

A FRAMEWORK FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

Preparing Medical Students for Evidence-Based Practice



EBSCO

Introduction

Academic librarians play an important role in preparing medical students to navigate a complex and rapidly changing information landscape. Students need more than access to biomedical literature. They need to learn how to find relevant evidence, evaluate it critically and use it responsibly.

As AI reshapes how students discover and explore information, the library has an opportunity to help them build research habits grounded in trusted evidence.



The Academic Library as a Partner in Medical Education

Academic libraries do more than provide access to biomedical literature. They help medical students develop the research skills needed to ask better questions, evaluate evidence and make informed decisions throughout their education.

Today's academic librarians help medical students:

- Develop effective biomedical search strategies
- Navigate authoritative medical literature
- Evaluate sources and evidence critically
- Build information literacy skills
- Use AI responsibly in research
- Prepare for evidence-based clinical practice

At the same time, students expect research experiences to be intuitive and efficient. Libraries can help meet those expectations without sacrificing the rigor, credibility and critical thinking that medical education demands.



Four Pillars of Evidence-Based Learning

Academic libraries can help prepare medical students for evidence-based practice through four connected pillars.



Precision — Teach students to build focused, effective searches.



Efficiency — Help students navigate biomedical literature more effectively.



Transparency — Keep students connected to the evidence behind the information they discover.



Access — Provide reliable access to trusted, peer-reviewed biomedical literature.

Together, these four pillars help students develop something they will need throughout medical school and beyond: **confidence working with evidence.**



PILLAR 1: PRECISION

Strong Evidence-Based Practice Starts With Strong Search Skills

Learning how to search biomedical literature is an essential part of learning how to work with evidence.

Academic librarians help medical students move beyond simple keyword searching to understand how thoughtful search strategies can uncover more relevant evidence.

Libraries can help students develop research precision through:

- Controlled vocabularies such as MeSH
- Advanced field searching
- Boolean search construction
- Search histories and saved strategies
- Query refinement and combination



**Precision isn't about finding more articles.
It's about teaching students how to find the right evidence.**

PILLAR 2: EFFICIENCY

Make Rigorous Research Easier to Navigate

Medical students have demanding schedules and increasingly complex information needs. Research tools should help them spend less time managing searches and more time understanding and evaluating evidence.

Academic libraries can support more efficient student research by helping students:

- Refine searches without losing context
- Update or rerun previous searches
- Save searches for future assignments and research
- Organize and manage results
- Move more efficiently from a research question to relevant literature
- Use intuitive search approaches as they develop more advanced research skills

Efficiency isn't about taking shortcuts. It's about making rigorous research easier to navigate.



PILLAR 3: TRANSPARENCY

Responsible AI Supports Information Literacy

AI is becoming part of how students discover and interact with information.

Students need research experiences that improve efficiency while keeping the underlying evidence visible, verifiable and central to learning.

When evaluating AI-enabled research tools, academic librarians should look for solutions that:

- Draw insights from trusted scholarly content
- Connect responses to supporting source material
- Make it easy for students to verify AI-generated information
- Encourage exploration of the underlying literature
- Support rather than replace critical thinking

Responsible AI
doesn't replace
critical thinking.
It can help
students engage
more effectively
with trusted
evidence.



PILLAR 4: ACCESS

Put Trusted Biomedical Evidence Within Students' Reach

Students cannot learn to work effectively with evidence if the evidence itself is difficult to reach.

Reliable access to peer-reviewed biomedical literature helps students move more easily from discovery to reading, evaluation and application.

When supporting medical programs, academic libraries should consider:

- Depth of peer-reviewed full-text coverage
- Access to current research
- International journal coverage
- Historical archives for deeper research
- Timely access to emerging biomedical literature

Strong full-text collections help libraries support coursework, independent research and the development of evidence-based practice skills.



Access isn't simply about retrieving an article. It creates opportunities for students to engage directly with the evidence.

The Outcome: Confidence Build Confidence With the Right Research Foundation

Confidence with evidence doesn't come from a single assignment, database or tool. It develops through repeated opportunities to search, evaluate and engage with trusted biomedical information.

Academic libraries can help create that foundation through four essential capabilities:

- **Precision** through effective biomedical searching
- **Efficiency** through streamlined research workflows
- **Transparency** through responsible, source-based AI
- **Access** through trusted biomedical full text



Confidence grows
when students
understand
how to find,
evaluate and use
trusted evidence.



Preparing Students for Evidence-Based Practice

By strengthening these four pillars, academic libraries can make an important contribution to medical education and student success.

Libraries that invest in precision, efficiency, transparency and access are better positioned to:

- Strengthen medical students' information literacy
- Support evidence-based learning
- Encourage responsible use of AI
- Improve the student research experience
- Support medical school curricula and research programs
- Demonstrate the library's contribution to student success

The academic library is more than a gateway to biomedical information — it is a partner in preparing students for evidence-based practice.



MEDLINE Ultimate Supports Every Pillar



For academic libraries supporting medical education, **MEDLINE Ultimate** can help connect students with trusted biomedical literature while supporting their research skills.

1. Precision

MEDLINE Ultimate offers MeSH, field searching, Search History, Combine Searches and other query refinement tools that support the development of focused, reproducible biomedical search strategies.

2. Efficiency

MEDLINE Ultimate provides advanced search tools that help students refine, update, save and rerun searches. AI-Assisted Search enables natural language searching, providing another way for students to begin exploring a research question and refine their approach.

3. Transparency

AI Insights provides AI-generated article summaries, while Ask This Document (AI Ask) helps students explore individual articles in greater depth. Both features keep students connected to the underlying source material to bridge answers and evidence.

4. Access

MEDLINE Ultimate's biomedical full-text journal coverage helps students move from discovering relevant literature to engaging directly with the evidence.

Prepare the Next Generation to Work With Evidence

By strengthening precision, efficiency, transparency and access, academic libraries can create research environments that help medical students build skills for evidence-based learning and future practice.

See how MEDLINE Ultimate can help your library connect medical students with trusted biomedical evidence while supporting the research skills they will use throughout their careers.

[Learn more](#)