



citizens of science

What is COS?

The Citizens of Science (COS) Program was launched in 2022 by a group of students at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute with the goal of bridging the gap between researchers, the scientific knowledge they generate, and the public, who ultimately benefit from these discoveries.

COS seeks to address the limited opportunities for medical research students to engage meaningfully with consumers and lay individuals by establishing a learning and development program within the Parkville precinct.

Our Vision

To breakdown the barriers between medical research and the general public

For research students: to become public-conscious scientists, skilled communicators and future leaders
For the general public: to equip them with medical research literacy so they can actively contribute to the discussion and progress of science

COS 2025 Timeline

Mentors

Apr - Jul

Mentors recruited from **biomedical research students** across the Parkville biomedical precinct

Mentees

Mentees recruited from **consumers, institute professional staff, and the general public**

Sep

Training for mentors:

1. Preparing their mentoring material
2. Scientific communication
3. Science visualisation

Biology education for mentees:

1. DNA and the central dogma
2. Protein structure and function
3. Disease mechanisms and treatments

Oct

Welcome event - mentors & mentees meeting each other

3 weekly mentoring sessions

1. Introduction to the research topic - “literature” with lay language
2. Methods - how data is generated in this project, in simplified way
3. Curated results - simplified presentation that gives a “yes/no”

Nov

Final in-person event

Mentees will give a presentation about the project that they are mentored on in an in-person event

Event highlights



Mentees are taught on basics of biology and attend an in-person lab practice session in GTAC, where they learn basic laboratory techniques and get hand-on experiences of scientific experiments. This lays a foundation for mentees to understand the project that they are mentored on.

A trajectory of growth

	2022	2023	2024	2025 *
Mentors	4	9	22	35+
Mentees	7	16	35	50+
Team members		5	8	14

*2025 numbers of mentors and mentees estimated based on EOIs received.

Started in WEHI in 2022, COS has expanded to numerous institute across the Parkville area by 2025, including PeterMac, the Florey, Peter Doherty, Bio21, MCRI, MIPS, and MDHS faculty of University of Melbourne. In 2025, we expect a continued growth in program size, with an exciting future to look forward to.

Contact us

