

2020 Students Participating as Ambassadors for Research in Kentucky (SPARK) Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Q:** What is the purpose of the SPARK Program?

A: The purpose of SPARK is to recruit and train diverse undergraduate students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds and communities across the UK campus to learn how to do impactful research to improve health disparities.

2. **Q:** What is the definition of “underrepresented” and “disadvantaged background”?

A: The SPARK Program uses definitions from the National Institutes of Health, which can be found here:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-031.html>

3. **Q:** Do I have to be from Kentucky in order to participate in SPARK?

A: No.

4. **Q:** Do I have to live in Lexington over the summer to participate?

A: No, but you must attend **in person** in Lexington all of the Research 101 workshops (5 workshops in May of approximately 3 hours each). In addition, you must attend all of the in-person meetings (approximately 10 of 1-2 hours each), unless alternative arrangements have been made. These workshops and in person meetings occur weekly throughout the late spring and summer.

5. **Q:** What is the stipend and when would I receive it?

A: You will receive a stipend of \$4,000 over the summer, paid as an hourly wage over the 12 working weeks of the program, conditional on your fulfilling the requirements of the SPARK Program (attending the in-person workshops, meeting research milestones, maintaining regularly communication, etc.) If you are not meeting the expectation or milestones of the SPARK program, your appointment may be terminated. The stipend will be provided May-August, 2020.

6. **Q:** Given recent developments with COVID-19, will this program still take place?

A: Currently the SPARK Program will move forward as planned. We will follow University of Kentucky guidance in modifying plans as needed in response to the evolving pandemic. Students will be promptly informed of program updates, as we continue to adhere to University of Kentucky guidance throughout the duration of the program to ensure the safety of students, staff, and members of the Kentucky community.

7. **Q:** Can I participate if I have a job during the summer?

A: Learning how to do impactful research to improve health disparities requires developing a variety of new skills as well as a deep understanding of previous research. For these reasons, students are required to dedicate 25 hours per week to this research training and their research projects. Given the demands of our program, it will be difficult to maintain another job along with the SPARK program. However, if you are able to do both of your jobs, you may participate in the SPARK Program. We anticipate a start date of May 11, 2020 and a completion date of August 14 (14 weeks, with 2 weeks off, for a total of 12 working weeks) for this research training and research conduct. We expect students to commit 25 hours per week of their time for 12 weeks.

8. **Q:** I plan to be on vacation for part of the summer. Can I still participate?

A: As long as you are able to attend all of the Research 101 workshops in May (which are group workshops) and meet all of the other expectations of the program (face to face meetings, completing your research project), you may participate in SPARK if selected. It is critical to discuss your schedule with leadership as soon as you are accepted into the program.

9. **Q:** Will the program continue through the academic year?

A: Yes. You will be expected to complete all data collection and budget activities, conduct regular check in sessions with our staff, work with your mentors on presentations and articles for publications, present your findings at the annual CCTS conference (see below), and participate in all SPARK promotional events. Previous students devoted several hours of work per week during the academic year. The program culminates with participants presenting at the UK Center for Clinical Translational Sciences Spring Conference in Lexington and officially ends one year from the start of the program.

10. **Q:** What is the Center for Health Equity Transformation (CHET)?

A: You can find information about CHET here: <https://www.chet.med.uky.edu/>

11. **Q:** What is the Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences (CCTS)?

A: You can find information about CCTS here: <https://www.ccts.uky.edu/>. The CCTS also organizes an annual conference in the spring. You will be expected to present your research at the conference.