

Vista Worcester-Based Pathways Program Handbook

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General Information

Pathways Program Overview

- Beginning in the 2022-2023 Academic Year as part of the Vista curriculum, the Pathways Program gives students the opportunity to explore an area of interest longitudinally and in-depth during their 4 years. The seven Worcester Campus-based Pathways highlight different areas of health care and medicine:
 - Clinical Care
 - Clinical, Community, and Translational Research
 - Education
 - Entrepreneurship, Biomedical Design, and Innovation
 - Health System Science
 - Population, Community, and Global Health
 - Structural Inequity, Advocacy, and Justice

Students will learn about each Pathway through presentations, Q&A, and attending the Pathways Fair before deciding their preferences. Through interactive class sessions and outside research, students will complete a group Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) by their 4th year. All Worcester Campus-based students are required to be in a Pathway except for those in CTRS and MD/PhD. This program operates separately from the Baystate Regional Campus-based PURCH and Lahey Regional Campus-based LEAD Pathways.

Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) Overview

- Students are required to work in groups and may join existing projects with upperclassmen or cross-pathways projects with other students. PLPs are unique to each Pathway but may take the form of a publication or presentation by 4th year. Deliverables related to PLPs will be due throughout the course to keep students on track.

Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) Timeline

For Students, Pathway Leaders, Educational Program Specialists, and Faculty Mentors. This timeline outlines when deliverables will be expected of students across all Pathways. The expected content of the deliverable may of course vary across Pathways.

Related resources include:

- The [Pathways Project Planner](#) designed to guide progress and share information among involved students, Pathway Leaders, Education Program Specialists, and Project Mentors
- The [Pathways Faculty-Student Agreement](#) should be used to describe objectives and expected deliverables and shared among involved students, Pathway Leaders, Education Program Specialists, and Project Mentors.
- **Discovery Year 1 Fall:**
 - List of potential projects and faculty mentors provided by individual Pathway Leader
 - Student groups to reach out to faculty mentors and meet with them prior to committing
 - Finalize commitment to Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) and group by December of Y1

- **Time:** 3 hours during Pathway time + 4 hours outside of Pathways = 7 hours/student [1 hour per month/student]
- **Discovery Year 1 Spring:**
 - **Deliverable:** Finalized group and Faculty mentor, PLP proposal (use Project Planner)
 - **Time:** 1-2 hours Pathway time + 3 hours outside of Pathways = 5 hours/student [1 hour per month/student]
- **Discovery Year 2 Fall:**
 - **Deliverable:** Oral Presentation summarizing summer experience/progress on project OR submit a reflection/progress report of group project OR poster presentation (from Research, Community, and Curriculum Exploration Programs - RCCE) [max 2 pages]
 - Summer: not required to work on project although some may
 - **Time:** 3-4 hours Pathway time (includes 4 asynchronous sessions) + 6 hours outside of Pathways = 10 hours/student [2 hours/month/student]
- **Discovery Year 2 Spring** (Feb 2024 is last scheduled Pathways session before Explorations)
 - **Deliverable:** Progress Report [equivalent of intro, background, methods and any data collection- max 4 pages]
 - **Time:** 2 hours Pathway time (includes 1 asynchronous session) + 4 hours outside of Pathways = 6 hours/student [2 hours/month/student]
- **Explorations Year 3:**
 - 2-week Pathways Experience - every student will have a 2-week dedicated Pathways block at a different point in the year (during Surgery/Radiology) dedicated to working on project
 - **Deliverables:**
 1. Project Advancement Form - handoff from prior student/group will include state of project prior to Explorations, progress made by student, next steps and handoff
 2. Progress report at end of Explorations (April) to include summary of progress made by group - [equivalent intro, background, methods, results]
 - **Time:** 2 weeks of 40 hours/week = 80 hours
- **Horizons Year 4: 1 month Pathways block**
 - **Deliverable:** Progress Advancement Form- handoff from prior student/group to include state of project prior to Horizons, progress made by student and next steps
 - **Time:** 4 weeks of 40 hours/week = 160 hours
- **March before graduation**
 - **Deliverable:** Presentations and/or submission of final written product

Pathway Specific Information

Clinical Care Pathway

Leader:

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Education Program Specialist:

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Class of 2026 Student Representative:

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Aly Wayne
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Pathway Description:

The Clinical Care Pathway focuses on fostering excellence in clinical care. Through didactic, small group and immersive sessions, students will learn about communication, high value care, team-based care, cultural humility, and interprofessional care. Pathways Longitudinal Projects (PLP) may focus on addressing a clinical problem, health care gap, patient safety issue or patient education gap via innovation, quality improvement intervention, development of educational materials, or prospective research.

