

Board Meeting  
January 21, 2016

ESTABLISH THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPARATIVE  
EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH, COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND THE  
GRADUATE COLLEGE, CHICAGO

**Action:** Establish the Master of Science in Comparative Effectiveness Research, College of Pharmacy and the Graduate College

**Funding:** No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Chicago Senate, College of Pharmacy, and the Graduate College recommends the establishment of the Master of Science in Comparative Effectiveness Research.

Comparative effectiveness research (CER) is the “conduct and synthesis of research comparing the benefits and harms of different interventions and strategies to prevent, diagnose, treat, and monitor health conditions in real world settings.”<sup>1</sup> The purpose of CER is to improve health outcomes by developing and disseminating evidence-based information to patients, clinicians, and other decision-makers, and responding to their expressed needs about which interventions are the most effective for which patients under specific circumstances. CER seeks to make the selection of therapeutic options more informed, resulting in better decisions and ultimately improved health outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Coordinating Council for Comparative Effectiveness Research, Report to the President and the Congress. Washington, DC 2009.

Given the relative newness of the field, there is a dearth of researchers with experience to conduct CER. While the National Institutes of Health and others have invested in mentored training awards for individuals, they are few in number and not designed to expand the availability of degree-granting programs in CER. As a result, in 2001 the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) Foundation began a funding program to support the development of training and educational programs in CER at academic institutions. In 2015, the College of Pharmacy was the sixth institution to be awarded the Centers of Excellence in CER Education award, joining Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and the universities of Maryland at Baltimore, Utah, and Washington.

The M.S. in Comparative Effectiveness Research has been developed to provide skills and knowledge relevant to conducting CER for application in the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. It is designed primarily for individuals already working in a pharmaceutical or medical product company, government agency, or in a healthcare provider organization, who would like to become competent in this new area of research. The program will be offered completely online with a projected enrollment of five students in the first year and ten per year once fully implemented. It will be the first online master's degree in CER in the United States, and one of only a handful of related degree or certificate programs in the country. It will require 32-hours of coursework: 20 required hours of CER, biostatistics or clinical research methods, epidemiology, pharmacoepidemiology, ethics and privacy issues, and a research project; and 12-hours of electives students will chose in consultation with their advisor.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respect with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes, The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.