently asked questions

What is clinical research?

Clinical research aims to improve human health by identifying strategies to prevent disease and improve care for patients. Clinical researchers typically observe individuals or groups of people with a focus on a disease, an affected population, or different influences on health. For example, recent master's students completed research studies on:

- The role of breast feeding in preventing childhood obesity among Latina women
- The impact of under-prescription of medications in the management of refractory high blood pressure
- The influence of HIV disease severity on the occurrence of heart disease

What differentiates the UCSF Master of Advanced Study in Clinical Research from other programs?

Four strengths of UCSF's program distinguish it from other similar programs:

- **Hands-on clinical research:** We believe students learn most efficiently and deeply if coursework is completed in parallel with hands-on practical application. Our expectation that students publish a scientific manuscript on their research project and present that work in a national conference sets our graduates apart.

- **Faculty interaction:** Many courses in the master's program feature weekly small-group discussions among faculty and five to 15 students. Most faculty are practicing physicians and clinical researchers who provide deep theoretical and practical expertise.
- **Course work variety:** In addition to coursework in epidemiologic and biostatistical methods, students may take courses in qualitative research, medical informatics, molecular methods in clinical research, social epidemiology and health disparities, and decision and cost-effectiveness analysis. A track focused on implementation science is available for those who wish to learn the methods for translating effective interventions into everyday public health or clinical practice.
- **Diversity:** Our students come from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds. They range from recent college graduates to clinicians trained as doctors, nurses, dentists, and pharmacists. This community provides the opportunity to work with diverse individuals who will typically be part of successful research teams in the future.

Is prior knowledge or experience in clinical research an advantage when applying?

Yes. We prefer applicants with prior biological or health sciences knowledge

or experience because it demonstrates commitment to health research. It also can help students identify a research area for fulfilling the requirement to perform original research. Prior knowledge or experience may include formal education, volunteering or employment in a health-related field such as clinical practice, public health, health promotion, or research.

What do graduates do after completing the program?

The majority of our graduates are employed as clinical researchers in a university setting. Graduates also work in other research settings such as public health departments, foundations, and private industry. Still others pursue an advanced degree, such as an MD or PhD (for example, the UCSF PhD Program in Epidemiology and Translational Science). Our program requirement for original research enables students to build academic records that are highly competitive when applying for subsequent advanced degree programs.

How can I learn more about the Master of Advanced Study in Clinical Research?

Visit our website at ticr.ucsf.edu. If you have questions about applying to the program, contact Clair Dunne at cdunne@psg.ucsf.edu.