Highlights:

- Interactive class sessions consisting of brief student presentations and feedback
- Opportunity to collaborate with UMass faculty in strengthening communication techniques
- Strengthen written and oral communication skills through presentations and patient interviews
- Exposure and access to expert communicators through the palliative care department

Sample Topics Covered:

- Hypothesis driven history taking
- Foundations of effective communication and therapeutic relationships led by the Palliative Care team
- Clinical Teaching and structured communication including conflict resolution techniques

Clinical, Community, and Translational Research Pathway

Leader:

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Rachel.Gerstein@umassmed.edu

Education Program Specialist:

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Class of 2026 Student Representatives:

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Pathway Description:

This Pathway gives students interested in clinical, community, and translational research an opportunity to learn about methodologies and skills that translate to real-life research experiences. Students will have the chance to engage with leaders at UMass Chan to understand contemporary topics and approaches for diverse medical research sampling. Students will develop skills needed to formulate their own projects and work with mentors to develop their Pathways Longitudinal Projects (PLP).

Highlights:

- Understand current topics and approaches in medical research including qualitative, clinical, and basic research pipelines
- Critique medical research findings, evaluate evidence-based practice guidelines, and analyze new treatments and therapies
- Synthesize and effectively communicate medical research findings
- Explore personal interests and identify research opportunities that align with individual goals and aspirations
- Receive mentorship from faculty and upperclassmen alike

Sample Topics Covered:

- Community Engagement in Research: didactic session followed by a journal club discussion of a relevant publication
- Qualitative Methods for Health Research: a didactic session followed by two group exercises, providing students with practical experience in applying qualitative research methods
- Fundamentals of Clinical Research: introductions to the essentials of biostatistics and epidemiology as it relates to clinical research

Education Pathway

Leader:

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Class of 2026 Student Representative:

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Pathway Description:

Through the Education Pathway, students will become active participants in their medical education and develop into physicians who are strong science communicators and community advocates. Within this Pathway, students will explore topics including undergraduate and graduate medical education, continuing education for physicians, and patient and community education. Education Pathway-specific sessions will include engagement with literature on educational methods, didactic sessions with experts on educational topics, and opportunities to practice and receive feedback on teaching. Pathways Longitudinal Projects may focus on building and evaluating curricula, creating patient and community outreach programs, or educational scholarship.

Education Pathway sessions typically consist of a short, interactive lecture to discuss the day's topics, followed by small-group discussions and activities to apply the concepts learned during the lecture.

Highlights:

- Interactive class sessions consisting of brief student presentations and feedback
- Opportunity to apply knowledge through the creation and presentation of an educational session
- Define goals and objectives to meet educational needs in academic, clinical, and community settings
- Create relevant, accessible, and effective learning materials based in scholarship
- Evaluate educational content based on current and relevant scholarship

Sample Topics Covered:

- Needs Assessments, Goals, and Learning Objectives
- Learning Modalities in Medical Education
- Evaluating Teaching and Learning

Entrepreneurship, Biomedical Design, and Innovation Pathway

Leader:

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Education Program Specialist:

Adam Marowski
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Class of 2026 Student Representative:

Vanessa Chin
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Pathway Description:

This Pathway gives students a hands-on customer discovery learning experience and will teach students how to successfully transfer knowledge into products and processes that benefit society. Students will engage with experts inside and outside of UMass Chan. They will interview and hear the perspectives of customers, partners, and competitors, learning how to deal with the chaos and uncertainty of commercializing innovations and creating ventures. These interviews lead to real-world insights, assessing key components of the business model, and often leading to pivots or refinements.

Highlights:

- Experience interactive class sessions consisting of student presentations and feedback
- Receive opportunities to collaborate with UMass Chan faculty on unique and exciting medical devices, technologies, and therapies
- Develop an understanding of the commercialization process, which can be applied to future ventures and ideas
- Strengthen written and oral communication skills through presentations and customer interviews
- Gain exposure and access to expert guest speakers in the biomedical innovation space

Sample Topics Covered:

- Elements of the Business Model Canvas, including customer segments and value proposition
- I-Corps Customer Discovery interview process: planning (question writing), scheduling, conducting, and data analysis
- Biodesign implementation: intellectual property (IP) resources

Health System Science Pathway

Leader:

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Education Program Specialist:

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Class of 2026 Student Representatives:

Hannah Carroll

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Ritika Revoori

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Pathway Description:

This Pathway allows students to explore and become well-versed in how health care is provided to, and experienced by, patients and populations. Study of health system science (HSS) aims to improve the delivery of equitable, high quality, high value, and compassionate health care to patients at both the micro/personal and macro/systems level. This Pathway will also deliver formal training in the Lean quality improvement and provide opportunity to participate in a mentored, longitudinal project based on Lean methodology.

Students will develop advanced knowledge and skills in (but not limited to) quality improvement, patient safety, health care delivery structures and processes, informatics, value-based practice, professionalism, ethics, interprofessional care, leadership, and systems thinking. This can happen simultaneously with the freedom to explore related personal curiosity, interest, and passion.

Highlights:

- Presentations from expert UMass Chan faculty members in health system science leadership positions and opportunities for discussion afterwards
- Receive training in Lean methodology (Lean teaches quality improvement by creating maximum value for patients by reducing waste and promoting value-based care)
- Interactive information sessions and simulations to help conceptualize the meaning behind and the importance of health system science
- Introduction to health care policy and economics, which inform the decisions, plans, and actions in the production of health care

Sample Topics Covered:

- Basics of Lean methodology and the PDSA (Plan-Do-Study-Act) cycle of quality improvement
- Importance of systems thinking in health care, which involves looking at how different health care components interact and devising interventions that improve the quality of care

Population, Community, and Global Health Pathway**Leader:**

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Education Program Specialist:

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Class of 2026 Student Representative:

Mitchell Kennedy
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Sahana Bail
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Pathway Description:

The Population, Community, and Global Health Pathway provides students with a unique opportunity to expand their biomedical and socio-ethical knowledge to the Greater Worcester Community and around the world. Students will learn about and discuss health care issues that affect communities across the globe, examining how challenges in the US medical system relate to and differ from those of other nations. Students are encouraged to travel and further explore the factors affecting the health and well-being of a specific population.

Highlights:

- Discussion-based meetings that address ethical considerations in global health settings, such as resource allocation, the role of students, the function of research, and informed consent
- Develop an awareness of the key disparities affecting health in developing countries and the health systems in which these diseases are treated
- Learn about the economic, environmental, political, and social factors responsible for global health disparities from field experts
- Develop an understanding of advocacy and compassionate medical care for patients from different cultures and in areas with limited resources
- Opportunity for travel, research, and immersive experiences with UMass faculty and community partners in places such as Kenya, Rwanda, Bolivia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, and India (among other sites)

Sample Topics Covered:

- Defining global burden of disease (GBD) and how GBD research affects socio-political change and the future directions of global health
- Explore the health care systems of other nations, and compare and contrast to the US model of care
- Refugee and migrant health: the struggles and barriers to care faced by these populations and how care for these groups differs around the world

Structural Inequity, Advocacy, and Justice Pathway

Leader:

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Education Program Specialist:

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Class of 2026 Student Representative:

Elizabeth Waltman
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Pathway Description:

Students will develop an understanding of the role of social structures in shaping the health of individuals, as well as the role physicians have played historically and currently in sanctioning and perpetuating oppression in structurally vulnerable communities. Using a multidisciplinary approach and critical social theories, students will discuss structural racism, trauma, sexism, intersectionality and standpoint theory, food insecurity, cultural humility, structural competency, systemic homelessness, language access, HIV, mental health inequities, mass incarceration, substance use and harm reduction, reproductive justice, and more. Students will be introduced to the principles of change through community organizing and effective interpersonal and public advocacy. This Pathway encourages critical thinking and challenging assumptions, ultimately training physicians who are effective advocates for meaningful change within their practices and communities.

Highlights:

- Interactive class sessions consisting of relevant lectures followed by small group discussions
- Conversations to develop an understanding of structural racism and how to practice anti-racism in the health care setting
- Introduction to advocacy and how students can be physician advocates
- Exposure to UMass Chan faculty and community partnerships focused on health equity
- Strengthen critical thinking skills

Sample Topics Covered:

- Structural Racism
- Putting Antiracism into Practice in Health Care Settings
- Trauma-Informed Care

Resources

Important Contacts List

Name	Email	Role
<u>Pathways Leadership</u>		
Anindita Deb, MD	anindita.deb@umassmemorial.org	Director, Pathways, PGCH Pathway Leader
Pawel Chojnowski	pawel.chojnowski@umassmed.edu	Education Program Specialist, OUME CC on all Pathways-related communication involving Dr. Deb
Mitchell Gitkind, MD	Mitchell.Gitkind@umassmemorial.org	Assistant Dean for Health System Science Professor of Medicine and Surgery

<u>Pathways</u>	<u>Pathway Leader</u>	<u>Education Program Specialist</u>
<i>Clinical Care</i>	Geeda Maddaleni MD Geeda.Maddaleni@umassmemorial.org	Isaias Monroy Isaias.Monroy@umassmed.edu
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<i>Education</i>	Alexandra Wink, PhD Alexandra.Wink@umassmed.edu	Victoria Cohen, MPP Victoria.Cohen@umassmed.edu
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Pathways Student Advisory Council (Class of 2026)

Co-Chairs	Vanessa Chin Vanessa.Chin@umassmed.edu	Erica Huang Erica.Huang3@umassmed.edu
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<i>Structural Inequity, Advocacy, and Justice</i>	Elizabeth Waltman Elizabeth.Waltman@umassmed.edu	
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Pathways Longitudinal Project: Project Planner

Pathways Longitudinal Project: Project Planner

Project Title:

Group Members:

Pathway:

1. CLEAR GOALS

The scholar states the basic purpose of the work clearly.

The scholar defines objectives that are realistic and achievable.

The scholar identifies an important question in the field.

Project purpose

Define the need, problem and/or question that your project will address.

Project goal

Define the outcome(s) of your project—what you will produce or know when the project is completed.

Describe how you will determine (measure) achievement of the outcome(s).

Project objectives

Define the steps to achieve the project goal as specific, measurable and time-limited objectives.

Indicate your timeline for completing each objective.

Project Significance

Describe how the outcome(s) of your project will change the discipline, clinical practice and/or the community (e.g., patients):

How generalizable would be the results of your project?

Who are the stakeholders in this project? (How will your project provide value to your division, department or the institution?)

2. ADEQUATE PREPARATION

The scholar shows an understanding of existing scholarship in the field.

The scholar brings the necessary skills to the work.

The scholar brings together the resources necessary to move the project forward.

Existing Scholarship:

Describe what is already known about this problem or successful approaches to addressing this need.

Review the literature (including the grey literature [eg. materials, research, white papers etc made available by government or non-governmental organizations] and websites from academic health institutions/professional organizations) to identify what is already known or being done to address this problem. List key resources/references here.

Skills

List the skills/expertise necessary to accomplish the project.

Indicate any skills you need to learn or acquire from mentors or collaborators.

Resources

Human Resources

List the personnel involved in the project: your team, collaborators, mentors/advisors.

Whose support/approval do you need?

Organizational/Material Resources

List the organizational/material resources required for the project (eg. space, IT, funding, staff/administrative support, access to data)

Financial Resources

List costs and funding sources for the project.

Do you need to create a budget or business plan? Do you need to demonstrate return on investment (ROI)?

3. APPROPRIATE METHODS

The scholar uses methods appropriate to the goals.

The scholar applies effectively the methods selected.

The scholar modifies procedures in response to changing circumstances.

Methods

List the methods required to accomplish the project.

Statistics

Does your project require statistical analysis? If so, have you engaged a statistician in the design of the project?

Ethical Approval

Does your project involve human subjects or animals requiring approval by the IRB or IACUC?

Alternative Strategies

What might prevent you achieving your project goals?

List alternative approaches to achieving your project goals.

Project Timeline

Objective:

Steps	Outcome measurement	Planned Date

Objective:

Steps	Outcome measurement	Planned Date

Scholarship

List plans for scholarship (presentations publications, etc)

Venue (Meeting/Journal)	Authors	Deadline

Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) Student-Faculty Agreement

Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) Student-Faculty Mentor Agreement

This agreement is to facilitate student and PLP relationship including providing regular feedback to each other and working towards stated goals. We expect this to be updated by the student regularly and communicated with PLP Faculty Mentor and Pathway leader.

Student Name:

Class of _____

Pathway:

LC/House Mentor:

UMMS Faculty Name (PLP Faculty):

Department/Division:

Faculty preferred contact:

Working Title of PLP:

Brief Project Description: Please provide a description of the Project including the hypothesis/statement of problem and planned involvement of the student.

Student Goals/Objectives: Please list student's specific objectives to be accomplished.

PLP Faculty Mentor Role: Please include agreements such as "contacting colleagues."

Proposed Timeline: Please provide a timeline of tasks/activities required and appx dates

Deliverables: Please list planned deliverables (i.e. poster presentation, manuscript, training manual) and dates expected

Please describe how this project aligns with student's interests and Pathway (<150 words):

Frequency of student-faculty meetings to review progress (recommended once/semester):

Please list the other students working on the project

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Student signature:

Date:

PLP Faculty signature:

Date:

Pathway Leader signature:

Date:

FAQ for Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) Faculty Mentors

FAQ for Pathways Longitudinal Project Faculty Mentors:

Pathways Director: Anindita Deb, MD (Anindita.deb@umassmemorial.org)

Pathways Education Program Specialist: Pawel Chojnowski (pawel.chojnowski@umassmed.edu)

Q: What is Pathways?

A. Pathways is a credit-bearing, 4-year longitudinal program which allows students to focus on an area of interest among various Pathway options. In addition to enhancing their professional identity, students will hone communication and scholarship skills through Pathway assignments. This will culminate in the presentation of a Pathways Longitudinal Project at the end of their 4 years. There are seven Pathways with a Pathway Leader and Education Program Specialist for each. For more information:

<https://www.umassmed.edu/oume/curriculum/Vista-Curriculum/pathways/>

<https://www.umassmed.edu/oume/curriculum/Vista-Curriculum/pathways/vista-pathways-leadership/>

Q. What is the time commitment expected of me as a Pathways Longitudinal Project Faculty Mentor?

A. You will be expected to mentor a group of students (4-5) over the course of their Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP). We expect project assignments to occur in fall of Discovery. During this time groups will be meeting with Faculty mentors to discuss the project plan and finalize their commitment to the project. We expect project mentors to meet with the group at least once every semester. You may decide to meet more frequently depending on project deliverables decided between you and the group. There is NO required manuscript. Students will have approximately 28 hours in Discovery, a 2-week block (30-40 hours/week) during Explorations and 4-week block (30-40 hours/week) during Horizons to focus on the PLP. The exact 2-week or 4-week block will vary between students in the group. They will be expected to meet and communicate with each other and with you at the beginning and end of these blocks in addition to other times through the year as determined by you and the group and submit a Project Advancement Form. The Pathway Leader and Faculty Mentor will ensure PLPs are carried through in a timely manner.

Q: How does the Pathways Longitudinal Project (PLP) differ from a Capstone project?

A: The PLP is a **GROUP PROJECT** where the goal is to learn about teamwork and the process rather than focus on the end-product. The scope of the project should be broad and the tasks divided up among the team. The final deliverable may be a presentation, white paper, or manuscript. The PLP should aim to do the following:

1. Foster teamwork
2. Maintain longitudinal partnerships for community-based projects at UMass Chan and beyond
3. Facilitate collaborations within and between class cohorts

Q. What are the deliverables expected of the group?

A. The deliverables for the PLP will be determined by the student group, Pathway Leader, and Faculty Mentor. Since the scope of the projects is broad, the deliverables may vary but should be divided among the group. For example, deliverables can be in the form of short progress reports, new documents (i.e. guide, checklist, survey), brief oral presentations (i.e. Pathway cohort or stakeholders/community partners), or self-reflection. The Project Proposal will be due in Discovery Y1 March, progress report/brief oral presentation in Discovery Y2 Fall, progress report in Discovery Y2 Spring, and progress reports at the end of Pathways blocks during Explorations and Horizons. These will be reviewed by the Pathway Leader.

Q. What is the role of the Pathway Leader in terms of the PLP?

A. The Pathway Leader will be facilitating formation of student groups and alignment with projects based on student interests and skills. The Pathway Leader will be tracking progress, communicating with Faculty Mentor when necessary. He/she can also aid in troubleshooting if unanticipated issues arise. The faculty mentor should be in close communication with the Pathway Leader regarding progress and issues as well. Pathway leaders may reach out to faculty mentors for feedback on student progress to include in student evaluations.

*The Project Student-Faculty Agreement and Project Planner worksheet is available to students and can also be requested from Pathway Leaders

	Pathways Longitudinal Project (VISTA)	Capstone Scholarship and Discovery (sunsets in 2024)
# students	4-5+ (can be inter-class, cross-Pathways)	1 (occasional group projects)
Scope of project	Broad	Narrow/individual
Tracking progress	Pathway Leader	Capstone Advisor
Faculty Mentor requirements	Meeting with group once a semester or as determined on Student-Faculty Agreement	Review of progress on Capstone report every semester
Final Deliverable	Presentation, white paper, or manuscript as determined by group, Pathways leader and Faculty Mentor	Capstone report/manuscript